



Reflecting Jesus - Experiencing God's Love

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Before you start:

1. Prayerfully read through the whole lesson at least twice
2. Gather all the materials you need for each section (see right)
3. Work with another team member and plan who will manage each section of the session

Leadership Personal Preparation:

Think about a time in your life when you felt especially loved by God in a direct way – i.e. not through the love and care of another person but perhaps through a scripture, an answer to prayer, or some other spiritual experience. What happened? Why did you feel so loved? What difference did it make to your life? If the Holy Spirit invites you to do so, be ready to tell the group about your experience at some time during the session. Otherwise, use your experience of God's love to inspire you as you lead out in today's session.

You will need:

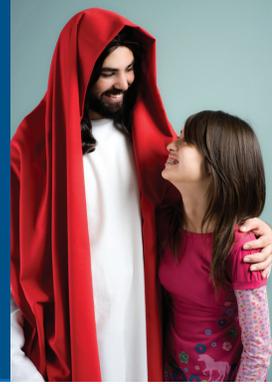
- One Box and one Ring-binder per person
- Paper and Marker pens for Icebreaker
- Items for Mission Possible Relay (see over)
- Copies of Word Search studies - enough for one study per group
- Copies of Combined Word Search Sheet – one per group to take home
- Pens
- Drinks and cups
- Family Discussion Cards for Family Focus Time – copy the sheet onto thin card and cut it apart. Provide one card per family
- Print out 'The Father's Love Letter'– one per person for Family Prayer Time. If you should need this in some other language for your group then you can download it in over 50 different languages on www.fathersloveletter.com
- 1 business envelope per person - plus a few extras of the Love Letter and envelopes for visitors
- One copy per person of 'The Father's Love Letter' Question Sheet
- CD player and CD of soft worship music
- If possible, a copy of 'The Father's Love Letter' on DVD. www.trinityvision.co.uk If you use a copy you will need a DVD player, projector and screen
- One set of Journal Pages per participant for Jesus and Me (JAM) session

By the end of the session, the group members will:

- Know that God is love and that everything that is loving comes from God's heart
- Feel the effect of God's love in their lives
- Respond by thanking God for his love



1 KID for Teens: Leader's Guide: Reflecting Jesus - Experiencing God's Love



Welcome and Prayer – 5 mins

Introduce the series and say how often the sessions will be and how long each session will last (75-90 minutes). Explain that there will be a variety of activities each week and perhaps some interesting surprises! Introduce the team if necessary.

Introduce the theme of today's session, say: 'today we will be exploring God's love. This is at the very heart of his relationship with us and our relationship with him. As Christians, we want to become like Jesus and we need to remember that Jesus, in turn, came to earth to show us God's love. Understanding God's love for us, and for those around us, is the very starting place for becoming more like him'.

Icebreaker – 7 mins

You will need:

1. Plain paper – enough for 1 sheet per person
2. Marker pens – one per person
3. A prepared example of the icebreaker using your own name. e.g. Jane Foster and God loves us joyfully and forgivingly. (A4 size)

Instruct participants to write their first and last names on the paper in fairly big letters. Then write one way you feel about God's love that begins with the first letter of your first name and another way you feel about God's love that begins with the first letter of your last name. Show them the one you have prepared about yourself.

Give the group time to write their names. Ask families to help each other think of descriptions of God's love that begin with their initials.

When the families are ready, say: 'Now you have one minute to go around the room and introduce yourself to as many people as possible, giving your full name and two ways in which God loves us.'

Feedback questions:

- What new or interesting responses to God's love did you encounter during the introductions?
- What was the most unusual feeling anyone wrote down?

What new or interesting responses to God's love did you encounter during these introductions?

