



## LESSON 3: INTERMEDIATE SMALL GROUP

### The Greatest Love

#### MAIN IDEA

Jesus loves us so much that he was willing to die for us, becoming the greatest sacrifice God provided.

#### BIBLE PASSAGES

- Matthew 26:47-27:56

#### MEMORY VERSE

There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.

John 15:13, NLT



Prepare your heart to teach.  
Plan for the lesson.



Connect with the kids and make them feel heard and cared for. (15 minutes)



Facilitate activity and study to help kids know and love Jesus. (20-25 minutes)



Lead kids to live out the mission of the Gospel. (5-10 minutes)

## Prepare



Prepare your heart to teach.  
Plan for the lesson.

## QUESTIONS

- How can you be praying for the students this week?
- Are there any specific students or requests you can pray for?
- Are there any adaptations that you can make to the lesson this week to better serve the kids in your small group or make your small group more effective?
- How can you connect with the students outside of club over the next few weeks? Is there a sporting event or performance you can go to? Can you plan a casual park or fast-food meet-up with them and their families (as a group or individually)?

## MATERIALS NEEDED:

- A Bible
- Name tags
- Snack, 1 per child
- Memory Verse Cards, 1 per child (on cardstock if desired, for durability)
- Strips of colored paper (1 per child, with extras)
- Markers or crayons
- Tape or glue
- 1 large nice item from home (i.e., favorite toy or book)
- 1 small broken item such as broken crayon or pencil)
- (Optional) Printout 1, one per small group
- (Optional) Prayer Wall activity: Large poster board, sticky notes, and pens
- (Optional) Forgiveness Cross activity: paper or foam crosses, markers, stickers, and ribbon
- (Optional) Printout 3, 1 per small group

## Connect



Connect with the kids and make them feel heard and cared for.  
(15 minutes)

## Small Group Session 1

### ICE BREAKER

Distribute name tags and snacks. Choose one of the following icebreaker activities to do together while children eat their snack:

- Option 1: Ask the children to share their highs and lows (the best and worst things that happened to them either today or from the past week).
- Option 2: Ask the children to take turns sharing how they're feeling today using the "How Are You Feeling?" chart (from the CKC Games Bag).

### PRAY TOGETHER

Collect prayer requests from the students. The leader or a student can pray for the entire group or a leader can pair up students and invite them to pray for one another.

### INTRODUCTION

Ask, **Have you ever done something really hard to help someone else?** (sharing a favorite toy, helping a friend when they'd rather play, or letting someone else have the first turn.)

**Today, we're learning about the greatest act of love and sacrifice ever shown. Jesus did something very hard, something that cost him everything, because he loves us so much. He chose to die on the cross so we could be close to God forever.**

**This story is about God's love and the biggest sacrifice of all time.**

### ACTIVITY: LOVE IN ACTION

Give each child a strip of paper. Ask them to draw a small way they can show love or sacrifice for someone else, just like Jesus showed love for us. Examples could be: "Help my parents," "Forgive my friend," "Share my toys," or "Say something kind."

After they draw, have each child share their idea with the group.

As they share, tape or glue each strip into a link, connecting each strip to form a long chain.

Say, **This chain shows how our acts of love connect us and can remind us of Jesus' love for all of us.**



### ACTIVITY OPTION 2: LOVE IN ACTION CHARADES

Using Printout 3, have students take turns picking a card from the stack. They are to act out what their card says without using words. The rest of the students will guess what they are acting out. Be sure to share with students that each word is an action we can do to show love. Set a timer, and allow each student to have a turn.

After they are finished, encourage them to take a card or make their own of how they can show love to friends or family this week.

Ask, **How does it feel to know that when we show love, we're following Jesus' example?**

**Just like Jesus connected us to God through his sacrifice, every time we make a choice to show love, we're remembering what Jesus did for us.**

# Heart



Facilitate activity and study to help kids know and love Jesus.  
(20-25 minutes)

## Small Group Session 2

Let kids know that you are glad that they are there.

Say, **What we are talking about today and next week is the most important thing that we can talk about. Learning about what Jesus did for us, that he willingly died to take the punishment for our sins and then rose again from the dead is the most important message we talk about in our lives!**

Remind students of the main idea.

Say, **Jesus loved us so much that He was willing to die for us, becoming the greatest sacrifice God provided.**

### OBJECT LESSON:

Hold up two items: something valuable (like a favorite toy or book) and something small or broken.

Ask, **Which one would you want to give to a friend?**

**God gave us the most valuable thing he could—Jesus—because he loves us. He didn't hold back but gave his best for us.**

Ask a student to summarize the story of the crucifixion in Matthew 27:36-54 or read through the passage.

Ask, **Why did Jesus allow himself to be arrested and put on the cross? How does it make you feel to know Jesus loves you enough to die for you?**

Say, **Jesus' love for us is greater than any other love that we experience. Jesus was willing to love us even when we didn't love him. Jesus even died for those who were making fun of him.**

- **Have you ever been punished for something that you did not do?**
- **How did that feel?**

**Although Jesus did come to die for our sins, he did not deserve our punishment. He took the pain and suffering we deserve in order for us to have sanctification and an unshakeable relationship with God.**

**Jesus forgave the people who hurt him.**

- **Have you ever forgiven someone even when it was hard?**
- **How did it feel?**
- **Why is forgiving others sometimes hard?**
- **How can Jesus' example help us?**

**Last week, we talked about how God provided a ram for Abraham and Isaac.**

- **How is Jesus like that ram God provided?**
- **What does it mean to say Jesus was the "greatest sacrifice"?**
- **How can we show others that we love them like Jesus loves us?**
- **What are some ways we can make sacrifices to help others, even in small ways?**

#### OPTION 1: PRAYER WALL

Create a "Prayer Wall". Have kids write a thank-you note to Jesus for his love and forgiveness or list someone they want to forgive. You will need: a large poster board, sticky notes, and pens.

- **Why is it important to forgive others, just as Jesus forgave?**
- **How does it feel to ask God to help us forgive?**

#### OPTION 2: FORGIVENESS CROSS

Using small paper or foam crosses, markers, stickers, and ribbon, have each child write "Father, forgive them" on the cross. Encourage them to decorate it with stickers or drawings that remind them of love and forgiveness. They can hang it up at home as a reminder of Jesus' forgiveness.

Ask, **How can remembering Jesus' forgiveness help us forgive others?**

Say, **This activity gives us a reminder of God's love and the lesson we learned about Jesus' sacrifice.**

## Hands



Lead kids to live out the mission of the Gospel.  
(5-10 minutes)

## Small Group Session 2

### WRAP IT UP

- **How did Jesus show his love for us?**
- **What do you think about Jesus forgiving those who hurt him?**
- **How can we remember and show Jesus' love in our own lives?**

### RESPONSE & REFLECTION

Print out and practice the memory verse for this unit (John 15:13).

Consider a game or activity to help students understand and memorize the memory verse. Take a look at the Memory Verse Game Ideas.

Send students home with a copy of the Gospel Hand. If you have time, go over it with your students. Use motions to help them remember the Gospel message.

Pray with the students and dismiss them.



Bible Memory Verse  
Games