

LESSON 4  
LOVE

## LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** God Loved Us by Sending Jesus**SCRIPTURE:** Isaiah 11; John 1**GOD'S BIG STORY:** God loves His people and promised to send a Savior to rescue them. Jesus—God's Son—is the promised Savior. God sent Jesus because He loves us!**WORD OF WONDER:** Faith is being sure of what we hope for and being sure of what we do not see.  
—from Hebrews 11:1

## CURIOSITY

## BELIEF

## FAITH

- Welcome Question: Who is someone you love? How do you show them love?
- Curiosity Questions
- Curiosity Activity: Stand Up If You Love ...
- Word of Wonder: From Hebrews 11:1
- God's Big Story
- Discussion Questions
- LARGE GROUP
- Responding in Worship: Responding in Worship: Promise Tree with Heart Gift
- Closing Game: The Floor Is Lava

[Waiting for Jesus Elem Spotify playlist](#)

### INVITATION

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

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** God Loved Us by Sending Jesus

**SCRIPTURE:** Isaiah 11; John 1

**WORD OF WONDER:** From Hebrews 11:1

Pumpkin is a pale-orange cat who lives in our home as a beloved member of our family. Pumpkin was born a stray, and her first home was under our shed. Shortly after Pumpkin's birth, her mother left her to fend for herself. My son and daughter were very worried about the kitten and wanted to adopt her immediately. Pumpkin was shy and wouldn't let anyone near her. Most days my kids would go outside after school and drop food for Pumpkin, who would wait until they left to nibble it. My kids made toys for Pumpkin. She would play with the toys after the kids went back inside. All my kids wanted was what was best for this kitten, who couldn't decide if she could trust them or not. After a few months, Pumpkin allowed my kids to get close enough to pet her. Then one day, she walked into the middle of our whole family while we were outside and decided she was one of us.

In their consistent, patient, kind way, my kids showed me a rich picture of how God loves us. No matter what we've been through, or how lost or untrusting we might be, He gets into our world and demonstrates His love for us. This is how Jesus came into the world. Read Isaiah 11:1–2 and John 1:1–14. God loved us by sending Jesus.

*How has trust been an important part of learning God's love?*

*How have you experienced the consistent, patient, kind love of God?*

—**Matt Irvine**

Pastor and Editor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS**

**WHO?**

God called Isaiah to preach a message of renewal. He prophesied that a “branch” growing from the root of Jesse’s family tree would restore the nation. This is a reference to King David’s line, from the tribe of Judah. Jesus is the promised Savior!

**WHAT?**

All things were created through Jesus, who is the Word. When humans disobeyed God, He continued to love them. God promised to send a Savior to rescue them so they could be with Him again. Jesus—the Word—is the promised Savior who came at Christmas and will return again.

**WHERE?**

In Isaiah 11, the prophet addresses the tribe of Judah who was living in the southern kingdom of Judah. Isaiah envisions a future when the divided kingdoms are reunited, and people will come from every nation, under the leadership of the promised Savior.

**WHEN?**

God’s rescue plan was always to send Jesus. Jesus has always existed, even before the creation of time. Isaiah sees a set of promises from God that can only be fulfilled in and through Jesus, more than 700 years after Isaiah lived.

**CONNECTING TO GOD’S BIG STORY:**

God loves us and wants to be in relationship with us, but sin separates us from Him. Jesus—who has no sin—is the only One who can pay the price for our sin so our relationship with God can be restored. God loved us by sending Jesus!

## LESSON 4 **EARLY ELEMENTARY**

### Small Group

**Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.**

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** God Loved Us by Sending Jesus

**SCRIPTURE:** Isaiah 11; John 1

**WORD OF WONDER:** From Hebrews 11:1

### Pre-Service Connection (15–20 min)

**RESOURCES:** whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils, board games or games

#### Games & Activities Guide

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have activities ready 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!

#### As kids arrive ...

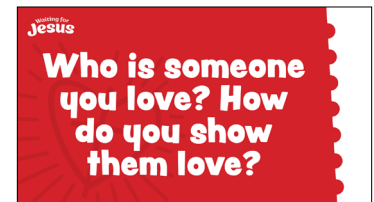
Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

Use the Welcome Question and the following "I'm Curious"

questions to engage kids. Say "**I'm curious..**" before each question and give kids an chance to think before answering 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.

Consider having a whiteboard or poster for kids to write or draw answers to any of the questions:

- **Have you ever done something really nice for someone you loved? Share your story.**
- **How does God show His love for us? What are examples from the Bible or your own life?**



### Small Group Begins

After the Opening Activity or game, Large Group Leader will begin small group time by reading the Welcome Question aloud and inviting everyone to open their Bibles and begin.

