

**Focus:** Love God and Neighbor

**Materials:**

Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth  
CD: America's 25 Favorite  
Gospel: In lesson plan  
Foam Heart

**Gathering** (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: *Good Morning everyone, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. Last week we talked about Bartimeus, the man that Jesus helped to see. Jesus helps us to see the good in others and be the light of the world. This week Jesus tells us the most important rule about following him.*

**Opening Prayer**

Together we make the Sign of the Cross (do in reverse so children can mirror).

Say: *Now let's put our hands together and bow our heads.*

*O God, you are one God over all the earth. Help us keep your word deep in our hearts, so we may love you as Jesus did. In the name of Jesus we pray.  
Amen.*

**Song/Movement**

*There is Power in the Name of Jesus*, track: 19, from America's 25 Favorite

Play music, encourage children to stretch or move to the music (clapping, stamp feet march in place to the beat), turn to each other and shake hands, saying hello, etc. Have children sit on their carpet squares when finished.

There is \_\_\_\_\_, in the name of  
Jesus. (3x)  
There is \_\_\_\_\_ in that wonderful  
name.

Power, Glory, Healing  
There's Salvation in the name of Jesus (3x)  
There's Salvation in that wonderful name  
(3x) –to fade.

**Memory Verse**

Say: *Now let's take a moment together to learn a verse from the bible.*

*Love God with all your heart.*

Have the children repeat the verse after you a couple of times.

Say: *Jesus tells us to love God with everything we have. We should never hold back our love for God. To love God with all our heart means that there is nothing we love more than God. He is always first in our thoughts, especially when we make choices between right and wrong. We use all our work and energy to serve God.*

**Gospel Story**

Say: *Today we are reading from the Gospel of Mark.*

Have children make sign of the cross on their forehead, mouth and heart saying. *“Lord, open my mind, my lips and my heart so that I may learn it, speak it and love it.”*

**Read:** None, pp. n/a,

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark

(Invite the children to repeat what you say and do.)

**One of the scribes asked Jesus:**

*[Chatty hands, thumb against fingers]*

**“Which is the first of all commandments?”**

*[Hold up index finger]*

**Jesus answered:**

*[Chatty hand]*

**“Hear, O my people!**

*[Cup hand behind ear]*

**The Lord our God is Lord alone.**

*[Point heavenward]*

**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,**

*[Cross hands over heart]*

**with all your mind,**

*[Tap forehead]*

**and with all your strength.**

*[Strong muscle arms]*

**You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”**

*[Point to everyone and cross hands over heart.]*

**The scribe said:**

*[Chatty hand]*

**“That was a good answer.**

*[Nod vigorously]*

**You are right in saying that God is one.**

*[Point heavenward]*

**There is no other God.**

*[Shake head]*

**We are to love God with all our heart,**

*[Cross hands over heart]*

**with all our soul,**

*[Touch heart]*

**with all our mind,**

*[Touch forehead]*

**and with all our strength.**

*[Strong muscle arms]*

**Loving our neighbor as our self**

*[Point to everyone and cross hands over heart]*

**is more important than offerings and sacrifices.**

*[Lift hands to God]*  
**Jesus said to the man:**  
*[Chatty hand]*  
**“You are not far from the Kingdom of God.”**  
*[Point heavenward]*

After the reading say: *The Gospel of the Lord*

Children respond: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

### Discussion Starters:

- *A scribe is a person who studied God's word all the time. What did the scribe ask Jesus?*
- *What did Jesus tell him was the first (most important) of all the commandments?*
- *What did Jesus add to the first commandment of Love God with all your heart?*
- *Why is it important to love our neighbor?*

### Reflection on Reading:

*The scribe knew what the rules were that had been written down in the Bible. There were 613 commandments in the Jewish tradition. The scribe was asking Jesus of all of those commandments which one was most important. Jesus tells us the loving God and loving our neighbor are the most important of the commandments.*

*God made and loves all people. We can't love our creator and not love all that he created and loves. Sometimes it is hard to show love for people who aren't very nice, but if we show love to them, by doing something nice for them they might change and be easier to love.*

### Gospel Activity

#### Activity 1:

#### **Love Go-Round Game**

Have the children sit in a circle. Hand the heart to one child and chant the following while they pass the heart around the circle:

*There's plenty of love to go around,  
The more and more we share.  
Where is the love that goes around?  
Where is the love, O where?*

When the verse is done, whoever is holding the heart shares something they can do to be kind to others.

(you can play a portion of a song from one of the CD's instead-for example: Jesus loves me, this I know, Jesus loves the little children, I am so glad that Jesus loves me-instead of the verse.)

Repeat as time allows.

Activity 2:**Kindness Brainstorming:**

Each time we do something that is good and faithful to God; we help bring about his kingdom of love and peace. When we have kindness in our hearts we do good deeds. Let's see how many things we can think of we can do every day to show love for others.

Use the following list for prompts if needed-

- > Say a prayer for someone in need while you are waiting in line
- > Say 'Thank You'
- > Let someone else go first
- > Leave the larger cookie for the next person
- > Be willing to help others
- > Think of what Jesus wants you to do
- > Tell the truth
- > Help without being asked
- > Let others choose the game to play
- > Ask the new child at school to play with you and your friends
- > Share your toys
- > Give someone a hug
- > Forgive someone who was unkind
- > Help someone with grocery shopping
- > Hold the door open for someone

Complete the weekly bulletin as a group-let the children color them if there is extra time

**Closing Prayer**

(Children respond: "I Believe!")

Ask: *Do you believe in God, sent us Jesus to show us how to love?*

*Do you believe in Jesus, who tells us to love God with all our heart?*

*Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who fills our hearts with the fire of God's love?*

**Sending Forth**

*Say: Remember to show God's love to others every day by showing kindness to others.*

**Lining Up/Closing Song**

Play "Amazing Grace" track 24 from America's 25 Favorite while children put away any materials and lineup. Hand out weekly bulletins. Remind them it is important that they return to their family quietly so that we may all listen and pray together in church.