



ELEMENTARY LARGE GROUP

LESSON 2

LOVE NEVER FAILS

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Shows Us How to Love

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 13

GOD'S BIG STORY: Paul teaches that love is more important than knowledge or self-sacrifice. It's even greater than faith and hope. Through Paul's words, God—the only One who loves perfectly—shows us how to love.

WORD OF WONDER: The three most important things to have are faith, hope and love. But the greatest of them is love. —1 Corinthians 13:13

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Welcome Question: What's your favorite way to show love?
- Curiosity Questions
- SMALL GROUP
- Interactive Game: Copycat
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Responding in Worship
- Blessing Your Kids



INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Shows Us How to Love

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 13

WORD OF WONDER: 1 Corinthians 13:13

“Can’t Buy Me Love” by the Beatles was a crazy popular song back in the 1960s. Its message is clear: You can’t buy love.

So how do we find love? And maybe more importantly, how do we share love?

In 1 Corinthians 13:1–8, Paul writes that we can have many spiritual gifts, knowledge, and money, but if we lack God’s love, we truly have nothing. To make matters more challenging, he writes in verse 12, “For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror” (NIV). Our knowledge, our hope, even our understanding of God’s love are not yet complete—they are like looking in a fogged-up mirror. We can wipe it, but our reflection remains hazy.

So if the mirror is fogged up, how can we understand what God’s love is all about?

We will only know it by entering a sweet relationship with Jesus. He’s the only one who can fully wipe away the fog. He’s the one who knows us and understands how to love us.

Take a moment to read 1 Corinthians 13:1–8, 12–13.

As you consider these words of Paul, what could you do to get a clearer vision of God’s love for you? Have you let yourself be fully embraced by Him, or are there parts of you that you hold back? What might it look like to share this kind of love with those around you?

Sit back and lean into Jesus, who knows you and wants you to fully know Him.

—Tom Bump

Children’s Ministry Leader, Author, and Coach

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

The Christians of Corinth were part of a church planted by Paul on his second missionary journey. Reflecting their culture, the Corinthians were highly conscious of social class and speaking skill. Paul addresses their tendency to divide into factions and fan clubs.

WHAT?

Paul treats a mirror as an object that obscures (1 Corinthians 13:12). Ancient mirrors were made of bronze and had none of the clarity of glass. An imperfect image from a dark mirror illustrates the way we presently “see” and “know.”

WHERE?

Corinth, the capital of Achaia, was a city with a blended Greek and Roman culture. Because of its important role in trade—Paul himself worked as a tentmaker in Corinth (Acts 18:3)—there existed a great divide between rich and poor.

WHEN?

In Acts 18:11, Luke notes Paul’s residence in Corinth for 18 months. Paul and the Corinthians exchanged letters over what were probably several years. Paul requests their financial support and mentions his plan to return in person (2 Corinthians 8:8–12; 10:2).

CONNECTING TO GOD’S BIG STORY

Jesus commands us to love our “enemies,” including those outside the community of faith (Matthew 5:44). In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul describes patient love within the church—the body of Christ. If Jesus’ followers can’t patiently bear with one another, they can’t possibly love their enemies.

Large Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Shows Us How to Love

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 13

WORD OF WONDER: 1 Corinthians 13:13

As kids arrive...

Around 20 minutes before service begins, display series theme loop. Play high-energy music in the background.

LG Leader walks around the room on mic and greets kids by name as they enter the room. Be sure to move to their level and introduce yourself to any new friends. Welcome kids by name and greet them with enthusiasm. Be extra intentional about hearing and responding to what they say.

SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP

Welcome Question

Consider using a **30 or 2:00 Countdown** to let leaders and kids know it's almost time to begin!

At Your Start Time...

