

Featured Story

Love Is the Greatest
Commandment
(Mark 12:28–34)

Lesson Goals

- to identify we follow Jesus by loving God and others
- to recognize we can learn about love in Sacred Scripture
- to explain we can ask for forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation when we fail to love fully

Materials Needed

- The Catholic Children’s Bible
- Chapter 3 activity booklet
- Chapter 3 student booklet (God’s Treasure of Forgiveness)
- Treasure Map
- Stickers
- Journal
- Coloring and writing tools
- Colored paper
- White, red (2) construction paper, red pencils; gold or yellow crayons or markers
- 1-piece cardstock or cardboard
- Glue

We Follow Jesus’ Message of Love

Background Focus (for parents)

Today’s chapter focuses entirely on the Greatest Commandment as Jesus taught it: **to love God and to love others as we love ourselves**. In teaching this commandment, Jesus summarized and simplified the Law of God in terms anyone, even a child, can understand. This demonstrates his insight and brilliance as a teacher. Of course, Jesus makes clear that this love includes the Ten Commandments and other teachings of God’s Law. (See Matthew 23:23–24.) This chapter also introduces the term Sacred Scripture as an alternative for the Word of God and the Bible. We look to Scripture for our knowledge and understanding of God and his plan for us. If we want to follow Jesus, we will listen to his Word in Scripture and then love as he loved.

Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

✚ **Child:** Turn to page 1 in the Chapter 3 activity booklet and locate the prayer on the page.

Together: Begin prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

Parent: Say: "Let us remember, we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.

✚ **Child:** Read the prayer aloud. End with the Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

✚ **Child:** Put the word "LOVE" in your journey book. Write it yourself, print it off the computer, or cut the letters from a magazine and glue them in. Be creative as you like.

✚ Think of all the people you love. Write their names around the word LOVE.

(Possible responses might be: Mom and Dad, brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, etc.)

Parent: Encourage your child to expand their answers by asking:

➤ "Who else does Jesus tell us to love?"

(Possible responses might be: those who are poor, hungry, homeless, alone, friendless, etc.)

Together: Read over the list and add any other people you can think of.

(Suggestions: people who are disabled in some way, people who are gravely ill, people in prison.)

Parent: Congratulate your child on thinking of so many people to love. Explain that in this chapter they will learn more about the greatest commandment Jesus gave us: **the commandment of love.**

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

 **Child:** Find Mark 12:28-34 in The Catholic Children's Bible (pages 1554-1555).

Note for Parent: Take this opportunity to review with your child how to find bible verses and what the different numbers in the citation mean (ex: Book Chapter: Verse-Verse).

 Turn the page to the Featured Story on page 1556 and place an "I found it!" sticker on the page. (The words between the leaves are a shortened version of the Scripture story on pages 1554 and 1555.)

 Look at the artwork on pages 1556-1557 and describe what is happening in the picture.

Parent: Read the title of the Featured Story and then the Bible story. Then ask several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:

- Who came to Jesus with a question?
(A teacher of the Law. "The Law" is God's Law that he gave to Moses on Mount Sinai.)
- What question did this teacher ask?
("Which commandment is the most important of all?")
- Jesus replied with two important commandments. What was the first one?
(To love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.)
- What is the second important commandment?
(Love your neighbor as much as you love yourself.)

 **Child:** Turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the activity with the Bible open.

(Answers: 1. 6, 2. 5, 3. 10, 4. 3, including infant, 5. hanging clothes on a line, 6. a baby, 7. orange, 8. a bundle of sticks)

Understand It!

 **Child:** Read the paragraphs of Understand It! on page 1557

Parent: Ask your child to summarize what they just heard in the reading and review these key points with them:

- At the end of our lives, Jesus will not care how much money we made or how smart we are. He will ask us, “How much did you love?”
- The greatest thing we can do in life is to love God with all our heart, and to love our neighbor as much as we love ourselves.
- When we love, we are like God. Loving God and others is so important that God made it a law.

Live It!

Parent: Follow the suggestion in the last paragraph of Understand It! Beginning with the Sign of the Cross, pray a spontaneous prayer in these or similar words:

Together: “God, fill our hearts with your love more and more. Help us to grow in love for you. Help us to grow in love for our families, our friends, our neighbors, and all people everywhere. Amen.”

 **Child:** Read Live It! on page 1557

 **Child:** Follow the directions in Live It!

1. Cut out two paper hearts from the red construction paper.
2. On one heart write a way that you want to love God more.
3. On the other heart, write a way that you want to love others more.
4. Put your hearts where you can see them every day.
5. Make sure to save a page in your journey book to glue the hearts when you are ready to take them down.

Tell It!

 **Child:** Look at the images in Tell It! on page 1557.

 Describe what is happening in each of the images.

 Use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages that capture your interest.

(Remember to save enough stickers to use on the remaining Chapters.)

Core Learning Activity

The Greatest Commandment Booklet

Parent: Explain that because we follow Jesus we want to follow the Law of Love he gave us, the Greatest Commandment.

Together: Make a reminder of this law and make it look like a page from the Bible.

