

The Chapter of Love



Scripture Reference: [1 Corinthians 13](#)

Suggested Theme: God is love. We should show God's love to everyone.

Memory Verse: "So these three things continue forever: faith, hope and love. And the greatest of these is love." [1 Corinthians 13:13, ICB](#)

Story Overview:

The church in Corinth had many problems, and Paul addressed those in the two letters he wrote to them. He instructs that their internal bickering and selfishness could be solved if they practised one thing: LOVE. In this chapter, Paul gives practical advice on what love is and how to practice it.

Background Study:

We first learned of the city of Corinth when Paul visited it during his second missionary journey ([Acts chapter 18](#)). He had made his home there for a year and a half and managed to teach both Jews and Greeks about Christ. While in Corinth, Paul financially supported himself by working with [Priscilla and Aquila](#) in the tent-making trade.

It had been quite some time since Paul had been in Corinth. Reading this first letter, we soon discover that Paul addresses many problems. The Corinthian Christians were not unified and were not caring for one another. There were sharp disagreements, and some members even took each other to court to solve things. Many were acting selfishly. Also, the church did not correct people who were sinning, so there was a problem with sin in the church.

Despite these problems, God has not given up on the Corinthian church. This was seen in how the church continued to practice spiritual gifts. Even so, the church has many lessons about loving and obeying God and respecting other people.

This chapter of love is also important to us today. Children and adults have many things to learn about love. The word "love" is used in many ways and contexts in our lives. We love God. We love each other within a family or marriage. We love our friends. The word can also be as common as loving food, sports teams, or hobbies.

But "love" is more than just a word; it is more than a feeling. 1 Corinthians 13 reveals that love is expressed in attitudes and actions.

Most importantly, understanding and practising love is key to knowing God.

“Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

1 John 4:8, ICB

Our love for God and love for others are deeply connected. Jesus understood this when he answered questions from religious leaders.

One of the teachers of the law came to Jesus. He heard Jesus arguing with the Sadducees and the Pharisees. He saw that Jesus gave good answers to their questions. So he asked Jesus, “Which of the commands is most important?”

Jesus answered, “The most important command is this: ‘Listen, people of Israel! The Lord our God, he is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God. Love him with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’” The second most important command is this: “Love your neighbor as you love yourself.” These two commands are the most important commands. Mark 12:28-31, ICB

Hearts have long been used to depict love. Take the time to explain the connection between the heart and the meaning of love. Paul explained love in practical ways to do the same, but in ways a child understands. True love means loving with our hearts, thoughts, words, and actions. True love means showing love to people even if we are not in the mood. True love is showing love when we are tired or even when we are angry with someone. Jesus talked about this kind of love when he said to love our enemies and people who treat us badly ([Matthew 5:43-48](#)).

An outline of what Paul writes about love in 1 Corinthians 13:

1. Verses 1-3:

No matter how many good things we might do, they mean nothing if they are not done from a loving heart.

2. Verses 4-7:

Love is practical and is expressed in how we think, speak and act.

3. Verses 8-12:

Love lasts forever, and the Christian will spend a lifetime understanding it more clearly and practising it in increasing measure. When all other actions and events of this earth have passed, love will remain for eternity.

4. Verse 13:

Faith and hope are eternal, but love is the greatest.

Way to Introduce the Story:

Before class, cut out a large heart on paper. “Children, I will pass this heart around to each of you. You each have thirteen seconds to write or draw one thing you love on the heart.” Repeat this activity for a few rounds and count to 13 each time. After a good selection of words on the heart, read some of them off to the class. “We can love food, our pets, friends, girlfriend, our parents, God . . but are all these kinds of love the same? Of course not. We do not love ice cream in the same way we love God!

Today, we will learn about a special kind of true love that God wants us to feel in our hearts, think about in our minds, speak about in our words and show in our actions.

Does anyone wonder why I counted to 13 each time we wrote on our big hearts? I was giving you a clue about today's lesson. Some very important words about love are recorded in our Bibles in the book of 1 Corinthians. Does anyone want to guess what chapter in 1 Corinthians is the love chapter? 1 Corinthians chapter 13!"

The Story:

The Apostle Paul helped many people understand how to follow God. Sometimes, he talked to people, and sometimes, he wrote letters. Paul knew that the Christians in the city of Corinth had many problems, so he wrote letters to the whole church. In our Bible, these are called the letters to the Corinthians.

The Corinthians needed to learn one important lesson about what it means to LOVE other people. They were not showing love to each other, even in the church.

But what about us? Do you think we need to learn how to love other people better? I do!

So, let's listen to what Paul writes about love in 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

First, it doesn't matter how many good things we do if we do them without a loving heart. If we do not have a loving heart, all of these good things mean nothing.

- Being able to speak in many languages or even speaking like an angel isn't meaningful if we do not speak them with love. In fact, without love, beautiful words sound like a noisy bell or a loud cymbal.
- It doesn't matter if we are very clever or even if we understand all of God's secrets if we don't have love.
- We may believe in God SO much and have so much faith we could move a mountain, but it means nothing if we do not have love.
- It is good to help poor people, but even if we give all of our money to help people or give up our lives doing good things, it would be worth nothing to God if we did not have love.