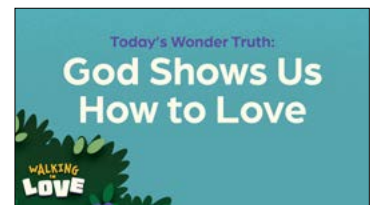
SLIDE: WELCOME QUESTION

At your start time ...

At your service start time, call attention to the Welcome Question on the screen and invite Small Group Leaders to begin: **"What's your favorite way to show love?"** "Today we'll learn what God says about how we can show love."

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Today's Wonder Truth is **GOD SHOWS US HOW TO LOVE.**"



Small Group

While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is _____ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! I have a little game for us first today!

Interactive Game: Copycat

SLIDE: COPYCAT

Gather kids at the front of the room. "**We're going to have fun playing a little game to see how good you are at imitating one another.**

Choose two volunteers to come to the front of the room—one to be the Pose Master and one the Copycat.

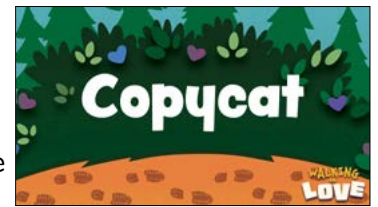
SLIDE: POSES

Demonstrate each pose, inviting kids to practice them as you go. Explain that the Pose Master can pick any of the poses displayed on the slide to do in succession; he can also add in original poses. He will start by doing two poses in a row. The Copycat will then do the poses exactly as the Pose Master did them. The Pose Master will then do three poses, and the Copycat will immediately follow with her imitation. They will go back and forth, adding poses a little faster each time, until the Copycat makes a mistake. If time allows, pick different volunteers for Pose Master and Copycat. Encourage all kids to follow the Pose Master and see how well they do! If your group is large, consider modifying the activity to be completed in small groups of about 10 kids.

You all did a great job of imitating the Pose Master! Today, we're going to learn that when it comes to loving others, the master we should try Spirit's help!) is God. None of us loves perfectly, but He does.

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Today's Wonder Truth is **GOD SHOWS US HOW TO LOVE.**"



Declaring God's Wonder

SLIDE: DECLARATION

Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

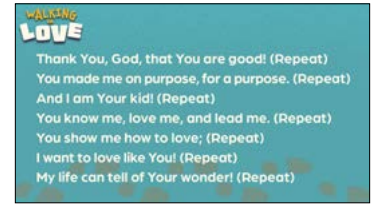
And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

You show me how to love; (Kids repeat.)

I want to love like You! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)



Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **Dear Father, we invite You to teach us. Help us to understand what love is and how You showed us Your love through Jesus. We ask Your Holy Spirit to guide us so we can love like You. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Consider sharing some about the songs you are going to sing. What they mean, why we sing them, why they are meaningful and important to you!

"We're going to stand and sing together! One way that we show love to God is to worship through song! So stand up, sing loud, and join in the motions with us. God loves to hear us sing praises to Him! These songs are very special because we got to sing them for Adventure Week VBS! Everyone stand up and dance and sing with your whole heart!"

WORSHIP VIDEOS: BREAKER ROCK BEACH, PRAISE

God's Big Story

SLIDE: TITLE

Explain that this book of the Bible is in the New Testament. It's a letter that Paul wrote to the church in Corinth.

"We read part of our story today directly from the Bible, which is God's Word. Now, let's watch God's big story from our video. Afterward, we'll watch and experience even more of the story!"



VIDEO: GOD'S BIG STORY

LESSON 2 LOVE NEVER FAILS

EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: Apostle Paul costume, Bible, large flashlight with 3 levels of brightness, mini flashlights (1 per small group leader), tealights (optional), glowsticks (optional), Christmas lights (optional), assortment of lamps (optional), DIY time machine or streamers (optional)

Walking in Love Experience It! Script Background:

During the Walking in Love Series, the Apostle Paul takes a break from his missionary work in the first century and walks forward in time to share God's message with the kids in your church! (Join kids in suspending disbelief and welcoming this enthusiastic time traveler!) The Walking In Love Experience It! Scripts have been designed independently of each other but can also be used as a cohesive unit. If choosing to utilize more than one Experience It! Script during the Walking in Love Series, try to have the same dynamic volunteer act out the part of Paul each week. (If this isn't possible, then have the volunteers playing the part of Paul wear the same costume.) This will help keep kids engaged while creating anticipation and excitement from week to week.

