

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
- Discussion Questions for Younger and Older Kids
- Small Group Prayer Time
- Word of Wonder: 1 Corinthians 13:13
- Word of Wonder Activity
- LARGE GROUP
- Responding in Worship: Examples of Love Stations



Walking in Love Elementary Spotify playlist

INVITATION

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

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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.

Small 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

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WORD OF WONDER: 1 Corinthians 13:13

Pre-Service (15–20 min)

RESOURCES: [Coloring Page](#)

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have play stations with various board games, activities, or use games from the extra Games & Activities Guide to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them!

Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

Allow quieter kids who don't engage with the board games to color. Involve them in the curiosity questions.

While kids are playing in their opening activity groups..

Pose the following “I’m curious” questions. Say “I’m curious...” before each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

I’m curious ...

- How would you explain what love is to someone who has never heard the word?
- How do you know when someone loves you?

Leader Tip: After kids give their ideas about love, share this short definition: Love is not just a feeling, but selfless actions that put others before ourselves. Love is who God is. As Jesus-followers, we can be filled with God's love so that Christlike love becomes what describes us best!

Small Group Begins: Welcome Question 2–3 min

SUPPLIES: whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils

As kids arrive, invite them to write/draw the answer to the Welcome Question:

“What’s your favorite way to show love?” Set out sheets of paper and colored pencils.

Right at your service time, move into Small Group time by sharing your own answers and allowing kids to talk about their answers.

Small Group Discussion: Younger Kids 5–8 min

Encourage kids to open their Bibles to 1 Corinthians 13. Explain that this book of the Bible is in the New Testament. It's a letter that Paul wrote to the church in Corinth. Encourage adult volunteers to help kids find the passage.

Read 1 Corinthians 13: 3-8.

- Reread 1 Corinthians 13:1–3. **What does Paul say we are if we don't have love?**
- **What's one word that describes love?**
- Reread 1 Corinthians 13:4–7. **What are some things love doesn't do?**
- **Is it easy or hard to show love the way Paul describes? Why do you think so?**
- **What do we know about God? How would you describe His love for people, including us?**
- **What's one way you want to ask the Holy Spirit to help you love more like God loves?**

"We've discovered today that loving the way Paul describes love in 1 Corinthians 13 isn't easy! We can be thankful, though, that God showed us how to love when He sent us Jesus. Let's ask His Holy Spirit to help us love like Him."

Prayer Time: Younger Kids

Invite kids to pray together. Ask for volunteers to share praises from the week and requests the group can pray for. Then choose one volunteer to pray, asking God to show everyone how to love like He does this week.

Small Group Discussion: Older Kids 8–12 min

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

Encourage kids to open their Bibles to 1 Corinthians 13. Explain that this book of the Bible is in the New Testament. It's a letter that Paul wrote to the church in Corinth. Encourage adult volunteers to help kids find the passage.

Give a brief overview of the history and context using the info on page 3 of this guide.

Call on three volunteers to read from 1 Corinthians 13. Invite one to read verses 1–3; another, verses 4–7; and the last verses 8, 12, and 13.

- Reread 1 Corinthians 13:1–3. **What does Paul say we are if we don't have love?**
- **What stood out to you most in Paul's description of love from 1 Corinthians 13? What images come to mind as you think about those words?**
- **What's one word or phrase that describes love?**
- Reread 1 Corinthians 13:4–7. **What are some things love doesn't do?**
- **Why do you think Paul says that showing love is more important than knowing a lot about God or even giving away all that we have?**
- **Who is someone you know who loves in the way Paul describes? Tell us about that person.**
- **What are some examples of how God shows us this kind of love?**
- **What makes showing love difficult at times?**
- **What's one area where you need the Holy Spirit's help to love like God loves?**

"We've learned today that loving the way God loves isn't easy. We can be grateful, though, to know that God is love and shows us how to love. Let's ask the Holy Spirit to help us love like He does."

Prayer Time: Older Kids

Invite kids to a time of prayer. Ask if there are volunteers to share any praises from the week and take prayer requests. As a group, complete a popcorn prayer, allowing kids to pray one after another for one of the requests they heard or to ask the Holy Spirit to help them love as God has showed us.

