

activate

THE
BUILDING
BLOCKS
OF FAITH



What we want students to learn: That students would see that God's unfailing love is most fully expressed through Christ.

What we want them to do with what they've learned: To identify how this perfect expression of love positively impacts their identity.

Scripture Focus: Romans 5:6-8, John 3:16-17, Romans 8:35-39

Overview: God is love. And His love is unfailing. These truths you learned in Lesson 11 form the backdrop for sending Christ as the answer to humankind's sin problem. God loved us so much that He provided the perfect way for us to forever be in relationship with Him. It was because of His love that God wanted to see us saved from the punishment of our sin. After all, our sin rightfully earns us separation from God. But God went to the greatest lengths imaginable to provide us with life in relationship with Him. This brand of searching, unfailing, seeking love has a dramatically personal aspect to it. The individual students in your class are the objects of God's love. If they can truly grasp this truth, they will never be able to look at themselves the same way. This lesson will help your students begin to understand how much they are loved and valued by God, and how this powerfully impacts how they see their value and purpose.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Each **Activate** lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your **God's Love** lesson 12 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 12, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

The **Bible Background** is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. The Details gives you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what's happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every **YM360** Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know **who** wrote the book, **when** it was written, and **why** it was written.
- **What's the big deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

activate

THE
BUILDING
BLOCKS
OF FAITH



THE DETAILS

Who wrote these Books?

The Apostle Paul wrote the Book of Romans. Of course, we know Paul as the one-time chief enemy of the Church. After his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul would go on to have a position of extreme importance in the early Church and beyond. Romans addressed to the Christ-followers throughout Rome, is one of the many letters Paul penned to various churches and individuals. John the Apostle wrote the Gospel of John. John was one of Jesus' disciples and was referred to as "the beloved disciple." John was probably only a teenager when he spent three years as Jesus' disciple. He ended up authoring 1, 2, and 3 John and Revelation.

When were the Books written?

Most people believe Paul wrote Romans from the city of Corinth while on his third missionary journey, sometime in the late 50s AD. Scholars are much less sure about when John would have written his Gospel. It was likely sometime between A.D. 70, when the Temple was destroyed, and A.D. 100 when John is believed to have died.

What was the purpose for writing these Books?

Romans

Paul was writing Romans to address the issues that would no doubt come up in a region made up of both Jew and Gentile Christ-followers. Paul addressed big-picture issues such as whether or not the Law could save a person, what the implications of God making salvation available to the Gentiles was for the Jews, and how Christ-followers were to handle such delicate issues as observing Jewish dietary restrictions based in the Law.

John

John had one purpose in mind: that his readers would know Jesus Christ as Messiah. John's message was evangelical at its core. He was chiefly concerned with both Jews and Gentiles knowing Jesus' true identity and knowing it in such a way that they came to a vibrant faith in Him.

THE MAIN POINT

These passages of Scripture all combine to form the strongest of arguments: in straightforward language, Scripture attests to the fact that God sent Jesus to save us from our sins, and He did it out of love, not because we offered anything unique or valuable. God's love was both the motivation and the agent for the salvation He gave us. More than anything, these verses show us that the absolute, most complete expression of the Father's love was sending His Son to live and die on this earth. And when you can so clearly see a love expressed in this way, it gives you the bold confidence to say as Paul says in Romans 8: nothing can separate us from this love. Nothing. God's love is unfailing. And in Christ, we are sealed in this love forever.

LESSON PLAN

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: An introductory activity called **The Lead In**; the Bible study section called **The Main Event**; an application-focused segment called **The Last Word**.

activate

THE
BUILDING
BLOCKS
OF FAITH



THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** To have students identify things people say they love and how they show this love.
- **Set-Up:** Print enough copies of the "I Heart _____" PDF (located in your Lesson 2 Folder) for each of your students to have one. Distribute something to write with. If you choose, consider doing a Google image search for the iconic "I (heart) NY" T-shirt. (If you have an actual T-shirt you could wear, or a spin-off of the "I (heart)" motif, that's even better!)

