

The LORD is good to everyone and everything; God's compassion extends to all his handiwork! (Psalm 145:9)

Showing Love – Matthew 5:43-48

Prepare to Wonder

In today's Scripture, Jesus is preaching the part of the Sermon on the Mount where he asks us to love our enemies. Who is an enemy? Is an enemy someone we hate? Is hate the opposite of love?

Jesus' words, "You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy," originally came from the Book of Leviticus. Jesus knew the Hebrew Scriptures well and was calling for love and wholeness. He shared that there is nothing but love.

This passage emphasizes that everyone is a child of God and that it is important to recognize that in all people. This does not mean we have to allow others to treat us poorly or to support bigotry or animosity. However, sometimes to love means setting boundaries, naming wrongs, and standing up for what is right. You still can know we all are created in love, yet disagree. Love does not always look one way. Love looks like many things, just like all of God's people.

We all need love, and kids can understand this. It might be hard to tell children to love their enemies when someone has been rude or mean. We can help them see that God is love and that they should do their best to be an example of that love. This means standing up for a friend or talking to an adult when being bullied. Help your children see that love can be a reminder that we are included. We all are loved.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

Have you ever played with a boomerang? As you probably know, when you throw a boomerang, it goes out and comes back to you. This is kind of like love. When you release love into the world, it comes back to you. Love is contagious. What kind of love do you want to send out and receive?

Look online for how to make a paper boomerang. Use a permanent marker and write on the boomerang your definition of love. Place the boomerang somewhere for safekeeping as a reminder of the love you want to give and receive. You could give the boomerang to someone you love.

Welcome to Wonder

Supplies: CEB Bible, Annual Music CD or song download, optional: Digital Class Pack

- Gather together near your Wonder Table.

SAY: Today's faith word is *include*.

- Show the children the "Include" poster (Digital Class Pack).

SAY: When we include, we welcome all of God's children in God's love.

WONDER: What is love?

SING together

- Use your Annual Music CD or download the song, "Welcome" (<https://www.cokesbury.com/Celebrate-Wonder-Annual-Music>).
- Play the song, "Welcome." Then sing and celebrate.

Wonder with Me

Supplies: CEB Bible, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, optional: Wonder Cube (Digital Class Pack)

READ the Bible Story

- Read the Bible story, Matthew 5:43-48.
- Roll the Wonder Cube. Take time to answer a few of the questions.

WATCH the Bible Story

- Visit <https://www.cokesbury.com/Celebrate-Wonder-Video> to download and watch today's Bible story, or watch on www.amplifymedia.com.

WONDER together

- Who do you love? Who does God love?
- What do you think the word *community* means?

CONTINUE to Wonder

- What do you think it means to love your enemies?
- Do you think it's hard to love your enemies? If so, why? If not, why?
- Why do you think God wants us to love everyone?

PRAY together

- Dear God, help me to show your love and to include everyone. Amen.

Experience Wonder—My Neighborhood (Craft)

Supplies: cardboard boxes, recycled materials, craft sticks, craft glue, scissors, tape, markers, other craft supplies

- Show the children the collected supplies.

WONDER: What is a neighbor? Who is a neighbor?

SAY: In today's Bible story, Jesus says that everyone is our neighbor and that God wants us to love everyone.

- Instruct the children to use the supplies to build a neighborhood. The children may choose to work independently or together.
- Let willing volunteers share their work.

WONDER: What makes your neighborhood special?

Spiritual Practice—Exploring Inclusion Through Community

- Gather the children in a circle.

SAY: Today we talked about loving our neighbors. Did you know it also is important to love ourselves?

WONDER: What does it mean to love yourself?

- Guide the children in making the sign for "I love you" with their hands.

SAY: Hold your hand up with your palm facing out. Put down your middle and ring finger to make the "I love you" sign.

SAY: You can do this practice anytime you need a reminder that God loves you and that God loves everyone.

- Encourage the children and their families to use the Celebration Chart (Digital Class Pack) and to read together the *Winter 2020–21 Celebrate Wonder Family Activity Book* (if purchased) at home this week.