

LOVE (LARGE GROUP)

Lesson 1: Love

Objective: Students will define love biblically and observe demonstrations of sacrificial love from the Bible.



SCRIPTURE: Luke 5:17-26

GAME/ACTIVITY:

Love songs Sing-Off

Using a list of words related to love, have students in groups compete with singing songs with those words in them. Have them use a hairbrush or an actual microphone to sing into. You could make it more competitive by moving the hairbrush/mic around the room and the first group member to reach it gets to sing the song and earn the point.

EX: If the word is love, then group 1 sings "I will always love you". Group 2 would sing "What is love? Baby, don't hurt me." Group 1 would sing a song with the word love in response. If group 1 runs out of songs to sing, then the other group would receive the point.

Word list:

*love *baby *heart *honey *care *feel(ing) *break *lady *together *crazy *one *girl *need

If these words don't inspire, you can google a list of words for the song game. Just make them love related.

It is really a remix of the game of Encore. Check out this Youtube video to get the idea.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PPo6bAiPBuc>

Candy Heart Games <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gN7128Byh8c>

You will need valentine candy hearts, plastic spoons, and plastic knives. If you can get the valentine Oreo's, play that game as well.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION:

Love is a word that I know most of us believe that we have a handle of in our lives. You love your mom, you love your dog, and you love pizza. Wait, do you love your pizza the way you love your mom? I hope not. It seems that there are different shades of love when we say we love something or someone. I think you would agree that saying you love someone is different in so many ways than saying you love something. As a matter of fact, I believe the word is overused and we lose its true meaning. There is a story in the Bible that I think will help us to get back to the true meaning of the word love.

Before we begin, in your head, I want you to define the word love. What does it mean? How do you know when someone loves you? What are some signs or evidence that love is present in that moment? I'll give you a moment. Maybe think about someone who you know loves you. You don't have to say it out loud. If you have to see it, I can get you a pen and some paper or you can write it in a text on your phone. Ok, everyone ready? Now, after I am done, in about 10 minutes, I want you to revisit your definition. I will remind you when that time comes.

Read Luke 5:17-26

Jesus is teaching. Everyone is showing up because no one teaches like Jesus. People are often astounded at how He teaches so well. This is not your geometry teacher we are talking about. There was something different about Jesus. Surprise, surprise, He speaks with authority. He knows the word of God because He is God. The teachers of the law and Pharisees never taught like they wrote the words. When teaching, they used some other teacher who said something that they were going to explain.

So I want you to visualize it in your mind. Think of a concert of your favorite artist. Crowded. Packed. No room to move because everyone wants to see and hear. People are pushing and jostling to get closer. Some people are a little too close; you can smell them. This is what it was like. People crowded into a small place like sardines.

While Jesus was teaching, the Bible tells us that there was a paralyzed guy who had some friends. These friends were not acquaintances or just neighbors. These friends were like family; ride or die kind of friends. How do I know this? Listen to what they were willing to do to get their non-walking friend to Jesus. They were carrying this guy. Now most full grown men weigh around 180 pounds or more. He is dead weight. He can't help in any way; paralyzed; helpless but not hopeless. He has friends. These friends have probably carried him some long distance. It was not a carry across the village. Remember people from villages all around the area are crowded in to hear Jesus. So, safe to say, a long way. The friends are probably tired, hot, and hoping they get a spot to see Jesus. Now, imagine, carrying 180 pounds between two or three people for a mile or more in the middle of a hot day. People are walking past you and leaving you in their dust. Frustration is probably creeping up on these guys because they get there last. No room. No space for a paralyzed man on a stretcher to get to Jesus.

"Sorry, Josef, we can't get you to Jesus. I guess we will head back to the village and try again some other time." None of the friends said this. I might have. They wanted their paralyzed friend to get to Jesus. The other friends knew what Jesus could do. They stopped at nothing but to achieve their aim; get our friend in front of Jesus was THE goal.. They loved their friend. They overcame every obstacle in their path. A crowded house full of people was just another hurdle to leap over.

