

# *Love Your Neighbors*



## **Discussion:**

When Jesus was asked to identify God's greatest commandment, He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30). But what does this truly mean? What does it look like?

When you find something fantastic, you want to tell others about it, right? What can be more wonderful than finding out that God loves us, forgives us, and offers us eternal life through Jesus? When we become followers of Jesus, God wants us to tell others too! If we wonder what it means to love our neighbors, God provides a secret—just love them the way we love ourselves. We never fail to love ourselves, so if we will just treat others the way we want to be treated, we will always know just what to do! God also makes it clear who our neighbors are— everyone we meet, regardless of who they are. If we know them, and they need Jesus, they are our neighbors!

Have you ever done something to help or reach out to a neighbor?

## **These stories can be powerful!**

I once saw that a neighbor's lawn had been neglected for weeks. I decided one day, that I would help them out and mow the lawn. Soon it was raining,

and the task turned into a big job. I loved my neighbor through my simple act of mowing his lawn. It turns out the man was ill, and was extremely thankful. Later that week, he showed up at my house with a thank you card- expressing his gratitude.

What is your story? How has God used you to make a difference in the life of a neighbor? Remember, a neighbor doesn't have to be someone who lives in your neighborhood.

**Prior to Reading the Scripture and story, Create Two large construction paper hearts, one saying "Love God" and the other "Love Your Neighbor"**

**Scripture:**

**"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." Mark 12:29-31**

One day Jesus was in the temple teaching the people who were gathered there. A group of religious leaders began asking him tricky questions to try to embarrass him so that the people would not listen to his teaching. One of the men asked Jesus, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment?" Which one do you think Jesus said was the most important? (Hold up the heart that says, "Love God.") Jesus answered him, "The most important is this, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind,' this is the greatest commandment.

How do you think we might show our love to God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength? (Allow time for them to suggest some ways.) Those are all great suggestions. Here are some ways that I thought we might show our love to God. Worship, prayer, Bible study, singing praises, bringing our offerings, and giving thanks for all his blessings.

Do you know what Jesus said next? (Hold up the heart that says, "Love Your Neighbor.") He said, "The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

Well, how do you think we could love our neighbor? (Allow time for responses.) Good ideas! Here are some things you might not have thought of.

We could treat them like we want to be treated, be kind to them, forgive them when they hurt our feelings, be helpful in times of trouble, and be their friends.

These are the commandments that Jesus thought were the most important. It isn't easy to keep those commandments, is it?

Jesus tells us the two most important things for us to do: to love God, and to love each-other. And he tells us *how* we ought to love each-other. Perhaps one of you noticed, He says: "love thy neighbor as \_\_\_\_\_" As what? Did any of you catch it? (As Yourself!)

Yes, exactly! As yourself. You should love other people the way you love yourself. But what does that mean? I remember when I was little girl— a little younger than you, I think— I was fighting with my sister, and I pulled her hair and made her cry, and my mother scolded me and said: "You should love your sister as yourself." I wondered what that meant, and my mother explained that it meant *I should treat my sister the way I would want her to treat me*. "Ah," said I, "then I will play tennis with her, because I would want her to play tennis with me." But my sister did not want to play tennis.

### **What does it really mean to love other people the way you love yourself?**

There are two kinds of love. One kind of love is the love that I have for chocolate. I love chocolate. But this does not mean that I want to make chocolate happy, to give it joy, to give it good things. No, it means I want the chocolate to give *me* joy; I want to eat the chocolate and taste its sweetness. To love other people the way I love chocolate would not be enough. If I love other people by wanting them to give *me* good things, give *me* joy, make *me* happy, then I do not love them in the right way. But there is a second kind of love. It is the kind of love that I have for myself. I love myself, and this means that I want myself to have joy and happiness and good things. We all love ourselves in this way. All of us want to ourselves to happy and have joy and good things.

So this is what it means to love yourself. And so, to love your neighbor as *yourself*, means to love the other people that you know (your brothers and sisters, your parents, the other children in your school) in this way: to want to make them happy and give them joy and every good thing. Not to make them frown cry, but to make them smile and laugh.

**This is the way that God loves you: He wants to give you joy and happiness, and He gives you every good thing that you have. Let us pray to God today, and ask Him to help us to love Him with our whole hearts, and to love each-other the way we love ourselves.**



**LOVE THY NEIGHBOR**

**Here is a Youtube video about Loving your Neighbor:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qdpUEMP7QHA>

### **Love our Neighbor Craft Activity**

#### **Materials needed:**

- Construction paper
- White paper
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

With our craft, we wanted to focus on ways that we could actually love our neighbor, and expand the idea of a “neighbor” to include anyone you meet, not just the person who lives next door to you.

#### **Instructions:**

1. Pre-cut different colored hearts ahead of time, either with a die-cut machine, or by hand. If you have older children, you certainly could show them how to make a valentine style heart using the fold and cut method. Hand-write the scripture Mark 12:29-31 (above) –it to a small colored piece of paper to make it stand out in the center of their paper.
2. Trace your child’s hands onto red construction paper, and cut those out so they are ready for the craft time.

3. The children glue the verse in the center of their paper, then glue down their hand.
4. Write down ways that we can be neighbors and show love to others on their hearts.

**Here are some ideas to get you started:**

- Feed neighbor's pets
- Pick up trash in my neighborhood
- Open the door other others
- Bake cookies for someone else
- Clean room for parents
- Share toys
- Make a card for someone
- Recycle
- Pray for others

Encouraged the children to put the paper up at home and try to do some of the actions during the week as they practiced loving their neighbors.

Have a fantastic Week! ☺

Krystal



## My Good Neighbour Recipe

<u>Ingredients</u>
a sprinkling of _____
a pinch of _____
a teaspoonful of _____
2 spoonfuls of _____
50g of _____
1 handful of _____
3 heaped tablespoons of _____
1 litre of _____
100g of _____
a dusting of _____

<u>Method</u>
Mix all of the ingredients together and you will have _____.
