



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

LOVE. / Week 1

SERIES OVERVIEW

SERIES SUMMARY

A 3-week series about Easter.

SERIES BOTTOM LINE

Good news for everyone.

WEEKLY BOTTOM LINES

WEEK 1: How Jesus loved shows us what love can do.

WEEK 2: Love shows up in the low points of life.

WEEK 3: Love lets people know they matter.

SCRIPTURE

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him (1 John 4:9 NIV).

NOTES FOR THIS WEEK

THINK ABOUT THIS

The focus of the conversation this week is two-fold. First, it's to help students recognize the ways they may be viewing God right now. After all, they can't change the way they see or experience God if they don't first recognize the patterns of thought they currently have toward God. Some may be fully aware that, when they think about God, things like anger, disappointment, confusion, or even apathy may come up right away. But others may not fully recognize that they're harboring some frustrating or unclear thoughts about who God is to them. After they acknowledge the way they're currently thinking, the hope is to help students recognize who God truly is to all of us, and that's love. The Easter story is the ultimate evidence of God's love for us, so be sure to frame this conversation through that lens.

NOTE TO THE COMMUNICATOR

It may be an interesting tension point for high schoolers to consider love as the core attribute—the very essence—of God. Many high schoolers believe God is everything *but* loving. God is annoyed with their constant poor choices. Or God is angry because of a mess up. Or they posture God as a perfectionist who expects the same of them. Some may see God like an absent parent. And others just think the very idea of God is irrelevant. This contrast is why what John says—that God is **love**—is so powerful. John spent personal time with Jesus and witnessed and recorded the ways Jesus loved, culminating with Jesus' death and resurrection. Do not be afraid to enter the tension with high schoolers, and allow the power of the resurrection to do what only the resurrection can do.

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- *[Tell a personal story.]*
- Sometimes when we don't fully understand something, we miss out on something that we could really love.
- **When you see Easter for what it really is, everything changes.**

TENSION

- Over the last 2,000 years, different cultures and people groups have found really unique ways to mark the events of that first Easter.
- In this series we're focusing on the reason; The motivation behind everything Jesus went through, the resurrection He pulled off, and the whole purpose of this holiday. It's why this series is called "LOVE".
- **The reason for Easter is love.**
- **But let's talk about what's real: Some of us don't want any part of that story because we really don't think love is what God is like at all.**
- Maybe your experiences, your family, what you've been taught, or even some Christians you've met have led you to think that God doesn't seem very loving at all.
- From your experience, God doesn't seem like God is **for** you. Maybe, God feels more like an entitled and angry authority figure.
- Maybe you've felt like God is anything but loving because your idea of God is that:
 - God is **annoyed** with our constant poor choices.
 - God is **angry** because we've messed up.
 - God is a **perfectionist**.
 - God is **absent**. God doesn't really care what happens to you.
 - God is **irrelevant**. God is old news, and not at all that helpful with today's problems.
- If you've ever felt any of these ways about God, you're not alone.
- So here's the question: **What do we do with the difference between what Easter is supposed to be about and the ideas we might have about God?**
- Easter is all about good news. But the **good news doesn't seem so "good" when God doesn't seem so "great,"** does it?
- If this holiday is supposed to be all about God's love, but God doesn't seem that loving to so many people and us, then where did this idea of a loving God come from in the first place?
- What are we missing?

TRUTH

- Well, throughout this series, we're going to look at the experiences of a few different people who interacted with Jesus.
- One of the people who had firsthand experience of Jesus was a man named John.
- He wrote the book of John in the New Testament which is a firsthand account of His experiences walking with, talking with, and learning from Jesus.