One of them came up with the idea of climbing on the roof. Houses in Bible times had easy access to the roof of the home via a stairway. Once there, unlike houses of today, you could dig through a roof. That is exactly what they did. Each friend moved each tile and the dirt/mortar out of the way so that their friend could be with Jesus. They tied rope to the stretcher and lowered him down while Jesus was teaching. Now, I don't know about you, but if I am the paralyzed guy. I am worried. "Guys, you sure this is a good idea? Can we come up with a safer plan. I'm paralyzed. I don't want to become a quadraplegic! Guys?" Down he went, through the roof. Slowly, gently lowered in front of Jesus. I want you to hear what Jesus said as He looked up through the newly formed hole in the roof seeing smiling, sweating, friends peering down. "And when he saw THEIR faith, He said, "*Man, your sins are forgiven you.*" Did you hear that? When Jesus saw the faith of the friends, the paralyzed man benefitted. These friends KNEW that their paralyzed friend needed to be in front of Jesus. The paralyzed man's life would no longer be the same once they accomplished the goal they set out to meet earlier that day. Jesus healed this guy and changed his heart. He got a two for one deal all because his friends LOVED him.

These friends demonstrated their love in a real, life-changing way. They loooooovveedd their friend. They did not let anything stop them from getting their friend to Jesus. They did not give up. They kept at it, ignoring the heat of the day, ignoring the throng of people, ignoring the tiles in the roof. They. Did. Not. Stop. That is love. *Love is unstoppable. Love is overcoming obstacles. The*



friends were committed to this paralyzed man. They cared for him and carried him. They loved him and they lowered him. They suffered for him and served him. They gave up time, energy and effort all for this guy who truly was helpless and hopeless. In those times, paralytic people were beggars and a burden to their families. This guy had friends that WERE family. He was loved and not an unwanted weight around their necks.

Those friends came to Jesus with a helpless, hurt, and hopeless man who probably was getting comfortable with the idea that this would be his lot in life. Nothing would be changed. Paralyzed. But because of the determined action of his friends, his life completely changed. "And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God" He was *carried* to Jesus and *walked* back home. He was *lost* before coming to Jesus and now he *was found*. That truth has not changed.

Love is a determined action, an intentional choice, that stops at nothing to bring you the best. Let me say that again. Love is a determined action, an intentional choice, that stops at nothing to bring you the best.

Now, look at your definition that you wrote or that you thought about. How does your definition of love fit what you just heard? Was it close? See, all too often, we think love is a feeling of butterflies in our stomach and this fuzzy feeling that makes all warm and tingly all over. What you should learn from the story is that love is an action; a choice. Those friends did so much for their friend! Why? They wanted the best for him despite the discomfort that they experienced. What was the best thing for the paralyzed man in that moment. Jesus.

How about you? You may be able to walk but you may be just as paralyzed. Unable to move. Trapped. Frozen. Because of fear or guilt or shame. Jesus is in the business of changing hearts and lives. Maybe you came today because friends invited you. You thought you came for the fun or the free food or that cute guy/girl. Whatever the reason, Jesus wants to free you from whatever has you paralyzed. Sin traps us and leaves us unable to move away from harmful habits, toxic situations, and hurtful choices. Sin is choosing to live life on our own terms, without God, which leads to paralysis. Jesus wants to heal your heart and forgive you because he loves you. Love is a determined action, an intentional choice, that stops at nothing to bring you the best. Jesus loves you. He stopped at nothing to bring you the best, which is Himself. He paid for those poor choices and harmful habits on a cross 2000 years ago. Nothing can separate you from the love of God. Romans 8:38 "*For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, not anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" Nothing will stand in Jesus' way because He wants the best for you. Not a cross nor a grave. He loves you and asks that you trust in Him. That is how you begin to free yourself from the paralysis of fear, failure, and sin. Jesus paid it all. For you.

Pray

