

MIDDLE SCHOOL GUIDE 5

AMBASSADORS ARE COMPELLED BY LOVE

YEAR: KNEEL / FOCUS: I AM AN AMBASSADOR
SERIES: GOD IS THE KING - I AM HIS AMBASSADOR

BIG TRUTH: AMBASSADORS ARE COMPELLED BY LOVE

1 Timothy 1:5; 1 Corinthians 13:13

BIBLE VERSE: 2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-15

"For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and He died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised."

BIG IDEAS

- The cross demonstrates God's love for us.
- This love captures and compels Jesus followers.
- God's love for us creates in us a love for the lost.

BIBLE PASSAGE: 2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-15

KNEEL - I AM AN AMBASSADOR

The Kneel Year is an exploration of what it means to worship God with our all (Luke 10:26-28). Worship is not something that is limited to a service once a week, but instead occurs every day, in all of life. We are unceasing worshipers. Worship never stops, it only changes directions. In order to worship God with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind, we must embrace our identity as image bearers. It is out of that identity that we can begin to live for God's glory in all of life (Colossians 3:17).

SERIES AIMS



Every student should know that...

- Jesus is the One True King.
- An ambassador is someone who is a representative of someone else.
- Jesus followers are set apart to live as ambassadors for God in the world.



Every student should feel...

- Deep sorrow and compassion for people around them who do not know Jesus.
- Passionate about the gospel that rescued them out of darkness.



Every student should strive to...

- Learn more about how to live faithfully as an ambassador for Christ.
- Share the gospel with at least one person who does not know Jesus.



Every student should want...

- To look at the world through a gospel lens.
- To live as a faithful minister of reconciliation.
- To orient their thoughts, actions, and conversations around the gospel that saved them.

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week's Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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God's people are controlled by His Spirit.

"For the love of Christ controls us..."

- We understand and know God's love because He shows it to us when He awakens us to our need for Him. We continue to grow in our knowledge of His love through the work of His Spirit inside of us. God's Spirit controls our lives by working in us to reveal the depth of God's love for us and by teaching us how to obey God out of love.
- The Holy Spirit guides us to a greater knowledge of God through His Word. As we grow in our knowledge of God, we grow in our understanding of His love for us and this drives us to serve Him. As we serve Him, we will love others as He has loved us.

Jesus' death sets people free from their former lives.

"...that one has died for all, therefore all have died..."

- We are all slaves to our sin natures. We are born spiritually dead and we continue choosing our sin over pursuing Christ. Jesus died on the cross for our sin debt and by paying it in full gave us a chance to be free from it. When we have true saving faith in Christ, we are set free from the bondage of our sin and are free to obey God.
- This saving faith transforms us into new people with hearts that desire to serve God. Because of Jesus' death, we no longer have to live spiritually dead lives. We are raised to new life through His death and resurrection.

God's people live for Him and not for themselves.

"...that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised."

- Being raised with Christ means no longer living for ourselves. Because of Him, we can live for God and die to ourselves daily. We no longer love the same things we once loved. Because we are loved by God, we love the things He loves, which means we love lost people.
- Being God's chosen people also means we live for Him. We seek to please Him and we live for His glory and not our own. We become His ambassadors and live to share His truth with the world around us.

AMBASSADORS ARE COMPELLED BY LOVE

BIG IDEA #1: THE CROSS DEMONSTRATES GOD'S LOVE FOR US.¹

[THIS]

Love originates with God. What it truly is cannot be defined by the world's standards or examples. We know what love is because God first loved us. He is perfect and without sin, which means His love is absolutely perfect in every way. This also means that His love is steadfast and unchanging. It lasts forever because God has said that His love will last forever. Paul writes of God's love for man in his letter to the church at Corinth. He shows them and us that God loved perfectly when He sent His only Son to pay the world's sin debt. We did not deserve this sacrifice, yet God willingly sent His Son, Jesus to live the life we could not and to die the death we deserve. Jesus' death on the cross is the greatest example of love and reveals God's affection for His people.

[THEREFORE]

Read John 15:13. What does it show about God that He willingly sacrificed Jesus for sinful people?

1 Peter 3:18 shows us that God's love is deep and perfect because He willingly sacrificed Jesus for people who are sinful and unjust. God is merciful and kind in seeking out sinful people who reject Him and rebel against Him in their natural state. Isaiah 53:3-5 reminds us that mankind's sinfulness and God's great love for people.

[THIS]

Because man is born with a sin nature, people are born separated from God. Not only are people separated from God, but we rebel against Him and reject Him. No one seeks after God naturally. Instead, we seek to please ourselves and we follow after the god of this world, Satan. We are enslaved and blinded to our sinfulness and even our need for a Savior until God shows us mercy and grace by awakening us to the truth. It's when we come to this realization that we can truly understand God's love because we will understand what the cross means for us and what it cost God. Jesus, a perfectly righteous person, died for unrighteous people who rejected and despised Him. That is true love.

[THEREFORE]

Why is it hard for us to sacrifice things?

2 Timothy 3:2-4 teaches us about our sin natures. We are all selfish and put ourselves above others. It is difficult to sacrifice things because we do not like to give up what we love. Instead, we want to cling to it and hold it tightly. When we value the things of this world over our eternal life, we will find it hard to give up anything that is valuable to us.

