

© 5: Love That Can't Sit Still

Exploring service as an expression of love.

Scripture:

- Galatians 5:13—Serve one another in love.
- Hebrews 13:1-3—We can show love by helping those in need.
- Colossians 3:23-24—It is Christ we are truly serving.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW		
Activity	Summary	Pre-Session Prep
Activity 1: Mine, All Mine	Determine the meaning of selfishness.	You'll need a bag of candy and a Bible.
Activity 2: Penny Auction	Plan a family service project.	none
Activity 3: Secret Service of Love	Serve Jesus by serving each other.	You'll need paper, scissors, and pens.

Main Points:

- Acting selfishly is the opposite of being loving and serving.
- Our family can show love by serving others.
- We can show love by serving family members.

LIFE SLOGAN: "When my love is true, actions show it to you!"

Make it your own

In the space provided below, outline the flow and add any additional ideas to guide you through the process of conducting this family night.

Prayer & Praise Items

In the space provided below, list any items you wish to pray about or give praise for during this family night session.

Journal

In the space provided below, capture a record of any fun or meaningful things which happened during this family night session.



WARM-UP

Open with Prayer: Begin by having a family member pray, asking God to help everyone in the family understand more about Him through this time. After prayer, review your last lesson by asking these questions:

- What did we learn about in our last lesson?
- Do you remember the Life Slogan?
- Have your actions changed because of what we learned? If so, how? Encourage family members to give specific examples of how they've applied past learning.

Share: Today we'll be learning about one of the fruits of the Spirit—Love.

ACTIVITY 1: Mine, All Mine

Point: Acting selfishly is the opposite of being loving and serving.



Supplies: You'll need a bag of small candies, with at least three pieces per child.

Activity: Empty the bag of candy in the center of your family circle and tell kids they can take as many pieces as they like. Wait to see how children determine who gets how much candy. Don't interfere as they divide the loot.

When the candy is divided, whether fairly or not, discuss:

- When I said you could have as much as you wanted, what did you think? What did you do?
- Do you think you were selfish?
- How do your actions prove whether or not you're selfish?
- What do you think it means to be selfish? (*Wanting to keep things to yourself, not sharing.*)
- What do you think is the opposite of being selfish? (*Being generous; being loving.*)



Adjustments for an only child

If you have only one child in your family, see if the child keeps all the candy, or shares any with you. Ask the child what he or she plans to do with the candy. Perhaps your child will want to share it with friends, save it, or eat it all at once.



Read Galatians 5:13 together, then ask:

Age Adjustments

FOR OLDER CHILDREN, you might use quarters or dollar bills instead of candy in this activity.

If you're concerned about your children eating too much candy, use other small treats they would enjoy for this activity. Consider new pencils, stickers, or small toys instead of candy.

- What do you think the Bible means when it says not to “indulge the sinful nature”? (*Don't do what comes naturally—being selfish.*)
- How is showing your love by serving others the opposite of being selfish? (*You put others first.*)
- How has Jesus unselfishly shown us His love? (*He came to earth and died on the cross for us.*)

Share: When we're selfish we're only thinking of ourselves. When we love others, we think of them first, and want to serve them.

ACTIVITY 2: Penny Auction

Point: Our family can show love by serving others.

Share: Here's a true story about some people who thought of others before themselves.

Activity: Read the following story aloud.

A dime for a horse! A quarter for a tractor! A cow for only three cents!

Can you imagine shopping at prices like these? The people who paid these prices weren't really shopping. They were helping their friends. Let me explain.

In the 1930's the United States went through a time called the Great Depression. During this time many factories, banks and stores closed. Millions of people lost their jobs, all their money, and their homes.

Also during this time, the middle areas of the United States such as Kansas, Oklahoma, and Colorado, were without rain for a long time, and the land became very dry. Huge windstorms blew the dusty soil away. Can you imagine what this might have been like?

With no rain and so much wind, most farmers couldn't grow anything on their land. They became poorer and poorer, and often borrowed money from the bank for things they needed. But when the farmers couldn't pay back the money they owed, the banks would come and auction off everything the farmer and his family owned. This was sort of like a garage sale, but *everything* had to be sold to satisfy the bank. How would you feel if you were in this situation?

Well the farmers cared about each other, and figured out a way to help each other during these hard times. When a bank would come to sell everything a farmer had, his friends would only bid a pennies on what was for sale. That's how they'd get a horse for only a dime, or a tractor for twenty-five cents. The bank never made much money on these "penny auctions," but what could they do? They'd sold everything the farmer had!

Then later, the friends would come and give the farmer back everything they'd bought from him! Instead of thinking how lucky they were to buy a horse for ten cents, they gave it up for their friend!

