

Supplies Needed: *Bibles, Papers with the following headings: Family, School Friends, Church, Pets, Others, sticky notes, pencils, beach balls, tubs, masking tape, ping pong balls,*

Notes for leaders: *Paul establishes churches across the Mediterranean and he would keep in contact with them through letters. After Paul left Corinth, the Christians there began to disagree. 1 Corinthians is Paul's response to the church in Corinth which explains Paul's understanding of God's love as disclosed in Christ and the appropriate conduct for those who are in Christ. Love is the only and ultimate enduring reality.*

Opening/Centering Prayer – led by a Student

Supplies: Bibles

Suggested Time -2 min

Ask students to leave their Bibles and backpacks near the edges of the room and sit in a circle. Ask them to close their eyes to listen as the Apostle Paul describes "love:" (drawn from the Common English Bible) - 1 Corinthians 13:1-8. Teacher please read:

13:1 If I speak in tongues of human beings and of angels but I don't have love, I'm a clanging gong or a clashing cymbal.

2 If I have the gift of prophecy and I know all the mysteries and everything else, and if I have such complete faith that I can move mountains but I don't have love, I'm nothing.

3 If I give away everything that I have and hand over my own body to feel good about what I've done but I don't have love, I receive no benefit whatsoever.

4 Love is patient, love is kind, it isn't jealous, it doesn't brag, it isn't arrogant,

5 it isn't rude, it doesn't seek its own advantage, it isn't irritable, it doesn't keep a record of complaints,

6 it isn't happy with injustice, but it is happy with the truth.

7 Love puts up with all things, trusts in all things, hopes for all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails.

Opening Exploration:

Supplies: Papers with the following headings: Family, School Friends, Church, Pets, Others, sticky notes, pencils *Suggested Time - 10 min*

Teacher to say: **Who are the people you share God's love with on a daily basis?**

Place sticky notes next to each of the headings that apply to you.

(The class will return to the results of this poll later).

Active Exploration:

Supplies: large bins, beach balls, masking tape, ping-pong balls.

Suggested Time: 15 min

Instructions: Divide the class in half.

One half of the class will play a version of "horse" except they will be spelling "love." Players take turns shooting, if Player 1 makes a basket, then player 2 must shoot from the same place. If someone misses they get a letter. The object of the game is to avoid collecting and spelling "love."

The other half of the class will play ping-pong on the floor with their hands (teams of 2 and 2). Divide each space with masking tape. A player is to return a hit either on the rly or after one bounce. A ball that does not land within the space is a foul. Each team starts at "love" then the first team to get 10 points wins.

Teacher to say:

- **In our sticky note poll, which groups did most of us say we share God's love with every day?**
- **In the shooting game, you tried to avoid spelling "love." In the ping pong game everyone started at "love." Are there people with whom you avoid sharing God's love?**

Bible Exploration:

Supplies: Bibles.

Suggested Time: 15 minutes

Instructions: Ask the students to get their Bibles and sit in a circle. Ask a few students to act out the story of Zacchaeus as silent mimes while other students read the scriptures aloud - Luke 19:1-10.

- 1 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through town.
- 2 A man there named Zacchaeus, a ruler among tax collectors, was rich.
- 3 He was trying to see who Jesus was, but, being a short man, he couldn't because of the crowd.
- 4 So he ran ahead and climbed up a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus, who was about to pass that way.
- 5 When Jesus came to that spot, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down at once. I must stay in your home today."
- 6 So Zacchaeus came down at once, happy to welcome Jesus.
- 7 Everyone who saw this grumbled, saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."
- 8 Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my possessions to the poor. And if I have cheated anyone, I repay them four times as much."
- 9 Jesus said to him, "Today, salvation has come to this household because he too is a son of Abraham."
- 10 The Human One came to seek and save the lost."

Bible Exploration – Continued:

Instructions: After the Zacchaeus drama, ask the kids to sit again in a circle with their Bibles in their laps.

Ask:

- I wonder why Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus. ☒
- I wonder how Zacchaeus felt when Jesus stopped and asked to have dinner with him. ☒
- I wonder why Jesus did not condemn Zacchaeus for cheating his own people.
- I wonder why Zacchaeus changed. ☒

Closing:

Instructions: Ask the students to gather their things and bow for the following benediction:

Ephesians 5:1

¹Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, ²and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

For the Teacher-tidbits

- **Zacchaeus was probably considered one of the worst of the worst in ancient Jewish society: a chief tax collector.**
- **Tax collectors were despised by their own people because they received their salary by taking as much money as they could from the people, paying the government what was owed and keeping the rest.**
- **Jesus loved Zacchaeus (in words and actions), despite who he was and what he did for a living. The love of Jesus changed Zacchaeus' life.**