

Love God and love others

**Bible verses:**

Mark 12:28-34

The most important command

**Aim:**

To discover how Jesus answered a tricky question

**Today's fruit:**

Faithfulness



In today's story a religious leader comes eager to listen and learn.

Jesus faced tricky questions from lots of different religious leaders, often trying to catch him out. One religious leader had seen Jesus tackling tricky questions and was impressed with his answers. We don't know what happened afterwards to the man who questioned Jesus, but he walked away understanding that loving God and loving others is the most important thing we need to do.

Faithfulness is shown when we trust in God's Kingdom. God's faithfulness is reflected in us when we love him and other people.

Each child will need:

- Pens/pencils and paper
- *Explore It ideas* handout

You will need:

- A large sheet of paper and pens
- Today's fruit sign: *Faithfulness*



Start it

Say:

In our Bible story last week Jesus reminded the people how precious children are to God. Jesus said that adults should come to God with the humility of children. Children have an important part to play in God's Kingdom.

This week we find Jesus answering tricky questions just like the ones we often ask about our

faith. There's no reason why children like you can't think about tricky questions about Jesus – they're not just for adults. Sometimes, children have better answers!

You may wish to create a challenge between the adults and children in your group. Watch the clip together and see who can solve the most riddles. You do not need to complete all the riddles and can pause the clip if the children (or adults) need more time to think. It's fine if they're far too difficult for everyone – that's part of the discussion you can have with the children.

Video

Five children's riddles that are too hard for 95 per cent of people by Bright Side (6:35)



Sing it

Say:

In our Bible story today we hear Jesus sharing his wisdom about the greatest commandments we should follow in life. Our song for today reminds us of one of those commandments.

Song

'Love the Lord' Kids Worship Motions with lyrics by CJ and Friends (3:14)



Tell it

On a flip chart write the numbers one to ten. Remind the children that we have looked at the Ten Commandments in previous sessions before – now let's find out how many they can remember.

1. You must not have any other gods except me.
2. You must not worship or serve any idols.
3. You must not use the name of the Lord your God thoughtlessly.
4. Remember to keep the Sabbath as a holy day.
5. Honour your father and your mother.
6. You must not murder anyone.
7. You must not be guilty of adultery.
8. You must not steal.
9. You shall not tell lies about your neighbour.
10. You must not [covet]: want to take anything that belongs to your neighbour.

Last August we also used this shorthand version:

1. God first.
2. No idols.
3. Don't misuse God's name.
4. Worship and rest.
5. Honour your parents.
6. No murder.
7. No adultery.
8. Don't steal.
9. Don't lie.
10. Don't covet.



Say:

The Ten Commandments were given to God's people as part of a covenant, or agreement, with him. The people were supposed to follow God's rules for all of their life.

Ask:

How did that work out?

Say:

For hundreds of years the Israelites tried to follow these laws carefully (with mixed success) and then Jesus came along and challenged what they believed. Many of the important religious people were angry about what Jesus was saying and repeatedly questioned him. Often they were trying to catch him out.

Ask:

- Why would the religious leaders want to catch out Jesus with a tricky question?
- How does it feel when someone asks you a tricky question?
- How do you think Jesus felt when it happened to him?

Say:

In our story today one of the teachers of the law came to speak with Jesus. Jesus had handled tricky questions from other religious leaders, from the Sadducees (who didn't believe that people could rise from death), wealthy Jews and merchants, and the Pharisees, priests and scholars. However, this person didn't want to test Jesus; he wanted to know more.

Read:

'One of the teachers of the law came to Jesus. He heard Jesus arguing with the Sadducees and the Pharisees. He saw that Jesus gave good answers to their questions. So he asked Jesus, "Which of the commands is most important?"'

‘Jesus answered, “The most important command is this: ‘Listen, people of Israel! The Lord our God, he is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God. Love him with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’ The second most important command is this: ‘Love your neighbour as you love yourself.’ These two commands are the most important commands.”’

(Mark 12:28–31 *ICB*)

Say:

The teacher of the law wasn’t looking for an argument. Instead, he was impressed by Jesus and the answers he gave the other religious leaders. It would have been easy for Jesus to be defensive, ready for a heated discussion, but instead he listened carefully to the man’s questions.

Ask:

What did Jesus say were the two most important commandments?

Read:

‘The man answered, “That was a good answer, Teacher. You were right when you said these things. God is the only Lord, and there is no other God besides him. One must love God with all his heart, all his mind, and all his strength. And one must love his neighbour as he loves himself. These commands are more important than all the animals and sacrifices we offer to God.”

‘Jesus saw that the man answered him wisely. So Jesus said to him, “You are close to the Kingdom of God.” And after that, no one was brave enough to ask Jesus any more questions.’

(Mark 12:32–34 *ICB*)

Say:

The Israelites used to do lots of things to show everyone that they followed God. They made sacrifices, kept the Sabbath, attended the Temple, and prayed regularly. There was nothing wrong with these things, but they often focused on what was happening *on the outside*.

Say:

When Jesus said that we should love God and love our neighbours, he was focusing on what was happening *on the inside*. The teacher of the law understood what Jesus was saying.

Ask:

We don’t know what happened in the life of the man who questioned Jesus. What do you think happened next?

