

GREATER RIFT VALLEY CONFERENCE

CHILDREN MINISTRIES SABBATH

27TH JULY 2019

OUTLINE

Praise Song – Through the Jungle

Scripture: 1 John 4:7-12

Offering

Special feature (your choice)

Suggested features

- a. What is Love Youtube Video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcYIA58E_ss
- b. Kid Panel choose 4 or 5 children to sit up front and ask them the question “what is love? How do people show you love? How does God show you love? (this is a live version of the video. Look at the video for an example)

Congregational prayer

Skit: God’s Great Big Love

PART 1

Song 1: Amazing Grace

Sermon part 1 – God’s Loving Gift Of Grace

Up front Demonstration- God’s Gift Bridges The Gap

Group Activity- Spreading Hearts

Part 2

Song 2: This is love

Sermon part 2 – Love One Another

Up front activity – Fill It Up!

Group Activity 2– Letters Of Encouragement

Part 3

Song 3: Song Of Freedom

Sermon part 3 – God’s Forever Free Family

Call to commitment

Closing prayer

1 John 4:7-12. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is ^[a]born of God and knows God. ⁸The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹By this the love of God was manifested ^[b]in us, that God has sent His ^[c]only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

INTRODUCTION

We are all a part of God's great big family! Acts 2:42-47 shares that those who followed Christ in the early church devoted themselves to the apostle's teachings, to one another, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. They met in the temple courts and they met in their homes. They shared with those who had need and had everything in common. They broke bread together, praised God together, and enjoyed the favor of all the people. Because of this, God added to their number daily those who were being saved..

The people in Acts were a family! These early followers understood that as they came closer to Jesus and chose to follow him, they also grew closer to one another. This was a strong testimony of Jesus' love acting in their lives. There is power in connecting with a family of believers! We are able to uplift one another, encourage one another, and care for one another's needs.

Not only do we support each other when we are a part of God's family, we can also be a witness to those around us. Jesus tells us in John 13:34 and 35 to "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

This children's sabbath is designed to draw people into the meaningful presence and fellowship of the family of God. Its program is an encouraging reminder that because Jesus loves us, we are able to love one another freely and unconditionally. The world is full of loneliness. As we open our hearts to the love of God and allow Him to guide our footsteps, we CAN touch the lives of those who are hurting. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we are able to share the authentic, unconditional love of our Savior with one another, and with the world around us. When we do so, God helps his family grow even greater!

SKIT: How Big is God's Love

Child 1: (comes onstage takes ruler and measures random things in the room. Focused and concentrating, he/she does not notice the other child coming in)

Child 2: (taps child 1 on shoulder) hey! What are you doing?

Child 1: Me? Oh I'm measuring...

Child 2: What are you measuring for?

Child 1: Well... someone told me that God's love is a great big love... and I wanted to see just how big it could be! So I'm using my ruler to see if I can measure for it.

Child 2: Oh... I don't think a ruler will be big enough to measure God's love... (thinking) Hold on one second I have an idea! (goes offstage and gets a yardstick) This should do the trick!

Child 1: Wow hey! This yardstick is much bigger! Now we can measure God's love!

(Child 3 comes onstage... child 1 and child 2 are concentrating on measuring random things and do not notice child 3)

Child 3: hey! What are you guys doing?

Child 1: we're measuring!

Child 1: What are you measuring/

Child 2: We're seeing if we can measure God's love!

Child 3: Oh, I don't think you can measure God's love with a yard-stick. (thinking) but I have an idea! I'll be right back! (goes offstage and returns with measuring tape)

Child 1: hey that's perfect! Now we can measure much bigger things! (all 3 work together to stretch out the measuring tape and focus on measuring random things)

Adult: (comes onstage reading a bible, notices child 1,2 and 3) Hey what are you guys doing?

Child 1: we're measuring

Adult: What are you measuring?

Child 2: We're trying to measure God's love!

Child 3: Yeah!!! It's pretty big I think, so we got a measuring tape! Can you help us?

Adult: Oh I don't think that measuring tape is big enough to measure God's love... but I might know where you could find that measurement...

Child 1, 2 and 3: REALLY?! Where?

