

LEADER GUIDE

Unit 7: Love is Greater **Lesson 1:** Love is "More Than..."

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OVERVIEW

UNIT OVERVIEW

Lesson 1: Love is "More Than..." DISCIPLINE: Consider How to Love KEY VERSES: James 1:19-25, Joshua 3:5, 1 John 2:16-17

Lesson 3: Love Unstoppable

DISCIPLINE: Break Through Barriers **KEY VERSES:** Genesis 1:1-10, Genesis 2:2-3, Exodus 3:5

Lesson 2: Beautiful Feet

DISCIPLINE: Have Beautiful Feet **KEY VERSES:** 1 Peter 2:9-12; 1 John 3:13, 1 Samuel 16:13

Lesson 4: Following the Holy Spirit

DISCIPLINE: Prepare to Share the Gospel **KEY VERSES:** Romans 12:1-3, 1 Peter 2, Matthew 5:16

LESSON 1 OVERVIEW

This is a series about evangelism. It's also a series about love.

Love is a multifaceted concept. A simple definition for the word "love" can be hard to come by. At times, it seems to be expressed in action: "Greater love has no man than this: that he lay down his life for his friend." At times, love seems to be a feeling or thought: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your mind..." At times, love seems to be a divine being: "God is love."

In today's lesson, we are going to help preteens explore this great mystery, love, so they can understand what love looks like, and what love does NOT look like. We'll focus specifically on preteens loving their peers. Using 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 as our guide, preteens will see that much of the boyfriend/girlfriend games that preteens play are not loving, and that God has a much higher calling of love for them to demonstrate toward one another. We'll look at "wanting and doing what's best for others" as a true mark of loving others.

LESSON 1 LEADER DEVO

Read: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

God is love – always, 100%, toward everyone. That includes you. He sent Jesus to put an exclamation point at the end of this description. God sent his Son to explain his love to you. God sacrificed his Son for all of the dumb, mean, dishonest, and terrible things you've done because he loves you.

None of us can comprehend this kind of love, but God wants you to accept it and then share as much of it as you can. Look at the 'love list' above and choose one area where you want to understand and receive more of God's love. Look at yourself. Pretend you're a sponge. See how much of God's love you can soak up in the next minute in that one area you picked. Set your phone timer. Start soaking. Now, see how much of that love you can share with those around you. You won't run out of this love. God has more than you can receive. Stop anytime and ask for more.





SCHEDULE Lesson 1: Love is "More Than..."





Preteens will play an Opening Game and get a brief overview of today's lesson topic. **Today's Opening Game: Real Sweet**



Preteens will read through a passage of Scripture on their own. They'll consider what stands out to them from the passage and why it stands out to them. They'll also be given time to talk with God about the passage.

Today's Passage: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7



Preteens will learn about spiritual disciplines that will help them draw closer to God. They'll discover the Biblical basis for these disciplines, the purpose and benefit of these disciplines, and the reasons why Christians have practiced these discipline throughout history.

Today's Discovery: How do I love my peers?



Preteens will move into action as they practice different ways that they can grow in their own personal relationship with Jesus.

Today's Quest: Consider How to Love



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NOTE: Highlighted words indicate supplies to prepare. These are also listed in the ADMIN GUIDE.

[Slide 01 Love is Greater]

[Slide 02 REAL Sweet]

[AUDIO 01 Opening Game]

- Show a candy bar and ask who would like to have it. Choose two preteens who don't have food allergies to compete for it. Say, "This candy bar can be all yours. All you have to do is correctly identify a simple thing: sugar."
- 2. Blindfold both participants and bring out the numbered cups. Hold up each cup so the audience can see the contents of each. (Based on appearance, the audience may assume the salt or Splenda are the sugar.) Let the contestants feel the contents of each cup, one at a time. Be sure to tell them the number of each cup as they are feeling each.
- 3. Once they have felt all four, ask them which number cup they think is the sugar. Pour a little bit of their choice into their hands and invite them to taste their choice. See if they want to keep their answer the same or change it.
- 4. Now that you have a final answer from both contestants, remove the blindfolds and reveal the correct cup. Most likely, one of the contestants, if not both, will choose the wrong cup. If either chose the correct cup, give them the candy bar. If both chose the correct cup, you could split the candy bar or have a second one on hand.)