## Curiosity Activity: Stand Up If You Love ...

Gather all the kids and tell them to sit down. **Today we're going to talk about love. What does it mean to love someone or something?** Allow the kids to respond. **You might love pizza or candy or love your parents. Those are different kinds of love! Let's do an activity where you'll stand up if you love the things I call out. After each round, everyone will sit back down. Only stand up if you love what I say.**

Say the following things, and invite the kids to stand up each time if they love what you say (or add your own ideas that are customized for your group):

- Ice cream
- Sports (name a local favorite team if you have one)
- Playing outside
- Swimming
- Animals
- Your family
- Reading
- Drawing
- Pickles
- Your stuffed animal or favorite toy
- Music or singing
- Dancing
- The color blue
- Chicken nuggets
- Sleep
- Running
- Friends

**We didn't all love the same things! We might love those things in different ways, and we might all show love differently. Did you know that there is Someone who loves us more than any of those? It's God! He showed His love for us in a big way! We'll learn about that in God's big story today.**

## Word of Wonder

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, paper (several sheets), scissors (prep only), markers

### WORD OF WONDER

**Faith is being sure of what we hope for and sure of what we do not see.**

—from Hebrews 11:1

Ahead of time, cut out 18 paper hearts, and write on each one a word of the verse (with the reference on the last heart). You can also write a number on each heart to help the kids put the hearts in order.

**Our Word of Wonder for the Waiting for Jesus series is from Hebrews 11:1. Let's practice saying the Word of Wonder together.**

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

- **FAITH**—Make prayer hands.
- **IS BEING SURE**—Make a fist with one hand and put it down on your other hand (open palm).
- **OF WHAT WE HOPE FOR**—Put your fist down onto your open palm once for each word (what, hope).
- **AND SURE**—Hands on your hips.
- **OF WHAT WE DO NOT**—Hold one finger up and shake it back and forth (“No, No”).
- **SEE**—Put your hands by your eyes like binoculars.
- **FROM HEBREWS 11:1**—Hands open like a book.

Gather the kids together and put the paper hearts with the verse on them in a pile on the floor .

**Each heart has a word of our verse on it. We'll work together to put the verse in order. Even if you can't read, we'll work together. The hearts remind us that God loves us, and we can be certain of that. Even if we can't see God's love, we can feel it and know that God loves us by sending Jesus.**

**When we finish saying the verse, I'll call out a picture. If you have that picture on your card, you will run to the wall and say the verse as loud as you can. Then come back to the circle, and we will play again. If you need help saying the verse, that's OK!**

Let the kids go one at a time and get a heart from the pile, then bring it back to your group. The kids can set the paper hearts on the floor while leaders help the kids put the hearts in order. When the words to the verse are in order, encourage the kids to say the verse together. Even if kids can't read well, you can point to the words on the hearts and say the words with them.

**We can always be sure that God loves us! He showed His love by sending Jesus.**

Gather the kids to discuss these questions:

- **How do you know God loves you?** (If the kids need help, offer ideas such as: He sent Jesus; the Bible tells us; I feel His love; I have faith; He made us; He forgives us.)
- **How can you show God that you love Him?** (If the kids need help, offer ideas such as: We can tell Him we love Him; we can worship Him; we can serve Him; we can give Him our hearts, etc.)

## God's Big Story

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, Bible Story picture SG

### 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 start by reading part of God's big story from the books of Isaiah and John in the Bible. Long before Jesus was born, God made a special promise through a prophet named Isaiah. God said a wonderful King would come from a family tree like a tiny new plant growing strong. This King would be filled with God's Spirit and bring peace to the whole world. Today we will hear how that promise began when Jesus came to live with people on earth.

Read the God's Big Story Script below from Isaiah : 2, and John : , .

Let's all sit in our circle and make our hands small like a tiny seed. Long ago, God promised that a special new King would grow from a family, just like a little plant grows into something strong. Slowly stretch your arms up like you are growing into a tall plant. God said this King would be full of God's Spirit and would bring peace.

Isaiah also told a beautiful picture of peace. Pretend to be a fast lion, then freeze like you are calm and gentle. Animals that usually do not get along would live peacefully together. God was showing what His world would be like when His promised King came.

Now we jump forward to the book of John. John tells us something very special about Jesus. Before anything was made, Jesus was already with God. John calls Jesus "the Word." Touch your mouth like you are about to talk. A word tells us what someone thinks and who they are. Calling Jesus "the Word" means He shows us exactly what God is like.

Jesus made everything. Make big sweeping circles with your arms like you are making the whole world. Then something amazing happened. Jesus came to live with people. Pretend to knock on your heart like Jesus is coming close.