Mission Possible – 15 mins

You will need:

1. A roll of thick plain wallpaper – the kind used to line walls before they are painted.
2. Thick coloured marker pens
3. Sticky tack for sticking the paper to the wall
4. A large, empty wall
5. Coloured tape or chalk etc to make an easy-to-clean line on the floor

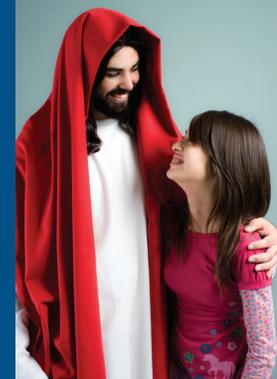
To do:

- Fix the wallpaper to the wall and draw large heart shapes (50 cm diameter) at equal distances along the paper (50 cm apart). One heart for each family attending the session. (Draw more hearts than you think you will need, just in case).
- Draw a line in chalk – or tape a line – along the floor a few metres in front of the 'heart' wall.





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Play Mission Possible – God's love relay – 7 mins

Ask each family to stand in a row behind the line on the floor. One person will stand with their toes behind the line and the rest of the family members will line up behind him or her.

Give the first person in each line a marker pen (felt pen). Invite them to use the pen to write their family's name underneath a heart and then return to their place to prepare for the start of the relay.

Say:

“ When I say ‘One..two..three.. Go!’ the first person in your line must run up to the heart on the wall and write one word to describe God's love. You can draw a quick picture if you prefer. Then run back to the end of your family line, giving the pen to the next runner. That person will then run up to the heart and add another description of God's love. Each person in your family must write something different. Keep going until I tell you to stop. You will have three minutes. ”

Start them off, allowing them to continue for three minutes. Then stop the relay.

Invite everyone to come forward and look at the hearts. Ask each family to read their descriptions to the rest of the group.

Feedback Questions:

- Ask them to count how many different descriptions they wrote on their heart
- Which family wrote the most?
- Which are the most frequent descriptions and which ones are more unusual?

Word Search – 25/35 mins

You will need:

1. Word Search Sheets
 2. Sheets of paper
- Divide the participants into three groups (a mix of adults and teens in each group) and give each group one of the three different Word Search Sheets to study and explore
 - As part of their exploration, ask them to create a mime, drama, picture or verbal report about an aspect of God's love
 - Let them know, clearly, how long they have to study and prepare

Coming Together:

- Call everyone back into one group
- Invite each small group to show or perform what they have created – watch the time on this
- When completed, ask people to find a partner. Invite them to share together one new insight they have had into God's love during the session today
- Give each participant a copy of the Combined Word Search Sheet to take home. These can be used during family worships or for TAG time.

Family Focus – 10/15 mins

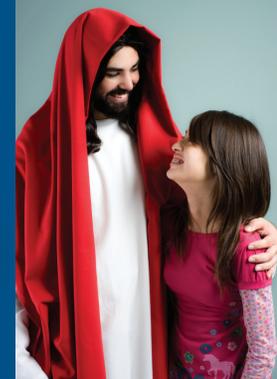
You will need:

1. Family Discussion Cards – one per family
- Invite families to get a drink and then gather in their family group
 - Give each family a Family Discussion Card and allow them time to discuss, as a family, the statements on the card. Encourage full participation and sharing – but don't force it, if someone is uncomfortable speaking out.





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Family Prayer Time – 15 mins

You will need:

- An envelope addressed to each participant containing a copy of 'The Father's Love Letter'.
- CD or soft worship music
- DVD with player, projector and screen – if using the DVD
- 'The Father's Love Letter' Question Sheet – one per person
- Personal ring-binders

Either:

- Allow them time to read their letter while a CD plays, or
- Show the DVD. As an alternative you could find someone to read the letter aloud in a warm and sensitive manner.

After it has been read or viewed, allow some quiet time for the words and ideas to sink in. Then invite the family groups to hold hands in a circle and pray one sentence each, thanking God for different aspects of His love.

Give out a copy of 'The Father's Love Letter' Question Sheet to each person and encourage participants to put it in their personal ring-binder and use it at home for TAG time.