[Slide 03 Love is Greater]

When you are looking for something, you can't always identify it by how it feels.

(Hold up the cup of salt) You can put your hand in and think it feels like sugar. It even looks like sugar, but it's definitely NOT sugar. It's salt, something that isn't sweet at all.

(Hold up the Splenda cup) This feels kind of like sugar. It may even taste strangely sweet if you try it. But it is not even close to being sugar either. It's just chemicals. When you're looking for the sweetest thing in life, you can't go off just a feeling. You can't even just go off of how it looks. It's so much MORE THAN just that.

Today we're going to learn about something even sweeter than sugar that is also more than just a feeling.



WARM UP 2 of 2





It seems that a lot of people think about love....a lot. Have you noticed how many songs are about love? Or how many stories are about love? Turn to the person next to you and tell him/her one song you know about love. (*Pause.*)

Love is a huge, important topic in life. The Bible, God's Word, talks about the important things in life, including love.

How many times do you think the word "Love" shows up in the Bible?

[Slide 04 Love in the Bible]

(Read each answer and have the preteens stand up when they think you've read the correct answer. Then say:)

The correct answer is... D. More than 600. In fact, *(in the ESV translation)* the word "love" is in 684 verses. Wow – God thinks about love a lot, it seems. Which I guess makes sense. Because, check out this Bible verse:

[Slide 05 God is Love]

That's right. God IS love. That's an amazing thing to think about. God IS love. Since God IS love, that makes him the love expert, doesn't it?









Many people are curious about what love is. "What is love?" is a top search on Google. But if we want to know what love is, we should be searching somewhere else. Instead of searching Google, we should be searching God. After all, God IS love.

During M.A.P. time this month, we'll be looking at God's words about love and listening for him to speak to us through his Word.

[Slide 06 MAP Time]

Each week this month, during M.A.P. time, we'll take a look at a different section of the Bible that will teach us something about love. After we watch a video explaining M.A.P. time, we'll use these highlighters (*hold up a highlighter*) for the "M" part of M.A.P. and we'll use these (*hold up a pen/pencil*) for the "A" part of M.A.P.

We want you to bring your own Bible from home each week to our StepUp service, but if you didn't do that today, just raise your hand when the video ends, and we'll hand you a paper with today's verses on it.

Check out this video. It will explain what to do for M.A.P. time.

[VIDEO 01 MAP 1]

[Slide 07 MAP 1 Cor 13:4-7]

[AUDIO 02 MAP Time]

(After the video/instructions, hand out MAP Cards to preteens who didn't bring a Bible. Also, give each preteen a pen/pencil and a highlighter.

Give preteens time to complete M.A.P. as explained in the video. When it looks like most preteens are done, you can have preteens describe what they highlighted and wrote in their Bibles – or on the M.A.P. Cards– either in Small Groups or with the whole group.)



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[Slide 08 LOVE]

For the next few weeks, during the "Love is Greater" series, our theme is (*Pause for response*) LOVE. Right. Love can be a complicated topic, so before we dive into that, I want to do something much simpler: Breath.

Everybody sit up straight with your feet flat on the ground. Let's do this very simple thing together before we talk about the way more complicated topic of love.

Everybody breath in through your nose as I slowly raise my hand, and breath out through your mouth as I slowly lower my hand. Let's see if we can do this all together and without a whole lot of noise. Here we go.

(Have the preteens take a few breathes in and out.)

Breathing is pretty simple, and you all did very well. That's a good thing, because you need to breathe to stay alive.

