



Family Worship Kits

Supplies Included:

- May 16 - Noodles, Food Dye Tablet, Water bottle
- May 23 - Paper Circle Disks, String, Markers (these are in the every week kit)
- May 30 - Set of Dominoes
- June 6 - Homeless Kit Supplies (toothpaste, toothbrush, peanut butter crackers, protein bar, hand sanitizer packs, bandaids, tissues, chapstick & water) ,2 - Gallon Zip Lock Bag, Card
- June 13 - 2 Plastic cups, A Piece of Paper, 4 Craft sticks
- June 20 - Cross with Heart Wood Ornament

Other Supplies Needed: If you are joining us virtually

- May 23 - Markers
- June 6 - Markers or Pens (You are welcome to keep both kits)
- June 20 - Markers



Family Worship Experience for May 16

Topic: What is Love?

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13

Focus Verse: "If I have the gift of prophecy and I know all the mysteries and everything else, and if I have such complete faith that I can move mountains but I don't have love, I'm nothing...Now faith, hope, and love remain—these three things—and the greatest of these is love."

Family Activity:

Supplies Included:

- Noodles
- Food Dye Tablet
- Water Bottle

Instructions:

Place a few noodles and add the dye tablet into each water bottle. Place the lid back on the bottle and shake it to mix the dye tablet. Watch and see how the noodles change due to the color they are surrounded in. Whatever we surround ourselves in also changes us and shows to others. In order to be changed and love the way God tells us to, we must surround ourselves with Him each day!

Family Discussion Questions:

- What is love?
- How do I find God's love?
- How do I keep loving when the world seems to be going the other way?

Devotion:

This is the beginning of a new sermon series that is all about love. Through most of this series, when I speak of love, I will be speaking of agape love, which is unconditional love. And even though 1 Corinthians 13 is often read at weddings, what it really described is an unconditional, agape love. "Love is patient, love is kind, it isn't jealous, it doesn't brag, it isn't arrogant...." Agape love is "sacrificial love that seeks the good and well-being of others...[this is] love that looks outward." Loving outwardly, sacrificially, unconditionally, is not easy. That's why we've got a whole sermon series on this one topic. But the first step in loving God and loving others well is understanding God's agape love for every person, including God's unconditional love for us.

Remember, God gave his Son for us, and Christ is the fullest expression of love.

You might think the opposite of love is hate. But the thing about love is that it looks outward, to the good of the other. That's exactly what is exemplified in God's giving of his Son. So for a love that truly looks outward, the opposite of love is not hate, it is selfishness. It's a life completely centered on the self. The problem with a "me" approach to life is that if it's only about me, there is no room for you. And if everyone thinks, lives, and acts that way, there will be no room for any of us! Instinctively, we all understand that nothing good ever comes out of selfishness and greed. It was causing serious problems for the Corinthians, and it is still causing major problems for humanity now. What we are going to learn through this series, though, is that love changes things.

So what is love? First and foremost, God is love, and love is all around us. Love is faith in action. The way of love will show us the right thing to do, every single time. Love is how we stay decent in indecent times. Loving is not always easy, but love grows as we exercise it and practice it. And still, the love we humans experience, as powerful as it is, is still only a faint reflection of God's love, which is eternal, the source of all love.

"Now faith, hope, and love remain—these three things—and the greatest of these is love."

Virtual Family Worship Experience:

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Family Worship Experience for May 23

Topic: The Call of Love

Scripture: Acts 2: 1-4, 14-21, 42-47

Focus Verse: "They praised God and demonstrated God's goodness to everyone. The Lord added daily to the community those who were being saved."

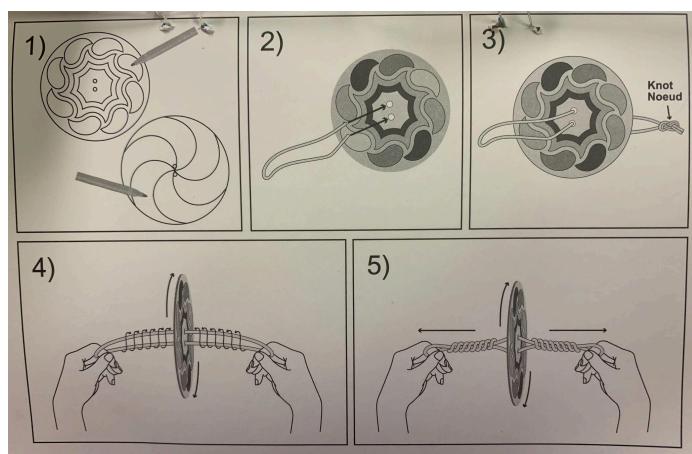
Family Activity:

Supplies Needed:

- Paper Circle Disks
- String
- Markers (Every Week Kit)

Instructions:

Take your circle disks out and color both sides. On one side think of ways to love others and on the other side think of ways to love yourself that reflect God's love for us. Complete putting together your spinner by using the image below. Take turns using the spinner and notice that it takes equal action on both sides to make it work. When we put into action or practice the love we receive for God we will love others and ourselves better. The more practice we have using our spinner the easier it will be to use. The more practice and action we put into surrounding ourselves with God, feeling His love for us and living it out the easier it will be for us to love others and ourselves the way God wants us to.



