**Connected: Created to Belong**

**Module 3: Markers of God’s Family**

**Lesson 3: Loving Others**

**Spiritual Aims**

Students will hopefully:

* belong to God by loving others
* love others in light of God’s love

**Lesson Objectives**

Students will:

* describe God’s love as unconditional and sacrificial
* explain why imitating God shows we belong to him
* articulate and perform a practical example of showing love

**Materials Needed**

* 1 Bible, bookmarked at Ephesians 5:1–2
* Video equipment to show “Ducklings Walk” clip: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnkr77zWJRM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnkr77zWJRM)
* Placemat templates (Appendix D), 1 per group of 4 students
* 1 pen/pencil per student
* 2 to 3 fragrant items in airtight, but openable, containers per scent station. Remember to consider students with allergies or sensitivities to food or scents. Suggestions:
  + - oranges or orange peels
    - sliced, ripe bananas
    - spices
    - rose petals
    - scented lotion
    - piece of deodorant or scented soap
    - air freshener
    - a rag with engine oil or other grease on it
* Table cloth, blanket or similar item
* Blindfold

**Pre-Lesson Preparation** (if applicable)

* Ensure the area where you will do the Bible study has tables for students to work at in groups of 4. Distribute placemat templates and pens so students can get to work once they are placed in their groups.
* If you have space, set up your scent station(s) in a separate room or area. Cover it with a table cloth or blanket cloth if necessary so it doesn’t become a distraction during the lesson.

**Minds On** (approx. 15 min.)

**Prompt:** Fragrances can create strong memories and associations in our minds. Sometimes that’s a good thing, but sometimes smells remind us of negative things too. Let’s see what these smells remind you of.

**Fragrance Activity:**

1. Blindfold a volunteer or ask that person to close his or her eyes and choose 1 of the containers to smell.
2. They can guess what it is or describe it to the group for them to guess.
3. Ask another volunteer to choose another container to smell and guess.
4. Have your students gather at a scent station where you have laid out fragrant items in airtight containers that students can open to smell the contents.
5. Instruct your students to take turns smelling the different items and discuss whether the scents spark any memories or ideas. Keep that 1 scent with the memory/idea in mind.

**Leader’s note:** Ensure each scent station is supervised by a leader who can ensure all the students get a turn and to facilitate discussion about the smells.

**Action** (approx. 25 min.)

**Prompt:** Last week we learned about what it means to be loved by God, and this week we are going to figure out what comes next: If God loves us so much, what do we do about it?

Ask if anybody remembers the story from the last lesson (the parable of the prodigal son), and then recap the main plot points:

* A man has two sons.
* The younger son asks for his inheritance, leaves home and wastes it.
* When he runs out of money he returns home to be a servant.
* But the father accepts him as a son and throws a party to celebrate his return.
* The older brother is angry.

**Leader’s note:** These plot points are here for your reference, but give students the opportunity to supply their own version of events. This will help them remember better, and you’ll get some insight about how they perceived the lesson!

**Prompt:** God shows us *unconditional*love, just like the father showed both his sons in the parable. Can you think of other words to describe God’s love?

Allow students to raise their hands and share how they’d describe God’s love.

Ask a volunteer to read Ephesians 5:1–2 from the Bible twice, with a 10 second pause in between readings. Remind your students to remain quiet after the passage is read.

Ask your students if the passage says anything new about God’s love. If they don’t pick up on it themselves, suggest that the verse shows us God’s love is *sacrificial*.

**Think/Pair/Share:** [teaching tip 3] This passage tells us that because God loves us as his children, we should act like him. What is 1 way that you can imitate God?

Invite 4 or 5 students to share their partners’ answers. A wide range of answers is acceptable, but hopefully at least some students will say that love is a way we can imitate God.

**Prompt:** Walking in love as Christ has loved us means we let his example be our guide. In nature we can see an example of something like this when baby ducklings all walk in a row behind their mother.

Show “Ducklings Walk” video [teaching tip 1].

**Prompt:** God’s love is unconditional, but it makes him happy when we share that love with others. This activity will help us think of ways we can show love to others, imitating Jesus by walking in love that is unconditional and sacrificial.

**Placemat:** (approx. 10 minutes) [teaching tip 16]

1. Students will be divided into groups of 4. Each group will have an assigned table with a placemat and pens. If your group does not divide evenly into 4, groups of 3 are acceptable. Instruct your students to X-out 1 section of the placemat and skip over it when they rotate.
2. Each student will write in their own section ideas of how to show love to others.
3. After 1 minute, on your signal, the group should rotate their “placemat” a quarter-turn clockwise so each student can see what the person next to them wrote.
4. When they read the idea of how to show love, the next student should write beneath it who it applies to (e.g., “help with chores” could be a parent or sibling; “write a note” could be almost anyone).
5. After 1 minute, on your signal, the group will rotate their placemat once more, read what is written, and add 1 more person who it could apply to.
6. After 1 minute, rotate a final time so everyone can see the last idea on their group’s placemat.
7. Each group should discuss their options and choose 1 activity to put into place this week.
8. The chosen activity will be written in the center space of the placemat and shared with the wider group.
9. Ask students to repeat the instructions.

**Leader’s note:** Keep track of time and signal the groups to rotate their placemats every 60 seconds.

When students have completed the placemats, invite a spokesperson from each group to share what they wrote in their center space.

**Prompt:** You came up with some great ideas of how to show love. Your next challenge is to choose 1 and put it into practice! It can be what your group chose to write in the middle of your placemat, or something another group thought of. Before we move on, choose a partner from your group and tell each other how you will show love this week. Next week you can ask each other how it went.

**Consolidate/Debrief** (approx. 15 min.)

**Prompt:** Think back to the first activity with the fragrances. Remember that scent you associated with a memory or idea? Fragrances can create strong memories and associations in our minds. Our passage says Christ’s sacrifice was a fragrant offering to God, and we want our love to be the same — to leave a good impression and create a positive memory for others. Take a moment and think of that good impression or positive memory you want to create for someone this week. If you need to, write it down or remind yourself.

Close in prayer by thanking Jesus for the sacrifice of his life and for his unconditional love, and by asking God to help your students imitate him by showing love to others.

**Appendix D: Placemat**