Now let's talk about something a little more complex. Let's talk about love. In Mark 12:30-31, Jesus said the greatest two commandments were these:

[Slide 09 Love God-others]

Check out this other verse about love, straight from God's Word, the Bible.

[Slide 10 1 John 4:8]

Who will read it for us? (Call on a preteen to read 1 John 4:8.)

Love is more than just being kind. Love is more than just being patient. Love is more than just a nice, warm feeling. Love is what we are made to do. It is what we're commanded to do. It's kind of like breathing. It's something we were made to do. If I want to stay alive, the first step is breathe in. (*Take a loud breath in. Kind of hold your breath as you say:*) And the second step is breathe out. (*Breathe out loudly.*)

[Slide 11 Breathe in-out]

Let's combine the greatest two commandments with the two steps of breathing.

[Slide 12 Love God-others 2]

Let's say this together. Love God. (Loud breath in.) Love others. (Loud breath out.) That's what we are told to do. It's what we do if we know God.



DISCOVER 2 of 5





Part of loving others is what we do. That's the part we see.

However, part of loving others is something we don't see. It's what we feel and think. Love is more than just actions. Love is feelings, thoughts, AND actions!

I'll give you an example of what love looks like, and you try to think of what might be the feelings or thoughts that are connected to it.

[Slide 13 Teenage Boy]

Number one. (*Read the sticky note, and then stick it to the large heart*.) "A teenage boy sends money each month to help people in a faraway country." What feelings or thoughts do you think are connected to this act of love? (*Take responses.*) Great answers. Let's hear from this young man and see what he has to say.

[VIDEO 02 Love Testimony 1]

[Slide 14 Mother and Baby]

Behind every action of love, there are thoughts and feelings connected to it. Let's look at another one.

Number two. (*Read the sticky note, and then stick it to the large heart.*) "A mother tenderly holds her baby and sings to him." What feelings or thoughts do you think are connected to this act of love? (*Take responses.*) Great answers. Let's hear from this mother and see what she has to say.

[VIDEO 03 Love Testimony 2]

[Slide 15 Couple]

Those were different thoughts and feelings connected to that act of love. It's a different kind of love than the young man sending money to a faraway land. But it's still called love.

What else would be a way to love others? Who can think of another example of what it LOOKS LIKE when people live Jesus' command to love others?

[AUDIO 03 Thinking Music]

(Have Small Group leaders hand out s<mark>ticky notes</mark> and <mark>pens</mark> to each preteen. Have them write down their answers to this question. You may need to repeat the question or give an additional example. Have them stick their answers to the large heart or hearts that you have posted. Then continue.)



DISCOVER 3 of 5





These are great answers. But is this ALL love is? (NO.) No, love is even MORE than all this. (Use a marker to write the > symbol at the top of the large heart next to the word "LOVE".)

Let's look at one more picture of love. On the screen, you can see an older husband and wife hold hands as they walk along. What feelings or thoughts do you think are connected to this act of love? (*Take responses.*) Great answers. Let's hear from the wife and see what she has to say.

[VIDEO 04 Love Testimony 3]

[Slide 16 What does love look like]

Great. So there's a third example of what love looks like.

This last example is a type of love that involves feelings of attaction.

[Slide 17 Attraction]

This is an area where love can get a little confusing for some people, especially for people around your age. If you believed what you see on T.V. or what you hear on the radio, you'll think that everybody wants to have a boyfriend or a girlfriend when they're 10 years old. But that's sooo not true.

If you haven't had the kinds of feelings you just heard about in that video for somebody, there's nothing wrong with you. You are perfectly, wonderfully normal.

This type of "attraction" love makes you want to be around somebody. It makes you really, really like them. It might even make your heart flutter. These kinds of feelings aren't bad. In fact, they're described in the Bible.

Listen to this (*say in a wistful way*): "You have stolen my heart with one glance of your eyes." That sounds very romantic, doesn't it? That's actually a verse from the Bible, describing what love can be like. And there are more verses like that, describing some of those mushy feelings that sometimes go along with love.

