

One truth shared: Remain in Jesus' love as you love other people.

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

John 15:9, 12-13

Love Each Other

The story is told of a mother who was walking down the street with her two little girls one day. Each girl held mommy's hand as they strolled down the sidewalk in their quaint little Alaskan hometown. It was just another day surrounded by beautiful scenery in a beautiful location . . . until they turned the corner. Suddenly a massive grizzly bear charged out of the woods at the three of them. Without hesitation, the mother pushed the girls to the side and took on the bear, knowing she was outmatched and about to be mauled to pieces.

Stories like this are moving. What selfless and self-sacrificing love! We could imagine most parents would do the same for their children. But would you do that? Would you lay down your life for someone else? Maybe a family member or someone you deeply love. But what about the classmate who spread rumors about you on social media last week . . . what about the school bully . . . what about a criminal who did evil things and now is in jail for life? Would you die for any of them?

Romans 5:8 says, "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." The remarkable fact of God's love is that Jesus died for all people of all time—even the worst of sinners, which includes you and me.

In John 15, Jesus is talking about that incredible, selfless, self-sacrificing love that he has for us. He gives multiple examples of that love in these verses as he spoke to his disciples. These words also describe how Jesus loves us. Jesus laid down his life for us. Jesus calls us his friends, even though he is true God and we are mere humans. We didn't choose him, but he chose us. All of these things reveal the extraordinary love that Jesus has for us, even though we are sinners!

Jesus' love is not just a one-time thing of the past though. His love is life changing! Two repeated phrases tell us what Jesus wants us to do next: remain in his love and love each other. Jesus wants nothing more than for us to stay inside the protecting bubble of his love, constantly reassured of his forgiveness and care for us. And then, Jesus wants us to love other people in the same way that he has loved us.

This week, look for ways you can "remain in his love." Don't miss opportunities for Bible reading, devotions, prayer, and worship. Then, look for specific ways and specific people that you can show the love of Jesus' too. His love has been life changing for us, and it certainly will be life changing for others!

Prayer: Loving Savior, your love for me is beyond what I can comprehend, but it means everything to me. Help me to remain in your love and to appreciate it with a glad and joyful heart. Then help your love to spill over in me in the ways that I love other people. Amen.

Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

Year B – Easter 6

Resurrection Reality

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Love Each Other

Starting the Discussion: *This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

What is the best love/ romance movie of all time? Explain why!

Connecting: *This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they've looked at it.*

- What makes Jesus love different than the love stories we “love” to hear in TV and movies?
- If you had to use adjectives to describe the love of Jesus, which ones come to mind?

Digging In: *Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- Jesus spoke these words to his disciples on the Thursday before Good Friday. Explain why that context makes these words even more meaningful.
- The word that Jesus uses for love in Greek here is *agape*. It's a word that means selfless, self-sacrificing love that loves a person by choice, despite who they are or what they might have done. Identify phrases from John 15:9-17 that prove God's love is truly *agape* love.
- Identify other verses in the Bible that describe God's love for us.
- What makes it so difficult to love other people the way Jesus has loved us? How can we learn to do that better?

Conclusion: *Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the “connecting question” above.*

As a group, identify three specific ways you plan to “remain in his love” this week, and three specific ways you plan to “love each other” this week.