

GOD LOVES US EVEN WHEN WE ARE UNLOVABLE

FOUNDATION: GOD IS LOVE - GOD GIVES HIMSELF

BIG TRUTH: GOD LOVES US EVEN WHEN WE ARE UNLOVABLE

Deuteronomy 9:6-7; Psalm 36:7-9; Romans 5:6-8; Ephesians 2:1-6; Colossians 2:9-15; 1 John 3:8-10; 4:10

BIBLE VERSE: ROMANS 5:8

but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

BIG IDEAS

- God not only shows love, He is love.
- God's love is not dependent upon our obedience.
- God's love is greater than our sin.
- God's love changes our hearts.

BIBLE STORY: LUKE 15:11-32

God's love is unconditional. It is never dependent upon our obedience. Jesus shared a parable of a father whose love for his son was unconditional. The father of the prodigal son didn't stop loving his son when he left with his inheritance. When his son made poor choices and ended up with no money, the father didn't stop loving him. The father loved his son regardless of what his son did. When the son returned, he was met with open arms and a celebration. This is a picture of God's love for His children.

FOUNDATION: GOD IS LOVE - GOD GIVES HIMSELF

God is love. Love is not just something that God does, it is who He is. God's love is perfect and unchanging. It is not simply an emotion or feeling, but it is an unbreakable commitment. His love is displayed to humanity and all of creation by giving us the greatest gift in all the universe....Himself! Even when humanity rebelled against God, He still displayed his love and commitment to us by sending Jesus to redeem us. God's character of love is displayed throughout human history in that He loves us even when we do not love Him back. The way that God demonstrates His love for us is by sending Jesus to die in our place.

BIG AIMS



Every child should know:

- God is love
- Love is not just something God does, it is who God is
- Love is not just an emotion or a feeling



Every child should feel awe:

- Thankful for the love of God
- Love for God who loves us even in our sin



Every child should:

- Choose to love others because God first loved them



Every child should want to:

- Grow in love for God

FAMILY DEVOTION: GOD'S LOVE CHANGES OUR HEARTS

God not only shows love; He is love. Because God loves us, we know how to love. When we experience God's love, our hearts are changed forever. His love overcomes all of our sin and shortcomings. It pierces our hearts and changes us forever.

GOD LOVES US EVEN WHEN
WE ARE UNLOVABLE**BIBLE VERSE: ROMANS 5:8**

but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

No one is worthy to be saved.

- There is no person who is good enough to be saved.
- No one deserves God's love or to have Him send His Son for their sin debt.
- All are sinners and unjust before God.
- We are all in need of a substitute.

God provided redemption for us when we were sinners.

- None of us can be saved or pay our sin debt on our own.
- We all need a substitute to pay our sin debt.
- God provided a substitute for us even though we were still sinful.
- God provided a substitute for us because of His great love for us, not because of anything that we did or do.
- Nothing we did or do caused God to love us so much that He would send a substitute for us.
- He chooses to provide a substitute for us out of His own love for us.

God's substitute completely satisfies Him.

- God provides a substitute for people through His Son Jesus and God is completely satisfied in His substitute.
- Only God could provide a substitute for us that would completely satisfy Him.
- God chooses to provide a substitute for us even though we are so sinful and undeserving.
- God is a just and loving God in all that He does.

GOD LOVES US EVEN WHEN
WE ARE UNLOVABLE**BIBLE STORY: LUKE 15:11-32***The Prodigal Son*

Supporting Scripture: Romans 11:36; Psalm 52:8; Psalm 36:7

Teacher Introduction:

God's love is perfectly beautiful. It is through His love that we understand what it means to truly sacrifice. We cannot know love apart from God. Jesus shares this truth with His followers when He tells the parable of the prodigal son. The youngest son did not make good choices. He chose instead to please himself and he did so while hurting his father. His father did not stop loving his son. Instead, he loved him more. His son did indeed use his money foolishly and found himself living among swine. A remarkable picture of God's love is seen in the father's response to his son when he returns.

It is not in our nature to overlook offenses. We are sinful people who do not know how to love. The father chose to welcome his wayward son with open arms and a celebration. He loved his son even though his son didn't do anything to deserve his love. His son was unlovable. He had foolishly run off and lost all of his inheritance. The father loved his son unconditionally. The father loved his son, not because his son was obedient or even loveable, but because he was his father. Our heavenly Father shows us what real love is by loving us when we are unlovable.

Teaching Guide:

The guide below is provided to help you teach the narrative: *The Prodigal Son*. The four points are the Big Ideas that should guide your lesson as you share from Luke 15:11-32 and teach the narrative: *The Prodigal Son*. Footnotes are provided for further study of the text and God's interaction with His people. Throughout the lesson, questions are placed to help you guide the preschoolers to think about and process the narrative: *The Prodigal Son*.

Opening Illustration:

Give each child two balloons that have been blown up. Choose one student to play the prodigal son and one student to play the father of the prodigal son. Role play the return of the prodigal son. As the "prodigal son" gets closer, tell the students to wave their balloons to show they are celebrating his return. God celebrates our coming to know Him just like the father celebrated the return of his son.

- God loves each of us even though we are unlovable.
- He celebrates when we come to know Him with saving faith just like the father celebrated the return of his son.

GOD LOVES US EVEN WHEN
WE ARE UNLOVABLE**BIG IDEA: GOD NOT ONLY SHOWS LOVE, HE IS LOVE.****All things are from God, including love.**

- Love is not just a human emotion or a feeling.
- Love is from God because all things originate in Him.¹
- God created everything and gave us the ability to create things ourselves.
- The father of the prodigal son knew how to love his son because God has revealed what love is.

