

Primary Bible Teacher

March, April, May 2017

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SPRING QUARTER

For Teachers of Children Ages 6 Through 8

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The Love of God

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EDITORIALS

DEAR PRIMARY TEACHER:

The lessons this quarter concentrate on the love of God, which is actually the theme of the entire Bible. The Bible is the love story between God and His people, whom He created for Himself. God is the source of all love because He is love. He pours out His love upon humanity, who turned away from Him in sin and rebellion. When we were dead in our sins, God sent His Son to die for us.

Because God has loved us, we should love one another. Because God has been merciful in His love toward us, we should be merciful to others.

In Psalm 23, God's love is compared to the relationship between a good shepherd and his flock. God loves us and will take care of us. We can trust Him to do what is best for us and to supply everything we need.

God's ultimate act of love for the human race is shown in the sending of His Son to die for our sins. The sacrificial death of Christ on the cross was the only way for sinful humanity to be able to spend eternity with the holy God. Though the sacrifice was great, greater still was Christ's victory over sin, death, and the grave. His resurrection is a symbol of God's triumphant love. When we are in Christ, we are truly saved and in the hands of Jesus the Good Shepherd.

The last four lessons of the quarter deal with the adventures of Jonah. You will enjoy teaching these lessons, and the children will enjoy hearing them.

God first had to deal with Jonah's disobedience and rebellion. God could have sent someone else, but He chose to work with Jonah. God wanted Jonah to learn obedience, and he did—the hard way.

Even though Jonah had to be disciplined, God protected him and saved him for the work that He wanted him to do. While in the belly of the great fish, Jonah came to his senses, and his attitude changed. He was truly thankful that his life had been spared, and when he was spit out onto dry land, he went to Nineveh to preach their impending doom and destruction.

In the final two lessons, we see the reaction of the people of Nineveh to Jonah's proclamations of sudden destruction coming upon them in forty days. They completely believed Jonah right away and changed their lives accordingly. They did everything they could think of to show God that they were repentant. Even the king put on sackcloth and sat in ashes, crying out to God. Because of their quick and genuine response, God did not destroy them.

This left Jonah feeling left out in the cold. He had thought this might be the outcome when he was first told to go to Nineveh. Evidently Jonah wanted to see fire and brimstone fall upon the city, killing everyone in it. He was angry enough to want to die. When Jonah's gourd plant, which provided him with shade, died, he became angry again. God was trying to teach Jonah a lesson in having pity upon people, rather than on a mere plant.

The story of Jonah is a great example of the compassionate love of God. Anyone who turns to God and seeks Him will surely find Him. God is waiting with open, outstretched arms for all who will come to Him.

Your friend,

Wanda Tupps

Demonstrating Love

Since the lessons this quarter concern the love of God and loving one another, I have a few suggestions for ways to implement this in the lives of your students. First, you must help the students to understand that God's love pervades every area of our lives. The fact that we are alive, breathing, eating, sleeping, and carrying on our daily lives is evidence of the love of God for His people. Because of His great love for us, we should show forth His love to others.

One easy way to help your students show love for others is by spending some time in the classroom having the children make cards to send to the shut-ins and elderly of your church. There are several holiday times when a card would be appreciated, such as Thanksgiving, Easter, and Christmas, as well as other times throughout the year.

Is there a nursing home located in your area? Plan a field trip to this local nursing home. Have your church purchase some artificial flowers that the children can pass out to the residents. Present a short program of the songs the children are learning in Sunday school. Just seeing the delightful faces and bright smiles of the children will make the residents very happy and pleased that you took the time to visit them and share with them.

There are always things with which the elderly and shut-ins need help. This springtime, does anyone in your church family need help in getting his or her yard cleaned up and ready for the summer? This could be another field trip. It is easy to say we love one another, but how much better it is to *show* people that we love them! Sometimes that involves work, but it also gives great joy to know that we have helped someone who truly need-

ed it. Your students can ask their parents for names of elderly individuals who might need help in this or some other way.

People in need of food and clothing exist throughout society. Arrange a date for the children to bring in clothing from home that they would like to donate to an area thrift store. On another occasion, suggest that children bring in nonperishable food items to donate to a local food pantry. During these donation times, always emphasize that they should do these things in the name of Jesus—to show their love for Him and their love for others.

In the fall, many things can be done to help elderly people with their yards or other housework. Good fall craft ideas abound that children can make to give the elderly people in the community. Your students could likewise make crafts to give the younger children in the church to brighten their day. These are just a few thoughtful, fun things that can be done to show kindness and love for others.

The Christmas season provides numerous opportunities to help others and make the season more enjoyable for them. Many people are moved with compassion and love at this time of year and reach out to help others. Therefore, it may be wise to make an effort for your students to plan some special projects later, in January and February, when the elderly may feel more alone and forgotten.

As the children begin to think outside of themselves toward helping others, they must consider the things they do within their own families. How are they being responsible, kind, loving members of their own families? What are they doing to show their love of Jesus within their own family structures?

