

Love in Action

1 John 3

1 John 3:16-24 NIV

Bible Lesson & Activities for Children



THE **SUNDAY SCHOOL** STORE

Louder Than Words...



It's important for children to be loved, and they can usually tell when someone cares for them. As adults, it's essential that we not only communicate our care but also help kids understand how much God loves them. This lesson emphasizes how we see God's love demonstrated and how we can pass along His love by showing kindness to other people. There are many ways we can show our love for others, of course. When we do so, we give evidence of our love for God.

Jesus is the image of God, and the evidence of His love for us. Christ gave His life for us. We can rejoice in the sacrifice He made on our behalf, and out of gratitude we should seek to serve others. As Christians, we should aim to love one another, even if it sometimes requires sacrifice on our part. When we give of ourselves to other people, it lives out the love of God.

Passage: 1 John 3:16-24

Target Audience: Kindergarten-6th grade

Materials Needed: Construction paper; paper plates; glue; markers or crayons; tape; scissors; decorative supplies; envelopes; note cards; cards or small gifts; Bibles.

More Resources Online

- Watch the [video demonstration of the object lesson](#).
- Watch the [video example for the craft projects](#).
- Watch the [video Bible story "John's Letter About Love"](#) from Saddleback Kids Club
- Watch the [video Bible story "God Loves Us"](#) from Crossroads Kids
- For more free illustrations, visit [Christian Clip Arts](#) and [Ministry-To-Children](#)

Object Lesson (5 minutes)

Greet children and discuss ways to show love...

Hello, children of God!

How do we show that we love God? It's important to love the Lord, but how do we demonstrate that to other people? Of course, we can do things like going to church and reading the Bible. We can pray and tell others about God. But the Bible tells us of another, and very important way that we can show how much we love God. We can show we love Him by loving other people. When we demonstrate care for those God loves and created, we show love for Him, too.

So how do we show love for other people? If we just say "I love you", does that do the trick? There's nothing wrong with telling people of our love, but there's a lot more to it than that. We need to live it out. You've probably heard the phrase "actions speak louder than words." We want to do more than just tell people how we feel; we should show them, as well. There are a lot of methods that we can use to demonstrate love in action. As *appropriate, have objects on hand to hold up as visual aids while describing.* You might see people show love for others by writing special cards or notes. Maybe you give someone gifts or flowers to say "I love you," or special treats. Or perhaps you do special things for someone else. A lot of people say that love is spelled "T-I-M-E." Spending time with people shows that we care about them. Just being with someone else can be a sign of love. When we do things for and with other people, it allows them to understand not only how we love them, but how God loves them.

In the book of 1 John (not to be confused with the Gospel of John, which is also great), we are told that we should love not just with words but "with actions and in truth." The passage also explains that we exhibit the love of God in us, and His spirit in us, when we

keep His commandments. We keep His commandments when we love one another. We know that Jesus loves us because He was willing to die for us. He laid down His life for us. "We ought to lay down our lives" as well. Now, hopefully we don't have to actually die for someone else, but we can still live sacrificially. This means putting the needs and desires of other people ahead of our own. Perhaps we have choices in life between doing things that are comfortable for us and doing things that help and serve others. "Laying down our lives" means choosing the things that will benefit other people.

Loving others isn't always easy. We might not always feel the happy sappy emotions that we think come with love. But we also remember how God loved us first. He is the best example of love. Out of gratitude for that and recognition for all He does in our lives, how can we not love Him and love those He places in our lives? We show others His love by passing it on. So let's try to do that. Find ways that you can show care for other people. Live in a way that reflects the love of God, and bless others through it!

Prayer: (Invite the children to repeat each line)

Dear God,

Thank you for giving us Jesus.

Help us to pass on your love to others

And to be willing to serve them.

Thank you for your love

We love you, God!

In Jesus name, Amen!