Family Discussion Questions:

- What are some ways you demonstrate God's love and goodness to others?
- Won't loving everyone make me a doormat?
- When have you seen love make a big difference in your life, or in the world?

Devotion:

Today is Pentecost Sunday, which is the day we celebrate the Holy Spirit coming among God's people. Because of this act, Pentecost Sunday is also sometimes referred to as the birthday of the church. But when we read all of this second chapter of Acts and the Pentecost story, what we can see is that there are actually two important things that happened on this day. The first is that the Holy Spirit came among the believers as they were all together and united them, launching the church as a body of believers. The second thing that happened is a consequence of the first, which is that people began living their lives differently. Acts tells us, "The believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers...All the believers were united and shared everything...They praised God and demonstrated God's goodness to everyone." This is the call of love. Because we follow Jesus, because the Holy Spirit draws us together, because we are a part of the church, we should live our lives differently, in order that we might fully experience and share the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Love changes things. Love changes us. Love changes the world. When we respond to God's call of love in our lives and follow Jesus' way of love, it will have a huge impact. And when we do that together as the church, as the body of believers, it will have an even bigger impact that will radiate across the world. Because those early believers were dedicating themselves and all their resources to God in Christ Jesus and living their lives in a new way, according to the call of love, God was adding to their number daily—new people were being saved. And love was the driving force there. The actions of these people impacted other people. Love is a force that is passed along. And when it comes to God's love, we are the ones that make that happen. God's love has to pass through us and on to the next person. And it may not seem like what we do is a big deal, but think about what would happen if we weren't there, if we weren't passing along God's love!

Following the call of love, making God first in all things, and putting the needs of others above our own will make all the difference. And when we do this, when we demonstrate God's goodness in all things through love, then "the Lord will add daily to the community those who [are] being saved."

Praise the Lord, for a love that really does make a difference!

Virtual Family Worship Experience:

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Family Worship Experience for May 30

Topic: Leaving a Mark with Love

Scripture: Romans 12: 9-21

Focus Verse: "Love should be shown without pretending. Hate evil, and hold on to what is good. Love each other like the members of your family. Be the best at showing honor to each other."

Family Activity:

Supplies Included:

- Dominoes

Instructions:

Take turns setting up the Dominoes by placing them in a line or get creative and set them up in a pattern and then start the chain reaction by knocking over the front domino. While completing the activity discussion the family questions below. Notice it only takes one action to create a chain reaction. Think of one action each of you could make to share God's love this week. Imagine what the impact would be if we focused on leaving a mark with love each day.

Family Discussion Questions:

- What are some ways to show love without pretending?
- Can my love have an impact?
- Can love really change the world?

Devotion:

Most of you have probably heard that story about the man walking down a beach filled with starfish washed ashore with the tide. Every so often, the man would pause, stoop down, pick up one of the starfish and throw it into the ocean. An observer eventually jumped into stride with the man as he continued his jilted journey down the beach. After a few moments of walking and pausing as the man threw another starfish back into the sea, the observer asked, "Why are you doing this? How could you possibly make a difference with all these starfish covering the beach for miles in every direction?" Again, the man stooped down, picked up a starfish and threw it back into the ocean. Then, he looked at his curious companion and replied, "I made a difference to that one."

That's where this passage from Romans can be so helpful. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul described what love is. Here in Romans, though, Paul describes what love in action looks like – these are real, tangible, concrete acts that exhibit love. Paul tells us that genuine love is: Hating evil and holding on to what is good. Caring for others like they are members of your family. Outdoing one another in showing honor. Being enthusiastic and on fire in the Spirit as you serve the Lord! Being happy in your hope, persevering in the face of troubles, and devoted to prayer. Contributing to the needs of God's people, and welcoming strangers into your home, and on and on.

Showing love without pretending, offering genuine love requires that we are constantly checking ourselves and our every action. We have to ask ourselves again and again, "Do my actions look like love?" And if they don't, we need to reset.

