

1 THESSALONIANS: FAITH. LOVE. HOPE.



Week Seven: 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

To the Teachers

This letter to the Thessalonians is one of encouragement and thanksgiving for their faithfulness, but also a call to live even more as God's people. Let's be thankful as a church how God has worked in us, and also ask Him to draw us deeper into His Story. Pray for the kids to be filled with faith, love, and hope.

- **Big Idea:** God's love fills us to overflow with love for others

As Kids Enter (15 minutes - Classroom)

- **Question:**
Who do you love? Who loves you? Is it easier to love some people than others?
- **Starter: 'Spreading Love'**
In front of the kids, draw a heart on a paper towel using a pen. Then, using a red marker, color it in. Talk about how God fills us with His love. Then draw some smaller hearts above the first and do not color them. Talk about how God wants us to be overfilled with His love so it spreads to others. Dip the paper towel into a cup of water and watch the red marker spread.

You can view steps for this activity here: <http://playeatgrow.com/2015/02/valentine-object-lesson.html/>

Sing Together (15 minutes)

STORY (30 minutes - Lead Teacher)

You know how we've been reading a letter from Paul to the Thessalonians church? Remember how Paul kept writing how encouraged he was by them and how they showed great faith, love, and hope? Well, even though Paul was excited by how loving they were, he also wrote that he wanted them to have even more love! In fact, he wrote, *"may the Lord cause you to increase and overflow with love for one another and for everyone, just as we do for you. May he make your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints."*

God wanted to not only love the Thessalonians, but to fill them so full of His love that it would overflow and pour out - like when you fill your glass too full of orange juice and it spills out onto the counter! Only, what if when it spilled out of the glass, it fell into some other glasses and filled them up too? That's kind of what this meant. God's love would fill them so full that they would go out and share His love with others, so they would be filled too.

Paul wanted them to not only love one another in the church, but to show love to everyone - even the people who were mean to them for following Jesus! He said that this would make their hearts blameless and holy when Jesus returns. Jesus said something similar. One time someone asked him what God's greatest law was and Jesus said, *"Love the Lord your God with all you have and love your neighbor as yourself. The whole story of God has been about this!" (Matt. 22:36-40)*. He told people to love their enemies like they were their neighbors and to love their neighbors like themselves.

This is a radical kind of love - and it's the kind that Jesus showed us. He came to earth and loved us when we were enemies of God. This is why Paul could write this letter; because Jesus loved him when he was God's enemy, Paul could love the Thessalonians. Because God loved the Thessalonians by sending Paul with the good news of Jesus, they could love the people in their city. Because God has loved us through Jesus, we can love the world around us, too. *"We love because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19)*

[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]

- What does it look like to love someone?
- How has God loved us?
- Is there someone in your life you have not been loving toward? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you love that person.

In Breakout Classes (30 minutes - Classroom)

- **Prayer:**

God, thank You for loving us so much that You sent Your Son, Jesus, to take away our sin and death and shame. Thank You for filling us with Your Spirit of love. Help us to love You and to love others. Amen.

- **Craft:**

Use the worksheet attached. Kids can color the images, cut them out, and paste them into the boxes in the correct order (*they may need help with the order*).

- **BLESS Activity:**

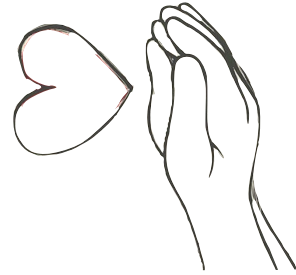
For kids to do during the week

Because this Story is true, we want to be faithful to live in it. We ask the Spirit to help us to *Bless, Listen, Eat, Speak*, and *Sabbath* (rest & celebrate) in ways that tell the good news of God's Story.

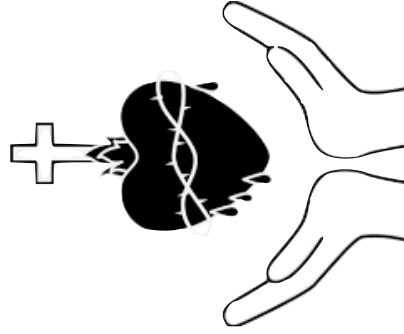
This week, focus on the **Bless** rhythm. What are some tangible ways you can show someone love this week? Can you share something with someone in need? Can your family invite someone over for dinner? Can you spend time getting to know the new kid at school or someone who doesn't have many friends?

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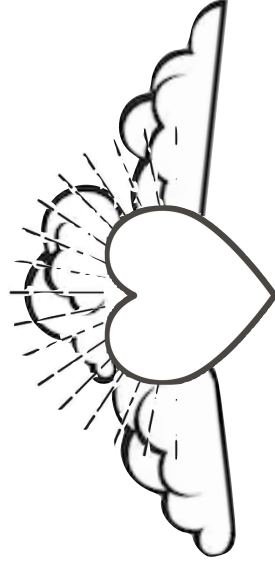
Cut out the images and place them in order in the boxes.
 Remember 1 John 4:19, "We love because He first loved us."



We love others



Our hearts are
made holy before



God loved us