

# Devotional of the Month: Loving Heart

The devotional is broken into four days, but feel free to do it at your own pace throughout the month. Read the italic section or paraphrase with your children to fit their age level.

## Day 1: God Loves Us!

### **Introduction:**

*Of all the people you could be like, who would you like to be like and why? (Wait for answers- some might include superheroes, princesses, sports celebrities, parents, friends, etc.)*

*Do you know who the most important person to be like is? It's Jesus, God's Son! We want to be like Jesus because He has such a beautiful heart. He never hurts anyone or does anything wrong! The ways in which Jesus acts towards others are called His character traits. Some of the character traits Jesus shows in the Bible are kindness, helpfulness, wisdom, and love. No one else in the world has a heart as beautiful as Jesus with so many good character traits. And because we want to be like Jesus, we want to have good character traits, too! That means we can become kind, helpful, wise, and loving like Jesus! Do you want to learn to act like Jesus and have good character? I sure do!*

*We will be learning a new character trait each month. This month we will start with the most important character trait! Any guesses? (Wait for a response) I will give you a clue. What month is it right now? And what special holiday do we celebrate in February? Valentine's Day- that's right! What do we celebrate during Valentine's Day? (Wait for response) Love! The Bible says that of all the character traits, love is the most important!*

### **Define Love:**

*So what does love mean? (Wait for answers) The dictionary defines love as liking something or someone a whole lot! What are some things you love? (Wait for answers) Love can be a feeling. When you think about someone you love, maybe your grandparents, parent, or best friend, doesn't it make you feel good inside? We just love them so much, right? Love can also be an action! We don't just have to feel happy because we love someone, we can show them we love them!*

### **Give Examples:**

*What are some ways we can show people love?*

*How do you like people to show you love?*

Some examples to talk about include- giving hugs, telling someone you love them, giving gifts to people, doing something nice for someone, and spending time with someone. Gary Chapman's *The 5 Love Languages of Children* is a great book for parents read that talks about these different ways we can show love to others.

### **Learn from Jesus:**

*Let's see how Jesus showed love when He was on earth. Read Matthew 19:13-15*

*"Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there." (NIV)*

### **Read paraphrase for younger kids:**

*In this true story from the Bible, some people brought their children to see Jesus. But Jesus' disciples or friends thought He was too busy to play with kids. But Jesus told the disciples to let the children come to Him and that they have a special place in His Kingdom. He put his hands on them and spent time with them.*

*In what ways did Jesus show He loved children?*

*Jesus showed He loved people in the Bible in many ways. In this Bible story, we learn Jesus spent time with people, He said nice things to them, and he touched them - probably giving hugs to children. We also know that He listened to people and helped people feel better by healing them. And do you know the biggest way that He showed everyone in the world that He loved them, including you and me? He died on the cross for our sins so we can go to Heaven to be with Him one day!*

To further explain how Jesus loves us and died for our sins, [click here](#) for a great video.

### **Prayer:**

*Let's pray and thank God that He loves us so much.*

*Dear God, thank you that you made us and you love us so much. Thank you that you sent your Son Jesus to teach us how to love others. Thank you that Jesus loved us so much that He made a way to get to Heaven so we can live with Him there one day. Amen.*

## Day 2: Loving God

### **Read Verse and Ask Questions:**

*Let's read from the Bible today to learn more about God's love. Read Matthew 22:34-38*

*"Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. 35 One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment." Matthew 22:34-28 (NIV)*

### **Paraphrase for younger kids:**

*The Bible says a man came up to Jesus and asked Him a very important question. He asked Him what the most important rule is in the Bible. Jesus told him the most important rule is to love God as much as we can! We can love Him by how we feel, how we think, and how we act!*

*What is the greatest commandment or rule of all the Bible?*

*How much are we to love God?*

*Last time we learned that God loves us soooooo much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for us so that we can go to Heaven. Knowing God loves you sooooooo much, does that make it easier to love Him soooooo much, too?*

