

**TEACHING BIG IDEA:**

Jesus showed up in the world to let us know that God loves us.

**TEACHING SUMMARY:**

This teaching begins by addressing what true love is. True love shows up in pain when we cannot give anything in return. True love also shows up to serve those who are in need and doesn't have expectations. Those who receive true love will understand that they are lovable. So many times we try to determine love based on a performance of those we want to love us. We can go through an almost adolescent "they love me, they love me not" process. We can even do that with God, basing our thoughts on what we think God should be doing for us. Christmas shows us something about true love from God. Jesus showed up. He shows up in our pain. He shows up to serve us. He therefore demonstrates true love and shows us that we are lovable. This type of love is like a gift to be received. When we receive the love of Jesus, we receive life and life to the fullest, even in the midst of pain and need.

**TALK IT OVER (DISCUSS ONE OR MORE):**

Share a story from your past where you had a young adolescent teenage type love – a "they love me, they love me not" type of love.

What are ways that you have based your understanding on God's love for you with how the events of your day have gone? How about with how your relationships are going? What about with how your job or money issues are going?

Why doesn't God immediately fix our pain? Why doesn't God satisfy all our needs? What about our wants?

Explain how the birth of Jesus demonstrates God's love.

Why is it important to receive love? Explain how love can be seen as a gift. How can understanding love as a gift allow us to see that we are lovable? How can we receive God's love and really know it?

How can receiving God's love and understanding that He loves us, allow us to love others? What are ways that we can demonstrate God's love to our family? Our friends? Our co-workers? Our acquaintances?

***OTHER SCRIPTURES TO READ:***

Romans 5:8

John 3:16

Galatians 2:20

1 John 4:9-11