3 LESSON PLANS FOR
LOVE REACHES OUT: Love is.....
ART AND WRITING COMPETITION 2015

It is our hope and prayer that through the Love Reaches Out art and writing competition children will engage with the concept of God reaching out to us, and us reaching out to others in love. Over the years we have seen some fantastic entries and have been inspired by the thought and energy children have poured into their work. One thing that has become clear is that children who have been given space and time to reflect upon the topic, produce very thoughtful and creative outcomes. In a desire to help you inspire the young people in your ministry, we have developed three Love Reaches Out children’s lessons to help churches (and church schools) promote conversations and activities to get their children thinking about how much God loves us, and how we are called to love others in response.

The following lessons can be used during the church’s Sunday children’s ministry programme, a school holiday programme, kids club or church school RE (religious education), art or English classroom.

All of the lessons promote this year’s “LOVE REACHES OUT” ART AND WRITING COMPETITION theme: Love is...

**Week One:**

**Theme: LOVE REACHES OUT: Love is....**

**Leaders:**

**Set up:**

😊 Arrive early or the day before to set up your “sacred space”.
😊 Turn on lights to create warm atmosphere and lay out room as you need it.
😊 Have a mat, cushions or carpet squares for children to sit on.
😊 If you are doing crafts set up the tables.
😊 Prepare children’s altar table (at front or in the middle of your circle) with props you need e.g. globe (for prayers for the world), candle, matches, prayer wheel, prayer stones etc.
😊 Make sure the room is tidy, clean and notice boards are looking good.
😊 Set up a welcome table at the front door of the church to welcome children by name (with rolls, stickers, prize box, enrolment forms, welcome packs etc (See “A Kids Friendly Welcome” resource).
Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13 (see addendum)

In church:
Consider sharing the children’s scripture in church so everyone gets to hear it. (See the Message version attached or use your favourite version) You could place some of the statements about love on numbered cards and hand them out to kids and adults in the congregation to call out their statement in sequence as part of the reading e.g.

- Love never gives up
- Love cares more for others than for self
- Love doesn’t want what it doesn’t have
- Love doesn’t strut
- Love doesn’t have a swelled head etc.
- Love…..etc.

Be creative and participatory.

The children’s programme:

Lesson Objectives:
- To remind children what the scriptures have to say about love
- To remind them how much God loves us and how He wants us to love others too
- To inspire them to explore how they can be active recipients and/or agents of God’s love through art and writing

Gathering rituals:

Welcome:

Ideas for welcoming children
😊 Ask if any child is new and if so buddy them with a regular attendee and welcome them
😊 If you don’t know all the children by name you might like to play a “getting to know you game” (see ideas in the Kids Friendly resource PLANNING A KIDS FRIENDLY “SUNDAY SCHOOL”) ⏩
😊 Check if they received a welcome pack and if not give one to them
😊 Introduce leaders
😊 Ask if anyone has had birthday the week before, sing happy birthday and present card and/or wee gift
😊 Notices – announce forthcoming children’s events, find out who would like to help with worship and how (to pass on to the minister).

Opening ritual:

Idea: Lighting the Christ Candle
Kids love rhythm and routine, so create routines for your time with the children that hold, regardless of who is leading. An opening ritual can be very centring. Invite a child to light the Christ candle that is placed in the middle of your circle. After the candle has been lit ask the children why we call Jesus the light of the world explaining that we light the Christ candle to remind us that Jesus is with us always guiding our living and loving. He lights our way.

Prayers:
Prayer is an important faith practise that we should practice every week together as we form disciples for Christ. See prayer ideas in our resources ‘PLANNING A KIDS FRIENDLY “SUNDAY SCHOOL” and ‘PRAYING WITH CHILDREN’. There are heaps of creative ways to prayer with children. Remind them when we pray we are talking to God. Use the prayer wheel, globe, prayer ball, prayer musical game etc.
Singing:
If your kids like to sing then choose songs that speak of love eg the “Magic Penny” song https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IclFQj4l3F0
You might like to make this your theme song for the series of LOVE IS….lessons.

Introducing and reinforcing the theme:
Read “Love is” by Anderson Halperin. Show the images printed in colour or on ppt (you may like to read it together or take turns) (LOVE IS... is based on 1 Corinthians 13 (King James version) and has lovely images to inspire children to draw their own illustrations to show WHAT LOVE MEANS TO THEM”. Purchase from http://www.fishpond.co.nz/Books/Love-Anderson-Halperin-Edited-by-Anderson-Halperin/9780689866753

- If your group is not yet reading, make it interesting for them. Ask them to make up actions as you read. What does it look like if “Love is patient?”
- If your group knows how to read, alternate lines amongst the group, so that each line has a different voice. Experiment in different ways to read it aloud.
- Children (in groups or pairs) make a list of the “do’s” and “don’ts.” Love is: Patient, kind, rejoices in truth, etc. ... Love does not: envy, boast, act proud, etc...