Remember, though, love is a lot of things. Listen to all of these things, because all of them can be love.

- A husband and wife holding hands.
- A mother holding her baby.
- A preteen worshipping God with all his heart.
- A teenager sending money each month to help an orphan in a faraway country.
- Jesus dying on the Cross to save us from our sins.

Love is so many things. We can get confused and think that the heart-fluttering, "attracted to you" kind of love is all there is to love, or even that the heart-fluttering kind of love is the greatest kind of love, but that's not true according to what Jesus said in John 15:13.



DISCOVER 4 of 5





[Slide 18 John 15:13]

(*Read John 15:13.*) Jesus didn't say, "No one has greater love than the one whose heart is fluttering." No...giving your life for your friend is a much greater kind of love.

Sometimes, those mushy, "I'm attracted," "I really like a person" feelings can actually lead people to be NOT loving.

Let's say that you're having a heart-fluttering feeling toward somebody. Would it be loving for you to tell all the kids at school, "Guess who I like? I like So-and-so."? No, that's not loving. Think of a little boy who has feelings for a girl. He chases her around at recess and pesters her. Is he being loving? (NO)

I want to remind you of some of the things we read in 1 Corinthians 13 a little while ago during MAP time.

[Slide 19 Love is not]

(*Read the slide.*) Listen. If you have fluttery feelings for somebody, fantastic. Remember, though: that feeling isn't all that matters. Love is SOOOOO much more than just that feeling. You have a crush on somebody? Great. Now love him or her. Love by not bragging about it. Love by not playing a boyfriend/girlfriend game, which involves all your friends and dishonors the person. Love by being respectful and not making it all about yourself.

Let me give you three ideas of how to be loving.

- 1. Number one: when you have those feelings for somebody, and you just HAVE to tell somebody, don't pester the person. Instead, go talk to an adult that you trust a parent, a pastor, a teacher. Pick an adult who you know is going to listen to you and who might even give you some helpful ideas about how to be loving.
- 2. Here's a second idea: be a friend. Don't embarrass or dishonor somebody by dragging him or her into a boyfriend/girlfriend thing or by telling everybody, "ooohh...guess who I like?" Instead, be their friend.
- 3. Here's a third idea if you want to be loving toward somebody: think about this question:

[Slide 20 What is best for them]

Out in the world, on TV, in songs, and in movies, I've heard a very different message about love. The world's message about love, especially the kind of fluttery love that we're talking about is "follow your heart."

[Slide 21 vs Follow your heart]

There's nothing wrong with following your heart IF your heart is lined up with God's. However, following your heart isn't always love. Sometimes, it's just selfish.

Many of you know about a King David. The Bible says that David was a man after God's own heart. In other words, his heart was lined up with God's. Well, most of the time it was. However, there was this one time when David had some of those fluttery, attraction, desire kinds of feelings for a woman named Bathsheba.



DISCOVER 5 of 5





As I tell this story, I want you to tell me whether David was thinking "What is best for Bathsheba" or just following a selfish heart. When I say **"What was David doing,"** say, "thinking," if you think he was thinking about what was best for Bathsheba, or say, "following," if you think David was just following his feelings and not really thinking about what was best for Bathsheba.

Here's the story: David was up on his roof one day and he saw this woman named Bathsheba. She was very beautiful. BAM! Attraction. Fluttery heart. Desire to be around her. David found out all about Bathsheba, and part of what he finds out was that she was married to a guy named Uriah. David sent messengers who took Bathsheba and bring her to his house so that he can spend some time with her and get closer to her. Now – **what was David doing?** (*Pause for response.*) David was definitely not thinking about what was best for Bathsheba, and he wasn't thinking about what was best for Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, either. David was "following his heart."

