

TOGETHER

A GUIDE TO GROWING IN
LOVE FOR OTHERS



Hey Families,

It's February. We know that means love is in the air and Valentine's Day is right around the corner. This month, you may express this love through greeting cards, flowers, candy, and little gifts "spoiling" your loved ones.

While all of that is sweet (no pun intended) and fun to celebrate, our love for others should be something we express and grow in all year long.

1 John 4:7-12, tells us that, as Christians, we serve a God who IS love:

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

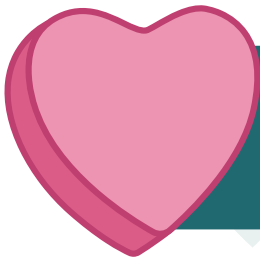
12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

- 1 John 4:7-12

It is our hope and prayer that this guide will give some practical ideas and encouragement to love those closest to you and even those you may have conflict with.

Please visit empoweredhomes.org to find more resources in the areas of marriage, parenting, and personal growth.





**Grow in your
understanding of
God's love**

S.O.A.P. BIBLE STUDY METHOD

Let's begin by studying God's Word for clues on how to grow in His love!
The S.O.A.P. Bible Study Method is a simple way to study the Bible by reading a
SCRIPTURE passage, OBSERVING what it says, APPLYING the passage to life and PRAYING
for God's Spirit to help you grow. Schedule time to gather
and grow TOGETHER in God's Love this month!

Scripture: Read Out Loud Together

"7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us."

1 JOHN 4:7-12

Observation:

- 1.How many times is the word **God** used in this passage? (answer: 11)
- 2.How many times is the word **love/loves/loved** used in this passage? (answer: 13)
- 3.How did God make His love known to us? (Hint: verses 9-10)
- 4.Look up the word propitiation in the dictionary. What does it mean?
(Check out <https://www.gotquestions.org/propitiation.html> for what propitiation means in the Bible)
- 5.Why does this passage say we should love one another? (Hint: verse 11)



Application: Get Creative.

Each heart below gives a practical example of a way you can show love. Discuss the different ways listed below and come up with some of your own. On the next page, write down a few that you plan to grow in over the next month.

Draw a picture with "I love you" and give it to someone.

Pray for someone out loud.

Purchase new socks/underwear and donate to a homeless shelter.

Text or write an encouraging message to someone.

Bring someone their favorite coffee or other favorite drink.

Do an activity with a friend that they enjoy, even if you don't like it.

Forgive someone in person.

Tell someone about Jesus' love for them.

Make someone their favorite meal.

Call someone and express your appreciation for them.

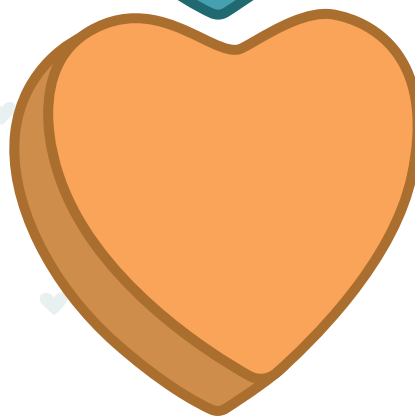
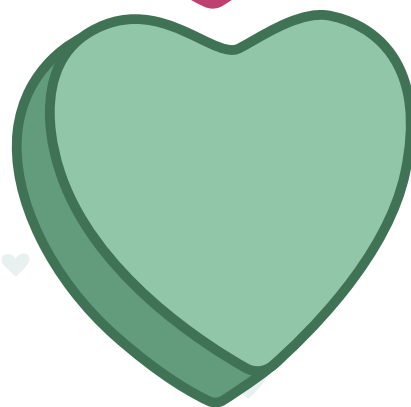
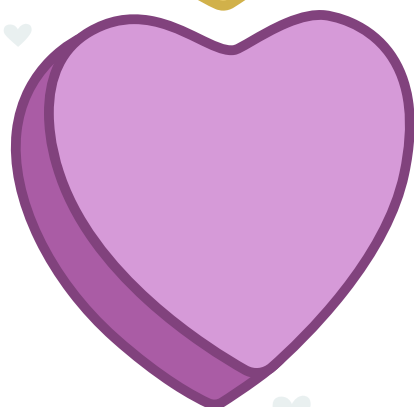
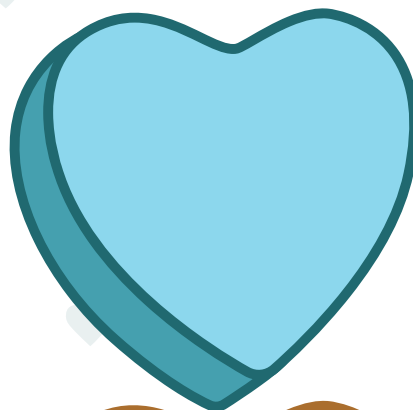
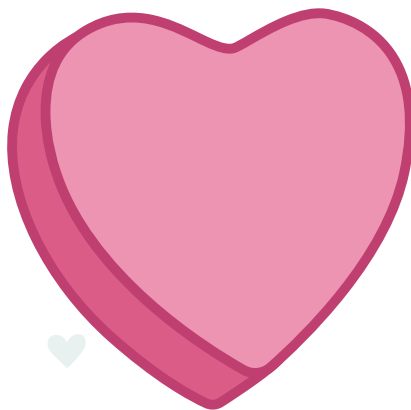
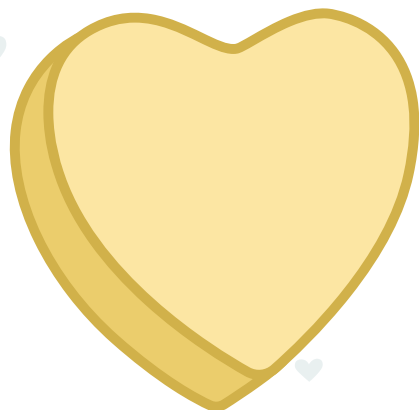
Help someone with a chore and task.