Child:

1. Fold the white construction paper in half lengthwise.
2. On the left half of the folded paper, write "LOVE GOD" in capital letters at the top of the page.
3. Continue with the words "with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength."
4. On the right half, write "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR" in capital letters at the top of the page and continue with "as you love yourself."
5. Fold the page to create a cover.
6. On the cover, print in gold or yellow crayon or marker, "THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT."
7. They may draw an outline in red around these words.
8. Glue into your journey book.

Process the Activity

 **Child:** Why is loving God and our neighbor so important.

(Responses might include: Because Jesus gave us this commandment; because when we love we are like God; because when we love we follow God's Law.)

 **Child:** How might this Bible page help your family?

(Responses might include: They will know what Jesus teaches about love; when we see it, we will remember not to start fights with our brothers and sisters; we will remember to share.)

Parent: Conclude by reminding your child that if we want to follow Jesus, we will love God, ourselves, and others as he taught us. Love is a decision and an action.

It is not something we do for one day, but something we do for the rest of our lives. Jesus will help us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation so that we can love God, ourselves, and others more fully.

Additional Activity Option

Jesus Teaches about Love (15 minutes)

Parent: The Bible includes many teachings of Jesus about love.

-  Cut the Bible passages (last page of the lesson plan) onto a single strip of paper. Keep them in box, basket, or jar kept alongside your child's bed or in the kitchen. Some place where you can remember to use it. (If your family is participating in Destined, you can keep the container at the prayer space.)
-  **Child:** Over the next week go to the container, take out one slip of paper.
-  **Child:** Use the Children's Bible to find the passage and read it out loud.

Parent: Explain the Bible verse briefly, if needed. Ask your child what they learned from reading God's Word in the Bible.

(Responses might include: We learned that God wants us to love others; we learned that love is the most important commandment.)

Parent: Conclude by reminding your child that if we want to follow Jesus, we must love God, ourselves, and others as He taught us.

Find (30 minutes)

God's Treasure of Forgiveness

Parent: Remind your child we learn about God in the Bible. Explain another name for the Bible is Sacred Scripture. When we read Sacred Scripture, we are reading God's Word. Give an example of today's reading from the Bible in which we learned that Jesus gave us the greatest commandment of all, the commandment to love.

- Explain they will likely hear God’s Word in the Sacrament of Reconciliation as well.
 - After the priest greets you, you will make the Sign of the Cross with the priest and he says a few words to encourage you to trust in God’s mercy.
 - Next, you may hear God’s Word from the Bible. Explain that the priest may read a short passage from Sacred Scripture, or he may ask you to read.
- Reading from the Bible— both in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and in our daily lives—allows us to hear about God’s love and forgiveness and helps us to love God and one another more fully.
- Remind your child that Sacred Scripture can help us see when we may not have loved as fully as we are called to do, or we may have sinned. Remind them the Good News is that we can trust in God’s loving-kindness, and we can ask for forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Remind them in this sacrament, we receive God’s grace, God’s new life, to help us love God, ourselves, and others.

 **Child:** Turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity.

(Answers: 1. Bible, Sacred Scripture, 2. God, 3. neighbor, 4. God’s Word, 5. Reconciliation)

Parent Note: This content is presented in a child-friendly way in the God’s Treasure of Forgiveness Student Booklet. You may wish to have your child read all or parts of chapter 3 to supplement the lesson. Or use the concluding points under “Things to Remember” to wrap up the lesson before prayer.

Lesson Wrap-Up

Parent: Invite your child to think back over all of the different things discussed in this lesson and have your child share some of the key things they learned.

- Ensure the following points are made:
 - We follow Jesus by loving God and others.
 - We learn about love in Sacred Scripture.
 - We can ask for forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation when we fail to love fully.

Closing Prayer

Together: Begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Parent: "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God."
Followed by a few seconds of silence.

 **Child:** Turn to page 1993 in The Catholic Children's Bible and read together
"A Prayer to Jesus."

Together: Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Extra Activity

 **Child:** Watch "Help Each Other & Love Each Other. Never Stop Sharing,"
available on YouTube (5:43)
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=help+each+other+%26+love+each+other.+Never+stop+sharing

Parent: Ask your child what characters or actions they remember from the video. Point out that each time someone in the video did a small act of love, the person who was helped did something to help someone else.

- Explain that because God loves us, we can share his love with others, even in little ways. When we share God's love, and love one another as Jesus asks us to do, we become part of a chain of love.
- Before gluing the activity booklet into the journey book, make sure to read over the Family Page.

John 13:34–35

John 14:15

John 14:21

John 14:23

John 15:10

John 15:12

John 15:13

John 15:17

Romans 12:9

Romans 12:10

Romans 13:8

Romans 13:9

Romans 13:10

1 Corinthians 13:1

1 Corinthians 13:2

1 Corinthians 13:3

1 Corinthians 13:4

1 Corinthians 13:5

1 Corinthians 13:6

1 Corinthians 13:7

1 Corinthians 13:8

1 Corinthians 13:13

1 Corinthians 16:14

