



Introduction

Many schools follow a programme of key values throughout the school year. These values can be an important framework for helping to define and validate the work of the school 'beyond the curriculum'. Each value can be used as the theme for collective worship, the focus for classroom reflection and the subject matter for main hall or quiet corner displays.

The Bible has so much to offer in this area of positive personal, relational and community values. Its timeless wisdom can help all schools pass on to the next generation valuable qualities of life which Christians believe are God-given and foundational.

Preparation

What follows is a series of ideas linked to the value of '**Love**'.

It includes: key themes to explore, a key Bible verse to use, key concepts to unpack, ideas for displays and reflective corners, as well as Bible story links with further connections to material on the Barnabas websites.

Development

1. Key themes to explore

The range of meanings for the word 'love' - friendship love; romantic love; self-centred love; respectful love (for example, for parents) and sacrificial love.

Love is more than just words. explore this with some ideas for a 'Love is' poster; look at ways to express love, for example, marking special days with cards and gifts; flowers; presents; offering help; being there when times are difficult.

Love isn't easy (see 1 Corinthians 13). It involves not giving up; taking time; listening; sharing suffering; being thoughtful. It is said that true love is spelled T I M E.

Love is powerful - motivating good causes; making a difference; overcoming barriers of prejudice and bringing people together.

2. Key Bible verses

Use verses from 1 Corinthians 13:4-8:

for example love is patient and kind; love is not selfish nor quick tempered; love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful and trusting; love never fails; love doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do.

See also Colossians 3:14 (CEV):



'Love is more important than anything else. It's what ties everything completely together.'

3. Key concepts to unpack

Love is regarded as the jewel among the virtues - love sums up all the values.

Jesus quotes the key commandments of 'Loving God and loving our neighbour as ourselves' - in this way love sums up all that is most important about life.

But love must not be 'just words'. It means something only when it is expressed in action and practical care.

To love means putting other people's needs before your own.

Christians teach that only when we love like this, can we become the best sort of people we can be. Christians believe that Jesus' life and work are our best examples of love in action and they also believe that as they trust in Jesus, he by his Spirit can inspire and work love out through their lives (see Romans 5:1).

- Children usually encounter love:
- from parents and carers at home
- from teachers in school
- from their friends and relatives
- from other adults in their lives

Equally, children (and adults) who do not experience love might become damaged in some way; for example, they can no longer trust another human being; they cannot settle; they see other people as a threat; and when older they may become withdrawn and even possibly violent.

Christians believe that a loving God made people in love, for love and that when this love is missing their wholeness as human beings begins to unravel.

4. Display and reflective corner ideas

Use lots of symbols for love in the display such as variously shaped and coloured hearts, flowers, the 'x' mark on a Valentine's or birthday card, other special day cards, chocolates and Cupid with his arrow.

Include some 'love is...' mini-posters, on which the children can complete the sentence.

Include a key Bible verse such as:

'You show love for others by truly helping them, and not merely talking about it' 1 John 3:18 (CEV).

Key questions to have on the display:



Who loves you? Who do you love? How do you know that someone loves you? What is the true test of love? What can I do today to show love to other people?

Also include a box of chocolates on display (an empty box may be best!), friendship bracelets, some rings, wedding photos, a 'family together' photo and a 'two friends' together photo.

5. Bible story links

- The story of the love-friendship between David and Jonathan - see 1 Samuel 18:1-5 (also chapters 19:1-7 and 20:1-42).
- The family love shown by Ruth for mother-in-law Naomi - see the book of Ruth.
- Jesus sacrificial love for his disciples when he washed their feet - see John 13:1-20.
- James in his letter urges Christians to love all people, whatever their status or appearance - see James 2:1-9.
- John in his letter talks about the source, inspiration and power of true love - see 1 John 4:7-11.
- Hosea the prophet describes how God loves his people like a parent, sticking with them even when they are rebellious - see Hosea 11:1-4.
- The story of Dorcas, who put her love into action - see Acts 9:36.

Ideas for collective worship and the classroom

[People Jesus met and cared for](#)