Game & Activities Suggestions

(10 minutes)



This passage emphasizes the love God has for us, and ways that we can demonstrate that love to others. It's a great conversation to have for special "love-themed" holidays, or any day! Kick things off with a thought-provoking activity based on this theme. Some possible ideas include:

- Random acts of kindness: Brainstorm ways to share God's love with other people, perhaps even in a "secret" way. If possible, work as a group to carry out some of those acts for others.
- Words of affirmation: invite students to write notes or create cards that let others know they are loved and cared for.
- Love languages: Have older students take a quiz to identify their "love language" types and discuss how they can show care for others according to their "languages."
- Love in action charades: write down methods of demonstrating love to other people (an act of service, writing a letter, etc.) and have students take turns acting them out for others to guess.
- Would you rather... discuss sacrifices in terms of things that students would rather do. Sometimes treating others means doing things we'd rather not do, but Jesus sacrificed everything for us.
- Fruit of the spirit...look at similar Bible passages (1 Corinthians 13, John 15, etc.) and how we can love other people as God loves us.

Explain to students that this lesson, based on 1 John 3 (not to be confused with John 3, also great) describes how we can appreciate God's love and pass on His love to those around us.

Main Bible Teaching (15 minutes)



This passage is from the epistle of 1 John (not to be confused with the Gospel of John), in which the author speaks to people about how to show love for God and others. While it doesn't lend itself as much to acting out, it contains important principles to discuss. You might also have students take turns reading these verses, or read them out loud and pause to explain what is being said.

1 John 3:16-18 NIV *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. (17) If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? (18) Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.*

Jesus has demonstrated His love for us by laying down His life and sacrificing Himself for us. Because of that, we can rejoice and be thankful. We can also copy His example by living out His love with one another. It's not enough just to say that we love someone. We should act and live out that love by demonstration. We can show others how we care and really live our love for them by acting it out. If we love God, it should be evident in our lives.

Ask: Have you ever heard the phrase "actions speak louder than words"? What does that mean? How can we love with actions and in truth?

1 John 3:19-22 NIV *This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: (20) If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. (21) Dear friends, if our hearts*

do not condemn us, we have confidence before God (22) and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him.

Note: these verses are not telling us that we need good works to earn God's love. However, our actions and our commandment-following should be the evidence and fruit of the Lord's love within us. Deep in our hearts, we know if we are following His commands and living out what He wants. Loving God is not about us, but about recognizing how much He loves us.

Ask: What are the most important commands God gives us? (Love Him and love one another!)

1 John 3:23-24 NIV *And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. (24) The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.*

It's important to note here how the Spirit of God helps us. We are not left on our own to serve others and sacrifice. We do it through His guidance and support. We follow and love God by loving other people. When God lives within us, other people notice! He gave Himself for us and we can give ourselves to His people. We might not lay down our physical lives, but can sacrifice and love and serve those around us in special ways.

Ask: How can you show love to someone today? Who do you know that needs to see God's love?

It can sometimes become easy to grow complacent about God's love for us or our love for Him. This short but important passage reminds us that true love is a verb. We know that God loves us and gave Himself for us. In turn, He wants us to care for others that He

made. We should be able to demonstrate and live out His love in the ways that we act towards one another. We love because He first loved us!

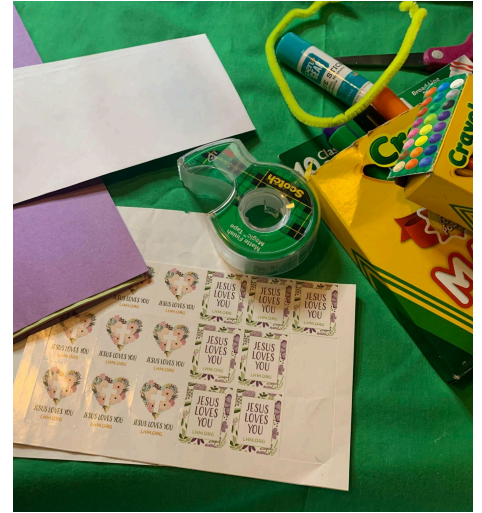
Craft Activities (15 minutes)

How can we demonstrate our love for God? By loving one another! These crafts remind children of the importance of loving others and provide methods of showing that love. A "Card of Coupons" provides special gifts for someone to feel extra loved. A "Heart Wreath" allows for ideas of ways that children can demonstrate God's love to others. Let's get crafty!