Jesus and Me (JAM) session – 5 mins

You will need:

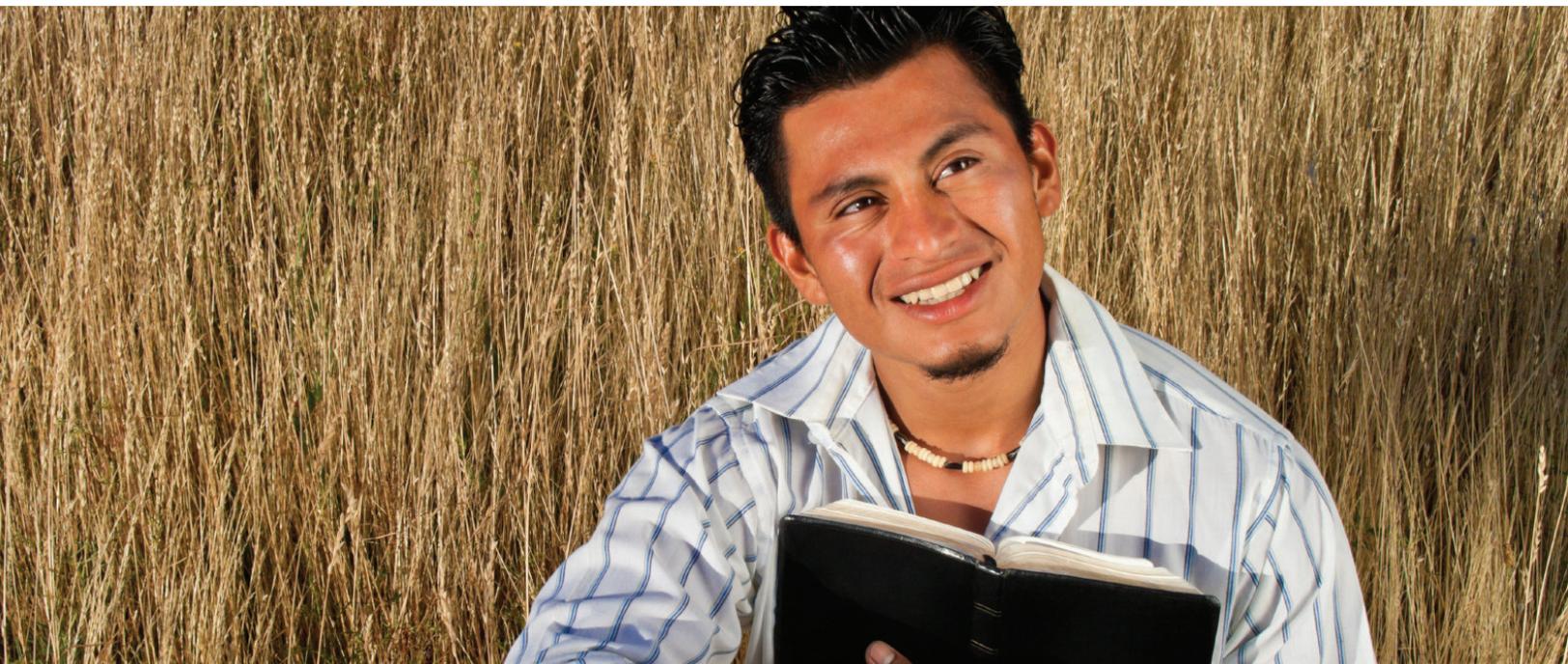
1. Jesus and Me Journal page for Session One – one per person
2. CD player and soft music
3. Personal ring-binders

- Give each participant a copy of the Journal page for Session One
- Allow 5 minutes for them to begin this activity
- Play some reflective music
- Encourage them to place the Journal pages in their personal ring-binder and to complete the questions and work on the ideas throughout the week – either as part of Family Worship or TAG time

Take-away Menu

Encourage each participant to take away the various handouts from the Session and keep them either in their boxes or their ring-binders.

