

# Attributes of God

## Gospel of John

### God Is Love

**Key Verses – “The Father loves his Son and has put everything into his hands.” (3:35, NLT)**

**“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” (3:16, NLT)**

The goal of this week's lesson is to help the children understand the love of God. Here is how Wayne Grudem defines God's attribute of love. — “God's love means that God eternally gives of himself to others. This definition understands love as self-giving for the benefit of others. This attribute of God shows that it is part of his nature to give of himself in order to bring about blessing or good for others.”<sup>1</sup> We will first begin by describing the love of God towards Himself, and specifically His Son. The Father loves the Son — perfectly! Then we will explain that God graciously did not keep His love to Himself, but decided to bestow that love upon sinful humanity by sending the Son that He loved to die for their sins, so that they could experience and share in the love of God forever.

## Preparation

Materials:

- Origami Heart Instructions
- Regular sized Red Paper cut to a square shape (8.5 x 11 cut to a square is best for students).
- Two levels of word searches to emphasize the main point.
- Main point maze.
- God is love coloring page.

Set-up:

- Prepare an origami heart using the instructions.
- Prepare origami sized sheets for the students.

## Bible Verse (5-10 minutes)

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<sup>1</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 199.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV) – “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”

Memorization — Have the students repeat the Bible verse with hand motions 2-3 times.

Song — Have the students sing “It Is By Grace” (Pop Scripture Songs, NIV) at least once.

NOTE — Start the Bible Verse section at the beginning without waiting for students who may arrive late. This will preserve the allotted times for other sections.

## Lesson (20-25 minutes)

Main Idea – God is love.

Pray

### Introduction (5 minutes)

Today we are going to be talking about the love of God! Before we start, let’s head to the tables for a craft.

Opening activity — Origami Heart — Have the students follow the instructions to make an origami heart. Afterwards, you can have them write their name on it and head back to their seats for the lesson. If the older kids finish early, you can have them write the names of the people they love on the back.

According to the Bible, love is the most important experience that we can enjoy as humans. The only reason that humans can experience love is because God — the One who created humans — is a loving God! It is *one* of the attributes, or qualities, that defines who God is. So today, we’re going to talk about the love of God.

### Body (15 minutes)

Let’s start with a few questions. (You can allow students to give answers to these questions before giving your answer).

Opening questions — **Who do you love? How do you show you love them? How do your parents show that they love you?**

Important to all of those questions is a great question — **What is love?** Love is when you care about someone and put their needs and wants before your own. It not selfish, but selfless! You are giving of yourself — your time, your toys, your attention — to others for their benefit. Love is not a duty — something you are forced to do — but something that you want to do, and that brings you joy! To love others and to be loved is an amazing privilege.

When the Bible says that God is love — that love is an essential part of who God is — it means that He joyfully gives of Himself to others! Today, we’re going to look at two examples of God’s love that we can find in the gospel of John.

**First, God shares His love within the Trinity!** Another way to say that is that God loves Himself! **Is it wrong for God to love Himself?** No! It is not wrong for God to love Himself, because God is without sin and can love Himself perfectly!

I will give you an example of love in the Trinity (draw a triangle illustration on the board to help them see the relationships). God the Father loves God the Son. **Can you give me other examples?** God the Father loves God the Holy Spirit. God the Son loves God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit loves God the Father and God the Son.

God eternally gave of Himself to Himself for all eternity. It was a perfect, loving relationship. Then 6,000 years ago, God created the world and man and woman in His image. Adam and Eve experienced the perfect love of God towards them in the garden (draw two stick figures next to the triangle to show the perfect relationship). But when they sinned, they became God's enemies, and this perfect loving relationship was broken (draw an x to show the broken relationship because of sin).

But even though God is holy and just, and had to punish Adam and Eve for their sin, God remained loving. So He decided to do something amazing. God sent His Son Jesus to earth to restore the loving relationship between sinful mankind and Himself.

When Jesus came to earth, the love of God was on display for the world to see like never before — Read John 3:35

**What is the loving relationship in the verse we just read?** God the Father loves God the Son (Jesus!). **And how do we know?** God the Father showed His love for God the Son by giving everything into His hands! Jesus is the King of the Universe, and He was given that privilege by His loving Father. So we know that God's love is real within the Trinity. But there is another verse in John 3 that talks about God's love that should blow us away!

**Second, God shares His love with sinful humans** — Read John 3:16 (You can invite the children to do the hand motions along as you read it)

This is incredible! The only thing that sinful humans deserve is death. They do not deserve God's love. But because God is a loving God, He decided to share His love with the sinful world. **How do we know that God shared His love with the sinful world?** He showed it by sending His Son into the world to die on the cross as a substitute (in the place of) sinful men and women (replace the x in the illustration with a cross to show that the relationship can be restored. The reality that God not only loves Himself within the Trinity, but that He chooses to share that love with sinful humanity through His Son is amazing!

### **Conclusion (5 minutes)**

God is a loving God. He loves Himself perfectly within the Trinity, and He loves sinful humanity through the gift of His Son. But we cannot leave without understanding the most important part of God's love towards sinful humanity — it is conditional. That means there is something you have to do in order to enjoy and experience God's perfect love forever. **What must you do to enjoy and experience God's perfect love forever?** You must believe in the Son that He sent into the world!

God gives salvation as a free gift to those who recognize their need for a Savior and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ for forgiveness.

To be able to know the love of God is an incredible gift — so incredible that rejecting His gift results in eternal suffering and destruction in Hell. Don't reject the love of God. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will enjoy and experience the love of God for all eternity.

Pray

## **Lesson Activities (20-25 minutes)**