

This year's resources are going to concentrate on the 'Fruits Of The Spirit' (Gal 5:22-23). The first 'fruit' we're looking at is LOVE

There are many definitions of what love is – and even more of what love isn't – but it's difficult to beat the description given in Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth (1 Corinthians 13. Vv4-8):

⁴Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or conceited or proud; ⁵love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; ⁶love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth. ⁷Love never gives up; and its faith, hope, and patience never fail.

⁸Love is eternal. There are inspired messages, but they are temporary; there are gifts of speaking in strange tongues, but they will cease; there is knowledge, but it will pass.

We use the word 'love' in many different ways – I love Mars bars in a different way to that in which I love my family – how many different things to your children or young people love?

The Bible suggests that there are 4 main types of love:

Romantic love - boyfriend, girlfriend, partner

Family love or affection - siblings, parents, cousins, etc

Love for one another – what might be called 'Christian love', encompassing love for fellow humans, care, respect, and compassion for people in need.

Divine love – the love that God has, and shows, for us.

Here are some activities and resources you might use to explore 'love' with your group.

For younger children:

<http://www.daniellesplace.com/html/bible-lessons-crafts-activities-love.html>

<https://teachingmama.org/love-craft-preschoolers/>

<https://www.brighthubeducation.com/preschool-crafts-activities/70329-god-is-love-poster-activity-for-preschoolers/>

There are lots of craft ideas on these websites that are ideal for use with pre-schoolers and primary school aged children. Many would work well as part of a Messy Church session.

For teenagers:

<https://ministrytoyouth.com/youth-group-lesson-on-gods-love/>

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/seriously-awkward-youth-group-resources> (Please note: you have to register in order to receive the resources on this site – although it’s free -you will then be able to download all the resources you need. There are six sessions covering Session one: Identity, Session two: Mind matters, Session three: Healthy relationships, Session four: Life online, Session five: Seriously Awkward, Session six: Make a difference.

<https://www.livestrong.com/article/1004328-activities-teach-teens-gods-love/> - craft activities for teenagers on the theme of love.

Remember – a craft activity is only a time-filler unless you have worthwhile conversations whilst you’re doing them!

A good book “Let’s Talk Relationships” by Vanessa Rogers is available from Amazon (and all good booksellers). It contains quizzes, discussion starters, role-plays and includes photocopiable resources. It covers a wide range of relationship topics including peer pressure, relationship bullying, decision-making, managing conflict at home, and family values.

Young Adults

An excellent read is “A Book About Love” by Jonah Lehrer (available from Amazon in a variety of formats) or direct from the publishers, Simon and Schuster

<https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/A-Book-About-Love/Jonah-Lehrer/9781476761404>

It looks at scientific studies into what love is (scientifically speaking!) along with excerpts from child-rearing manuals, literary depictions, even the language of online dating sites!