



LESSON 1

**THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT**

LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** God Wants Us to Love Him and Love Others

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 22; 25

**GOD'S BIG STORY:** An expert in the law asks Jesus which is the most important commandment, and Jesus says that the greatest commandment is to love God and the second is to love others.

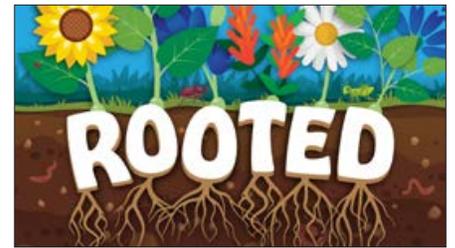
**WORD OF WONDER:** Love God with all your heart and soul and mind. —from Matthew 22:37

**CURIOSITY**

**BELIEF**

**FAITH**

- Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: He Is the Light, Your Love for Me
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Prayer and Blessing



[Rooted Helper Preschool Spotify playlist](#)



## LESSON 1 FOR LEADERS

### INVITATION

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

#### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** God Wants Us to Love Him and Love Others

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 22; 25

**WORD OF WONDER:** Matthew 22:37

Hold up your arms and put them in the shape of a cross. One arm points vertical, the other, horizontal. This simple illustration reminds us that God wants us to love Him (the vertical arm) and love others (the horizontal arm).

What would happen if, while you were holding your arms up like this, one of the kids in your ministry poured a jug of juice on your topmost fingers? Would it simply drip down your arm, or would it splash out on the kids around you? Obviously, it would splash out. This is an even better illustration of God's love! When He pours His love onto us, it naturally splashes out to other people. Love for God and love for others go hand in hand. Read Matthew 25:31–40. When we follow Jesus, God gives us power through the Holy Spirit to love like Jesus, including the ways Jesus describes in these verses.

Have you ever sensed God's love splashing down all over you?

He loves you completely, exactly as you are. You don't need to do more or be more for Him to love you. Letting God's love flow through you to your neighbors is as simple (and sometimes as hard) as living in the splash zone of God's love for you.

—Christie Thomas

Children's Ministry Volunteer and Author

Contributor to Wonder Ink

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS**

**WHO?**

Pharisees were influential Jewish men who promoted their religious traditions based on their interpretation of the Law of Moses. In this story, a Pharisee who was an expert in the Law tried to trap Jesus in His words by testing Him with a question.

**WHAT?**

Jesus teaches that the two greatest commandments are to love God and love others. The Law and the Prophets hang on these two commands, which go hand in hand. Jesus equates loving others and meeting each other's needs with loving and serving Him.

**WHERE?**

Jesus was in Jerusalem. The Pharisee in Matthew 22 questioned Jesus while He was teaching in the temple courts. By Matthew 25, Jesus had left the temple and was teaching His disciples on the Mount of Olives, east of the city across the Kidron Valley.

**WHEN?**

These teachings happened during the week leading up to Jesus' death. Jesus was in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover Feast with His disciples. Jesus' teaching in Matthew 25 looks ahead to the judgment at the end of history, when God's kingdom comes in its fullness.

**CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY**

For all eternity, God is love. He gives of Himself for the good of others. God's love changes our hearts so we might be found walking in love on the day of Christ's return. This will show that we love God and belong to Jesus.



## LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

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

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** God Wants Us to Love Him and Love Others

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 22; 25

**WORD OF WONDER:** Matthew 22:37

## Welcome

### Slide: Series Welcome Loop

#### As kids arrive...

Walk around the room and welcome as many kids as possible by showing excitement that they have joined you. Give high-fives, fist bumps, encourage them to sit on the floor in their spots, and ask questions about their week.

#### Video: Countdown

Welcome kids to worship time. Introduce yourself by name.

## Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions

**RESOURCES:** Tac the Cat puppet

For this section, you can use the cat picture provided, or a stuffed animal cat, or a cat hand puppet.

Introduce the kids to Tac, the curious cat.

**Leader:** Hello, Tac the Cat! How are you today?

**Tac the Cat:** Hi, friends! I'm feeling annoyed. (*Tac grumbles.*)

**Leader:** What? Why are you annoyed? You sure don't look very happy.

**Tac the Cat:** Well, I'm annoyed because of my little cousin, Mac.

**Leader:** Why are you annoyed by Mac?

**Tac the Cat:** He tries to follow me around everywhere, including when I'm climbing trees.

**Leader:** And you'd rather be alone?

**Tac the Cat:** No, I don't mind when he comes with me. But he can't keep up. He can't climb very high. Then when I climb higher and leave him behind, he gets upset.

**Leader:** Why do you think he gets upset?

**Tac the Cat:** I don't know. Maybe because he wanted to be with me?

**Leader:** I bet Mac likes to spend time with you. Do you have anyone you like to spend time with?

**Tac the Cat:** My older cousin, Zac! He's Mac's brother. Zac used to make an obstacle course that we could do together.

**Leader:** That sounds like a fun thing to do together. Why do you think Zac did that?

**Tac the Cat:** Hmm. Probably because I couldn't go with him to explore the neighborhood, and I'd cry when he left me.

**Leader:** So Zac found something you could do together. That was a great way for him to include you and be kind! He was showing you love.

**Tac the Cat:** Yeah, I guess so.

**Leader:** In God's big story today, we're going to learn that Jesus says the greatest commandment in the Bible is to love God and love others.

**Tac the Cat:** Really? That is so interesting! Now it gives me an idea! I'm going to make a treasure hunt for Mac and me to do together!