God wants us to love Him and to love others. Sometimes loving people is hard, but God wants to help us. The Holy Spirit pours God's love into our hearts and helps us have love for others. But, we still have a choice to make. We have to choose to speak and act with love towards others.

Love is not just a feeling in your heart. Love is not just how you act. It is both a feeling and an action. When Paul wrote 1 Corinthians chapter 13, he gave some very practical ideas about real love. This love is God's kind of love.

- Love is patient.
- Love is kind.
- Love is not jealous.
- It does not brag
- and it is not proud.
- Love is not rude,
- is not selfish
- and does not become angry easily.
- Love does not remember wrongs done against it.
- Love takes no pleasure in evil but rejoices over the truth.
- Love patiently accepts all things.
- It always trusts

- hopes
- and always continues to be strong

Love never ends. There are gifts of prophecy, but they will end. There are gifts of speaking in different languages, but those gifts will end. There is the gift of knowledge, but it will end. These things will end because this knowledge and our prophecies are incomplete. But when perfection comes, the things that are not complete will end.

At the end of 1 Corinthians chapter 13, Paul writes that the longer we live, the more we should understand about love. Many of the good things we can do on this earth end. (We know this to be true, don't we? Summer holidays end. Toys break. Clothes wear out. Flowers, animals and even people grow old and eventually die.)

But Paul tells the Corinthian Christians to think about three important things that will continue forever: Faith, Hope, and Love. And guess which one of these three Paul said was the greatest? You guessed it! Love.

God's love will never run out, because God *is* love. God lives forever, and so does His love. When Jesus returns and makes the whole world new, we will live with God and have His perfect love forever.

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible, but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

[Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.](#)

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Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child's spiritual development and help them connect to God. [Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.](#)

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Review:

- Where do we find the chapter on love in the Bible? (1 Corinthians 13)
- Who is completely made of love? (God)
- How has God shown us love?
- Can you think of a Bible character who was very loving?
- Why does God want us to grow in love and do all things with love?

- Name something that Love is: (any of these: patient, kind, happy with the truth, patiently accepts all things, always trusts, always hopes, always continues strong, never-ending)
- Name something that Love is not or does not do: (any of these: not jealous, does not brag, is not proud, rude, selfish, does not become angry easily, does not remember wrongs done against it, and is not happy with evil)
- What does this scripture show you about God?
- What does this scripture show you about people?

Reflection:

- Which of the things that the Bible says love is 'not' do you find it hardest to obey? What about the easiest?
- Which of the things that the Bible says love 'is' do you find the most difficult to do? What about the easiest to do?
- When has Jesus shown His love for God or people in the Bible?
- When has God shown you His love for you?
- Who is the most loving person you know? Why? What makes them so loving?
- Is there anyone who doesn't treat you with love? (Suggestion: pray for the child and this situation. Take careful note on if something from this conversation needs to be reported or brought up to certain leaders or adults in your church)
- Who do you struggle to show love to? (Suggestion: pray with the child for this situation and for God to help them show love)
- What part of this scripture is the most interesting to you?
- What is something you wonder about in this story?

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a lifelong friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. [A variety of prayer methods are found here.](#)

Song Suggestions:

- [Ha-la-la-la Song](#)
- [Hello Hello Song](#)
- [If You Love Jesus Song](#)
- [Jesus' Love is a-Bubblin' Over Song](#)
- [Love is Something If You Give It Away](#)
- [L-O-V-E Song](#)
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more song options.

Activities and Crafts:

- [How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.](#)
- [Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.](#)

Activities:

- Make a list of ways to show love this week.
- Have children write out the list of love attributes in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Use dictionaries if necessary to explain and/or illustrate each of these.
- Older children could create a love challenge based on [1 Corinthians 13:4-7](#). Using a small piece of paper, each child writes down a way to show love during the following week. One challenge per paper. Have the children read the challenges out loud so that you can check to see if they are appropriate (and can be accomplished in a week). Then, have the children fold the papers and place them in a basket or bowl. After this, each child now draws out one folded challenge. This is their challenge for the week.

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable “God’s Story” printable reflection page. [Free printables for this story.](#)

Crafts:

- Write titles across the top of blank sheets of paper (Love is Patient, Love is Kind, etc.) and let the children draw pictures depicting each. You could do the same with a long roll of newsprint.
- Make any craft involving hearts.
- Let the children cut hearts out of pink or red paper and write parts of the verse on each heart. Provide flat chocolate bars and show the children how to wrap their paper around them. Give these away as gifts.

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. [Free printables for this story.](#)

Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page and puzzle worksheets \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Colouring page: Colour the border for I Corinthians 13 \(teacherhelp.org\)](#)
- [Colouring page of children playing \(christiananswers.net\)](#)
- [Craft: Adapt this “curved-flap Valentine Card” by substituting today’s verse for the Valentine’s message. Printable pattern for card \(Enchanted learning\)](#)
- [Craft: Printable envelope and verses about the heart \(thecraftyclassroom.com\)](#)
- [Worksheet for pre-school “Same and Different Hearts” \(abcteach.com\)](#)

- [Printable patterns of young child \(boy or girl\) holding a heart-suits pre-schoolers \(makinglearningfun.com\)](http://makinglearningfun.com)
- [Paraphrase of I Corinthians 13 that is easy for children to understand \(anabaptists.org\)](http://anabaptists.org)

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