Can your love make an impact? It sure can, but not if you don't show genuine love. So, if you want to leave a mark with love, focus on putting love into practice in the way Paul describes to the Romans. We can start small, knowing that every life is important, and even one act of love can be the difference between life and death for someone. Then, we can trust God with the rest, having faith that God in Christ Jesus will do immeasurably more than we could ever ask or imagine.

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Family Worship Experience for June 6

Topic: From Old to New, Love Remakes You

Scripture: Luke 10:25-37

Focus Verse: "He responded, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.'

Jesus said to him, 'You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live.'"

Family Activity:

Supplies Needed:

- 2 Sets - Homeless Kit Supplies: (toothpaste, toothbrush, peanut butter crackers, protein bar, hand sanitizer packs, bandaids, tissues, chapstick & water).
- 2- Gallon Zip Lock Bag
- Card
- Markers/Pen

Instructions:

Take turns placing one of each of the homeless kit supplies provided into each of the gallon zip lock bags. Take a moment to color and write a message of love on the card provided to the individuals who will be blessed with the care bags you created together. Then pray together as a family for the individual who will receive this gift of love. We invite you to take one of these bags home with you today and live out the message you have received by giving it to a homeless individual that God sends your way this week. Please leave the second bag in your worship space to help us share this love opportunity with the individuals worshipping in the Sanctuary service today. Allow God to change the old into new in our lives and others. Love has the power to change us and others. Pass It On!

Family Discussion Questions:

- What do we need to give up so that we can love God with all of our being?
- What about ourselves might need to change in order for us to love others well?

Devotion:

You know, I think sometimes we get so caught up in the amazing, generous, and merciful acts of the Good Samaritan, that we miss just how shocking this parable would have been to Jesus' listeners. When putting ourselves in this parable, I think it's important to also think of what the parable might sound like if Jesus were telling it today. I think it would go something like this: A carjacker shot a man, stole his car, and left him on the roadside for dead. A preacher and then a Bible Study leader each came upon him as they were driving on the same road. Both swerved past the injured victim and went on their way. Then came a church van full of retreat-goers, upon seeing the man, a quick discussion determined the need to continue on, and they too swerved past the man. Next, there came an atheist. The atheist slowed her car, turned on her flashers, and stopped alongside the injured victim. Upon seeing the man's injuries, she pulled him into her car and rushed to the emergency room. As the medics hurried the man back to surgery, she made sure his family was notified and stayed until they arrived. Then, two days later, she came back to the hospital, checkbook in hand, to make sure all the man's medical bills were paid.

Jesus told this parable to help his followers understand the love which is required of us. But understanding the fullness of love to which we are called also means understanding our own failings to act in neighborly, loving ways toward those in need. Jesus wants his listeners to see that despite our temptation or tendencies to ignore our neighbor in need, we cannot do such a thing. As Christ-followers, we must love everyone, and extend Christ's mercy to all, even our enemy. In fact, Christians should be at the forefront of offering love and mercy to everyone, most especially those in need. If we are "passing by on the other side" at any time or for any reason, we are failing in our task as disciples.

This is a huge challenge that Christ lays before us in this parable. Loving according to Christ's call is way, way, way more complicated than carrying the newspaper to the person living next door to us. Loving according to Christ's call involves a lot more than simply affirming one another in our present way of life, even as injustices persist all around us. Christ is calling us to a complete behavioral change. No longer can we look at the atheist, or the Muslim, or the democrat or the republican as the enemy, these people are worthy of our love and compassion too; they are our neighbors. We have to expand our thinking about who we are in Christ and how we relate to all people we encounter. It is certainly difficult to summon such love for some people, especially our sworn enemy, but imagine what this world would look like if we truly did love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Just imagine...

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Family Worship Experience for June 13

Topic: United By Love

Scripture: John 13:1-5, 12-15, 34-35

Focus Verse: "I give you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other."

Family Activity:

Supplies Included:

- Plastic cups
- A Piece of Paper
- Popicle sticks

Instructions:

Use the supplies provided and build a bridge. Get creative :) Building a bridge is hard work, but they are important to help us reach the places and people that are separated from us. Loving others and overcoming what separates us can be hard too but it is very important to help us reach the places and people that surround us. Love can and does overcome the divide. Even when it is hard it is worth it!

Family Discussion Questions:

- When have you seen love build a bridge or heal brokenness?
- Do I have to love even my enemy? How do I love my enemy?
- How can love overcome what divides us and move us forward together?

Devotion:

Have you ever taken a moment to reflect on how very profound this encounter is between Jesus and his disciples in the Upper Room on the night that Jesus was betrayed? I'm not referring to the fact that Jesus washed the disciples' dirty feet. Servants washing people's feet was not at all uncommon in that day and age. What blows my mind – every single time – about this scene, is the fact that Judas got the same loving treatment as the rest of the disciples. Jesus knew everything that Judas was about to do, and he still Jesus knelt down and washed Judas' feet.