FIRST, make sure students are familiar with the timeless "I (heart) NY" T-shirt. If you have a shirt or found an image of one, display it for some context. Ask if they are familiar with the many different ways this has been co-opted and adapted to allow people to express their love for all sorts of things. Explain that they are going to get their chance to craft a T-shirt that expresses their love for something.

THEN, distribute the PDFs and a pen or pencil for each student. Instruct them to complete the T-shirt design by drawing or writing a word or symbol that represents something they love dearly. Allow them a few minutes to complete the design. Then have students share their drawings with the group. Make sure they explain why they chose what they chose. Considering asking a few students to explain precisely how their love for their chosen "thing" shows itself in their day-to-day lives.

Explain that there are many things we say we love. And we show our "love" in a variety of ways! Remind them that the word "love" is used flippantly in our culture. We may hear people say they love pizza or a video game. Ask how many of them know of a young couple that might say they love one another one day, only to break up the next day. Explain that we are regularly exposed to a vision of love that is conditional, and fleeting, and based more on feelings than anything else.

FINALLY, transition into The Main Event by sharing that this lesson will build on what they learned last week about God and His love, and will look at how God chose to make the ultimate expression of His love.

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** That students would see that God's unfailing love is most fully expressed through Christ.
- **Set-Up:** None

FIRST, spend a few moments reviewing the truths taught in God's Love, Lesson 11. Give students a chance to recall the things they remember. Use these to help with the discussion:

- **God is forgiving and abounding in love.**
- **Not only is God loving, but He is also love. Love is an essential part of His character.**
- **God's love is unfailing. (Note: This point will be critical in this lesson.)**

Following this review, transition to your Bible study time by reminding students that while the previous lesson discussed the idea of love as part of God's character, in this lesson, you will look at how He demonstrated this love. God did not merely tell us He loves us, He showed us that He is love. He can express love to us though we do not deserve it because of our sin.

activate

THE
BUILDING
BLOCKS
OF FAITH



THEN, after this review, instruct students to turn to Romans. While they are finding it in their Bibles or Bible apps, make sure they know the context. Use "The Details" from the Bible Background to set the stage for this passage. Then, read or have a student read aloud Romans 5:6-8 and ask the following questions:

- **Look at these verses. How do you see Paul describing us?**
 - Answer: Powerless, ungodly, sinners
- **Those are some awesome words, right? Considering that this is the shape we find ourselves in apart from Christ, how did God powerfully demonstrate His love for us?**
 - Answer: While we were weak, lost, sinners, God sent Jesus to die for our sins.

Explain that the "powerless" part of this is often overlooked but still significant. Remind them that as sinners, we're all powerless to save ourselves. Say something like:

- **We are ungodly and do not deserve God's love. But, because it's an essential part of His character, God demonstrated His love by sending Christ, regardless of our failings.**

NEXT, have students find John in their Bibles while you give the details. Once you've provided the context, read or have a student read John 3:16-17. Then, lead students in a brief discussion. Ask:

- **How do these verses reiterate what we just read in Romans 5:8?**
 - Answer: God showed His love for us by sending Christ to die.
- **John said God loves us so much He sent Jesus. What does that tell you about God's love, especially in light of what we just read in Romans 5?**
 - Answers will vary. But students should come to a place where they recognize the unique nature of a love that seeks out those who have nothing to offer in return.
- **John 3:16-17 goes further in elaborating why God sent Jesus. How do these verses speak to God's purpose? What does Christ's death mean for us?**
 - Answer: Christ's death was an atoning death. He atones for or pays the debt our sin earns for us. We're saved from death. We have life on this earth and life eternally with God as a result.