- But, John also wrote some other books in the New Testament 3 of which were called 1, 2, and 3 John.
- And in one of the letters he wrote late in his life, he summarized what he believed God was all about this way:
 - ...*God is love (1 John 4:8b NIV)*
- Ok, so after all that John had experienced with Jesus and after decades of living like Jesus taught him to live, he summarized who God is by saying “God is love”.
- That is INCREDIBLE. But what’s even more incredible is that he tells us why he thought this:
 - *This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins (1 John 4:9-10 NIV).*
- It’s like John is going, “You want to know why I think God is love? Because I hung out with God in a human body (Jesus) and that’s what He was like.
- **John kept receipts...and all of those receipts read “love.”**
- John had experienced love because He had spent time with Jesus.
- He was there, at the very first Easter, where the greatest love in history was put on display through the death and resurrection of the most loving person to ever live.
- John declares that Jesus had one objective: to show us what love looks like.
- How Jesus loved John and his friends showed them how love changes everything and all that love can do.
- John wasn’t writing all of this down to make some point for the sake of history.
- No, quite the opposite.
- **John had history with Jesus.**
- Think of it this way...
 - **BOTTOM LINE: How Jesus loved shows us what love can do.**
- But what is so different about God’s love, displayed in Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection?
- Jesus went as far as dying to show us the depths of love He has for us. If you ever wonder if your mistakes are too big, or your missteps are too many, all you need to do is remember what Jesus at Easter...that He died and then came back to life, with you in mind.
- Whatever you’ve thought about God up until now...what you need to remember moving forward is that **how Jesus loved shows what love can do.**

APPLICATION

- Look, the way we celebrate the events of Easter are kind of strange when you think back to what historically took place.
- Regardless of the ideas you had about God when we started this talk today, I want to encourage you to take two steps this Easter season...
 1. **Be honest about your ideas of what God is like.**
- **INTERACTIVE: See the Teaching Script for detailed instructions.**
 2. **Process what God’s love means for you personally.**

LANDING

- Love looks like Jesus.
- How Jesus loved John and his friends showed them how love changes everything and all that love can do.

- **How Jesus loved shows us what love can do.**
- Imagine what could happen if this Easter, and every Easter in the future...could be a reminder of just how much God loves you and the world around you.
- That would be good news for everyone.

TEACHING SLIDES

All bolded words and phrases in the Teaching Script are also provided as teaching slides for Premium Tier subscribers.



TEACHING SCRIPT

LOVE. / Week 1

BOTTOM LINE

HOW JESUS LOVED SHOWS US WHAT LOVE CAN DO.

INTRODUCTION

3.5 MINUTES

Tell A Personal Story. . .

- *Share a humorous and light story about a time you were afraid because you didn't understand something.*
- *Here's an example story...*

Okay, so I wasn't the most comfortable with swimming when I was younger. I'm talking, I could not swim until much later than most people I knew. And I was TERRIFIED of the water. It doesn't matter where it was, just the thought of dipping down below the water could give me nightmares. I don't know if it was something I picked up from watching too much Shark Week or what. But I would often walk in to my ankles and say "I'm good right here, this is perfect for me." There was no way I was going in any deeper than that. I know, I know, it was bad. And it drove my family crazy.

Then of course, the solution my family thought of was swim class. In the short amount of time I had been alive at that point, it was the scariest few weeks of my life. I never knew how much I could hate weekends, knowing that each Saturday, I had to get into the water. But then something changed. I actually learned how to swim. And I could swim really well. And it turns out, I loved it. I was looking for every excuse to go to the pool, hang out on the lake, or drive to the beach. I even joined the swim team!

Something that I once hated, because I didn't know how to participate, became one of the best parts of my life.

Sometimes when we don't fully understand something, we miss out on something that we could really love. But then, when we see it for what it really is, everything changes. Just like when I learned how to swim, everything became so much better for me.

Here's the deal. With Easter right around the corner, we believe the same thing—**when you see Easter for what it really is, everything changes.**

TENSION

2 MINUTES

Look, the way we celebrate the events of Easter are kind of strange when you think back to what historically took place.

A couple of thousand years ago, this guy named Jesus, who some of us believe was God in a human body, was arrested, beaten, and brutal executed on a cross...and then His followers and friends say that a few days later He came back to life.