Craft one: "Card of Coupons"

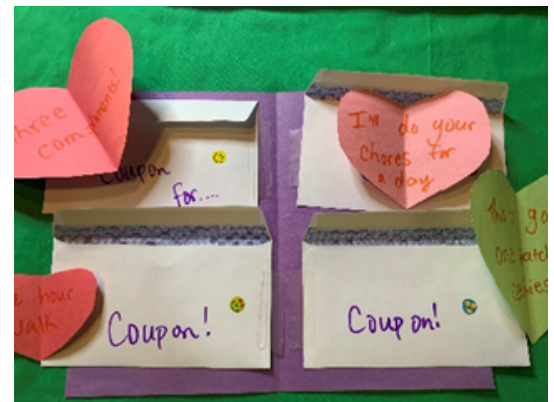
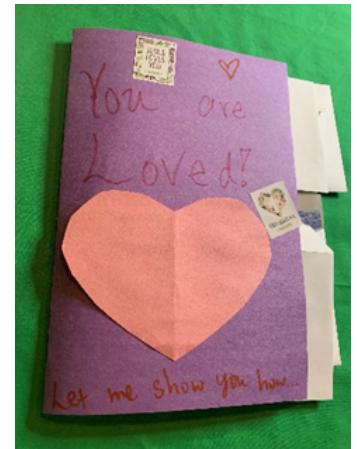
You will need:

- Construction paper or cardstock
- Markers or crayons
- Glue or tape
- Scissors
- Decorative supplies (scissors, glitter, etc.)
- String or pipe cleaner
- Envelopes (small ones work best)
- Note cards or small papers.



Procedure:

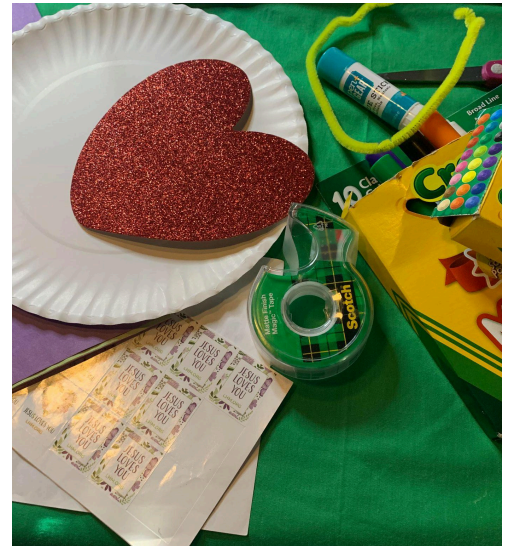
1. Create a card, decorating the outside with positive statements and loving notes.
2. Add verses and decorations as desired.
3. Inside the card, tape or glue envelopes.
4. On note cards or small papers, write things that would serve as "coupons": acts of service, time, compliments, etc.
5. Attach a hanger if desired. Provide the card to someone who needs a little love!



Craft Two: "Heart Wreath"

You will need:

- Paper plate
- Construction paper/cardstock
- Markers/crayons
- Tape or glue
- Scissors
- String or pipe cleaner
- Decorations



Procedure:

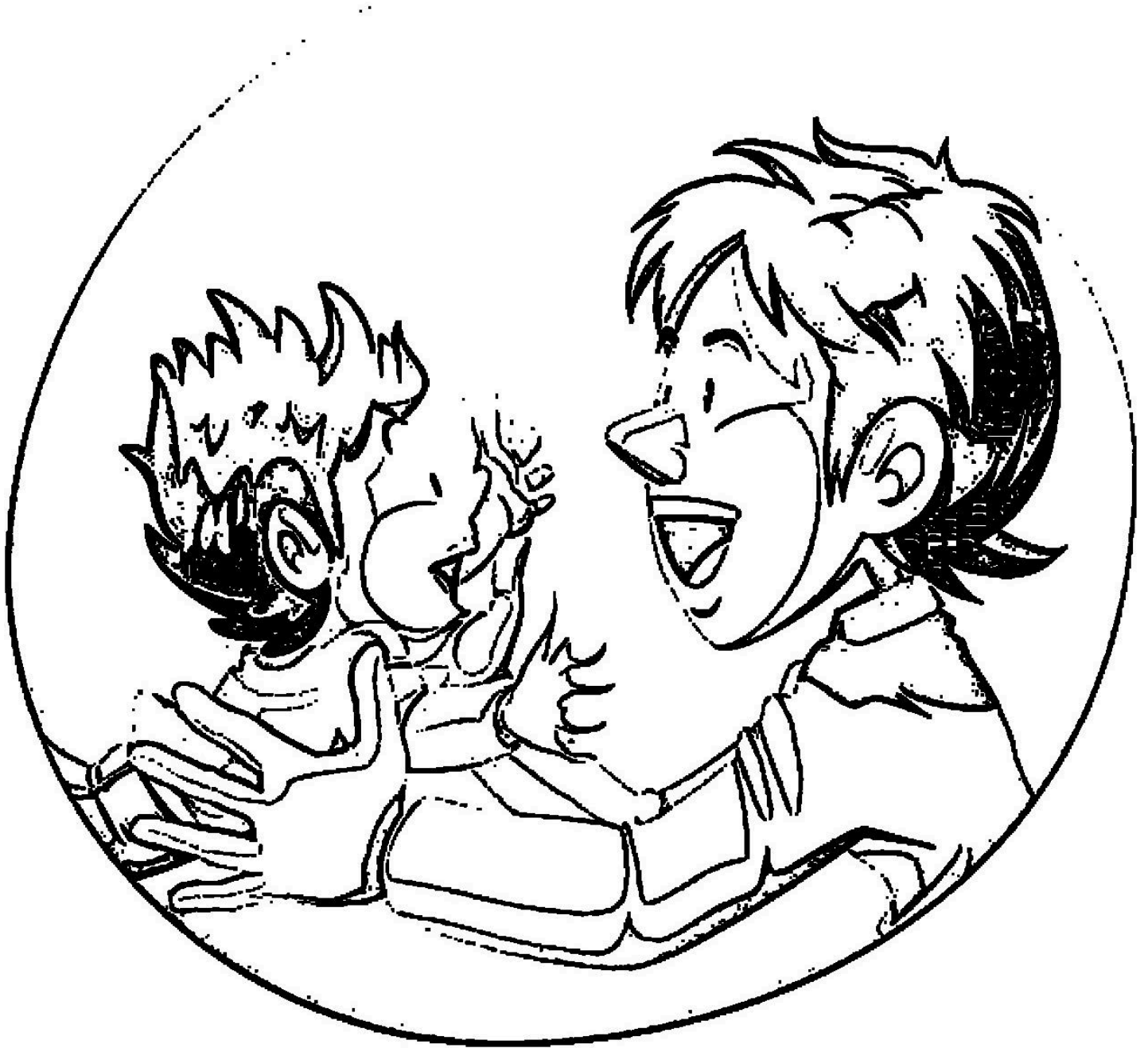
1. Cut several hearts out of paper or cardstock.
2. On the hearts, write ways to show others love and care.
3. Glue or tape the hearts to the paper plate.
4. Add verses and decorations as desired.
5. Attach a string if desired, to hang.



1 John 3:16 NIV

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.





Word Search Puzzle

Love - Brother - Heart - God - Children - Beloved

Commandment - Jesus - Christ - Spirit - Deed - Truth

L W M J L U A J A F P T
G C O M M A N D M E N T
B C B T X U J C T H K M
N H N S N I J H M Z C L
I R U O D U T R U T H B
Y Z D V Z E N I G P I E
A W P J E S U S F O L L
S V F E M Z V T D H D O
E G H W S W L O V E R V
C U U S K G F U Z A E E
K T D B R O T H E R N D
O N I U S P I R I T X S

Word Search Answers

L W M J L U A J A F P T
G C O M M A N D M E N T
B C B T X U J C T H K M
N H N S N I J H M Z C L
I R U O D U T R U T H B
Y Z D V Z E N I G P I E
A W P J E S U S F O L L
S V F E M Z V T D H D O
E G H W S W L O V E R V
C U U S K G F U Z A E E
K T D B R O T H E R N D
O N I U S P I R I T X S