David was a man who was following his own heart at this point in his life, and his heart was not lined up with God's heart. Were David's actions toward Bathsheba loving? (NO.) 1 Corinthians 13 says love is not self-centered. If your heart is not lined up with God's heart, then following your heart can be very self-centered and selfish. In this case, it was. David was only thinking about himself.

David's feelings for Bathsheba were strong. Uriah was off fighting in a battle, so King David had an idea. He sent a message and had Uriah put on the front lines of the battle. He put Uriah in a position where he would surely be killed so that David could marry Bathsheba and not have Uriah in his way. Again – **what was David doing?** *(Pause for response.)* Yup. He was following his self-centered feelings. He was not thinking about what was best for Bathsheba. Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, ended up dying in the battle. I hope you guys can all see clearly: David was NOT being loving. Not at all.

Later David confessed to God, through tears, that he was sinning. Not against Bathsheba and Uriah, but against God. David's life was almost completely destroyed. Bathsheba's loving and honorable husband, Uriah, was dead. Following self-centered feelings is NOT love. It's sin. It can lead to horrible consequences.

Feeling heart-fluttery attraction toward somebody – that's NOT sin. Those feelings can be a gift from God that are a wonderful part of love. But those feelings have to be mixed with loving thoughts like: "What is best for that person?"

[Slide 22 Heart Mind Body]

Love is about heart and mind and body. It's about (*point to head*) THINKING about what's best for others, and (*point to heart*) actually WANTING what's best for others, and (*holding hands out*) actually DOING what's best for others.









For today's Quest, we're going to talk a little more about this in smaller groups. Jesus said the two greatest commands are to *(breathe in)* love God and *(breathe out)* love others. We're going to spend a little time thinking about what it means for us to love others.

[Slide 23 Quest Consider How to Love]

Split your group up so that the boys are in one group and the girls are in another. If you have a large group, split up in multiple same-gender groups.

In each group, a leader will lead a discussion about what it means to be loving toward kids their age of the opposite gender.

The leaders should start with review questions:

1) We read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 earlier in service. It tells us a lot about what love is and what love is not. Who can tell me one thing that love is or what love is not? (*Take responses, and then read – or have someone read – 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.*)

2) In the service, we heard about King David, and how he was attracted to a woman named Bathsheba. Did King David demonstrate love? (NO) Why weren't his actions loving?

3) Part of what we learned about love is that love means thinking "What would be best for somebody." Can you tell me a time when somebody showed you this kind of love – a time when somebody did something that was best for you?

The leader can continue by saying something like this:

We're going to talk about being loving toward girls/boys (the opposite gender from your group. From now on in this section, "girls/boys" will be written as "g/b").

Television, music and movies give us ideas about what it means to be loving toward g/b. Some of these ideas are ok but a lot of them are really messed up.

1 John 15:13 tells us that God is love. So, instead of trying to get ideas from television, music, and movies about how to be loving toward g/b, let's get our ideas from God. Before we start thinking and talking about how to be loving toward g/b, let's pray and ask God to help guide our discussion.

(Pray, or ask a preteen or another leader to pray.)

OK. On this poster board, we have written "How to be loving towards g/b: Think about what's best for them."









Let's talk about this for a minute. I want you to think of what's best for g/b, and share your ideas. We'll talk about it and use a marker to write these things up here. The goal for our workshop time is to come up with at least seven ways to be loving toward g/b.

Leader Tip: Give the preteens a chance to answer the question first. If they are hesitant, or on the wrong track, a leader can share an answer to get the conversation going in the right direction.

(After your group has generated at least seven ideas, continue by saying:) These are great ideas, guys/ladies. Remember though, love is always "more." At the top of the poster board it says "Think about what's best." Love is more than just "thinking about what's best" (point to head). It's also "WANTING what's best" (point to your heart). And it's also "DOING what's best" (hold out hands).

We're going to gather back together with everybody and sing a song of worship that asks God to change our hearts. As we sing that song, you'll see three signs around the room that say these things:

"God, help me to THINK about what is best for others."