Closing Prayer



My Child,

Psalm 139:1-3 You may not know me, but I know everything about you. I know when you sit down and when you rise up. I am familiar with all your ways.

Matt 10:29-31 Even the very hairs on your head are numbered.

Genesis 1:27 For you were made in my image.

Acts 17:28 In me you live and move and have your being. For you are my offspring.

Jeremiah 1:4-5 I knew you even before you were conceived.

Eph. 1:11-12 I chose you when I planned creation.

Psalm 139:15-16 You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book.

Psalm 71:6 I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live.

Psalm 139:13-14 You are fearfully, wonderfully made. I knit you together in your mother's womb.

Psalm 71:6 And brought you forth on the day you were born.

John 8:41-44 I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me.

1 John 4:16 I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love.

1 John 3:1 And it is my desire to lavish my love on you, simply because you're my child and I'm your Father.

Matthew 7:11 I offer you more than your earthly father ever could.

Matthew 5:48 For I am the perfect father.

James 1:17 Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand.

Matt 6:31-33 For I am your provider and I meet all your needs.

Jeremiah 29:11 My plan for your future has always been filled with hope.

Jeremiah 31:3 Because I love you with an everlasting love.

Psalm 139:17-18 My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore.

Zephaniah 3:17 And I rejoice over you with singing.

Jeremiah 32:40 I will never stop doing good to you.

Exodus 19:5 For you are my treasured possession.

Jeremiah 32:41 I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul.

Jeremiah 33:3 And I want to show you great and marvellous things.

Deut. 4:29 If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me.

Psalm 37:4 Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart.

Philippians 2:13 For it is I who gave you those desires.

Ephesians 3:20 I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine.

2 Thess. 2:16-17 For I am your greatest encourager.

2 Cor. 1:3-4 I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles.

Psalm 34:18 When you are broken-hearted, I am close to you.

Isaiah 40:11 As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart.

Rev. 21:3-4 One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes, and I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth.

John 17:23 I am your Father. I love you even as I love my son, Jesus.

John 17:26 For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed.

Hebrews 1:3 He is the exact representation of my being.

Romans 8:31 He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you.

2 Cor. 5:18-19 And to tell you that I am not counting your sins, Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled.

1 John 4:10 His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you.

Romans 8:31-32 I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love.

1 John 2:23 If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me.

Romans 8:38-39 And nothing will ever separate you from my love again.