Jesus brought God's light into the world. Turn on a pretend light switch. When we see Jesus, we see God. God's promise of peace and new life began to grow right in front of everyone.

## Discussion Questions

**SUPPLIES:** paper heart, scissors (prep only)

Ahead of time, cut out a paper heart. Gather the kids to sit in a circle.

**We're talking today about how God showed His amazing love for us by sending Jesus to earth for us. We all sin (that means we make wrong choices) and need to be forgiven. God loves us so much that He left heaven to make His home with us. Jesus is God. And Jesus came so that people could be saved and forgiven. We're going to remember God's love as we pass a paper heart around the circle like a hot potato. Pass it around quickly! When I say, "Stop," whoever has the heart will answer a question.**

Give the paper heart to a kid in the circle and encourage the kids to pass it around the circle. Say, "Stop" at various times and ask a question to whoever has the heart.

**Leader Tip:** Jesus is God and has always existed. Yet He is also God's Son. This idea, based on the doctrine of the Trinity, might be new (and confusing!) to kids. Explain that God is three persons but still one God: Father, Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit. While Jesus was born on earth as a baby, He has always existed because He is God.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **What was God's plan to save people from sin?** (to send Jesus to earth)
- **What was the name of the prophet who promised a Branch would come to save everyone?** (Isaiah)
- **Who was the Branch?** (Jesus)
- **Who makes you feel loved? How does that person make you feel loved?**
- **How can you show God that you love Him?**
- **Why was it special for Jesus to come to earth?**
- **Who does God love?** (all of us!)

**We can be forgiven for the wrong things we do—our sin. Because of Jesus, we can have a relationship with God and be close with Him. Jesus came to save and forgive us. That is the most amazing action of love. Let's talk to God now in prayer and thank God for Jesus.**

Invite kids to share their prayer requests and praises from the week and give them time to pray for one another. If kids need help getting started, together list all the ways God shows us that He loves us. Feel free to lead your group in prayer while your kids pray silently.

## Head to Large Group!

Return and finish the rest of this guide before parents arrive.



## Responding in Worship: Promise Tree with Heart Gift

**SUPPLIES:** craft sticks per child, tape or glue, gift tag per child, small heart sticker per child, markers or crayons, pom poms or stickers for decorating, optional glitter or jewels

**RESOURCES:** music from the [Waiting for Jesus Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#)

**Jesus is the promised Branch God told Isaiah about, the Savior who would grow from a family tree and bring God's peace and love to the world. God showed His love by sending Jesus to live with us. Today we will make a tree to help us remember God's promise and give a heart back to God as our gift of love.**

Give each child four craft sticks. Help them arrange three into a triangle and tape or glue the ends together. Attach the fourth stick to the back as the trunk to make a simple tree shape. As they work, briefly remind them that Jesus is the special Branch God promised would grow.

Let children decorate their trees using markers, stickers, or pom poms. As they decorate, invite simple wonder questions quietly at the tables, such as:

- *I wonder how God felt when He sent Jesus.*
- *I wonder how the world felt when Jesus was born.*
- *I wonder how Jesus shows God's love to us today.*

Give each child a gift tag and a heart sticker. If they can write, they may write their name. If not, they may draw a simple picture. Explain that the heart sticker is their way of giving their love to God because God first loved them and sent Jesus. Play soft worship music while they place the heart sticker on the gift tag.

Help them attach the gift tag to their tree with tape or glue.

While the music continues, read slowly:

- **Romans 5:8**
- **1 John 4:9**

Invite the children to quietly hold their tree and heart while you pray a short thank you prayer for Jesus. Encourage kids to take their Promise Tree home to remember that God kept His promise and showed His love by sending Jesus.

## Closing Game: The Floor Is Lava

**SUPPLIES:** red construction paper several sheets , scissors prep only , tape

Ahead of time, draw a heart on red construction paper, one for each kid Tape a paper for each child to the floor.

Today we're learning God loved us by sending Jesus. God's love for us is so big. Let's play a game of The Floor Is Lava! You'll walk all around the room (not just near the hearts). When I say, "The floor is lava," you have five seconds to quickly go to a heart. When I get to five, if someone is still not on a heart, that person will shout the Wonder Truth, "God loved us by sending Jesus." If everyone is on a heart, we'll play another round! lay several rounds, encouraging the kids to walk all around the room and go stand on a heart when you say, The floor is lava!

**Leader Tip:** To add an extra challenge to the game, remove a heart each round.

**Make It Inclusive:** for kids who can't move around quickly, invite them to sit near a heart and toss a beanbag onto a paper heart instead of running onto one.