

JOHN 3:16 - WHOEVER BELIEVES



Big idea: God loves me

Key verse: John 3:16 - "God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life."

THOUGHTS FOR LEADERS

It is our goal in ministry for children to hear the good news of Jesus Christ. Yet time and time again we have seen that this good news falls on deaf ears unless it is prefaced by a certainty that *they are loved*. More than anything, children crave love: not fluffy, feel-good, affectionate love (although that can be nice as well), but a love that is constant, that can be counted on whether they are being bad or being good, whether they are absent or present. We, as leaders, have such an opportunity to model the love God has for these children to them. As the children grow in confidence in the love we have for them, they become more open to the idea of a God they can't see, who loves them as well.

Our prayer for you is that you will have the patience and wisdom to demonstrate Christ's love as you reach out to the children around you.

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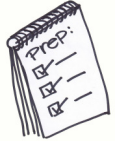
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SUPPLIES LIST:

| Attention Grabber | Teaching Time | Small Group | Memory Verse |
|---|---------------|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Copies of attention grabber 1.10 (attachment) - Tape/sticky tack - Pages of stickers for each child | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prayer journals - Copy of small group lesson plan, pages 7-9 - copies of page 10 (one verse per person) - scissors - scotch tape - prayer journal | <p>Print out of Memory Verse 1.30 (attachment)</p> |
| Craft Table | Games | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suckers Felt/fleece fabric Needles Embroidery thread Ribbons Hole Punch Scissors Copies of Craft 1.10, Craft 1.11 Washable marker | | | |



attention grabber



Place photos (Attention grabber 1.10) around the room. Give each child a sheet of stickers (hearts, dots, or other small stickers). Have music ready to signal end of game.

Leader: Everyone has a sheet of stickers. These stickers represent things you LOVE. All around the room there are pictures of people and things that you may or may not love. On the count of three, you're going to go around and place your stickers on the things you love the most. You can put more than one sticker on something you REALLY love, but don't put any stickers on the ones you don't love. So, for example, I really love my mom, so I'm going to put one of my stickers on this picture of a mom. I really don't love onions, so I won't put anything on that one. You have five minutes to decide where to put your stickers. When you hear the music playing, come back to your seat and sit down. Ready? On your mark, get set, go!

Allow kids time to complete this exercise. After five minutes, or when it seems like it's winding down, play the music to signal an end to the exercise.

Leader: Great job, everyone! Let's see what some of the results are! It looks like a lot of people loved (*insert one of the more popular items*). Hardly anybody loved (*insert less popular item*).

This is just a fun game, and it doesn't really mean a lot, but it makes us think a little bit about love. I love my mom, but I also love hot fudge sundaes... do I love them the same? I hear some of you say you love Justin Bieber, and that you love God... do you love them the same? Are there different kinds of love? What do they mean? Today we are exploring the truth that God loves us... and we'll find out what He meant when He said that!



TEACHING TIME

Have you ever worked really hard on something, put a lot of effort into it, and it came out *great*? Maybe you made something you were super proud of: a model airplane, or a picture you drew, or a craft you made. Have you ever been super proud of something you made?

God made each one of us, and is very proud of us! More than that, He loves us in the most amazing ways!

There are a lot of things we claim to love. Maybe we say we love pizza, our little sister, that cool new song on the radio and that totally hot actor on TV... but we don't mean that we feel the same about all of them, do we?

We use the word love a lot. So when somebody tells us that God loves us, maybe it doesn't mean much to us. Maybe we think that means he likes us, but only if we're good. Or maybe we think it means that as long as we go to church, he thinks we're cool. Or maybe we think it's kind of an obligation: he *has* to love us.

God knew that we'd use the word love in so many different ways that he decided to tell us what He thought love was. And it's pretty amazing! Listen to this:

Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not want what belongs to others. It does not brag. It is not proud. It is not rude. It does not look out for its own interests. It does not easily become angry. It does not keep track of other people's wrongs.

Love is not happy with evil. But it is full of joy when the truth is spoken. It always protects. It always trusts. It always hopes. It never gives up. (I Corinthians 13:4-7).

Wow! That sounds so good, it almost sounds impossible! I don't think I *ever* act that unselfishly to anyone: even to the people I love the most! But that is God's definition of love, and He lives it. So when He says He loves you... He means it in the most amazing way. He means He doesn't keep track of what you've done wrong. He never gives up on you. He is patient with you and kind to you. Wow. Isn't it good to know God loves you with THAT kind of a love?



small groups



one copy of small groups handouts (pages 7-9)
copies of Bible verse with name inserts (page 10) (one per person)
scissors
scotch tape
prayer journal

Leader: In front of us are two categories: one for things or people that we like, and one for things or people that we love. We're going to cut out these pictures and decide where each one goes. When we like someone or something, we mean it or that person might make us happy, feel nice or be enjoyable. When we love someone, it means that we might not always *like* them – they might not make us happy – but we still care about them a lot. One good example might be your mom. You probably don't *like* your mom very much when she tells you not to watch TV until your room is clean. You might not even *feel* like you love her, but you still care about her and would be sad if anything happened to her. So now we need to decide which of these we **like** and which of these we **love**. Let's do that together.