Adult: In the Bible, it says in Ephesians 3:18 that we may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge. I think when we get to know Jesus, HE is the measure of God's great big love.

Child 1, 2 and 3: Ooooooooooooh!!!

Child 1: So God's love is bigger than a ruler?

Adult: Yes!

Child 2: Bigger than a yardstick?

Adult: Yes!

Child 3: Bigger than measuring tape?

Adult: Yes! God's love surpasses anything we can measure. But that's ok! That just means that his love is so big it can be for anyone!

Child 1: Wow! That's great! I guess we'll have to measure something else then huh?

Adult: sounds like it!

Child 2: Hey I know! Lets go measure that tree over there! Goodbye (adult's name)

Adult: Bye kids!

(everyone walks offstage)

Song 1 – Amazing Grace

Sermon 1: God's Loving Gift Of Grace

Prop: Gift Box with a large paper labeled "Grace" placed on the inside.

Child 1: have you ever given a gift? Maybe you shared a toy with your brother or sister, or gave flowers to a grandparent. Maybe you surprised your son or daughter with a birthday present. Or maybe you gave a card to a person who was ill. When you gave that gift, you gave it out of love! There were no expectations in return. The person you gave the gift to did not pay any money for it

Child 2: It always feels good to receive gifts! God gave us one of the greatest gifts of all! John 3:16 tells us **16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.**

Child 1: Like any other gift, God's gift is absolutely free! (open gift box and show the paper that says grace) The gift that God gives is grace. The bible tells us in **Romans 6:23. the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Jesus took the consequences of sin for us! And in return, we can accept his gift of eternal life.** (take the paper that says' Gods' grace and give it to child 2)

Child 2: when we accept that gift of grace, every day we are set free! God's grace changes us, helps us grow, and covers our sin.! All we have to do is open God's gift by accepting it.

Did you Know #1 (optional, have a person dressed as Nicodemus up front. Have nicodemus quote what he says in John 7 and John 19. His quotes are in red)

When Jesus shared in John 3:16-17, he was talking to a Pharisee named Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He approached Jesus in the dark of night because, as an important leader, he did not want to be discovered talking to someone who was causing so much controversy. He and Jesus have a stirring conversation which includes how to enter the kingdom of God through his gift of eternal life, as well as how important it is to live by the truth and God's light. Nicodemus' response to all of this is a question. **"How can this be?"** Although John Chapter 3 does not have a solid conclusion, it is not the last we hear from Nicodemus.

In John chapter 7 we see him speaking up for Jesus in the presence of the chief priests and pharisees by saying **"our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?"** Perhaps he has not yet become a true disciple, but he finds the courage, in the daylight this time, to speak up for fairness and keep an open mind about Jesus.

In John Chapter 19 we then see him teaming up with Joseph of Arimethea, another Jewish leader, to bury Jesus. **Yes, I brought myrrh and aloes to anoint him, and to give him a proper burial.**

Think of the progression Nicodemus makes through John's Gospel. He moves from the cover of darkness, to public open-mindedness, and finally to a public expression of love for Jesus. He experiences God's great big love from the beginning of his story, and he changes and grows from it. God's love and

grace does the same for us. When we come to know of his love and grace, we are changed by it. We grow to love Jesus as he has loved us.

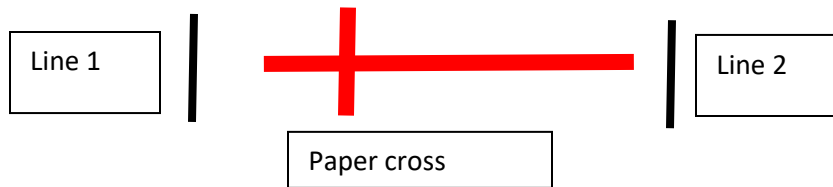
Up Front Demonstration 1- “God’s Gift Bridges The Gap”

Supplies:

1. make a large cross out of paper, or make a cross out of two wooden planks large enough for a person to walk across and be seen by the congregation
2. Masking tape

Preparation Instructions:

1. have several children chosen ahead of time to participate in the activity
2. Tape two lines far enough apart that children can not reach the other line. Be sure that the cross fits in the center of the two lines



Presenter 1: Why is God’s gift so important to us? To illustrate this, we will need four volunteers (point out the two lines on the ground) notice that I have two lines taped on the ground. Lets see if our first two volunteers can jump the gap between the two lines (have volunteer 1 jump, then volunteer 2 jump. The lines should be far enough apart that they can not reach the other side.) (to the volunteers) Is there any way that you can make it across this gap without touching the floor in the middle?