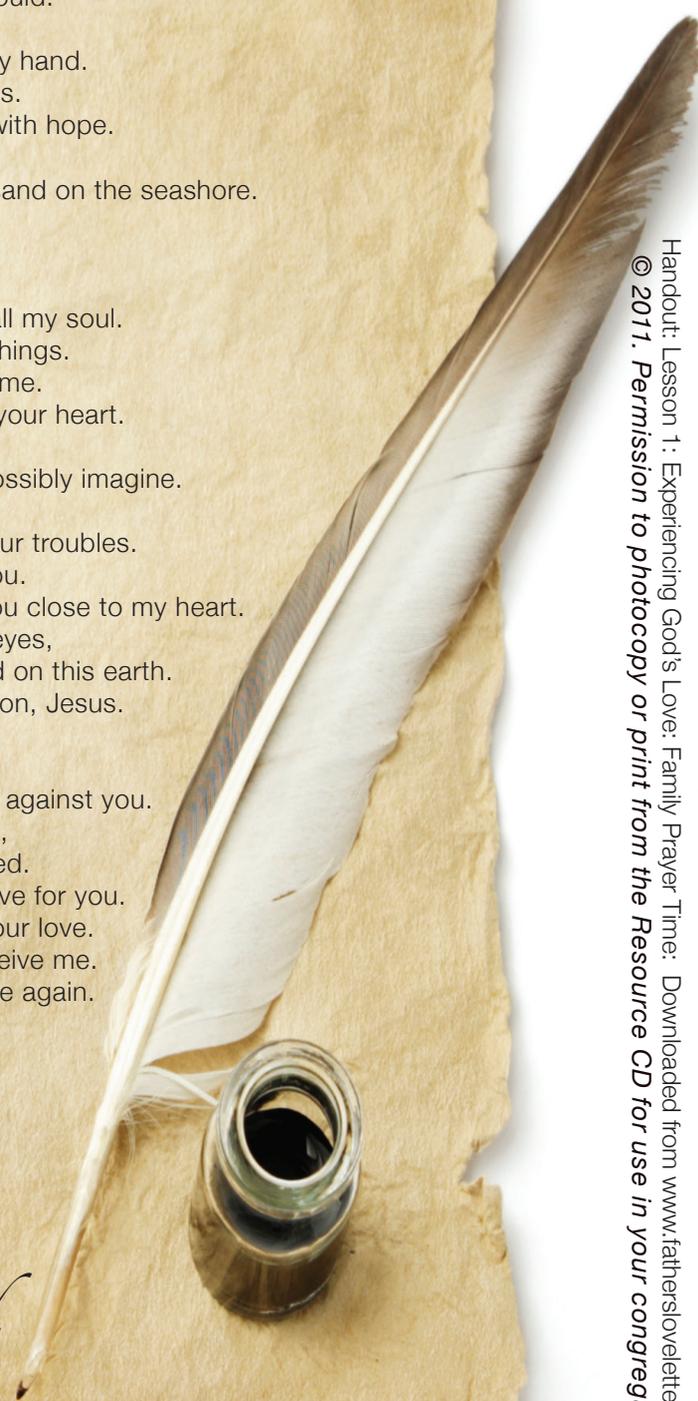
Luke 15:7 Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen.

Eph. 3:14-15 I have always been, and will always be Father.

John 1:12-13 My question is...Will you be my child?

Luke 15:11-12 I am waiting for you.

*Love, Your Dad -
 Almighty God*





Handout: Word Search: Experiencing God's Love - A



Read Psalm 103 together.

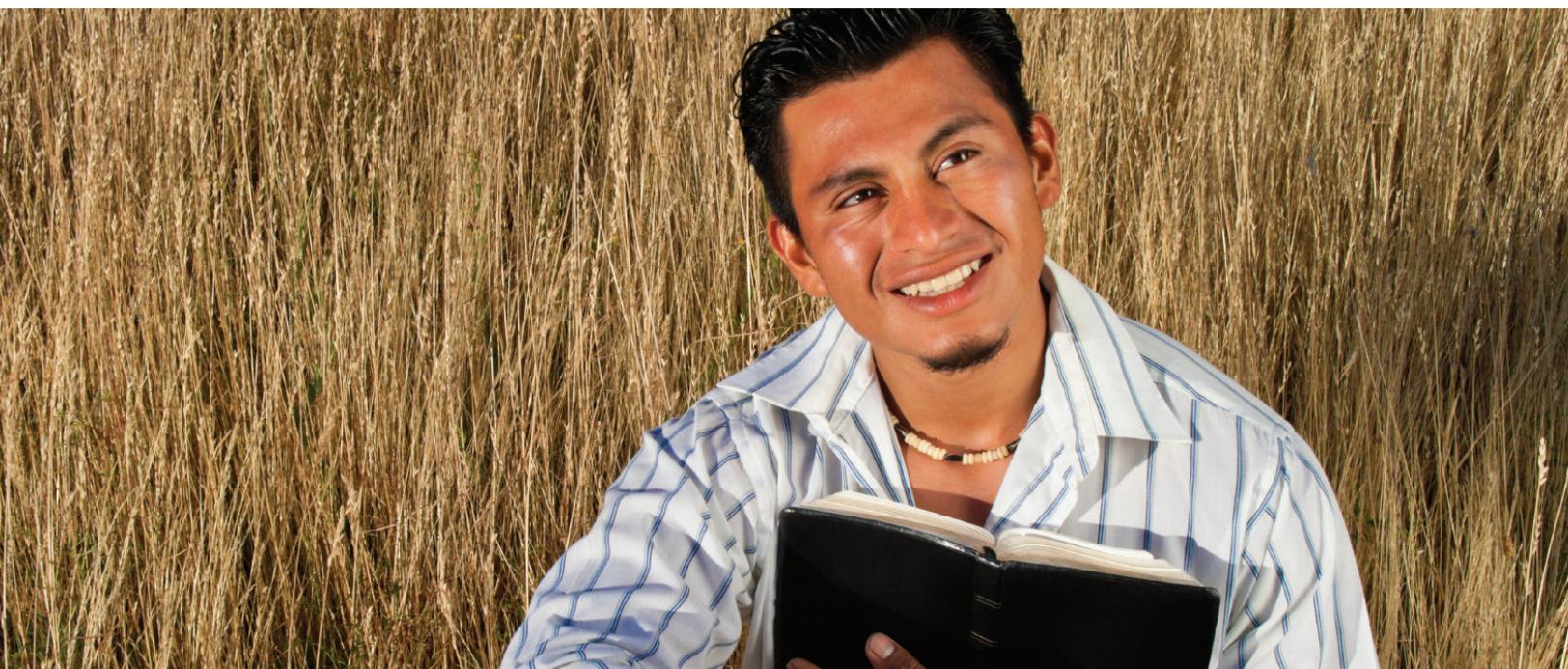
Take it in turns, going clockwise around the group, to read 4 verses each. If someone would rather listen than read they can indicate that by touching the Bible of the person to their left. That person will then continue the reading.