"God, help me to WANT what is best for others."

"God, help me to DO what is best for others."

Pray those things as we're singing together. In fact, while we are singing, you can go up to any of those posters, or all of them, and write your name on the poster board. This will be a sign to God that you want his help in being a more loving person. A person who (*breath in*) loves God, and (*breath out*) loves others.

What did Jesus tell us to do? Let's all say it together: (BREATH IN) LOVE GOD....and (BREATH OUT) LOVE OTHERS.

What is God wanting us to do? Let's all say it together: (*BREATH IN*) LOVE GOD....and (*BREATH OUT*) LOVE OTHERS.

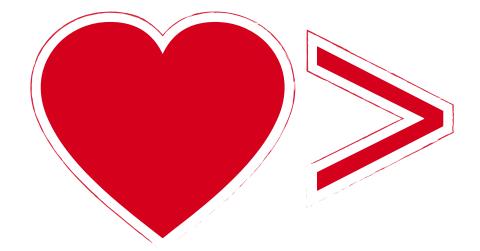
What are we created to do? Let's all say it together: (BREATH IN) LOVE GOD....and (BREATH OUT) LOVE OTHERS.

Great – let's worship.

(Dismiss to an time of worship with everybody.)







ADMIN GUIDE

Unit 7: Love is Greater **Lesson 1:** Love is "More Than..."

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SUPPLIES Lesson 1: Love is "More Than..."

WARM-UP



- Candy Bar
- **O** 8 Clear cups. Number these #1-#4. You'll have two sets.
- O 1/₂ cup Salt, poured into each of the #1 cups
- O 1/2 cup Turbinado sugar, poured into each of the #2 cups
- O ¹∕₂ cup Sea salt, poured into each of the #3 cups
- $O_{1/2}$ cup Splenda, poured into each of the #4 cups
- ${f O}$ 2 Blindfolds

02 M.A.P. 10 min

- ${f O}$ Highlighters for each preteen
- **O** Pens for each preteen
- O MAP Card for each preteen (copy on cardstock)

D3 DISCOVER 20 min

NOTE: Within the leader guide, supplies are highlighted so you can understand how they'll be used and prepare accordingly.

NOTE: Supplies on this page that are written in a **bold font** can be found in the *Printables* Section.

- **O** Bible
- O Large heart, posted in your teaching space. At the top of the heart, write "LOVE"
- O Large marker, to write on the heart
- ${f O}$ Post-it note for each preteen
- ${\bf O}$ Prepare a Post-it note to go along with each skit and video you are using
- \mathbf{O} Pen for each preteen



QUEST

Carefully read today's Quest and consider:

- **O HOW MANY** groups you'll want to split into. You should split boys and girls.
- **O WHERE** the groups will meet. Create comfortable settings for this discussion.
- **O WHO** will lead each group. Familiarize these leaders with their Workshop Section.
- O For each Discussion Group, a posterboard with header: "How to be loving toward"
- ${f O}$ For each Discussion Group, a marker to write on the posterboard



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ARAP Card (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)



1 Highlight what stands out for Me.	1 Cor. 13:4-7	2 How does what I highlighted Affect me?
its own interests. It does no does not keep track of othe	not brag. It is not proud. It eople. It does not look out for ot easily become angry. It er people's wrongs. Love is s full of joy when the truth is . It always trusts. It always	
	highlighed. REATER > Lesson 1 > Love is "More Than"	
1 Highlight what stands out for Me.	1 Cor. 13:4-7	2 How does what I highlighted Affect me?

"Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not want what belongs to others. It does not brag. It is not proud. It does not dishonor other people. It does not look out for its own interests. It does not easily become angry. It does not keep track of other people's wrongs. Love is not happy with evil. But it is full of joy when the truth is spoken. It always protects. It always trusts. It always hopes. It never gives up."

M.A.P.

LOVE IS GREATER > Lesson 1 > Love is "More Than"

Pray about what you