Presenter 2: We have a problem here! The lines are too far apart! Its impossible to jump to the other side alone. We will need something that can bridge the gap. (get the cross cutout, show it to the congregation, then lay the cross on the ground between the two lines) Now that we have the cross in the center, lets have our other two volunteers try to cross. You can use the cross as a bridge. (the other two volunteers can walk from one side to the other) (to the volunteers) were you able to make it across? Why? That’s right! Because of the bridge!

Presenter 1: God’s Gift is important because Sin separates us from God, But when God gave us the gift of grace, by giving his one and only son Jesus, that gap was closed. Jesus died on the cross for our sins.

Presenter 2: Because of Jesus, our sins are forgiven, and we are no longer separated. When we believe in this gift and accept it, we become a part of God’s great big family!

Group Activity 1: Spreading Hearts

Supplies

1. Heart Stickers

Instructions: Give each person in the congregation one sheet of heart stickers
Set an onscreen timer (1 minute or 5 minutes)

Child Presenter: I'm excited because We have a lot God's love to spread around today (pass out the sticker sheets) Each of you will be given a sheet with heart stickers. We'll set a timer for you. Lets see how many stickers you can give out in that amount of time. Be sure to give out hearts to a different person each time you give one.

(set the onscreen timer, have the child presenter say "GO! Then start the countdown)

Child presenter: Wow! Look around you! So many different people have hearts! God's love is for everyone. It fills up this church. Look at the smiles on people's faces! God's love gives us joy. I'm happy to be in the presence of God's love this Sabbath day.

Song 2- This Is Love

Sermon Part 2 – Love One Another

Child 1: God has loved us and given us the gift of grace and freedom from our sins. Because of this, we are now called to give that gift to one another. Jesus told us to share love in John 13:34-35. He says ³⁴ "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Child 2: This was right before Jesus was taken to be crucified, right before he would take the penalty of the wages of sin for us. He wanted his disciples to know and understand that by loving one another, they were demonstrating God's love and grace in action. People would take notice of this as part of their identity as Christ followers.

Child 1: The love Jesus tells his disciples about is no ordinary love! It was unlike anything that the world around them had ever seen or heard of. The word Jesus uses is "Agapao" (pronounced Ah-Gah-Pah-Oh) this is unconditional love, even for people who don't deserve it. This is practical love, which acts unselfishly. This is adoptive love, which accepts people into a family.

Child 2: This is the love God has for us, and this is the love that Jesus asks us to share with one another. He asks us to love those who don't always deserve it. He asks us to act on our love unselfishly, he asks us to share this love unconditionally just as he has loved us.

Supplies: 3 large signs that say "Ahab" "Phileo" and Agapao/ as an alternative you can have slides that go up on the screen with the same words.

Did you know # 2

There are several words for love that are listed in the Bible, and which would have been known during the time of Jesus.

The first kind of love is the Hebrew Word “Ahab” (pronounced Ah-Hav) (show sign, then have the congregation repeat the word) This word was used to describe a close relationship, such as with a parent and child, husband and wife, or brother and sister. The second love is Phileo (pronounced Fil-Eh-Oh) (show sign, then have the congregation repeat the word) This word was used to describe the kind of love you have between you and your friends. The Third word, which Jesus uses when he says to “love one another” is agape (pronounced Ah-Gah-Peh) or Agapao. (show sign, then have the congregation repeat the word) This kind of love is different from the others.

Agape love is described as unconditional and is not based on the goodness of the one loved (what they do) or on fondness for the one loved (how you feel about them). Instead, it is an unconditional love that comes directly from God.

Each of us is different. We come from different families, different cultures, we are different ages and we have different likes and dislikes. We may all be different, but we all need God’s unconditional love, and we all need the gift of his grace!

Up Front Demonstration 2: Fill It Up!