Other questions to generate discussion:
- What does it mean to say “Love is patient?”
- What might that look like? How can you show that?

Talk with a partner (or the group) about when someone showed you love. How did it feel? Or when you showed someone love? What happened? (Allow 2-5 minutes. Be sure to let them know when half the time is up so BOTH speakers (if talking in pairs) get a chance to talk.)
**Activity:**

**For your artists:**
Challenge your kids to create their own version of 1 Corinthians 13. Here are some examples for your artists:

See our [Pinterest page](https://www.pinterest.com/KidsFriendlyNZ/love-reaches-out-ideas/) for more ideas!

**For your writers:**
Encourage them to paraphrase the verse. Their interpretation may take the form of a poem, rap, song, etc. If they put it to music, be sure to send us a video or at least an audio version so we can hear it! [jill@kidsfriendly.org.nz](mailto:jill@kidsfriendly.org.nz)
Week 2:

Theme: LOVE REACHES OUT: Love in action....

Leaders: __________________________________________

Set up: (as per week 1)

Scripture: 1Peter 4:8-11

8Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins. 9Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. 10Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. 11If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

In church:

Do: As you walk to the front of the church, drop something that you are carrying (a stack of papers makes a great impact). Did anyone step in to help you? If no one does, make a big show of the difficulty in picking up your items. (“Oh no! I'll never get these picked up in time. I’m so embarrassed! Why did that have to happen in front of everyone?”) If any of the children do stop to help you, be sure to mention it afterward. (“Thank you, Sarah. I felt so loved when you did that. Mark, I wasn’t nearly so embarrassed when you were there helping me pick up my stack of papers.”)

Ask: Did you know that Love can be shown as an action? Watch this video very carefully. I wonder how many acts of love you can see...

Show this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PT-HBI2TVtI (cut it if you think it’s too long)

- How did the kids and adults in the video influence the behaviour of other people?
- Do you think this can happen in real life?
- What can you do as an act of love for someone?

The children’s programme:

Lesson Objectives

- To remind children what the scriptures have to say about love
- To remind them how much God loves us and how we wants us to love others too
- To inspire them to explore how they can be active recipients and/or agents of God’s love through art and writing
- To highlight the idea that love can be shown in the form of an action.

Gathering rituals:

See week 1 for ideas for:

Welcome:

Opening ritual:
Prayers:

Prayer is an important faith practise that we should exercise every week together as we form disciples for Christ. See prayer ideas in our resources ‘PLANNING A KIDS FRIENDLY “SUNDAY SCHOOL” and ‘PRAYING WITH CHILDREN’. There are heaps of creative ways to prayer with children. Remind them when we pray we are talking to God. Use the prayer wheel, globe, prayer ball, prayer musical game etc. See Addendum 2 for using 1 Corinthians 13 as a springboard for prayer.

Singing:

If your kids like to sing then choose songs that speak of love eg the “Magic Penny” song https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IclFQj4l3F0
You might like to make this your theme song for the series of LOVE IS….lessons.

Introducing and reinforcing the theme:

Share the story Dogger by Shirley Hughes using the graphics provided or create a ppt of it. You can purchase Dogger, By Shirley Hughes from http://www.fishpond.co.nz/Books/Dogger-Shirley-Hughes/9781862308053

For a PowerPoint of this book contact jill@kidsfriendly.org.nz

Discussion starters:

- How can you tell Dave really loves Dogger?
- How do you show you love the people in your family? Do you have a special loved one or thing like Dogger?
- How would you feel if you lost it?
- Do you think Dave’s sister wanted to give up her prize? Why do you think she did it? How did Dave feel afterward?
- Has anyone ever shown that kind of love for you? Have you ever shown that kind of love for someone else?

Activity:

- Challenge your kids to think about how they could show love or inspire others to show love.
- Provide materials for children to follow up on their inspirational ideas in art or writing as an entry in the Love Reaches Out competition.
- Perhaps they might like to create a journal in which they can write down their “Kindness Experiments.”
Kaila’s Super Duper Tips for Creating Great Entries:

As you and the children work out the way in which you want to express your message, help them to decide whether or not they want to write or create an artistic expression—or perhaps a mixture of both.