Read Psalm 100:1-5. In what ways can you worship God for His perfect love this week?

Not only is God's love perfectly displayed on the cross, but it endures and lasts forever. This means that God's love is unending and unconditional always. We can worship God for His perfect love and His love will never stop. Just as the psalmist worshiped God for His unending love, we can worship Him, knowing that our behavior does not dictate the way He loves us.

1. 2 Corinthians 5:14: Christ died for all that we might live through Him.

AMBASSADORS ARE COMPELLED BY LOVE

BIG IDEA #2: THIS LOVE CAPTURES AND COMPELS JESUS FOLLOWERS.²

[THIS]

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 speaks of God's love and the power it has over His people. When a person is awakened to the truth of their sinfulness and they are presented with the knowledge that God, who is perfect in every way, chose to rescue them, they are captured by this display of love. God's love is powerful and can soften the hardest heart. It draws people to God and awakens them to a new life spiritually. This love arrests their hearts and leads them to desire different things than before they had true saving faith. They no longer desire to follow the way of the world, but instead, desire to please God and to know Him. Their hearts are made new and they are reconciled to God through Christ. Because God's love captures us, we learn a new way of loving. We, too, strive to love unconditionally and sacrificially because of God's great love for us.

[THEREFORE]

What are some ways that our society distorts the definition of love?

The way the world describes love is different than God's love. 1 Corinthians 13 and 1 John 4:18 both teach us what Godly love is and highlight how it is different from the way the world defines love. The world defines love as something that makes us feel good all of the time or is something that we deserve. It is seen as more of an emotion that can change rather than action that is faithful and steadfast.

[THIS]

Because God's people are captured by His love, they are also controlled by it. His love compels His people to live and serve Him and others. Paul writes of this in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 when he says, "for the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this that one died for all, therefore all have died..." That Christ died for us compels us to live for Him and to be obedient to His Word. Because Christ's death on the cross is an example of what it means to love God and others, we can follow His example in being obedient to God's Word. This love compels us to love others with patience and long-suffering. It leads us to share the gospel with the lost people in our lives. God's love controls our responses and choices. It mobilizes His people to carry His message everywhere.

[THEREFORE]

What are some things you've been compelled to do because of God's love?

Ephesians 4:2-3 and Colossians 3:12 teach us some of the ways that God's love controls, or compels us. As we seek to love God, we will bear with one another, seek peace, and put others before ourselves. Loving God means loving people as He commands us to and His love compels us to do that.

What are some things in your life that you do out of a love for God and others?

Mark 7:21-23 shows us what the works of the flesh are and Ephesians 4:22-24 teaches us to put those works off and to put on our new selves. As we grow in our understanding and love of God, we will put off the flesh. We will want to become more like Christ by dying to our fleshly desires that we might walk in obedience to Christ. We will also seek to love others as Christ has loved us.

2. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15: The love of God captures His children's hearts and leads them to worship and serve Him as they seek His glory in their daily lives.

AMBASSADORS ARE COMPELLED BY LOVE

BIG IDEA #3: GOD'S LOVE FOR US CREATES IN US A LOVE FOR THE LOST.³

[THIS]

Jesus' ministry on earth is an example for His people to follow. His life is characterized by His great love for sinful, fallen mankind. As Jesus ministered on the earth, He loved people perfectly and steadfastly. He has always loved perfectly and continues to love sacrificially and unconditionally. His love compelled Him to choose death on the cross so that mankind might be reconciled to God the Father. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 shows us this great love that God has for His people. Jesus died for all that all might live through Him. God models what loving the lost looks like through the sacrifice of His Son. Because all are lost, when we have true saving faith, we experience the fullness of God's love and it is His love that leads us to share the gospel with those around us.

[THEREFORE]

What is a specific thing that you can do to love the lost people in your life well?

In Philippians 2:5-11, Paul shows us the example of Christ that we should imitate. Christ loved others and served them. We, too, should love others as He does by sharing the gospel with them. We should consider how our lives enable us to share the gospel with lost people and we should seek to follow Christ's example of seeking and engaging with lost people.

[THIS]

Because of God's love, His people love. As we grow in our own understanding of our lostness and the great love and mercy that God has shown us, we will in turn love lost people. The more we grow in our understanding of God's grace in sending Jesus to save us, we will want to share this hope with those who do not know God. As we understand how separated from God we were in our sin, we'll desire to see others who are separated from Him reconciled to Him. God's love is a catalyst that drives His people to make His name known in the world and to spread His gospel to a dead and dying world far from Him.

[THEREFORE]

What are some attitudes or behaviors that can distract you from showing God's love for the lost?

In Galatians 5:26, we see that we should resist the desire to provoke others or to allow ourselves to be jealous of them. Hebrews 13:5 also teaches us about contentment and not loving money or material things. We can become distracted from loving lost people when we focus on ourselves and seek our own pleasure over seeking God's glory.

How can you grow in your love for lost people this week?

In John 21:15-17, Jesus teaches Peter what it means to really love Christ. Peter has followed Christ and loves Him, but Jesus presses him to love Him even more by shepherding His people. As we grow in our love for Christ, we will grow in our love for the lost around us. As our hearts become more Christ-like, we can't help but love lost people because Jesus came to the earth to seek and save lost people.

3. Mark 16:15: Believers are commanded to share the gospel and the more they love Christ, the more they will love the lost.