

BIBLE VERSES: 1 John 3:11

In this session we'll see that we were created for love - for God to love us and us to love Him and others.

LEADER'S NOTES

We love because he first loved us. The older I get, the more I get this. I really cannot hope to love others if I don't receive the love that God has for me. Jesus said the first and greatest commandment is this: love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbour as you love yourself. So not only do we need to receive God's love in order to love him; we also need to be able to love ourselves in order to love others... And that loving of self only comes from receiving God's love. Ask God to remind you of his great love for you as you prepare this session.

Welcome Activities: If this session is being run as a 'Sunday School' session then the idea is that all 3 activities are provided, allowing the children choice. If it is being run as part of a Toddler Group then these activities can be provided as part of the all the other activities on offer. If it is part of a short Toddler and Parent worship session (e.g. Pram Service) then it may only be practical to offer one of the activities.

Today's welcome activities are about relationship and people.

Story Time: Choose whichever Story Time activity best suits your circumstances. It would be best to use the same area and seating arrangement each time. Probably helpful if it's separate from other distractions. Perhaps with a special chair for the story teller to sit on.

A couple of today's story activities are more simple discussions than stories.

Get Creative: A choice of 3 activities reflecting the Bible Story in some way. If you have lots of time and space then you could offer all 3, but just to offer 1 is fine. Children of this age are exploring their own ideas and ways of creating so may go off on their own tangent e.g. if you ask them to make a sheep they may well turn it into something else – don't be anxious about this – 3 year olds especially are much more interested in the 'doing' than the finished product.

The fourth Get Creative Activity will be a suggestion for a creative prayer activity. This is specifically for any parents/carers who are staying with their children. If you are in a Sunday School setting where no parents stay then you would not need to organise this activity.

Revisiting The Story: Similar to the three welcome activities and may well include some of those. An opportunity for the children to revisit and retell the story themselves using small world figures, dressing up etc. The idea would be that if you chose a making activity in the Get Creative section then the children could move on to the Revisiting The Story activities when they've finished – there is no need for the whole group to finish together.

The fourth activity “Time To Go Home” in this section suggests a take home activity and also a short prayer or song which you can use if you want to round up the sessions with all the children together again. If you want to you could adopt your own special good bye song. In other circumstances it may be better to have an informal ending with parents collecting children as the children are continuing to play.

SMALL WORLD

ACTIVITY |  **WELCOME ACTIVITY**

Make some small world toys, ideally a dolls’ house available for the children to explore.

The Point: A welcome activity.

EQUIPMENT

Small world toys - anything as long as it includes people - a dolls house is ideal.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

HOUSE CORNER

ACTIVITY |  **WELCOME ACTIVITY**

Set up a house corner for the children to interact in.

The Point: A welcome activity.

EQUIPMENT

House corner type activities - kitchen, ironing board, play food, etc.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

STICKERS

CRAFT IDEAS |  **WELCOME ACTIVITY**

Put out the stickers and other items for the children to create pictures with.

The Point: A welcome activity - links to You Are Special.

EQUIPMENT

Stickers, paper, colouring pens or pencils.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

YOU ARE SPECIAL

STORY |  **WATCHER** |  **STORY TIME**

Read the story or show the film to the children. If you don't have the book, all the pictures and text are easily found on the internet. The film can be found [on YouTube here](#), but it is not great quality. The DVD is not hard to find on the internet. It is about 30 minutes long.

After the story or film, ask the children how Eli felt about Punchinello and Lucia. He loved them! Say that this story shows how God feels about us. He loves us very, very much and he wants that to matter to us more than anything else. Say that it's hard for us to really love anyone else unless we know how much God loves us.

The Point: To show God's great love for us.

EQUIPMENT

You Are Special by Max Lucado - available as a book, movie and on the internet.

DURATION: 30 MINS.

LOVE LANGUAGES

ACTIVITY |  **STORY TIME**

Say to the children that God made us so that he could love us, so that we can love him and so that we can love each other. Ask the children how you show somebody that you love them. Say that you are going to learn five different ways to love someone today. (These are adapted from Gary Chapman's 5 love languages- www.5lovelanguages.com.)

Say that the first way you might show someone that you love them is by what you say. Ask the children what kinds of things you might say. If the parents/carers are with the children, ask the child and their adult to say something to one another which shows they love each other. Get the group to come up with an action to remember that 'We love each other by what we say'.

The second way we can love one another is by spending time together. What sort of things might you do with someone that you love? Ask the adults and their child to tell each other what they most like doing with the other. Ask the group for an action to remember that 'We love each other by being together'.