WRITTEN ENTRIES: If they want to write, they may use poetry, narrative, fiction or essay. Of course age and development will make a difference, but try not to assume that “littlies” cannot write. Encourage creative spelling in the initial phase of writing. Allow them to use picture words or narrate their story so you can put it into words (“book spelling”) for them. (PLEASE just be sure you are true to THEIR ideas.)

Here are some tips for making the environment friendly to writing:
- Offer lined and unlined paper
- Have clipboards available as well as tables so children may find a spot for inspiration and park there
- Offer many different coloured pens and pencils. Paper can also be multi-coloured
- Some children like the feeling of writing on a notepad or a journal
- Give them space and time to create something unique to them

ART ENTRIES: For art you’ll need to decide if you’re doing a group project or individual projects. Think about what they might need as well as what is attainable for the amount of adult supervision you have. Lots of painting might not be a great idea if you are short-staffed. (Children who are beyond the age requirements may like to assist you!) That said, be sure that good materials (pastels, pens, crayons, paints, inks, good paper, card to “frame” creations) are in abundance (as much as possible) and that children have free access to them. With individual projects, children may need help brainstorming, but try to avoid being too prescriptive. Encourage children to find a title and description for their artwork as judges are influenced by that.

As the judges look at the artwork presented, their eyes are naturally drawn toward art that is presented in a polished and lovely way. Children’s originality should be supported by a backdrop of some sort if it’s published on paper. Black card or construction paper that is slightly larger than your original paper works very nicely. Use the highest quality materials available to you. If your budget won’t allow for new items, ask your church or local community to donate materials. This boosts the children’s sense of importance for the project and it allows for a beautiful finished product. And most importantly HAVE FUN!
Week Three:

Theme: LOVE REACHES OUT: Love is...all around!

Leaders: __________________________________________

Set up:

😊 Arrive early or the day before to set up your “sacred space”.
😊 Turn on lights to create warm atmosphere and lay out room as you need it.
😊 Have a mat, cushions or carpet squares for children to sit on.
😊 If you are doing crafts set up the tables.
😊 Prepare children’s altar table (at front or in the middle of your circle) with props you need eg globe (for prayers for the world), candle, matches, prayer wheel, prayer stones etc.
😊 Make sure the room is tidy, clean and notice boards are looking good.
😊 Set up a welcome table at the front door of the church to welcome children by name (with rolls, stickers, prize box, enrolment forms, welcome packs etc (See “A Kids Friendly Welcome” resource).

Scripture: Matthew 25:31-40 New International Version (NIV)

31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

34 “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

37 ”Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

40 “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

In church:

Now, you are a storyteller. This is a fascinating story for children and adults alike. If you are excited about the story, then there is no need for extra object lessons and funny jokes. Tell the story.

If you like, you can recruit others to act out the story while you narrate it. You don’t actually need costumes because the more connected it is to “real life” the better the story will be.

You will need:

- People who need something (3) (Hunger/thirst; Stranger/Clothing; Sick/Prison)
- People who are helping (3)
- One person sitting on a chair that is dressed up to look like a throne
- Props (food/water, clothing, washcloth for a forehead or medicine)

This can be done with more or less people, but if actors have fewer things to do in the short space it takes to tell the story, it will make the message clearer. Alternatively, you could use illustrative pictures on a powerpoint. However, with expression and imagination, this story can be told on its own.
The Message:

Narrator: (in red)
One day, Jesus was telling his friends and students about what life looks like when someone is really truly following Him and living the way God wants them to. He told them this story: When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. (Who is the Son of Man? Jesus. You see, before he went back to heaven to be with God, Jesus promised us He would come back to earth one day.)

Everyone will be gathered before Him and He will be looking for those who have been faithful to him. To them he will say:

"...take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

[Actors will act out these things as they are read by the narrator. Alternatively you can give each actor their lines before hand to read out.]

And the people will say to him:

1. 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?'
2. 'When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?'
3. 'When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

Now take some time to wonder about the story with the children:

- I wonder how the people felt when Jesus told them how happy he was with them?
- There were some people there who hadn’t noticed or helped those who were lonely, or hungry, or hurting. I wonder how they felt?
- How do you feel when you see someone who needs something?
- How does Jesus feel?

You can ask the children to answer these questions...or just let them quietly process their answers. Let them wonder a bit.

Finish in prayer:

"Dear God, please help us to see when people need something. And then, help us to do something about it. Even if we must ask for help to do it.

May we see everyone we meet as YOUR CHILD; even those people who are hard to love. Give us your strength and your love for other people.