Imagine that you have been betrayed in the worst of ways. Would you want to sit down to a meal with that person? Would you want to get down on your knees and wash their dirty feet? Who among us would volunteer to serve in any way someone who has betrayed us? Because of our human nature, we steer away from such things. If someone betrays us, we cut them off. If someone is our enemy, we avoid them at all costs, right? But here Jesus is, kneeling down to wash the feet of his betrayer and saying to his disciples, "I have given you an example: Just as I have done, you also must do."

Our world is divided. And it's not just that we are 7 billion plus people with 7 billion different ideas and viewpoints. We've come to the point where, whether in thought or in action, we are hostile to our enemies, to our betrayers, and even to people who think differently than us. We are quick to express or even exhibit feelings of dislike or hatred. When it comes to our enemies, to those who have harmed us, and even to those who are different from us, we do not follow this example of love that Jesus has given us here. To that point, I feel pretty confident in saying that a great part of the problem of division in our country and around our world right now stems from the fact that we don't put enough effort into sharing love with those around us.

But with a little effort, love can overcome our divisions. Despite our many differences, love can unite us. Love, though, is a commitment to a whole way of life. We have to move past our differences and work together to make things better. We know this is possible, right? Because we do it right here in the church. We look past school rivalries or political divisions and we come together to assemble home buckets for Zimbabwe, or to host a BBQ so that we can give coats to kids. We practice such love here, we learn to love in God's house, so we go out into the world and make it real for others. And perhaps focusing on how we can work together to make things better in the world will help us exhibit love among the people we find most difficult to love. Love can transcend what divides us and help us move forward together.

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Family Worship Experience for June 20

Topic: Love Wins

Scripture: 1 John 4: 7-12

Focus Verse: "Dear friends, let's love each other, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born from God and knows God."

Family Activity:

Supplies Included:

- Cross with Heart Wood Ornament
- Markers (Every Week Kit)

Instructions:

Use the markers in your kit to color and design the Cross provided as a visual reminder of reflecting God's Kingdom values to God's people and creation. Use markers and discuss the following questions...

1. Use the **purple** marker - How can we reflect God's **compassion** to God's people and creation?
2. Use the **blue** marker - How can we reflect God's **mercy** to God's people and creation?
3. Use the **green** marker - How can we reflect God's **care** to God's people and creation?
4. Use the **red** marker to color the heart - How can we reflect God's **love** to God's people and creation?

Family Discussion Questions:

- How do we engage with the world so as to reflect God's Kingdom values of compassion, mercy, care and love for God's people and God's creation?
- What does it look like when love wins?

Devotion:

Today's sermon is the final in our series, "Love This Way." I hope that you have picked up on the key takeaway of this series, which is that love changes things. When the way of love becomes a way of life, it's a game changer. But I want to take this message one step broader this morning. Not only does love change everything, but I think the whole of the Bible can be summed up in two words, "Love Wins."

What I want to emphasize today is just how very important it is for us to do our part so that God can do God's part, and the whole world can experience the fact that love wins. When I read these words from John's first letter, what occurs to me is that perhaps many of us are living with uncertainty and doubt and unrest because we don't know God as we should know him. And what John suggests here is that knowing God fully requires living in love toward each other. We can't forget, though, what John also says in these verses, which is that we can love because God first loved us and showed us his love through Christ. So if God loved us that way, John says, we should also love each other.

Jesus' whole way of life was an exhibition of love. That way of life has to become our way of life. Love has to shape every decision we make, and every action we take. Love has to become our spiritual center of gravity and flood every aspect and dimension of our lives. You know, when someone asks the question, how do I grow closer to God, what sort of answers will they receive? Read your Bible. Pray. Go to worship. Get involved with a small group. Two thousand years ago, though, if someone had asked John that question, he would have said, "You want to grow closer to God? Then love people; love each other." Another way of hearing this message from John might be, "If it's not about love, it's not about God. And if it is about love, then it is about God."

"When God, who is love, becomes our spiritual center of gravity, and love our moral compass, we live differently, regardless of what the world around us does. The world changes for the better, one life at a time. So don't give up on love. Listen to it. Trust it. Give into it. Obey it. Love can help and heal when nothing else can. Love can lift up and liberate as nothing else will."

The way may seem rocky. Some days may prove harder than others. Evil will continue to seek a foothold in the world; to drive a wedge of division at every opportunity. But 2,000 years ago, Christ rose from the grave and proved that evil was conquered once and for all. Because of that, we can know that today and everyday, love wins!

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