Older Kids – Notes Page

****Complete the Notes Page with kids. Helping them to fill out all of the spaces. This is an important way for parents to see what their kids are learning each way and have meaningful conversations at home!**

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

"The Word of Wonder for the Walking in Love series is found in today's part of God's big story: 1 Corinthians 13:13. Today we've learned how love is the most important thing and that God shows us how to love. This verse tells us that, even among really good things, love is the greatest."

Ask kids to open their Bibles to 1 Corinthians 13:13. Invite kids to stand up and read the verse several times together. Encourage kids to crouch down as they say the words *faith* and *hope* and stand up to a normal standing position for the word *love*. When they say, "But the greatest of them is love," kids can stand on their toes and stretch their arms to the sky.

Make It Inclusive!

If a kid is not able to stand or crouch, assure her that it's OK. Help her use arm motions instead to convey that love is the greatest of the three words.

Gather kids to talk about these questions:

- **When you think of the word *faith*, what comes to mind? How about when you think of the word *hope*? *Love*?**
- **How did God show His love to people in the Bible? How has He shown His love to you?**

Leader Tip: 1 Corinthians 13:13 includes three key terms that are important for kids to understand. Refer to these definitions as needed when discussing the verse:

Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being sure of what we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1). To have faith is to trust with our hearts; this trust is shown through our actions.

Hope is a confident expectation that God will do what He said He will do; it's more than wishful thinking—it's certainty that God will come through.

Love is not just a feeling but selfless actions that put others before ourselves. Love is who God is. As Jesus-followers, we can be filled with God's love so that *Christlike love* becomes what describes us best!

Word of Wonder Activity

SUPPLIES: plastic disposable cups (3 per kid for younger kids; 13 per group of older kids), black markers

For groups of younger kids, ahead of time set aside three cups for each kid. Write the word Faith on one cup, Hope on another, and Love on the last. For groups of older kids, give each group 13 cups. Have kids write one letter of each of the above-mentioned words on each cup.

"We're going to try a challenge to see who can do two things at once: say our Word of Wonder while you stack cups in order!"

Invite kids to say the Word of Wonder out loud together first. The next time through, younger kids can stack their cups as they say the verse. On the word Faith, they will make their Faith cup the base. Then they will add Hope, and finally Love on top since it's the greatest. Kids will see how quickly they can stack their cups. Older kids can also stack their cups when they come to those words in the verse, but they will need to stack their cups as quickly as possible in letter order to spell Faith, Hope, Love. It's likely it will take them longer to stack their cups than to say the verse. That's OK! For an added challenge, encourage them to try saying the verse multiple times in the time it takes to stack their cups correctly.

Responding in Worship: Examples of Love Stations

SUPPLIES: butcher paper (4 sheets), markers, crayons, tape (prep only)

RESOURCES: [Walking in Love Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, get four large pieces of butcher paper. Write one of the following in the center of each piece of butcher paper: Love is patient; Love is kind; Love is content with what we have; Love is not easily angered.

Create stations by taping each sheet of butcher paper to a wall. Place markers and crayons at each station. If you're in a small space, you can use one large sheet of butcher paper and write Love is ... in the center. Then in each of the four corners, write one of the previous four phrases.

"Today we've learned what love is. It's not just a feeling; it's an action. In his first letter to the church of Corinth, Paul gives us many words and phrases to describe love. Loving people can be challenging! The good news is that we have the perfect example to look to as God shows us how to love. When we want to know how to love someone, we can try to imitate God, and the Holy Spirit will help us! Remember our first activity today when we tried to copy the different poses we saw the Pose Master do? We can also copy how God loves! Of course, doing so isn't always easy, so we need the Holy Spirit to guide and help us.

Let's spend time thinking about how God loves. You'll see different sheets of butcher paper around the room. Each sheet of paper explains a way God shows us how to love.

Read each of the sentences on the butcher paper.

When you hear the music playing, you may go to whichever station or stations you'd like. At each station, you can draw a picture that illustrates that particular way of showing God's love. You might draw a picture of God loving you and others, or you might draw a picture of yourself showing God's love to another person. At the end of our time, we will have art murals that show what God's love is like!"

Leader Tip: For Younger Kids. Before you begin, read the sentences at each station. Explain the definition of words kids might not understand, like patient and content. Be ready to share examples of each way to show love.

Play music from the [Walking in Love Elementary Spotify playlist](#). Allow kids space to contemplate and illustrate what love looks like. When an appropriate amount of time has passed, discuss the murals kids have created. Help them understand the different ways God shows love and that we in turn can show love to others.