

LESSON 1

Why Ask Why?

(Why Serving in Ministry is Important)

Lesson Objective:

To learn where the motivation for serving in ministry should come from—the Great Commandment! Your students will be challenged in this lesson to learn just what it means to love God with their whole selves and to love others as Christ has commanded us.

Prayer as You Prepare:

Father, thank You for loving us and showing us how to love others. Help me to teach my students Your perfect love as You have made it known on the cross and through Your Word. Help me to love You with my whole heart, soul and mind. Help me to love my neighbor as myself. I ask that as we begin this Children's 301 "Journey to Discover My S.H.A.P.E." that my students would truly understand that love must be the sole motivation and foundation for serving in ministry. Thank You for each of the students that You have entrusted to me this year. I need Your grace to teach them with accuracy, passion and love. Amen.

IN THE CLASSROOM

Begin the Journey:

Select a student to act out the "Mom" and "You" dialogue with you. Have your students read aloud Matthew 22:37–39 together. This may be a good time to find out from your students what their definitions of heart, soul and mind are. They may find it difficult to distinguish between the three. Here is a helpful hint to clearly make this distinction.

Man is made up of three parts—spirit, soul and body.

SOUL—In Matthew 22:37–39 Jesus is referring to loving God through the whole use of our soul. Our soul is the means by which man has self-consciousness (knows who he is). Our soul is essentially everything that makes you, YOU! Our soul is the medium between our spirit and our body. Our spirit was once dead through sin but has been resurrected through the work of Christ. The soul is made up of two "organs"—the heart and the mind. It is through these "organs" that we know who we are.

HEART—the part of you that decides how you will respond to God, the world and man.

MIND—the part of you that stores information gained through the experiences of your body, spirit, soul, conscious, heart and emotions.

BODY—Our body is the means through which we manifest outwardly who we are inwardly. When the Spirit came to life at our salvation, our soul was renewed and restored to the whole person that God originally designed it to be thus impacting how we live out our life in our physical body.

We love God with our heart when we make decisions that are pleasing to Him. We love God through our mind when the decisions that we are making by way of our heart are filling

our mind with righteousness. When these two "organs" are being exercised righteously we can truly love God with our WHOLE soul.

ACTIVITY PAGE: THE SEARCH FOR PERFECT LOVE

Have your students search for each characteristic, according to 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 of what perfect love is in the "Perfect Love Word Search." This may be a good time to ask your students in what ways they can show perfect love to their family and friends.

Did You Know?

Although we fail many times in showing perfect love, encourage your students to focus on putting into practice at least one of the traits of perfect love according to 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 in the weeks to come. Even though our love will never be perfect like God's love, it is a good example for us to follow and strive to imitate. Let's strive for God's perfect love in our relationships.

OBJECT LESSON: THE CROSS

The cross is the ultimate example of perfect love. Jesus said that the greatest love that you can show someone else is to lay down your life for that person. This is exactly what Christ did for you. We can love because Christ first loved us. Let the cross serve as our reminder for why we love and serve in the first place.

Seek the Treasure:

"Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.' And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matthew 22:37–38)

Uncover the Truth:

The Great Commandment calls us to first love **G**od and then **O**thers. This is why "**GO!**" can remind us to love **G**od and **O**thers. Are your students ready to "**GO?**"

- Why does God call us, as Christians, to follow the Great Commandment?
First, God loves us so much and all He asks in return is for us to love Him back. We are able to love God because He first loved us. Also, without doing these first two things—loving God and loving others—the rest of what we do does not matter. Love is the key to everything. Bottom line, a commandment means you must do it and that is what we are called as Christians to do—the Great Commandment!
- What is God trying to say here ("love your neighbor as yourself")?
We probably care about ourselves a lot if we look at how we take care of ourselves and live our lives. If we cared about others as much as we care about ourselves, that would be a lot of concern and attention and time.

- Give one example of how you can love God with all your:
 - **Heart**
Make decisions that are pleasing to God. Choose to go to church instead of going out with friends. Pray before meals as a family.
 - **Soul**
Recognize areas in your life that make God sad and work hard to change those things. Confess our sins and repent.
 - **Mind**
Think about the things we watch or listen to. Memorize God's Word. Read a book that teaches us truths about God or how we can better follow Him.

- Write down what "love" is based on in 1 Corinthians 13:4–7.
*Patient and kind.
Does not envy or boast.
It is not rude or self-seeking,
it is not easily angered and keeps no record of wrongs.
Does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.
Always protects, trusts, hopes and perseveres.*

Find the Purpose:

In this section you will ask your students some tough questions dealing with loving others. If you are finding that your students are responding with difficulty give your own answers to the questions.

- Who is the first person you think of as someone you can say you love "as yourself"?
Answers will vary. Hopefully at least one person will come to mind. Get your students started by sharing your own answer as a leader first.

- When was there a time you found it hard to love others as much as yourself? Why?
Answers will vary. Again, tough questions may be best answered first by a leader to open up the discussion. Probably the "Why?" is more easily answered—because they were mean, selfish, unkind, lying and more reasons that made it difficult to love that particular person.

- Why do you think the Great Commandment is the answer to "why serve in ministry"?
We serve in ministry because and only because Christ first loved us. We serve in ministry as a response to Christ's love. Serving in ministry is loving God back while at the same time showing love to the people around us who need it the most.

- How can you better demonstrate to others that you live according to the Great Commandment?
How we live our lives on a daily basis. Are your actions, your words and your deeds showing others how much you love God? If you are living out your love for God others will notice it.

GAME: LOVE 'N' KINDNESS BINGO

Objective—Encourage your students to not only get to know each other but to discover how perfect love can be put into practice through acts of kindness.

Materials—Bingo cards and pens

Instructions—Hand out the bingo cards and pens to your students. When you say, "GO!" your students must ask other students if the random acts of kindness listed out on the bingo has ever been done to them. The student that is the first to make a horizontal, diagonal or vertical line by discovering how others have been acted kindly towards wins! Play as many times as time permits. Even play for "blackout" where the game is not over until you have crossed out every square on the card.

NOTE:

- Your students must interact with different students. That means they can only have one student fill in one box at a time. If you must have duplicates due to the size of your class that is OK. But they can do so only after they have met everyone else once.

Discussion

1. We often think about love as something we "feel" in our hearts. Is love more than something we feel? How else can others experience love?
2. What are some practical things that we can do this week to show God we love Him? What about our families? Friends? What about people we do not know as well, like a new kid in class or a new neighbor?
3. Since this is your first Kids Small Groups lesson in Children's 301, spend some time praying for this next year. Ask your students if they have any requests pertaining to Kids Small Groups. Is there something they want to learn or an area where they really want to be challenged to grow, especially in serving? Have each student share at least one thing.

FOLLOW-UP:

Thank each student's parent(s) for allowing you to serve as their child's KSG leader. Then, ask your student if they have ANY questions about this year of serving. If there are questions that you cannot answer, feel free to contact your Kids Small Groups coordinator for support.