- Consider one of these directions for Paul's costume: 1. First century-inspired clothing, such as a simple tunic with a rope tied around waist. 2. Silly, mismatched outfit, such as a Hawaiian shirt, hat, and scarf.
- To create the illusion that Paul has taken a walk forward in time from the first century, and appeared on your ministry stage, consider creating a time machine or dressing up a doorway with streamers for Paul to enter through.
- Two opening options are written into today's Experience It! Script. If your church used the Experience It! Script in a previous Walking in Love lesson, choose Option 1. If today's is the first Walking in Love Experience It! Script you plan to use, select Option 2.

This Experience It! Script uses lights to illustrate love as the most important thing for Jesus' followers. In today's script, light is utilized at three different levels of brightness. Before Level #1, the room will be as dark as possible, with just one night light or emergency lights on. Level #1 should use a very small amount of dim light to represent knowledge. The room should become slightly brighter—Level #2—when Paul speaks about acts of self-sacrifice. Finally, the room should be at full brightness—Level #3—when Paul teaches on love. The light levels are noted throughout the Experience It! Script.

Carefully consider the lighting capabilities of your kid's ministry environment, budget, and the needs of your kids as you decide how to achieve the three different levels of brightness in your ministry (see lighting suggestions listed in supplies). One idea is for the Apostle Paul to hold a flashlight that has three levels of brightness. Additionally, each small group leader could also hold a mini flashlight, and Paul could designate various leaders to turn on their lights throughout the teaching. You could also provide each kid with a mini flashlight or glowstick. If your ministry environment has the use of stage lights, adjust the light level when prompted in the script; or, consider decorating your stage with an assortment of lamps or stringed Christmas lights for Paul to turn on throughout his teaching.

Opening Option 1: (Use if you utilized the Experience It! Script in the previous Walking in Love lesson.) Apostle Paul enters stage right, stumbling as if he has tumbled through time and landed in church. Paul looks around and smiles with excitement to see a room full of kids who have come to hear God's Word!

PAUL: Hello! It's great to be back with you today in (pause) **what year is it again?** Pause for kids to answer. **That's right! It gets a little confusing sometimes when you walk through time. Did anyone think I might fail to return to you this week? If you were here last time, you might remember I told you that failure isn't an option. Today, you'll find out what that means because e'll learn that love never fails!**

If we didn't meet last time, my name is Paul. Many people refer to me as the Apostle Paul because I am a Jesus follower and missionary. I dedicated my life to Jesus and helped the early church get started, and today I'm visiting you from the fi st century. If Paul is in a silly costume, say: **I want to apologize for my clothes. I had no idea how I should dress here in the 21st century. How did I do? Do you think I'll blend in dressed like this?** Pause for kids to respond.

Begin Lesson 2 Script:

PAUL: One of the ways I encouraged the early church was by visiting different cities and telling people about how God shows love for us. I also wrote a bunch of letters to different churches.

Speaking of letters, I learned something while visiting this century, and I'm wondering if it's true. I heard that God's story, including the history of the early church and my letters, has been combined into one book, and this book has become the most-read book of all of time. Is this true? Who knows what this book is called? Pause for kids to respond. **The Bible! Hmm ... is there any chance you have a Bible here today?** Ask an adult volunteer to bring a Bible to the stage. **Wow! Flip through the Bible. Your generation is incredibly fortunate! You can know what God is thinking and how much He loves you just by reading this book! In fact, this will make what I tell you today much easier, because I can read to you exactly what I wrote 2,000 years ago to a church in a city called Corinth. Open Bible to 1 Corinthians 13:1 and show kids.**

Let me tell you about the city of Corinth ...