After you have read Psalm 103 as a group, search and find all the things God does to show his love for us that are described in this chapter. Together make a list of them using the blank paper in your ring-binder.

E.g. God forgives us, heals us, etc.

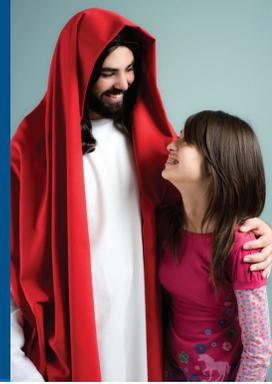
As a group, choose one of the verses or sentences in the chapter that describes how God loves us and develop a brief mime, sketch, drawing, or even a collection of objects that would help demonstrate this quality to the rest of the group.

Be prepared to perform or show this, at the end of the Word Search time.





Handout: Word Search: Experiencing God's Love - B



Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 together.

Take it in turns, going clockwise around the group, to read 1 verse each. If someone would rather listen than read, they can indicate that by touching the Bible of the person to their left. That person will then continue the reading.

After you have read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 as a group, continue working as a group and make a list of all the things God does to show his love for us, that are described in these verses. Use the spare paper in your ring-binder

E.g. God forgives us, is patient with us, etc.

As a group, choose one of the phrases in the chapter that describes how God loves us, and develop a brief mime, sketch, drawing, or even a collection of objects that would help demonstrate this quality to the rest of the group.

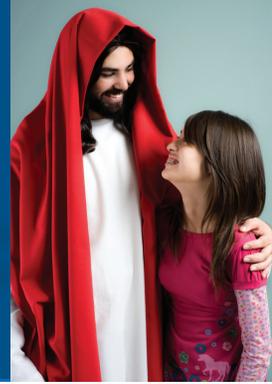
Be prepared to perform or show this at the end of the Word Search time.





