

Series Title: Agent I²

Session Title: Radical Love

Date and Time: _____

Number of Students: _____

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Two big puzzles of 1 Timothy 4:12
- ☐ Prize
- ☐ Scrap paper
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Blackboard or overhead with markers

Lesson Objectives:

As a result of this lesson students will be able to...

- Continue to reflect on the truth of 1 Timothy 4:12
- Create a Christian definition of love that includes the idea that love is costly.
- Identify love as radically other-centred.
- Identify some manifestations of God's love for them as revealed in scripture.

Pastoral Objectives:

Lead In:

This is a Scripture verse and series review:

Hold a competition to construct a 1 Timothy 4:12 *Survivor* puzzle. Using the large words or phrases from 1 Timothy 4:12 used a few weeks ago, make two large puzzles for two volunteers to assemble into order. Ask for two female and two male volunteers. Have the

men compete against each other and the women compete against each other and the winner of each round compete for glory, honour, and... chocolate will likely work too.

Transition by asking the students to predict the topic for the night: “If you had to guess, what do you think we are going to be talking about tonight?” The answer is love. You could say something like:

Tonight we are going to talk about love. All of us have a definition of love, whether we have thought about it or not. Television, our family and friends, even magazines all work to shape our own personal definition of love. So tonight we will consider what the Bible teaches about love.

Task One:

Split the students into pairs or threesomes (keep it small). Hand out some crap paper, pens, and Bibles and instruct each group to create a definition of love based on 1 Corinthians 13:1-7

For feedback, ask two or three of groups to read their definition of love and ask the other students to highlight any differences between the definitions. To conclude this task you might say something like:

Good work! It is fun to see how many different ways love can be defined just by reading that single passage of Scripture. I don't know if you knew this, but the concept of love is a huge idea in the Bible. In fact, the Bible goes so far as to say God is love, which suggests that if we search out true love we will find God, and that if we get to know God, we experience love. But the actual word love only occurs in modern translations of Scripture. The Bible was written in Hebrew and Greek. In the Greek New Testament, there are three words that can all be translated love. They are:

- a. Eros – which is attractive love, love between a man and a woman, sexual love.*
- b. Philos – which is “brotherly love” or the love between friends.*
- c. Agape – which is “other-centred love”, the love of God and the love that God calls his people to walk and live within.*

In old English one of these Greek words was translated charity. If you had to guess which one of these three Greek words was translated charity which one do you think it would be? [Allow students to answer.]

The Greek word agape was translated as charity in Old English. While we understand the word charity to mean “giving money to something” or “an organization that does good things”, at one time charity was understood to mean Christian love. In fact, the word still has deep meaning. When you think of charity, you think of an organization that does good things selflessly. Jesus taught about this kind of love by telling a story and we are going to look at that now.

Task Two:

Ask the students to read Luke 10:25-37 (The Good Samaritan) and decide whether that text makes them want to change their definition of love in any way. If yes, they should make those changes.

At the conclusion of this task, ask if any groups amended their definition and invite them read their new definition. Ideally, their completed definitions will include a sense of the costliness of love. If they don't get there now they will in the next step.

Now pose a second question for the same text: what did the Samaritan's act of love cost him? Ask them to identify at least five costs and then solicit answers until you have a decent list that looks something like: money, time, inconvenience, crossing a racial barrier, his own safety (stopping to help could give robbers the chance to get him), his reputation, the scorn of the victim once he was well enough to respond, etc. There are others that you could choose.

Task Three:

Give each group a slip of paper with one of the following scripture verses on it. Ask the groups to read the Scripture passage they are assigned and to identify what that passage says about God's love for them. Feel free to add or subtract from this list; psalms provide countless opportunity. If you have a large group add to the list or duplicate some verses. If you have a small group, you may want to give each group more than one passage.

Exodus 34:6-7	Deuteronomy 7:9	Psalms 86:5-13	Lamentations 3:22-24
John 3:16	Romans 5:8	Romans 8:38-40	Ephesians 1:3-5
1 John 3:1-3	1 John 3:16		

After the students make their decisions, have each group report back to the other groups. Have someone keep a running list on a blackboard or overhead. Some answers may overlap and that is okay; the purpose of this task is for students to see the inexhaustible ways of describing God's love for humanity.

Conclusion:

My suggestion is that you plan for a time of worship to conclude this session, a time when students can continue to reflect on and respond to God in worship. To further emphasize God's costly love for people you might even consider taking communion together, another opportunity to lift up the costliness of Jesus' love for people.