One thing you can do as a teacher is

to help the children think of things they can do within their own families every day or week. It might be good to show the children how to write a brief journal of the things they do in their own families. They can bring their journals to church each week and share with the other students the things they have done at home. When one shares what he has done there may be others who will not have thought of that particular deed and will want to do that same thing the next week in their own family.

Keep this process very simple at the primary level so that the kids do not feel overwhelmed. This should seem like a fun project and not an assigned chore in any way. It can be as simple as "I helped my mom with the dishes" or "I took out the trash every day." They might want to draw a picture of what they did instead of writing it down. The important thing is to share it with others in the class in order to give them some ideas that they might try.

Another thing that the children might do is to observe the good things that other people around them are doing. Did they see anyone doing a kind and helpful thing during the week? When you first ask the question, they might say that they did not see anyone performing a good deed. But you must tell them that if they are truly watching what others around them are doing, then they will see people doing good things every day. Have them watch closely for good deeds that they see happening during the week, and then have them share what they saw with their classmates. They will probably be surprised by all the good things they saw happening, which they had never paid attention to before.

Since the students are concentrating on showing their love for God by loving others, it will be important for you to extend your love for your students by doing special things for them.

Plan special events where they are the recipients of an enjoyable time together just for the fun of it. Every class will be different, so determine what your class at that time especially enjoys doing or eating.

What can you do that will show your students how much you love and care for them? Surprise them with some creative ideas. The activities do not have to be elaborate or costly. They just need to be an enjoyable, fun time together.

You do not have to limit yourself to a few get-togethers during the year to show your students how much you love them. There can be small surprises on random Sunday mornings, such as homemade (or store-bought for the baking challenged) cookies or some other small treat. Anything that is brought in with love will be enjoyed and appreciated.

All these ideas will help the children demonstrate the love they have for God and others. However, the most important thing they can learn to do is to obey God in every situation. They need to learn how important it is for their earthly lives to be lived the way God has instructed in the Bible. They need to follow the commandments God has given so that they can fulfill His purposes for their lives. Everyone will have a much happier and joyful life by being obedient to God. As the hymn says, "Trust and obey, for there's no other way/ To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey" (Sammis, "Trust and Obey"). Those truly are words to live by.

If your students learn early in life to love God with all their hearts and souls and minds, they will want to stay away from evil and do what is right. If they learn to love others as they love themselves, they will fill their lives with much kindness and helpfulness for others. Their lives will be a demonstration of love!



Jesus showed how much God loves us.

God Is Love

LESSON: I John 4:7-19

GOLDEN TEXT—"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (I John 4:11).

Scripture Lesson Text

I JOHN 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spir'it.

14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

15 Whosoever shall confess that Je'sus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

NOTES ON THE LESSON

This first lesson is taken from the book of I John. If you look at the beginnings of each of the three epistles of John, you will notice that the latter two letters begin with salutations from John (the Elder) to those who were to receive the epistles sent by him. This difference might indicate that I John is not in the truest sense meant for a specific group of Christians but is rather a document that was intended for all Christians everywhere. It reaffirms the fact that John knew what he was talking about because he was an eyewitness to the life and ministry of the Lord.

In this first epistle, John stressed the importance of love in the life of a Christian, the love of God for man, the love of man for God, and the love of Christians for one another. Since John did emphasize the importance of love so much, one has to wonder if many of the same unloving problems we find among Christians in churches today were likewise found among Christians in John's day.

John wrote this epistle as an older man who had lived a long life—surviving for longer than the other apostles of the Lord—and had seen the church grow and develop. He had also lived to see false teachers bring erroneous doctrine into the church, which brought confusion and unrest to the body of Christ. No one was better able to set the record straight, so to speak, than an apostle who had lived through it all from the beginning. John brought an authority to his words that the false teachers did not have.

Superintended by the Holy Spirit, John's message is that love is to be stressed in every facet of life because love is at the very essence and being of God. Some people can easily see the love of God in the New Testament but fail to see it in the Old Testament.

However, if one looks closely, one can see that the overriding theme of the whole Bible is the love of God for His people. God is love. He always has been and always will be.

THE OBJECT IN VIEW:

Because God is love and loves us so much, we should love one another.

TRUTHS TO STRESS:

1. God loves us.
2. God sent His Son, Jesus, to be the Saviour of the world.
3. As God's children, we should all love one another.

PLANNING VISUAL AIDS

For Beginning the Lesson, you will need a picture of a college-age young woman and a picture of a young man about the same age.

For Telling the Lesson, you will need a picture of John as an older man, a large red heart with the word "Love" written on it, a picture of Jesus on the cross, a large white heart with the words "Holy Spirit" written on it, a picture of the risen Jesus, and a sheet of paper with the word "Fear" written on it.

For Helping to Remember, cut out a large white heart and two smaller red hearts for each student. Each student will also need crayons, markers, and glue.

BEGINNING THE LESSON

When the doorbell rang, Katy ran to open the door. (Show picture of young man.) She was surprised to see Larry.