The third way we can love one another is by doing things for each other. What might you do for someone you love? Ask the parents to tell their children some of the things they do for them to show them that they love them. Ask the group to come up with an action for 'We love each other by doing things'.

The fourth way we can love each other is by giving presents. Ask the parents and children to tell each other what the best thing they have ever given them is. Ask the group to come up with an action for 'We love each other by giving presents'.

The fifth way we can love each other is by giving each other a hug or kiss. Get the parents and children to have a cuddle. Ask the group to come up with an action for 'We love each other by giving hugs and kisses'.

See if the group can remember all five actions.

The Point: To think about how we love one another.

EQUIPMENT

None.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

WHO & HOW?

DISCUSSION | STORY TIME

Run this activity as a very simple circle time. Encourage the children to be quiet and listen to what everyone says. Pass a small object round the circle - when you are holding the object, you get to speak.

Ask the children to each tell the group about someone that they love - a parent, sibling, friend. Ask them how they show that they love that person. Get the group to think of an action to show the way that they love that person. Let everyone who wants to, speak.

Say that the most important thing that God made us to do is to love him and to love each other. Say that you've thought about lots of ways of loving each other in the circle time. Ask them if they have any ideas about how they can love God.

The Point: To think about how we love God and others.

EQUIPMENT

None.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

HEART COOKIES

FOOD AND COOKING | 🙌 GET CREATIVE

I would suggest making the dough beforehand, but you could do the whole activity if you have time and space. Either bake onsite or send home with instructions for baking later.

Ingredients:

175g plain flour

100g softened butter

50g caster sugar

50g plain dark chocolate, grated.

Method:

Preheat oven to 180c.

Mix all ingredients to form a dough.

Roll out thinly and cut into heart shapes.

Place on baking trays and prick lightly.

Bake for 12-15 minutes.

The Point: A story reminder.

EQUIPMENT

Ingredients as detailed, rolling pins, heart-shaped cutters, paper plates or baking trays.

DURATION: 15 MINS.

GOD LOVES ME

CRAFT IDEAS | 📄 WATCHER | 🙌 GET CREATIVE

📄 [Download activity worksheet](#)

Give the children a colouring sheet to colour. They can decorate it with heart stickers. They might also draw pictures from your story activity.

The Point: A story reminder.

EQUIPMENT

Attachment, colouring pens/pencils, heart stickers.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

WE LOVE EACH OTHER BY...

CRAFT IDEAS |  **WATCHER** |  **GET CREATIVE**

[🔗 Download activity worksheet](#)

Children will need their parent's help with this activity. Let the child and their parent draw or collage appropriate pictures to show how we can love by doing each of the five things.

The Point: A teaching reminder.

EQUIPMENT

The attachment, coloured pens/pencils, magazines, glue, scissors.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

LOVE LEAVES

DISPLAY PICTURE |  **GET CREATIVE**

Let the children cut out a leaf and help them to write love on them - or get the adults to. Add them to your tree display.

The Point: To build a series reminder.

EQUIPMENT

Paper in leaf colours, scissors, pens.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

LOVE LETTER

WORSHIP AND REFLECTION |  **WATCHER** |  **GET CREATIVE**

[🔗 Download activity worksheet](#)

Allow adults some time and space to reflect on the attached love letter.

The Point: To respond to God.

EQUIPMENT

The attachment, pens.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

SMALL WORLD

ACTIVITY | ↻ REVISITING THE STORY

Let the children play with the dolls house again. They might choose to act out scenarios of people being loving towards one another.

The Point: To revisit the story.

EQUIPMENT

Dolls' house and dolls or other small world toys including people.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

HOUSE CORNER

ACTIVITY | ↻ REVISITING THE STORY

Make the house corner available again. Children may now be thinking about how families show love to one another.

The Point: To revisit the story.

EQUIPMENT

House corner type toys.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

STICKERS

CRAFT IDEAS | ↻ REVISITING THE STORY

Let the children create sticker pictures again - they might recreate some of Punchinello's story.

The Point: To revisit the story.

EQUIPMENT

Stickers (including stars and dots), paper, colouring pens/pencils.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

LOVE LEAVES

ACTIVITY | 📖 WATCHER | ⌚ TIME TO GO HOME

🔗 [Download activity worksheet](#)

In the last week, hopefully the parents and children will have managed to create a tree. Have last week's sheet available for any who weren't there. Give out the first leaf to be hung on the tree.

The Point: A take home activity.

EQUIPMENT

The attachment - one leaf per child on card.

DURATION: 5 MINS.
