**Connected: Created to Belong**

**Module 3: Markers of God’s Family**

**Lesson 2: Loved by God**

**Spiritual Aims**

Students will hopefully:

* know they are loved by God because he created them
* translate their connections with their creation to a concept of God’s love for them

**Lesson Objectives**

Students will:

* be able to describe God’s love in at least three ways based on group brainstorming and the given Bible passages

**Materials Needed**

* Playdough, plasticine or modelling clay
  + Follow these instructions to make your own playdough: [www.playdoughrecipe.com/no-cook-playdough-recipe](http://www.playdoughrecipe.com/no-cook-playdough-recipe)
* Sculpting tools (e.g., plastic knives, forks, spoons, pencils) with at least 1 option per student, since they can share different tools
* Plastic sheeting to protect work surfaces
* 1 paper towel per student and markers to label them
* Recording paper and markers
* 1 copy of Appendix C per 4 students (1 verse per group)
* At least 1 marker per group of 4 students

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

* Protect work surfaces with plastic sheeting for easier cleanup after playdough activity.
* Depending on the size of your group, it might be wise to create a number of different work stations that all feature a protected surface and different colours of playdough (or whatever sculpting medium you choose) to work with as well as sculpting tools as described in the materials list.

**Minds On** (approx. 20 min.)

**Playdough Creations:** [teaching tip 14]

1. Assign students to their work stations.
2. Instruct them to create a model of a person. It could represent themselves, a friend or someone imaginary.
3. As they are working, circulate around the room and ask students about the people they are creating (e.g., Do they have a name? A personality? What are their hobbies or careers?) Encourage them to express as many details about their model as possible.

When the sculptures are done, lay them on paper towels labelled with the creators’ names so they can be collected at the end of the study.

**Action** (approx. 35 min.)

*Discussion and Think/Pair/Share: 8 min.*

*Brainstorming: 8 min.*

*Instructions: 3 min.*

*Group Work: 15 min.*

Gather students together to ask what they thought of the opening activity. Have them raise their hands to vote:

* Was it fun to create little people?
* Did they focus a lot of the details?
* Was your model someone you know in real life or someone you imagined?

**Prompt:** Before I ask you this next question, I’d like you to be ready to hold onto the first thought that comes to your mind. Ready?

**Ask:** How would you feel if I went over and smashed the person you created?

Encourage students to hold that reaction/thought in their minds for 20 seconds.

**Think/Pair/Share:**

1. When I say “go”, you are going to think about your answer to this question: Why do you have any attachment to your model?
2. You are going to find a partner and share with him or her what you have been thinking.
3. After a few minutes, I will draw us all back together. Be prepared to share your partner’s answer.
4. Any questions? [Allow students to make clarifications, if needed.]
5. OK, go!

After 3 or 4 people have shared their partners’ answers, ask: How do some of the answers connect with the word “love”?

Some possible answers could include:

* They spent time/care making their people. God did the same for us! (Psalm 139:13)
* They imagined the lives their people could have. God has plans for our lives! (Jeremiah 29:11)
* They cared about their creations. This is actually the best connection, since the purpose of this lesson is to help students connect with the idea that God loves them.

**Prompt:** Today we are going to see what the Bible says about God’s love for us. Let’s brainstorm some ways that we as humans can show our love for others.

Ask your students to raise their hands and call out ways that people show love. Record the answers on your preferred recording paper. Some ideas (based on love languages) are: quality time together; loving words; physical touch (including hugging/kissing); gifts; and acts of service.

**Appendix C Group Work:** [teaching tip 8]

1. Students will form groups of 4 (3 to 5 is fine if required for all students to find a group).
2. Each group will receive a verse to read together (1 page from Appendix C) and a marker.
3. Each group will discuss the verse and create a symbol to represent what it says about God’s love.
4. When all the groups are ready, each group will take turns showing their symbols while the other groups try to figure out the main idea it represents. They can discuss it briefly in their groups and then a spokesperson can raise his or her hand to guess on behalf of their group. If they are able to figure it out, then great! If not, the presenting group will explain the meaning behind their symbol.

**Option for smaller groups:** If you do not have enough groups to study each verse, you may give more than 1 verse to a group. For a group of 5 or less, you may opt to do this activity without dividing into small groups.

**Option for larger groups:** If you have more than 30 students, assign the same verse to more than 1 group [teaching tip 4].

**Consolidate/Debrief** (approx. 10 min.)

**Prompt:** Remember how creating something makes you feel connected to it? God loves us so much because he created not only our bodies but also our personalities. He placed us in communities of other people he created and he has a plan for you!

Have students reflect which word/verse about God’s love stands out to them and why, and then share their answers with partners of their choice. Challenge them to remind each other of that word or verse in 3 days (with a text or phone call if they don’t see each other between events).

Close in prayer thanking God for his love.

**Appendix C**

God’s love is...

INTIMATE

Psalm 139:13 (NIV): You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.

God’s love is...

INTENTIONAL

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV): “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

God’s love is...

UNCONDITIONAL/

SACRIFICIAL

Romans 5:8 (NIV): But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

God’s love is...

ABUNDANT

1 John 3:1a (NIV): See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

God’s love is...

EVERLASTING

Jeremiah 31:3 (NIV): The Lord appeared to us in the past,saying: “I have lovedyou with an everlasting love; I have drawnyou with unfailing kindness.”