

Day 1: You can't claim you love God if you don't love your brother.

Read 1 John 4:20-21, and ask your children:

1. Should you believe someone who says, "I love God," but hates his brother?
2. Why should it be easier to show love to your brother than to God?
3. Who gave us the commandment to love?
4. If we love God, what should naturally happen?

John, who was called "the disciple whom Jesus loved," reminds us that you cannot claim to love God if you do not love your brother also. In fact, you can see your brother, but you can't see God. This means when Jesus told us to love God, it also meant we would show love to people as well.

Day 2: We should even love our enemies.

Read Matthew 5:43-48, and ask your children:

1. Does the Bible say to hate your enemy?
2. What is something you can do for your enemies to show you love them?
3. Is it hard to love those who love you?
4. How does God treat the person you may consider your enemy?

The Bible says, "Love your neighbor," but doesn't say "Hate your enemy." Instead, the teachers of the Law made that part up. However, Jesus explains that it doesn't mean anything if the only people you love are your friends. When we love God, we'll even love those who aren't good to us. We'll pray for them!

Day 3: Jesus commands that we love one another.

Read John 13:34-35, and ask your children:

1. What does Jesus command of the disciples?
2. Who is the perfect example of how we should love?
3. How will the world know we are Jesus' disciples?
4. What do people see about our love when we love other people?

Just before Jesus is going to be crucified, rise from the dead and ascend into heaven, Jesus tells the disciples that He will be leaving. They will be left behind to be His witnesses and tell people about His salvation. However, Jesus also tells them it will be critical that they love one another. In fact, Jesus says that people will be able to tell that the disciples love Him by the way they love each other!

Day 4: The source of our love (for God and people) is that God loved us first.

Read 1 John 4:7-11 and ask your children:

1. Where does love come from?
2. What does it mean to be "born of God?"
3. How did God show us He loves us?
4. When did God love us?

John reminds us that the ability to love other people comes from being born of God. If we are born again, then we love God. If we love God, then we will love other people. But God is not sitting back waiting for us to love Him first. Instead, God loved us before we ever loved Him, and showed it by giving us His Son to die for our sins. Jesus died for us when we were God's enemy so that we could become His friend.