AND it's because of this that we have a giant rabbit who drops off candy-filled eggs, pastel everything, and a ham for lunch? Definitely doesn't all seem to add up!

Over the last 2000 years, different cultures and people groups have found really unique ways to mark the events of that first Easter...BUT, in this series, we want to focus on THE reason...THE motivation behind everything Jesus went through and the resurrection He pulled off...THE whole purpose of this holiday...It's why this series is called "Love".

The reason for Easter is love.

Love is the reason Jesus lived.
Love is the reason Jesus died.
And love is the reason Jesus rose again.

L-O-V-E. Period.

Now let's be honest: if what I just said is completely true, then most of us would be cool with the idea of God.

But let's talk about what's real:

Some of us don't want any part of that story because we really don't think love is what God is like at all.

Sure, it makes for a great holiday theme and focus...but from your experience, it's not what God is actually about...

Based on what you've experienced, maybe your family, what you've been taught, or even some of the Christians you've met, God doesn't seem very loving at all.

From your experience, God doesn't seem like God is **for** you. Maybe, God feels more like an entitled and angry authority figure.

Maybe you've felt like God is anything but loving...because your idea of God is that:

- God is **annoyed** with our constant poor choices.
- God is **angry** because we've messed up.
- God is a **perfectionist**.
- God is **absent**. God doesn't really care what happens to you.

- He's **irrelevant**. God is old news, and not at all that helpful with today's problems.

If you've ever felt any of these ways about God, you're not alone. I've felt that way before. And if we're being honest, at one point or another we've all had one or more of these thoughts about God. So here's the question—**what do we do with the difference between what Easter is supposed to be about and the real ideas of God we might have?**

How do those thoughts about God fit with this big celebration of Easter? Easter is all about good news. But the **good news doesn't seem so "good" when God doesn't seem so "great,"** does it?

So maybe there's something missing in what we think about when we think about God. If this holiday is supposed to be all about God's love and God doesn't seem that loving to so many people AND some of us...then where did this idea of a loving God come from in the first place?

What are we missing?

TRUTH

6 MINUTES

Well, throughout this series, we're going to look at the experiences of a few different people who interacted with Jesus. The reason this is important is because followers of Jesus actually believe that because Jesus was God in a human body, He shows us what God is really like.

One of the people who had firsthand experience of Jesus was a man named John.

John was one of Jesus' closest friends and followers. He wrote the book of John in the New Testament that is a firsthand account of His experiences walking with, talking with, and learning from Jesus. It's literally a story of Jesus' life, written by one of his best friends, John.

But, John also wrote some other books in the New Testament 3 of which were called 1, 2, and 3 John. Scholars believe he wrote these closer to the end of his life. It was almost like he was looking back, both at the time he spent walking and talking with Jesus, and at the decades he spent living his life as a follower of the Way of Jesus. See, John had committed to living in the way Jesus taught him to live and by following the example of Jesus. He believed Jesus showed him what God was really like. And in one of the letters he wrote late in his life, he summarized what he believed God was all about this way:

...God is love (1 John 4:8b NIV)

Ok, so after all that John had experienced with Jesus and after decades of living like Jesus taught him to live, he summarized who God is by saying "God is love".

That is INCREDIBLE. But what's even more incredible is that he tells us why he thought this:

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins (1 John 4:9-10 NIV).

It's like John is going, "You want to know why I think God is love? Because I hung out with God in a human body (Jesus) and that's what He was like.

- I watched Him turn water in to wine, so that people could keep a wedding celebration going.

- I watched Him pay attention to the people society overlooked.
- I watched Him heal people who had spent years begging for help.
- I watched Him show kindness to someone caught up in some really bad choices.
- I watched Him confront people who were abusing their power to hurt others.
- I watched Him show a person of a different race and gender just how much they mattered to Him.
- Plus...I was there when he was arrested, beaten, and nailed to a cross... I was there at the empty tomb three days later...and I was there when He showed up alive again to me and my friends.