As the children cut out the pictures, decide together where each one belongs.

Discussion questions:

- What are some things you can do to show a person you love them?
- What has someone done to show you they love you?

Leader: We might give flowers for someone we love, or stand up for someone in our family if they were being bullied, but God showed us the most amazing kind of love: he sent his son, Jesus, to die for us because he loves us so much! John 3:16 says "**God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life.**" But the Bible wasn't just written for "anyone." It was written for each of us. So we're going to each take one of these cards with the verse on it, but in each blank I want you to write your own name there, then when we're done we're going to read it out loud. This is what mine sounds like:

God loved **Linda** so much that he gave his one and only Son so that if **Linda** believes in him **Linda** will not die but will have eternal life.

Let children fill out their cards (small group 1.12) and read them out loud to each other.



Leader: We're going to do something each week in small groups called prayer journals. If you have something you want to pray about, we'll write it down in our journals before we pray, and that way we can keep track of what we're praying about and how God's answering us over the months. Does anyone have prayer requests today?

Allow time to give & record prayer requests, take time to pray for each request and end with thanking God for his unconditional love.

Cut out each square and decide in which category it belongs





LOVE

God loved _____ so much that he
(Name)
gave his one and only Son so that if
_____ believes in him
(Name)
_____ will not die but will have
(Name)

eternal life. (John 3:16, NIV)



God loved _____ so much that he
(Name)
gave his one and only Son so that if
_____ believes in him
(Name)
_____ will not die but will have
(Name)

eternal life. (John 3:16, NIV)



God loved _____ so much that he
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gave his one and only Son so that if
_____ believes in him
(Name)
_____ will not die but will have
(Name)

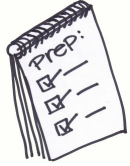
eternal life. (John 3:16, NIV)

God loved _____ so much that he
(Name)
gave his one and only Son so that if
_____ believes in him
(Name)
_____ will not die but will have
(Name)

eternal life. (John 3:16, NIV)



memory verse



printout memory verse 1.10

Verse of the Month:

John 3:16 - "God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life."

Pass out the words in the verse to each child so that all the words are being held by someone. Read the verse aloud together, and repeat three times. Have one child pick a word to put face down on the floor, and read the verse together, remembering the missing word. Put another word facedown on the floor and try the verse together again. Continue removing words from the verse until your group can say it together without any words at all.

Bonus Verse:

1 John 4:8b-9 - God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

John

3:16

God loved

the world

**so much
that He**

gave His

**one and
only Son.**

Anyone

**who
believes**

in Him

**will not
die**

but will

have

eternal life.