In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen"
Children’s Programme:

Lesson Objectives:
- To remind children what the scriptures have to say about love
- To remind them how much God loves us and how we wants us to love others too
- To inspire them to explore how they can be active recipients and/or agents of God’s love through art and writing
- **To highlight that just by being a part of the world, we can make a difference. We can allow others to love us and we can love others. This can make a big change in the world.**

See Week 1 for ideas for:

Welcome:

Opening ritual:

Prayers:

Prayer is an important faith practise that we should exercise every week together as we form disciples for Christ. See prayer ideas in our resources ‘PLANNING A KIDS FRIENDLY “SUNDAY SCHOOL”’ and ‘PRAYING WITH CHILDREN’. There are heaps of creative ways to prayer with children. Remind them when we pray we are talking to God. Use the prayer wheel, globe, prayer ball, prayer musical game etc. See Addendum 2 for using 1 Corinthians 13 as a springboard for prayer.

Singing:
If your kids like to sing then choose songs that speak of love eg the “Magic Penny” song https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IcIFQj4l3F0
You might like to make this your theme song for the series of LOVE IS....lessons.
Introducing and Reinforcing the Theme:


For a PowerPoint of this book contact [jill@kidsfriendly.org.nz](mailto:jill@kidsfriendly.org.nz)

Ask these questions:

- In this book, who is “doing” the love? (Of course, it will be both the child and the people around the child. When the child is small, he/she is the receiver of love. But as he/she grows, he/she can also be the giver of love.)
- How do you think your world is different because of YOU?
- Do you think you could draw, paint or write about a way that you bring love into other people’s lives (either by receiving their love, or giving it to someone else):
  - Because of me, my siblings have a brother/sister.
  - My mum has someone to pick up the pegs when she drops them at the washing line.
  - Because of me, my teacher has someone to smile at her every morning.
  - Because of me, the cat has someone to sleep with.
  - Etc...

Activity:

- Show children the comic strips below. ([There are more at](https://www.pinterest.com/KidsFriendlyNZ/love-reaches-out-ideas/)
- Challenge them to create a “scene” by cutting magazine photos/words or drawing their own pictures.

For those who are having a hard time: Try [Storyboardthat.com](http://Storyboardthat.com) to start your own comic. See what you can come up with on your own!
Addendum 1:

Week 1 intergenerational reading of scripture

Our reading today is from 1 Corinthians 13: The Way of Love

Reader 1: If I speak in the most beautiful way, but don’t love, I’m nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate.

Reader 2: If I speak God’s Word with power, revealing all His mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, “Jump,” and it jumps, but I don’t love, I’m nothing.

Reader 3: If I give everything I own to the poor and even give up my life for God, but I don’t love, I’ve gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I have nothing without love.

Reader 4: Love never gives up.
Reader 5: Love cares more for others than for self.
Reader 6: Love doesn’t want what it doesn’t have.
Reader 7: Love doesn’t strut,
Reader 8: Love doesn’t have a swelled head,
Reader 9: Love doesn’t force itself on others,
Reader 10: Love isn’t always “me first,”
Reader 11: Love doesn’t fly off the handle,
Reader 12: Love doesn’t keep score of the sins of others,
Reader 13: Love doesn’t revel when others grovel,
Reader 14: Love takes pleasure in the flowering of truth,
Reader 15: Love puts up with anything,
Reader 16: Love trusts God always,
Reader 17: Love always looks for the best,
Reader 18: Love never looks back, but keeps going to the end.
Reader 19: Love never dies. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.
Addendum 2:

Praying through 1 Corinthians 13

Display the verse below in poster form* or on an overhead projector. Students take turns praying each verse, substituting “Love” with “God.” (Because the Bible tells us that God is love. 1John 4:8b)

4 Love [God] is patient,
Love [God] is kind.
It [God] does not envy,
It [God] does not boast, it [God] is not proud.

5 It [God] does not dishonour others, it [God] is not self-seeking,
It [God] is not easily angered,
It [God] keeps no record of wrongs.

6 Love [God] does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

7 It [God] always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

NOTE: IF there is time at the end, a wonderful closing prayer would be to substitute their names for the word Love. If we want to be Christ-like, we will be all of these things (with God’s help, of course!).

*Try printing this graphic if you prefer:
Addendum 3:

More scriptures about love:


25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”
26 “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”
27 He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’”
28 “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

When Jesus was asked, “Who is my neighbour?”

Jesus answered by telling the parable of the The Good Samaritan in Luke 10:29-37

*Try reading scripture about love in different translations. BibleGateway.com is a great tool for this. You can enter “love” into the keyword section and it will search references for you where “Love” is mentioned in scripture. You can adjust your search for different translations of the Bible. Or even better, look up the verses in different Bibles of different translations and let the kids compare them.