John kept receipts...and all of those receipts read “love.”

John had experienced love because He had spent time with Jesus.

He was there, at the very first Easter, where the greatest love in history was put on display through the death and resurrection of the most loving person to ever live.

So of course, all those years later, when John was trying to explain what God is like, He could help but say, “God is love.” Of course this is why he wrote that what he knows of real love, is that God sent Jesus to die and come back to life, to show us how much God loves us.

That’s what John is really saying in his letter.

John declares that Jesus had one objective: to show us what love looks like. Love looks like Jesus, because Jesus lived out love. God’s motivation for sending Jesus was to show the world a love it had never seen before. John’s firsthand experience with the love of Jesus completely turned his life upside down. How Jesus loved John and his friends showed them how love changes everything and all that love can do.

John wasn’t writing all of this down to make some point for the sake of history.

No, quite the opposite.

John had history with Jesus.

And what Jesus proved to John proves something to us as well.

Think of it this way...

How Jesus loved shows us what love can do.

John had the receipts for all that love can do.

But what is so different about God’s love, displayed in Jesus life, death, and resurrection?

Jesus went as far as dying to show us the depths of love He has for us. If you ever wonder if your mistakes are too big, or your missteps are too many, all you need to do is remember what Jesus at Easter...that He died and then came back to life, with you in mind. Nothing you do can cancel what Jesus did for you. Because of Jesus, we know that love is greater than our failures, than our mistakes, and even greater than death.

Whatever you’ve thought about God up until now...what you need to remember moving forward is that **how Jesus loved shows what love can do.**

APPLICATION

4 MINUTES

If you and I take away one thing this Easter, my hope is that it would be this: God loves us, deeply. The death and resurrection of Jesus prove it.

Regardless of the ideas you had about God when we started this talk today, I want to encourage you to take two steps this Easter season...

1. **Be honest about your ideas of what God is like.** You have an opinion about what God is like, and it is impossible for that opinion to not affect you. But I want to encourage you to be honest with yourself first. Maybe even take a few minutes this week and write down what you *really* think about God. Don't give a churchy answer or the answer you feel obligated to write. Be **real**. Don't worry—God can handle it! You're not going to offend God.

Then, I want to encourage you to consider what would be different if everything we talked about today is true. I want you to...

INTERACTIVE

Media Package subscribers: Look for [LOVE_MediaPackage_Week1_ProcessGodsLove_XP3HS](#) to accompany this interactive. Interested in purchasing the annual media package? Look for the [Media Package Add-On](#) in your curriculum dashboard.

(Communicator, have a timer, a journal, and maybe a speaker. Give a practical visual of what application point #2 could look like.

2. **Process what God's love means for you personally.** What does it mean to you that God loves you? How does this knowledge impact how you see yourself? Turn on a timer for 15 minutes and sit down, put your phone on do not disturb, or even turn it off and think. Write it out. Shout it out. Have a dance party. Take a moment to stop and just hear your own thoughts when it comes to God—no other voices, no social media, no Netflix in the background, no noise or distractions.

LANDING

1 MINUTE

Love looks like Jesus. God's motivation for sending Jesus was to show the world a love it had never seen before. John's firsthand experience with the love of Jesus completely turned his life upside down. How Jesus loved John and his friends showed them how love changes everything and all that love can do.

And because of the resurrection, you can know the same thing. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection prove it. That love is extended to you so that you can experience life the way Jesus showed us and told us is best. **How Jesus loved shows us what love can do.**

Maybe that's why Easter is supposed to be such a celebration. Sure those events 2,000 years ago were brutal...but remember how it ended, with the resurrection. THAT showed us just how much love can do.

Love is the reason Jesus lived.

Love is the reason Jesus died.

And love is the reason Jesus rose again.

Imagine what could happen if this Easter, and every Easter in the future...could be a reminder of just how much God loves you and the world around you.

That would be good news for everyone.



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