Craft Table

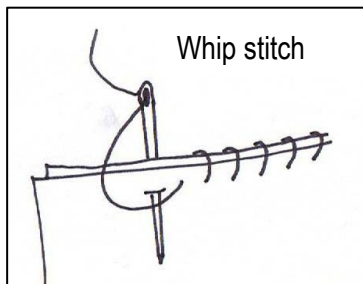
The Sweetest Gift



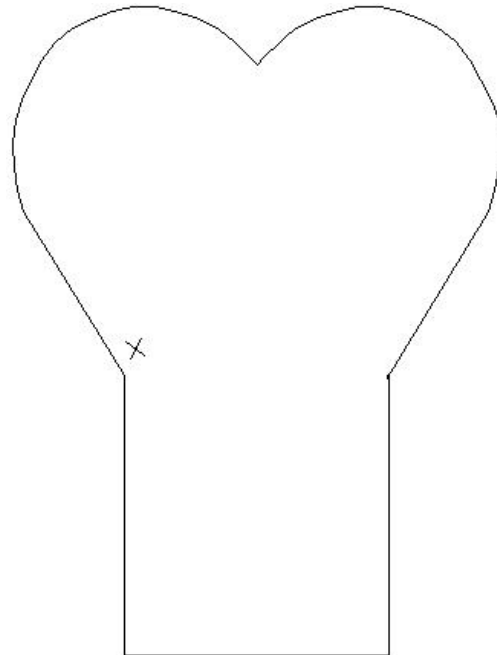
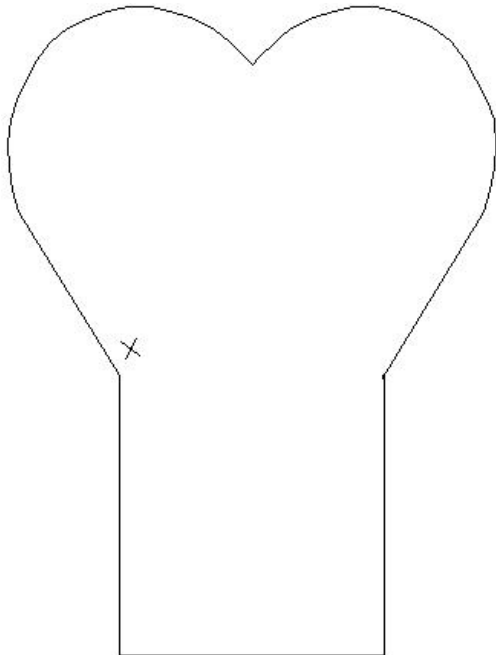
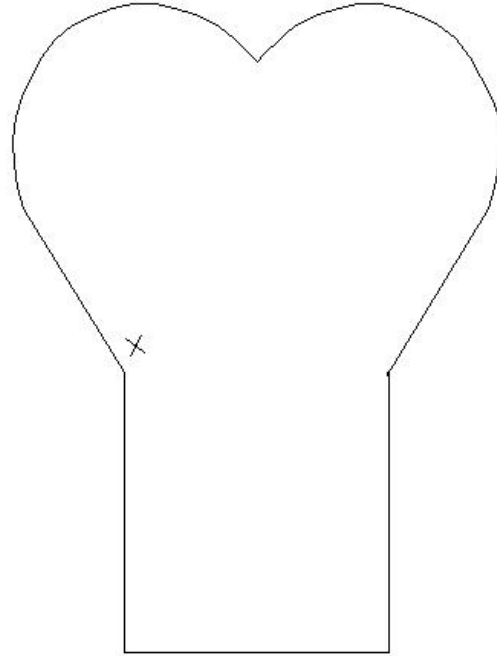
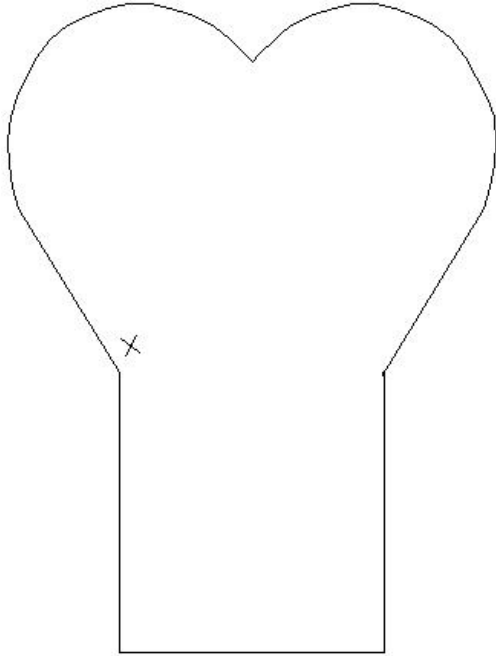
- Sucker
- Felt/fleece fabric
- Needle
- Embroidery thread
- Ribbon
- Hole Punch
- Scissors
- Copies of Craft 1.10, Craft 1.11
- Washable marker



1. Fold fabric in half, and using a washable marker, trace Craft 1.10 template onto one half of fabric. Cut out (cuts 2 identical pieces).
2. Using a basic whip stitch, stitch the two pieces together, leaving the bottom flat edge open. (Optional: younger children can glue the pieces together instead).
3. Stitch (or glue) a 5" piece of ribbon to the heart ("x" marks the approximate spot on the template).
4. Cut out verse from Craft 1.11, and punch a hole through it. Thread the verse through the ribbon. Place sucker inside the heart, and tie it into a bow for a pretty heart-shaped treat!



Craft 1.10 Template



Craft 1.11 Verses

| | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| o | God's love is the sweetest treat | o | God's love is the sweetest treat |
| o | God's love is the sweetest treat | o | God's love is the sweetest treat |
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games

No prep needed

Play in a large open space

“Chain Tag”

Select one child to be “it.” When the whistle blows, the child begins tagging others. When someone is tagged, they become “it” as well, but they stick to the person who tagged them by holding hands. Each time a person on the end tags someone, they join the chain, until finally everyone is part of a chain. If time allows, start the game again with the last person tagged becoming “it.” (Option: in a large group, you might want to allow the chain to break in half once there are 6-8 people in it).