Say:

For some people, God’s Kingdom might sound like a place; but Jesus teaches that the Kingdom happens when God’s ways are being done. When this happens, God is ‘in charge’ and his kingly rule is in place. In Jesus, God’s Kingdom was in front of us, and the teacher of the law saw it close-up. He experienced Jesus.

Action it

The children can complete this activity individually or in small groups. Ask the children to draw the outline of a person on a piece of paper. They will need to make sure there is space inside the person to draw and write other things.

Talk to the children about the different ways we show that we follow Jesus on the outside. One example is that, in The Salvation Army, many people wear a uniform to show that they belong to this church. It is an outward sign of their faith. Ask the children to write or draw other examples of outward expressions of faith around the outside of the person.

Now discuss the way that we follow Jesus on the inside, in the places that no one else can see other than God. Ask the children to draw or write these things on the inside of their person.

Discuss with the children if they think it is possible to do all the outside things while not following Jesus on the inside. And on the other hand, is it possible to follow Jesus on the inside, while not doing the outside things?

Say:

Jesus told the teacher of the law that we need to love God on the inside and on the outside.

Read:

‘Jesus answered, “The most important command is this: ‘Listen, people of Israel! The Lord our God, he is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God. Love him with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’ The second most important command is this: ‘Love your neighbour as you love yourself.’ These two commands are the most important commands.”’

(Mark 12:29-31 ICB)

Say:

This is how we will share God’s Kingdom with everyone here on earth.

Display the *Faithfulness* sign.

Say:

God loves us completely, with every part of who he is. He is a faithful God who is always there for us. He wants to grow the fruit of faithfulness in us, so that we can show others his love.

Pray it

Say:

Our memory verse for this month reminds us how important it is to God that we share his love with everyone we meet. Let’s read it together.

Memory verse

'I give you a new command: love each other. You must love each other as I have loved you.'

(John 13:34 ICB)

Say:

In our story today Jesus was asked a tricky question. He had already answered lots of challenging questions from people who were trying to cause him problems.

Ask:

How could he have reacted when yet another religious leader said he wanted to ask a question?

Say:

Sometimes people want to make fun of us because of what we believe and try to disprove that Jesus ever existed or that he is who he said he was. This can be challenging when we're not sure how we should answer. There are also people, like the teacher of the law, who genuinely want to learn about what we believe. It is important that we are ready to share God's love with others.

Prayer thoughts

Follow these steps, pausing after each point to give the children time to reflect and a moment to pray.

- Ask the children to close their eyes and think about the people they meet every day.
- Encourage them to think of one person that they can pray for.
- Ask them to think how they could show God's love to this person.
- Now ask them to think about someone who challenges what they believe and to spend time praying for them.

Bring the session to a close in prayer.

As an additional prayer point, you may want to pray for the young people attending Salvation Army residential camps over the summer, not just in the UK and Ireland, but across the world.

Explore it

Remember to send home the *Explore It ideas* for children and families.



Explore It is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview)

Love God and love others

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:

Mark 12:28-34

The most important command



Aim:

To discover how Jesus answered a tricky question



Today's fruit:

Faithfulness



Create

We have one more week to remember our memory verse for this month.

Create a picture version of the verse and stick it up at home to help you remember it.

Memory verse

'I give you a new command: love each other. You must love each other as I have loved you.'

(John 13:34 ICB)



Prepare

In today's session we thought about the times when people ask us tricky questions about our faith.

Watch this clip about Jesus with someone at home. Ask them to pretend to be someone interested in finding out more about Jesus. They can ask you questions, and you can use the information in the clip to help you answer them.

Who is Jesus? for kids, GQKidz.org by Got Questions Ministries



Song for the week

'Love the Lord' Kids Worship Motions with lyrics by CJ and Friends



Memory verse

'I give you a new command: love each other. You must love each other as I have loved you.'

(John 13:34 ICB)

Kids Alive! Online – salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive

Kids Alive! The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!



Children & Youth

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Memory verse

'I give you a new command: love each other. You must love each other as I have loved you.'

(John 13:34 ICB)



Start it

Play a game of *Sausages and squashed frogs*. Ask a volunteer to answer questions for 30 seconds, eg How old are you, what is your name, what do you like to eat? But the answer must always be either 'Sausages' or 'Squashed frogs'. If they laugh or say something else, they are out!

Today we are going to hear about about some tricky questions Jesus was asked – and the answers were definitely not sausages or squashed frogs!



Tell it

Share a child-friendly version of Mark 12:28-34.

Sit in a circle and ask the group to share together:

- Do you have a tricky question for God?

- Who do you ask for help at home when you have a tricky question?
- What is the hardest question you can think of?
- What does 'Love God' look like?
- What does 'Loving others' look like?
- Which person shows you the most love?



Sing It

'Great big God!' Vineyard Kids, Vineyard Worship UK and Ireland (2:51)

'Jesus song' by Saddleback Kids (2:45) This song tells us about the amazing thing Jesus did.



Action it

Games and activities to reinforce the Bible passage:

- Mime different ways of loving God (some children might pray, pretend to read a Bible).
- Mime ways of loving others (some children might help somebody who is hurt or upset).
- Act out being a teacher in a class, with the class asking tricky questions to the teacher.