Supplies:

1. a bucket Labeled “God’s Love”
2. 2 clear cups
3. 2 dish sponges
4. Table to set the bucket, cups and sponges on.
5. Pick 2 volunteers ahead of time

Child Presenter: When we follow Jesus we are called to love one another. This love is no ordinary love because it comes from God. What makes God’s love special? Our two volunteers will help us see the difference.

(to volunteer 1) Take this sponge filled with water, and squeeze as MUCH water as you can into your cup! Try to fill it to the top.

(wait for volunteer to squeeze as much water as possible out of the sponge then ask the congregation) Is the cup full? Why not? (wait for answers) That’s right! The sponge only had so much water in it. There wasn’t enough water in the sponge to fill up the cup.

(to volunteer 2) Now you try to fill the cup with water, except you can dip the sponge as many times in our bucket. Lets count how many times that he/she dips the sponge in the bucket to fill the cup. (count along with congregation, after the cup is full, ask the congregation) Is the cup full? Why? The cup is full because our volunteer was able to dip his/her sponge in the bucket as many times as she needed. The bucket has an endless supply of water.

Our bucket represents the love of God, and the sponge represents us. When we try to love by our own strength, we very often run out. But when we go to God and ask him to fill us with his love, we are able

to share so much more! God's love is endless! When we love one another, it is important to be filled up with God's love over and over and over again!

Group Activity 2: Letters Of Encouragement

Supplies:

1. 3X5 blank Colored index cards (without lines)
2. Crayons/markers/pens/pencils

Children's Ministry Leader: As a family, we are going to take a moment to share love with one another! We'll hand you a blank index card, and give you a few minutes to write some encouraging words. For our little ones, you can draw a picture to share!

(give 1-5 minutes for the congregation to write/draw on their notecards)

Now that you are done take a moment to pray over your card then, give your notecard to someone in the room! Tell that person "God bless you!"

How beautiful it is to share notes of encouragement and blessings! 1 Thesalonians 5:11 tells us to encourage one another and build each other up. That's what our church family does. As we continue on this life journey, We love as Jesus loved us. And we look forward to the day when Jesus returns as he has promised.

Song: Song Of Freedom

Sermon Part 3 – God's Great Big Family

Child 1: God's gift of love and grace have set us free. Because of this, Jesus has told us to love one another, he shared that others would recognize them as Christians by how they loved. The disciples and the early church followed in Jesus' footsteps and followed his command. We get a small picture of this in the book of Acts 2:42-47.

⁴² They continued to hold firmly to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of the bread, and to the prayers. ⁴³ Awe came over every soul,^[a] and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They were selling their possessions and property and were distributing the proceeds according to what anyone needed. ⁴⁶ Day after day, with one mind, they were devoted to meeting in the temple area, as they continued to break bread in their homes. They shared their food with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ as they continued praising God and being viewed favorably by all the people. Day after day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Child 2: the early church ate together, prayed together, supported one another's needs, met for worship, and praised God together! People saw God's loving grace through their actions. God guided them as they talked about Jesus, and more and more people became Christians every day! Each day God's great big family became even bigger!

Child 1: The best part about being in God's family is the promise Jesus has given us of forever freedom. The gift of grace does not end at the cross. Jesus has promised to come again. The early church knew and believed this, and we can believe it too.

Child 2: in John 14:1-3 Jesus leaves us his promise of his return. "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God;^[a] believe also in me. ²In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?^[b] ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

Child 1: This is a promise we can remember. Jesus is preparing a place for us in heaven, and he is going to come again so that we can be with him!

Call To Commitment

Person 1

We want to invite you to be a part of our family. We would be overjoyed to share God's love with you! If you'd like to be a part of our church family, come talk to one of our church leaders!

Person 2

We also each have a chance to be at that big family reunion with Jesus! Imagine it with me! All of those who have accepted the gift of Grace from the past, present and the future... all together! It's going to be HUGE.! If you would like to accept Jesus' gift of grace I invite you to pray with me now.

Dear Jesus, thank you for your gift of grace. Thank you that we are able to love one another! Because I love those around me, I want to see them in heaven too. I pray that you may bless each one here. We accept the gift of your grace. We give our lives to you. Amen.