Make room as dark as possible.

Corinth was a bustling city, and the church there was just getting started. Now, God created the church family to be an image of Jesus. That means they reflect Jesus and His love to the world around them. It was very important for the church at Corinth to understand the most important thing in life. Can you guess what it is?

Say in a loud dramatic voice: **Knowledge.** Pause and wait for the room to become brighter. Adjust light setting in environment to Level #1 (room should become slightly brighter after Paul says the word "knowledge"). **Nope. Knowledge is great, but it's not the most important. Listen to what I wrote.** Open Bible to 1 Corinthians 13: **"Suppose I speak in the languages of human beings or of angels. ... Suppose I have the gift of prophecy. Suppose I can understand all the secret things of God and know everything about him. And suppose I have enough faith to move mountains"** (1 Corinthians 13:1-2). Pause and look up. **Those are all good things, but they're not enough. It's excellent to know God's story and be shaped by the truth of His Word, but the church of Jesus is more than this.** Continue reading with Bible open: **"Knowledge will pass away"** (1 Corinthians 13:8).

There's something else people think is important (dramatic pause): **Acts of self-sacrifice** Pause and wait for room to become brighter. Adjust light setting in environment to level #2. **Self-sacrifice means that you give up something for others. Acts of self-sacrifice are great, but they're not the most important either. Listen to what I wrote.** Again, hold Bible open to 1 Corinthians 13: **"Suppose I give everything I have to poor people. And suppose I give myself over to a difficult life so I can brag"** (1 Corinthians 13:3). Look up from Bible. **It's not enough to give away all your money and be ready to suffer for and with Jesus. It's excellent to be generous with what we have and to be excited for a future with God, but the church of Jesus is more than this. Our hopes are not complete.** Continue reading: **"Now we see only a dim likeness of things. It is as if we were seeing them in a foggy mirror"** (1 Corinthians 13:12).

So, what's the most important thing for followers of Jesus? Big dramatic pause. Consider asking kids to do a drum roll with their hands. **Love.** Light setting in room should be at the highest level. If kids or leaders have flashlights, instruct them to turn on their lights at this point. **Many people use the word love to mean a lot of things, but it's not a weak or wishy-washy sort of love. It's a type of love that makes us patient with and kind to one another. Love makes us able to forgive when someone wrongs us, and love can keep us from growing angry with one another. Showing love means speaking up for others, wanting the absolute best for them, and courageously putting the needs of other people ahead of our own. This kind of love is the most important thing: "Love never fails"** (1 Corinthians 13:8).

Above all, love makes us like Jesus. It was Jesus' love that made Him our Savior. No matter how much we know or how much faith we have, what makes us most like Jesus is showing others the same love. God shows us how to love.

It's been great visiting with you today, but it's time for me to take a walk back in time to the first century and continue telling churches that God shows us how to love. Do you think you can tell your friends in this century the same truth? I hope so! See ya!" Walk offstage.

Connecting the Wonder Truth

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Pose the following question to kids to help them connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

"Our Wonder Truth today is GOD SHOWS US HOW TO LOVE.

Where did you see our Wonder Truth in action in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

Jesus taught His followers to love their enemies, which includes people outside the community of faith (Matthew 5:44). In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul describes patient love within the church—the body of Christ. Before we can love our enemies, we need to patiently love one another!"



Responding in Worship

SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson.



*****Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. There ARE motions to this video for AWWBS, kids may do the motions if they know them, or just worship and reflect.**

WORSHIP VIDEO: NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES

Blessing Your Kids

Speak a blessing over your kids, as a group or as individuals. Use your own words, with these as a guide if needed.

Blessing: The God of the universe sees you and loves you! May you experience His goodness every day. His love for you never ends. Go in joy, sharing His unfailing love with others!