Handout: Word Search:

Experiencing God's Love - C



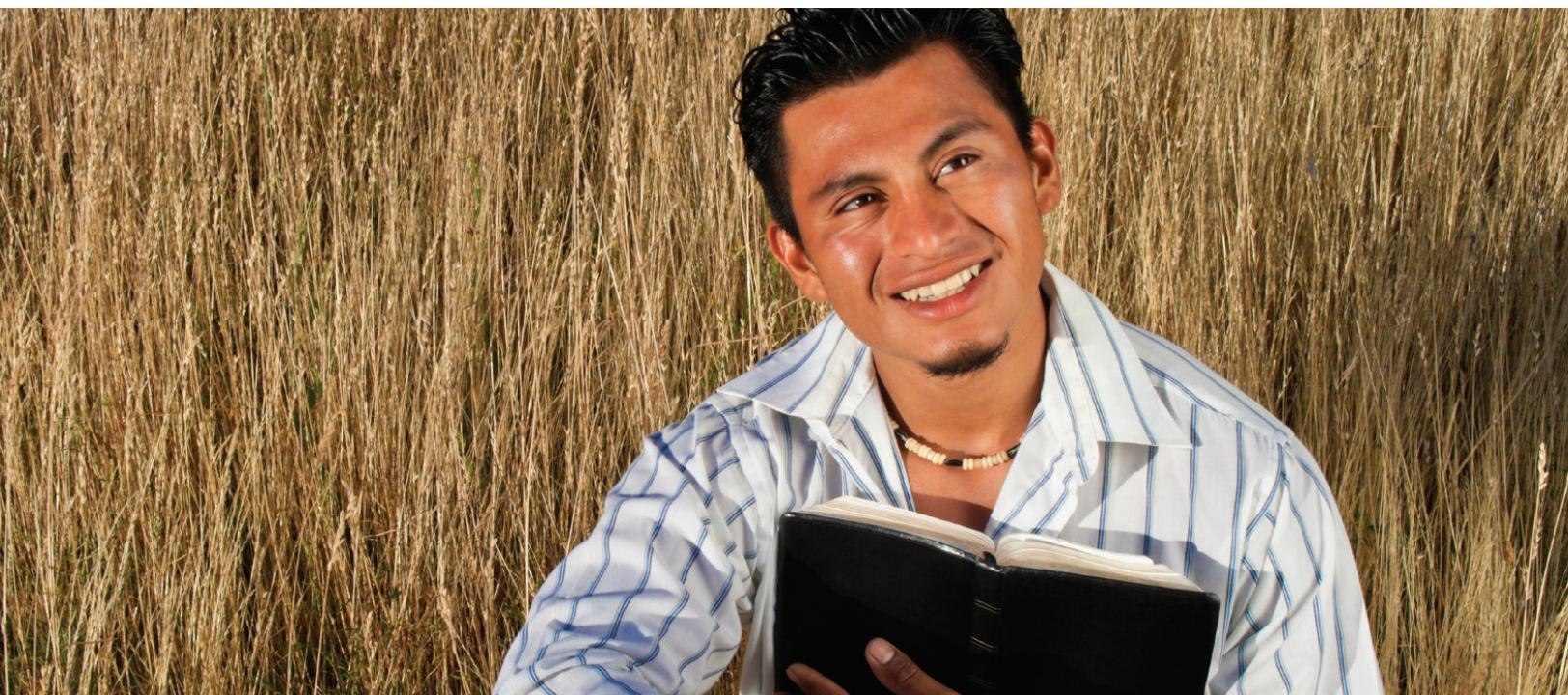
Read 1 John 4:7-12, 16-21 together.

Take it in turns, going clockwise around the group, to read a few verses each. If someone would rather listen than read, they can indicate that by touching the Bible of the person to their left. That person will then continue the reading.

After you have read the passage as a group, take two sheets of paper. On one sheet of paper write everything you can learn from these verses about God's love for us. On the other sheet write everything you can learn from the passage about how God's love for us affects our relationship with him and our relationships with those around us.

Then work together to create a brief mime, sketch, drawing, or even a collection of objects that would help to demonstrate one important theme from this passage.

Be prepared to perform or show what you have created to the rest of the group at the end of the Word Search time.





Handout: Summaries of Word Search Session 1: Experiencing God's Love



Word Search A

Read Psalm 103.

Search and find all the actions described in this chapter, that God does to show his love for us. Make a list of them.

E.g. God forgives us, heals us, etc.