THEN, pause for a second and make sure your students are tracking with where you are at this point in the discussion. Say something like:

- **To review, while we represented very little in the way of anything positive or good, God sought us out with His love. And this love wasn't just a feel-good thing. It was a love that sought to rescue us even though we didn't deserve it. I mean, when this sets in, this is a pretty remarkable love! But we're not done yet. There's one more aspect of this love that will blow you away!**

NEXT, have students turn to Romans 8. Explain in our understanding, love is conditional and dependant on circumstances. We can fall out of someone's love just as they can fall out of ours. In this passage, Paul brings this concept to the forefront. Read verses 35-39 aloud then use the following questions and thoughts to lead students in a final discussion. Ask:

- **Being loved unconditionally is fantastic! But that doesn't mean there won't be difficult experiences in life, many of our own making! According to verse 37, how do we make it through these things?**

activate

THE
BUILDING
BLOCKS
OF FAITH

- o Answer: God gives us power through Christ. He enables us to be more than mere conquerors.
- **Paul uses opposites in identifying the things that are powerless to change God's love for His people. In doing so, He covers the extremes as well as everything in between. There is no area left to cover. Can you think of some modern-day equivalents of things that feel like they might be able to come between you and God's love?**
 - o Answers will vary.
- **NOTHING has the power to separate us from the love of God. How does this make you feel?**
 - o Answers will vary.
- **While God offers this love to anyone who will believe, it's also a very personal love for YOU. What enables God to love us, sinners who do not deserve His love?**
 - o Answer: God sees us through the "lens" of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, and the salvation we have in His life, death, and resurrection.

FINALLY, help students understand that the way God showed His great love for us is by making a relationship possible by sending Christ to die as the payment for our sins. When we place our faith in Him, we have a secure eternity. The way God can have this relationship with us is because of the way our lives mesh with Christ. We are bound to God through Christ. There is nothing that can separate the two. Close this portion of the lesson by saying something like:

- **We know that love is God's very character. He expressed this love to us by sending His only Son, Christ, to die and be raised to life again to bring salvation from our sins. Once we accept this free gift of love from God by placing our faith in Christ, we are bound to Him by Christ. We are permanently united to God through Christ.**

Transition to "The Last Word" to wrap the lesson up.

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** The idea is for students to grasp how understanding God's love as perfectly expressed through Christ positively impacts their identity
- **Set-Up:** If you have a dry-erase board, you might want to utilize it for this activity.

FIRST, explain to students that this is the moment in the lesson where they will think of how what they've just learned impacts their lives. With the backdrop of the idea of being united in God's love in Christ, begin a discussion where you lead students to think about the different areas of influence they have based on the roles they play. (If you have the means to, begin to craft a list on something like a dry-erase board, scratch paper, or even a note app on your tablet or laptop.)

Help students identify what they would consider the three primary roles they play. These roles might include something like a cheerleader, or a football player, or a math tutor, or something similar. They represent the role of son or daughter and may play the role of brother or sister. Lead students to identify three or four of these that are primary in their lives. Explain to students that many of these roles flow out of who they are. They reflect their personalities or passions. They reflect their family make-up. Their roles are, in a sense, part of their identity. Then, have students think how these roles provide them opportunities of influence. Say:

- **Based on your roles, you have people who listen to you or come into contact with you. You can impact people's lives. And you can do so for the sake of Christ. But often we don't act on it out of**

activate

THE
BUILDING
BLOCKS
OF FAITH

fear or insecurity. But believe it or not, our lesson today has a lot to say about how you influence people based on the roles you play.

Remind students that they just studied the fact that God's love has made possible new, purposeful life, and closeness with God that can never be broken. Lead students to consider these questions:

- **How do you boldly live out your new life in Christ through the roles you play?**
- **How do you use your voice, or your influence, to communicate to people what a life covered in God's love looks like?**
- **Nothing can separate you from God's love, right? So why do we shy away from boldly living a life of love for God and others? What are we scared of?**

Discuss these questions with students, especially as it pertains to how they view the influence they have.

FINALLY, challenge students to continue to think about the unfailing, never-to-be-broken grip that God's love has on their life. Encourage them to be bold in the way they interact with others, being confident that God's ever-present love can and will rise above what others think of them. Remind them that they are all capable of making an impact on the world around them. Close in prayer.

- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're posting them on Instagram, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
- Use the **Social Media** guide to stay in touch with students via text or Instagram, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.