Schedule a time to visit a person who is shut in or in the hospital.



Application: Plan it out.

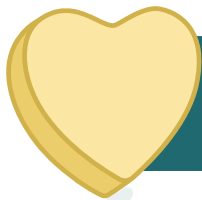
Use the blank hearts below to write down the ways you plan to be intentional and thoughtful in the way you love this month. To grow in your follow through - schedule your plans on the calendar - maybe start with one loving act each month.



Prayer: End your time in prayer.

Use the prayer below which is based on the Scripture OR say your own prayer, asking God to help you grow in your love for others!

God, let us love one another well this week. We believe love is from You. You are love God, and you showed us what love really meant when you sent your Son Jesus to die for us. I pray we all trust you more and more every day and we live like You, Jesus. Thank you for dying for us, Jesus, and cleansing us from our sins. God, help us to love others well - even if they are not our friends. Perfect your LOVE in us God, by the power of Your Holy Spirit. Amen!



Grow in Sharing the Love of Jesus

Loving God, loving others, and sharing the love of Jesus are a part of the Greatest Commandment (Matthew 22:37) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). As Christians, we should seek to grow in each of these areas. Here are some reminders of how God's Word tells us to grow in love by sharing the Good News of Jesus.



1 Pray for open doors to share.

Devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us that God may open the door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

Colossians 4:2-3



- Devote to prayer - Ask God to give you opportunities.
- Stay alert - Pay attention and listen for God's Spirit to guide you.
- With Thanksgiving - Be thankful for the opportunities given.

God doesn't tell us to kick down doors and force our beliefs on people. He invites us to ask for His help in seeing where He is already working in the hearts of the people around us. He is the one that opens the doors and we watch, wait, and walk through when He tells us to go.



2 Trust God's power to work.

For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, in the Holy Spirit, and with full assurance.

1 Thessalonians 1:4-5



- God calls us to share.
- God equips us to share.
- God's power transforms.

Have you ever received an electronic gift that says "batteries not included"? That gift is useless until it has power. God doesn't operate that way. He has given us HIS power by His spirit to share His love which He freely gives to us.



3

Answer Questions with Grace and Wisdom.

Act wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person.

Colossians 4:5-6



Most objections to Christianity come down to 3 areas:

- The problem of evil. "Why does God allow..."
- The problem of plurality. "What about all the other beliefs..."
- The problem of pride. "I can get to Heaven on my own." OR "Who is God and who are you to tell my how to live my life?"

People may not always seem interested in the claims of Jesus but they often wonder about the ways they see Jesus in you. Curiosity is a powerful thing. It indicates a seeking and maybe even a deep wrestling within a person to find true fulfillment in this life. Knowing this should inspire us to show great compassion and patience. To be curious of why other believe what they believe. To speak with grace, truth and wisdom.



Process it



Is there anyone you can think of when you consider praying for God to open a door?



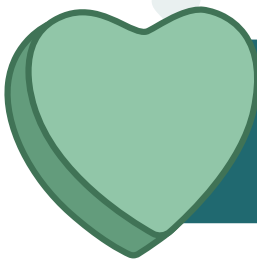
What are ways you can deepen your trust in God's power?




How can you prepare to respond to questions about Jesus with wisdom?

Write your answers on the next page.

 **Process it**



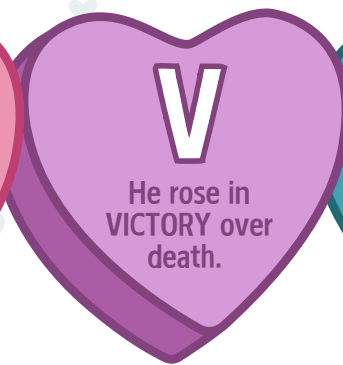
**Remember:
The good news of
Jesus is LOVE**



L
Jesus **LOVES** us.



O
He died for **OUR** sins.



V
He rose in **VICTORY** over death.



E
EVERYONE who has faith in Jesus lives forever.

10

Gracious Phrases & Questions for Sharing the Love of Jesus

That is an interesting perspective. Can you tell me how you came to believe that?

2

What or who has had the most influence on your spiritual beliefs?

1

3

I can understand why you might think that, but have you considered....

4

Can I share something with you that got me through a difficult time?

5

Have you ever prayed about _____ (whatever situation they are struggling with?)

Can we pray now?

6

Do you believe in God?
OR
Who is Jesus to you?

7

Just listen.

Don't think of what to say next or how to defend or respond. Listen. Wait. Respond, if needed or prompted by the Spirit of God.

8

Thank you for sharing about your beliefs. I have enjoyed hearing about your life.

9

Don't have an answer?

Say: I have been wondering that myself, let's find the answer together.

10

Have you ever thought about how we got here and where we go when we die?



Scripture Memory

Cut out the hearts use them to learn 1 John 4:7-12 and hide God's word in your heart.

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1 John 4:7-12**



Download your **FREE** copy of this
resource at
empowerhomes.org.