Discuss:

- How do you think the farmers and their families felt about selling all their things? (*unhappy.*)
- How do you think they felt when their friends gave everything back to them? (*surprised, happy, thankful.*)
- How were the people who bought the items back for their friends not being selfish? (*They spent their money to help others.*)
- There aren't penny auctions anymore, so how can we show love to others like this today? (*Brainstorm ideas for helping others.*)



Read Hebrews 13:1-3, as a Biblical discussion of how to love.

Question:

- Who do you know that needs to be shown love?
- Why are our actions so important in showing love? (*Actions often speak louder than words.*)

Age Adjustments

FOR SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN AND YOUNGER, check your library or bookstore for *Leah's Pony* (Boyd's Mills Press) by Elizabeth Friedrich. This wonderful story of a young farm girl whose family loses everything during the Depression captures the drama and feeling of a penny auction.

IF YOU HAVE OLDER CHILDREN, plan an evening to volunteer together at a soup kitchen, homeless shelter or other service agency. You may find yourself sorting canned food or mending donated clothing together as you serve God in love! An additional Bible passage for discussion before this activity is 1 John 3:16-17.

Depending on the laws in your area, teenagers may be able to visit prisons. See what kind of Bible studies or services are held at the nearest jail or prison and find out how your family can volunteer.

Activity: As a family, think of an unselfish way you can show love to another person or family in need. For example, you might take a few blankets to a homeless shelter, do yard work for an elderly neighbor, or take a meal to a family in need. Plan this project now, deciding who to help, and exactly when you all will carry out the plan.

ACTIVITY 3: Secret Service of Love

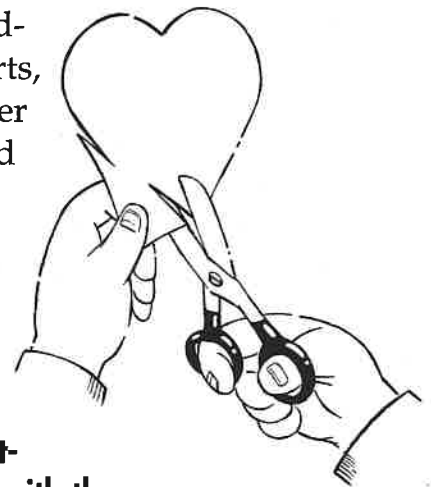
Point: We can show love by serving family members.



Supplies: You'll need paper, scissors and pens.

Share: It's great that we're able to serve. We don't even have to leave our homes to show love by serving. We can serve each other!

Activity: Have each family member, including yourself, draw and cut out seven hearts, about three or four inches in size. (Younger children may need help with drawing and cutting.) On each of their hearts, have the family member write, "Secret Service of Love." If you like, provide sticker, crayons or markers so each person can personalize their hearts.



Share: During the next week we can secretly show our love to other family members with these hearts. Every day, think of one way to serve another family member and secretly do it. Then leave one of your hearts at that spot as a further reminder of your love!



Read Colossians 3:23-24 aloud.

Question:

- What does this verse mean? (*When we help others, we are really serving Jesus.*)
- How should we go about our secret service mission this week? (*Let everyone suggest some ideas.*)
- Whom are we really serving with our actions? (*Jesus.*)
- How does knowing you're serving Jesus make you feel about serving?

Together brainstorm ways to serve other family members. If you like, make a list to post on the refrigerator to spark ideas later in the week. Your list might include taking the trash out, making someone's bed, vacuuming, feeding or walking the dog, driving someone to school, packing a lunch, and other similar ideas.



WRAP-UP

Gather everyone in a circle and have family members take turns answering this question: What's one thing you've learned about God today?

Next tell kids you've got a new "Life Slogan" you'd like to share with them.

Life Slogan: Today's Life Slogan is this, "When my love is true, actions show it to you!" Have family members repeat the slogan two or three times to help them learn it. Then encourage them to practice saying it during the week so they can talk about it at your next family night session.



Close in Prayer: Allow time for each family member to share prayer concerns and answers to prayer. Then close your time together with prayer for each concern. Thank God for listening to and caring about us.

Remember to record your prayer requests so you can refer to them in the future as you see God answering them!

Additional Resources:

The Toddlers Bedtime Story Book by V. Gilbert Beers (ages 1-3)

Jesus Loves Me by Debby Anderson (ages 1-4)

Rattlebang by Mark McCord (ages 4-7)

Age Adjustments

FOR OLDER CHILDREN, further your discussion of what the Bible teaches on showing love through actions by reading 1 John 3:11-20. Discuss these questions:

- What do these verses mean?
- Why are our thoughts and actions both important?
- What do you think verse 18 means?
- How do these verses apply to your life?