**Leader:** That sounds like a wonderful way to show love to Mac!

**Tac the Cat:** I'm going to work on it now! See you next time!

**Have you ever been curious about something? Let's take a moment and think: Who shows you love? How does that person show love to you?** Allow the kids to respond. **Our story today has two things that go together. Think about your favorite things that go together. What changes if you take one of those things away?** Allow the kids to respond. **We all see and hear things that make us curious. Did you ever stop to think about how loving God and loving others go together?**

### **SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH**

Today's Wonder Truth is **GOD WANTS US TO LOVE HIM AND LOVE OTHERS**. Today we'll discover how we can love God and love others!

## **Declaring God's Wonder**

### **SLIDE: DECLARATION**

Encourage the kids to say the statements and do the motions with you.

**Thank You, God, that You made me!** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Make prayer hands, then point up to God and to yourself.

**And I am Your kid!** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands on your hips.

**Jesus loves me so much;** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

**His love for me is big.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

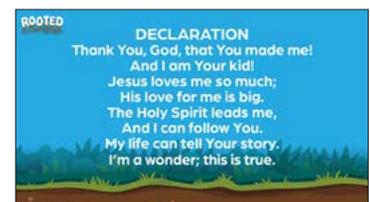
Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

**The Holy Spirit leads me,** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Bring your arms down from the sky, making a path in front of you.

**And I can follow You.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

March in place like you're following the leader.



**My life can tell Your story.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

**I'm a wonder; this is true.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shaking your fingers, celebrating ("praise hands").

## Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use your own words. Here is an example: **Father God, You know us and love us. Help us hear and understand Your Word today. May Your Spirit show us how we can show love to You and to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

## Worship

Today we'll learn about loving God and loving others. To love God is the greatest commandment. Let's sing and praise God to show Him how much we love Him!

**WORSHIP VIDEOS: He Is the Light, Your Love for Me**

## God's Big Story

Hold up a Bible and show the kids. Tell them that today's story comes from the book of Matthew in the Bible. Open a Bible and show them where the story is found.

### Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

**I open my Bible and what do I see?** (Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.)

**God's big story, waiting for me!** (Point to yourself.)

"Let's watch a part of God's big story that comes from the book of Matthew in the Bible."

**VIDEO: GODS BIG STORY**

# GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, marker (prep only), envelope, name tag, plastic bowl, crackers, water bottle, kid-sized coat, bandages

**Allergy Caution:** This activity includes possible food allergens!

Write “You’re Invited” on the outside of the envelope and seal it shut. Write “Visitor” on the name tag. Set all of the supplies nearby. Gather kids together. **Let’s listen to God’s big story today.**

**Jesus taught about God’s kingdom. He told people to stop sinning (or doing wrong things). Jesus taught people how to love others.**

**There was a group of people called Pharisees who knew a lot about the law. One day a Pharisee asked Jesus a question. He asked Jesus to tell him the most important commandment—or rule—in God’s law.**

**Jesus answered with Bible verses. He said, “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your mind.’ This is the first and most important commandment. And the second is like it. ‘Love your neighbor as you love yourself’ ”** (Matthew 22:37–39; Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18).

**Jesus said that all of God’s rules help us love God and love others. If we love God, we will love what God loves. And God loves people! We can show we love God when we love other people.**

**Jesus told His followers He will come back someday and rule as the forever King.** Grab plastic bowl. **When He comes back, Jesus will welcome His followers into God’s forever kingdom. He will say, “I was hungry.”** Have kids hold their stomachs and pretend they’re hungry. **“And you gave me something to eat.”** Hold up crackers. **“I was thirsty.”** Have kids touch their throats and pretend to be thirsty. **“And you gave me something to drink.”** Hold up water bottle. **“I was a stranger.”** Have kids hold out both palms in front. **“And you invited me in.”** Hold up envelope that says, “You’re Invited.”

**“I needed clothes.”** Have kids gently tug the shoulder of their shirt. **“And you gave them to me.”** Hold up kid-sized coat. **“I was sick.”** Have kids pretend to feel sick. **“And you took care of me.”** Hold up bandages. **“I was in prison.”** Have kids spread out fingers on both hands and hide their faces behind them. **“And you came to visit me”** (Matthew 25:35–36). Hold up name tag with “Visitor” written on it.

**The people will ask the Lord when they did these things for Him.** Have kids hold palms up and out and shrug shoulders. **Jesus will answer, “Anything you did for one of the least important of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me”** (Matthew 25:40).

**Love for God** (hold out left hand) **and love for others** (hold out right hand) **go together** (cup both hands together). **Jesus showed His love when He died on the cross so that we can be forgiven. When we ask Jesus to forgive our sins, He forgives us! Jesus makes us new, like we’ve never done wrong things. We can become children of God and be in His family. Then we can love people the way God loves people.**

**God cares about His people. So He cares about how we treat each other and how other people treat us. When we follow Jesus, God changes our hearts. The Holy Spirit gives us power to love**

like Jesus. Then we can show our love for Jesus by loving and helping others. This is the way we live when we follow Jesus. This is the way of God's kingdom. God wants us to love Him and love others.

**Leader Tip:** Engage kids who are especially active and those who struggle to focus by having them stand up each time you say love in the story.

## Connecting the Wonder Truth

### SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

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

**Our Wonder Truth today is GOD WANTS US TO LOVE HIM AND LOVE OTHERS. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in the story?** Allow kids to answer freely.

**God is love, and He gives of Himself for the good of others. God's love changes our hearts so we can love others the way He loves us. Our love for others shows that we love God and that we follow Jesus. The greatest way Jesus showed love is when He died on the cross for our sins so that we can be saved and forgiven.**

## Prayer and Blessing

Pray over kids and thank God for His love. Use your own words. Here is an example:

**God, thank You for loving us so well! Help us find ways to love You and others this week. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them. Use your own words. Here is an example:

**Blessing:** May you feel the love of God this week. May you be reminded of God's great, big love for you and others. And may you reflect that love to Him and those around you.