God shows His love to all people.²

- God is love and that means He shows love to all people.
- Even though no person is worthy of love, God still loves us.
- We know love because God is love and He loves us.³
- Without God we can't really know what love is.
- The father of the prodigal son shows us what God's love is like by loving his son no matter what.
- When we know God, we know love because God is love.



Play a game of hide and seek with an object. Have the children close their eyes while you hide the object. When they find the object, everyone should yell "Lost, but is now found." Hide the object several times for the children to find it. Remind them that prodigal son's father celebrated his return just like God celebrates when we come to know Him.

How do we know what love is? (God shows us what love is by loving us.)

How did the father of the prodigal son show what God's love is like? (He loved his son even when his son didn't deserve it.)

1. Romans 11:36: Everything comes from God and is for His glory. Love is from God and for His glory.
 2. John 3:16: God loves the whole world and sent His Son to pay the sin debt of the world.
 3. Romans 5:8: We know what love is because God loves us first. We learn by how He loves us.

GOD LOVES US EVEN WHEN
WE ARE UNLOVABLE**BIG IDEA: GOD'S LOVE IS NOT DEPENDENT UPON OUR OBEDIENCE.****God's love is unconditional.**

- God loves us no matter what we do or don't do.⁴
- We can't earn God's love, so His love is not based on anything that we do.
- The prodigal son's father loved him no matter what he did.
- Even when his son went away and wasted his inheritance, his father still loved him.
- God's love isn't dependent upon anything that we do. It is from God.



Sing "Your Banner Over Me Is Love" with the children. Remind them that God loves us unconditionally. He doesn't love us based upon how much we obey or not.

Our obedience doesn't cause God to love us more.

- God's love is from Him and not because of anything we do.
- The father of the prodigal son didn't love the older son more because he was obedient. He loved his sons because he chose to love them.
- God does not determine how He loves us on our level of obedience.
- No matter our level of obedience, God loves us because God chooses to love us.

Does God love us more if we are obedient? (No, God's love is not dependent upon our obedience.)

Did the father of the prodigal son love the older son more because of his obedience? (No, he loved both of his sons because he chose to love them.)

4. Psalm 52:8: *God's love is unfailing because it is not determined by our actions. God loves us because God chooses to love us, not because of anything that we do.*

GOD LOVES US EVEN WHEN
WE ARE UNLOVABLE**BIG IDEA: GOD'S LOVE IS GREATER THAN OUR SIN.****God's love is perfect and eternal.**

- We are all sinners with sinful hearts.
- We all make sinful choices just like the prodigal son.
- God's love is not affected by our sinful hearts.
- The prodigal son's father loved his son even though he was foolish and hurt him.
- His love was greater than his son's foolish actions.
- God loves us perfectly and forever.
- His love does not end.⁵

Our sin doesn't determine whether God loves us or not.

- We are not responsible for God's love.
- Our sin doesn't determine whether God loves us or not.
- The prodigal son made really bad choices, but his father still loved him.
- His love for his son was greater than his son's mistakes.
- God's love is greater than our sin.
- There is no sin that causes the father to not love us.
- He loves us because He chooses to love us, not because we deserve it.



Bring in two stuffed animals. One should be old and worn-out and the other should be soft and lovable. Ask the children to choose the animal that is most lovable. Remind them that God loves the unlovable. His love isn't determined by what we do.

What is God's love greater than? (It is greater than our sin.)

Is there any sin that causes God not to love us? (No, God's love is eternal.)

Did the father of the prodigal son stop loving his son? (No, he continued loving him no matter what.)

5. Psalm 36:7: *God's love is unfailing. It does not end when we make mistakes or because of our disobedience.*

GOD LOVES US EVEN WHEN
WE ARE UNLOVABLE**BIG IDEA: GOD'S LOVE CHANGES OUR HEARTS.****God's love makes us different.**

- God's love makes our sinful hearts new.⁶
- When we understand how much God loves us, our lives are different.
- God's love pierces our hearts and makes us new people.
- The prodigal son returned home a different person because of his father's love.
- His heart changed because his father loved him unconditionally.

Our hearts are not the same after we experience God's love.

- The prodigal son was different after he experienced his father's love.
- He was not determined to go out on his own anymore.
- We are different when we experience God's love.
- Our hearts are no longer set on our own sinful way.
- We want to please God after we experience His love.
- His love changes us into new people.



Give each child a paper heart. Allow them to draw on their hearts with markers. Tell them the marker represents their sin. Give each child a new paper heart and attach it to the first paper heart. God's love makes us new. It changes our hearts from sinful to clean.

How does God's love make us different? (His love changes our hearts.)

6. 2 Corinthians 5:17: *We are new creations in Christ when we place saving faith in Him. It is God's love that draws us to Him and changes our heart.*

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HOOKS



God Loves The Unlovable

On the board make a list of the ways that we disobey God. Help the children see that we all disobey God and do what we shouldn't do. Lead the children in a discussion about how God loves us no matter what we do.

- God loves the unlovable. He loves us even though we're sinful and disobey Him.
- God doesn't just love people who are obedient or lovable.
- He loves us all because He chooses to love us.



God's Love Is Greater Than Our Sin

Bring in a bucket and some heavy rocks. Have the children take turns trying to lift the bucket with the heavy rocks in it. The rocks represent our sin. Tell them that God's love overcomes our sin. It removes our sin. Remove the rocks from the bucket. It can be lifted easily now.



God's Love Changes Our Hearts

Bring in a balloon. Tell the children that the flat balloon is like our hearts before God's love. It is sinful and flat and empty. After we experience God's love, our hearts change. Blow the balloon up and tie the end. Let the children take turns holding the balloon. God's love fills us up and changes our hearts just like the air changed the balloon.