

Love, Love, Love

Based on Mark 12:28-34



Love, love, love. Jesus knew those words. His friends knew those words. His parents knew those words. The teachers knew those words. From the time they were very little children they would all hear those words and know what they mean. Love God with all your might.

One day, one of the religious leaders heard Jesus talking to a crowd of people. The leader moved a little closer and listened. "Mmmm," he murmured. "Jesus is very wise." So he spoke up and said, "Teacher, there are so many rules and laws to teach people. Which rule is the most important?"

Jesus knew the answer. He remembered saying it many, many times as he was growing up. "Love God with all your might."

"Yes!" said the leader. "That's what I say, every day! Love God with all your might."

"It's such an important rule, I have that rule written on my door, so I don't forget it."

"Wait, there is a second part to that rule," said Jesus. "It is important to love others, and to love yourself, too."

The leader looked at Jesus. Then the leader scratched his head. "Yes, yes. You are right! Love is the most important rule of all. Love God. Love others. Love yourself. You are very wise, Jesus. Thank you for listening to me."

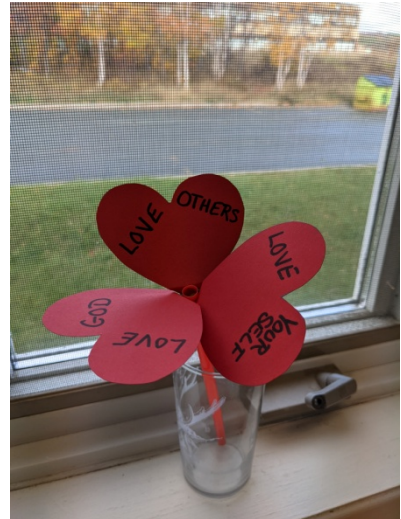
All the way home, the leader repeated over and over, "Love God. Love others. Love yourself." The teacher would remember that. He would not forget.

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Love flowers

Jesus helped the disciples to grow in their understanding of what it means to love. Make heart-shaped flowers to remind you of Jesus' teaching about love.

1. Cut three large hearts out of construction paper.
2. Write "Love God" on one heart shape.
3. Write "Love others" on another.
4. Write "Love yourself" on another.
5. Decorate each heart, then tape the three points together into a flower shape (see illustration).
6. Attach your "flower" to a drinking straw or wooden stir stick.
7. "Plant" your flower in a cup or flowerpot filled with sand or soil.



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The practice of building community

Directions

1. Find or make a blank calendar page. Starting with today, fill in one week of your calendar with the ways you can "love your neighbour" each day. Try to make this specific and straightforward.
2. Fill in more days of the month with ideas for loving your neighbour.
3. Put this calendar on your refrigerator or somewhere you'll see it every day. You might add these ideas to the calendar on your phone.

Younger children Help younger children think of what they might do each day to show someone kindness. Help them fill out their calendars or draw pictures of what they will do.



Meet Martin Luther

A long, long time ago in a little town in Germany lived a boy – Martin Luther. When he was 17, his father sent Martin to the university to study law. But Martin was not interested in law, Martin wanted to know more about God. So Martin left the law school and entered a monastery to become a priest. At the monastery with many other men who wanted to know more about God, Martin Luther was able to read a Bible for the first time. Bibles were rare and so valuable that many churches chained them to the pulpit.

At the monastery, Martin studied the Bible and prayed to God. The more he read the Bible, the more Martin realized that lots of people loved God, but they did not know all the wonderful and good things God wanted for them. Martin dreamed of a time when all the people could read the Bible like he did so they would know about God’s gift of Jesus for everyone. What a dream! Most people could not read, and the Bibles were written in languages that those who could read couldn’t understand.

Martin had another idea. He would translate the Bible into German so the people in his country could read about God’s love for themselves. He wrote other books too, books to help people understand the Bible and books to help parents teach their children about God’s love.

The more Martin studied and prayed, the more he realized that some things were happening in the church that didn’t fit with what he was learning about God’s love. Martin made a list of those things. One day in October, about 500 years ago, Martin nailed this list of 95 things to the church door, where public notices were placed.

Some people tried to talk him out of what he said, but Martin said, “No.” Martin Luther wanted everyone to know the truth about God’s love and forgiveness. He was serious; because he could not change his mind, the church said Martin was no longer welcome to be part of it. That didn’t stop Martin either. He kept right on writing books and hymns, teaching, and learning more about Jesus and God’s love for us. Some people agreed with Martin and wanted to change some of what was taught in the church. They started new Christian churches. One of these is the Lutheran church, even though Martin Luther did not want it named after him.



- **What about the life of Martin Luther is most interesting to you?**
- **What does Martin Luther’s life teach you about being faithful to God?**

Prayer Activity

Jesus' and Martin Luther remind us of all that we have to be thankful for. Jesus and Martin spent time with God in prayer, seeking God's will and praising God.

1. Read this prayer.
2. Copy it on a sheet of paper.

Thank you, God, for the food.
Thank you, God, for our family.
Thank you, God, for our church.
Thank you, God, for _____.
Amen.

3. Add more sentences of thanks to God.
4. Decorate the page.
5. Quietly pray the prayer you have written.



Martin Luther's Crest



Black cross:

Jesus died on the cross, but came back to the disciples on Easter.

Red heart:

God loves us.

White rose:

We can trust in Jesus to show us God's way.

Green leaves:

God is always with us.

Blue background:

The blue reminds us of heavenly joy.

Gold ring:

God's love for us will never end.