Choose one of the verses or sentences in the chapter that describes how God loves you and develop a brief mime, sketch, drawing, or even a collection of objects that would help demonstrate this quality. Then share your ideas with your family.

Word Search B

Read I Corinthians 13:4-8.

Make a list of all the things God does to show his love for us that are described in these verses. Make a list of them together.

E.g. God forgives us, is patient with us, etc.

As a group, choose one of the phrases in the chapter that describes how God loves us and develop a brief mime, sketch, drawing, or even a collection of objects that would help demonstrate this quality to the rest of the group.

Word Search C

Read 1 John 4:7-12 and 16-21 together.

Take it in turns, going clockwise around the group, to read a few verses each. If someone would rather listen than read, they can indicate that by touching the Bible of the person to their left. That person will then continue the reading.

After you have read the passage as a group, take two sheets of paper. On one sheet of paper write everything you can learn from these verses about God's love for us. On the other sheet write everything you can learn from the passage about how God's love for us affects our relationship with him and our relationships with those around us.

Then work together to create a brief mime, sketch, drawing, or even a collection of objects that would help to demonstrate one important theme from this passage.



LESSON 1 -

FAMILY Discussion CARD

One occasion when I felt especially loved by God was when...

One aspect of God's love that I have especially experienced today has been...

Something new I learned about God today was...

One thing I would like to do to share God's love with others would be...

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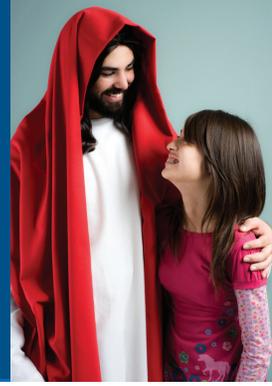
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Something new I learned about God today was...

One thing I would like to do to share God's love with others would be...



Handout: The Father's Love Letter: 1 Experiencing God's Love



Read through the 'Father's Love Letter' again.

Which sentence in the letter helps you to feel most loved by God today?

Write it here:

Look up the Bible verse on which that phrase or sentence is based and read it.

Write the verse here:

How does this idea from the 'Father's Love Letter' make you feel?

How do you want to respond to God after reading it?

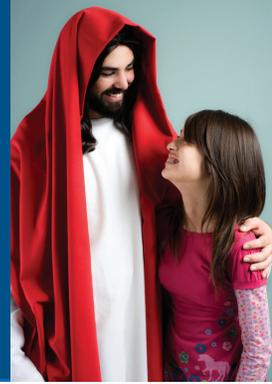
Other ideas:

- Write a thank you letter to God for all the ways he has loved you since before you were born.
- Use the best craft supplies you have to make a thank you card for God, or a card that expresses your love for him.
- If God came to your home today, what special thing would you do to show your love for him? Why not show him your love anyway by doing that special thing for another human being? Read Matthew 25:40



Handout: Jesus and Me - Journal Lesson 1

Experiencing God's Love



God's love in the Bible

Re-read the passages that were explored in the Word-Search this week:

- Psalm 103
- 1 Corinthians 13:4-8
- 1 John 4:7-12; 16-21

After looking at these passages again, what new ideas have you had about God's love for you?

Which one of the ways that God loves you, do you like the best?

Which one of the ways that God loves people, do you think is the most important?

Other ideas:

- Make a collection of pictures and objects that help you to understand God's love. Perhaps a stone could remind you that his love is forever, a cotton ball could remind you that his love is soft and gentle, a seed could remind you that his love will grow in your life and bear fruit, a candle could remind you that his love will light up your whole life...Keep the items in a gift bag, heart-shaped box, basket, jar, or even in a shadow box frame (deep picture frame that can hold objects and not just pictures).
- Make or draw something that expresses what you feel about God's love – a picture, PowerPoint presentation, sculpture, piece of music, song, etc.
- Explore the internet to look for images of God (not Jesus). Look for one that helps you to understand more about his love for you.