### **Apply What We've Learned:**

*Now that we know how much God loves us and how important it is that we love Him back, let's think of some ways we can love God and Jesus this month.*

- 1. How can we tell God and Jesus how much we love them? (Sing, pray, etc.)*
- 2. How can we spend time getting to know Jesus and God? (Read the Bible, pray, etc.)*
- 3. What can we give to show we love them? (Give to church or those in need, etc.)*
- 4. What can we do to show we love them? (Help those in need, obey our parents, etc.)*

**Prayer:** *Let's pray and ask God to help us to love Him.*

*Dear God, thank you that you love us so much and made us to love you back. Help us to show you love in many different ways and always put you first. We love you, Jesus. Amen.*

**Remind/Reinforce:**

- 1. Make a list of how and when your family is going to practice loving God this week. Use your list from above. This could be as easy as doing family devotions and going to church together, but feel free to be creative.**
- 2. Praise your children when you observe them loving God in one of these ways and talk about how happy that must make God.**

## Day 3: Loving Our Family

### **Read Verse and Ask Questions:**

*Let's read our verse again this week and add another verse. Matthew 22:34-40.*

*"Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (NIV)*

### **Paraphrase for younger kids:**

*So again, the Bible says a man came up to Jesus and asked Him what the most important rule in the Bible. Jesus told him it was to love God as much as we can! Then Jesus told him the second most important rule is to love others.*

*What is God's second most important rule?*

*We have learned that God loves us SO much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for us so that we can go to Heaven. Knowing God loves you soooooo much, does that make it easier to love others?*

### **Apply What We've Learned:**

*Now that we know how much God loves us and how important it is that we love God and others, let's think of some ways we can love our family. (choose a family member)*

- 1. How can you tell \_\_\_\_\_ how much you love him/her?*
- 2. How can you spend time with \_\_\_\_\_ to show you love him/her?*
- 3. What can you make/share/give to \_\_\_\_\_ to show you love him/her?*
- 4. How can you help \_\_\_\_\_ to show you love him/her?*

**Prayer:** *Let's pray and ask God to help us love our family.*

*Dear God, thank you that you love us so much and made us to love each other. Help us to show each other love in what we say and how we act. We love you, Jesus. Amen.*

### **Remind/Reinforce:**

- 1. Make a list of how and when your children are going to show love to a family member this week.** This could be as easy as drawing a picture for a parent or letting a sibling pick what they are going to play together. Feel free to be creative or see what your kids come up with!
- 2. Praise your children when you observe them loving family members this week and talk about how they are having a loving heart like Jesus!**

## Day 4: Loving Those in Need

### **Read Verse and Ask Questions:**

*We have been talking about loving God and loving others. Who else can we love besides our family? Let's read another verse from the Bible to get some ideas of whom Jesus wants us to love. Read Matthew 25:35-36, 40*

*"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me....whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (NIV)*

### **Paraphrase for younger kids:**

*Jesus is talking to His followers and telling them that whenever they help someone in need like giving water to someone who is thirsty or providing clothes to the poor, that it is like they are doing it for Him. Jesus loves when we help others. We are loving Him when we love others!*

*Who in this verse is Jesus talking about loving?*

*Do you think that loving people who are in need is a way to share Jesus' love with them? Why?*

*Who do you know that is hurting or in need? (brainstorm as a family- it could be a new neighbor, someone who lost a loved one, someone who is sick, someone struggling financially, etc.)*

### **Prayer:**

*Let's pray and ask God to help us love those in need.*

*Dear God, thank you that you love us so much and made us to love even those who are hurting or in need. Help us to show God's love to others by helping them and praying for them. We love you, Jesus. Amen.*

### **Remind/Reinforce:**

- 1. As a family, choose someone who is in need and think of a way you can share God's love with them by helping them in some way.***
- 2. If you can't think of someone, pray as a family that God will bring someone to you and be looking for opportunities to share God's love with people throughout the month.***