



## LESSON 1 FOR LEADERS

### INVITATION

*We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...*

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** Nothing Can Separate Us from God's Love

**SCRIPTURE:** [Romans 8](#); [1 John 3](#)

**WORD OF WONDER:** [1 Corinthians 13:13 \(NIRV\)](#)

Have you ever considered the power in the word nothing? No, just me? OK, let me explain why I think the word nothing is powerful.

First, read [Romans 8:33–39](#).

Paul's words in [Romans 8](#) were meant to encourage the early Christians to stay strong in their faith. He wanted them to realize that God was with them even in the hardest of times. Paul understood the power of the word nothing.

Let this lesson's Wonder Truth really sink in: *Nothing* Can Separate Us from God's Love.

*Nothing*. Maybe you're having a week where you wish you could separate yourself from certain situations (or even people!). Yet, even those things can't separate you from God's love.

Not troubles, not hardship, not persecution or famine, nakedness, danger, or sword. *Nothing* can separate us from God's love. Replace the words in this list with things from your own life and context. Perhaps your list sounds something like this: "Not volunteer or budget shortages, not falling short on goals, not lack of recognition. *Nothing* can separate me from God's love." Read your list out loud as a declaration of faith.

Paul experienced the power of nothing firsthand, and my prayer for you today is that you too understand just how connected you are to the Father's love—so connected, in fact, that *nothing* can separate you from Him!

Rest in the power of the word nothing this week. Receive God's overwhelming, inseparable love for you, and share it with the kids you lead.

—Tom Bump

Children's Ministry Leader, Author, and Coach

Contributor to Wonder Ink

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS**

**WHO?**

Under the Roman Empire, many people joined clubs and voluntary associations devoted to common religious, economic, or social causes. Early Christians followed some of this pattern when they formed “assemblies” in homes. The same Greek word is often translated as *churches*.

**WHAT?**

Paul mentions the threat of natural disasters. Ancient Rome had a housing density beyond even the densest modern cities. Cities were plagued by food shortages, infectious diseases, fires, and building collapses. Average life expectancy was under 30.

**WHERE?**

Christians in the capital of Rome faced many difficulties. The emperor Claudius expelled Jews from Rome around AD 50 (see [Acts 18:2](#)), and this would have included Jewish Christians such as Priscilla and Aquila, close friends of Paul.

**WHEN?**

Paul wrote his letter to Rome before being brought there as a prisoner in the early AD 50s. There are a wide range of dates proposed for [1 John](#). The books of Romans and [1 John](#) reflect a concern for the first generation of churches.

**CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY**

Jesus told His followers to place a radical trust in the heavenly Father's daily provision ([Matthew 6:25–34](#)). The church community endures trials together. Come what may, God sustains the church, and He will not allow it to fall to the powers of darkness ([Matthew 16:18](#)).



## Curiosity

### LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

*Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.*

#### LESSON AT A GLANCE

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#### Play Stations

**SUPPLIES:** contact paper, scissors (prep only), painter's tape, assorted craft supplies (craft sticks, pom-poms, googly eyes, etc.), magnetic tiles, coloring utensils

**Wonder Ink RESOURCES:** [God's Amazing Love Coloring Sheet](#)

Greet kids warmly as they arrive and briefly explain the play stations. Invite them to play at any of the play stations.

**Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas of what we'll be learning about today?**

#### Play Station: Sticky Art

**Set-up:** Cut a large piece of contact paper and tape it to the table using painter's tape around the edges, ensuring that the sticky side of the contact paper is facing up. Set out craft supplies (craft sticks, pom-poms, googly eyes, etc.) near the contact paper. If you have a large group, you can create several stations like this.

**Play:** Encourage kids to use the craft supplies to create art on the contact paper by sticking them onto it. Point out that this paper is extra sticky! Tell kids that it reminds you of God's love. God's love is strong enough to stick with us no matter what!

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### Play Station: Magnetic Tiles Building

**Set-up:** Set out magnetic tiles on a flat surface.

**Play:** Encourage kids to build a structure using the magnetic tiles. Comment about how the tiles seem to be strong and stick to each other because of the magnets. Tell kids that it reminds you of God's love. God's love is strong and sticks with us no matter what happens.

### Play Station: God's Amazing Love Coloring Sheet

**Set-up:** Print one copy per kid of the [Coloring Sheet](#). Set out the Coloring Sheets and coloring utensils.

**Play:** Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a heart.



## Belief

### LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

*Guide kids into knowing God more deeply, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.*

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**WORD OF WONDER:** [1 Corinthians 13:13 \(NIV\)](#)

#### Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words:

**Dear God, thank You for this day when we can come together and learn more about You. Please lead us as we look at Your Word. Thank You for sending the Holy Spirit to reveal Your love for us in today's part of Your big story. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

#### God's Big Story

**\*\*Note to leaders:** There is no story in our picture Bibles for today's lesson. You can read the verses below as well as use the summary included.

Pull out the Bible.

Ask: What is this called? *The Bible*

Ask: Why is the Bible important? *Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.*

#### TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Read from the passage below - Romans 8; 1 John 3  
God's Amazing Love

<sup>38</sup> I am absolutely sure that not even death or life can separate us from God's love. Not even angels or demons, the present or the future, or any powers can separate us. <sup>39</sup> Not even the highest places or the lowest, or anything else in all creation can separate us. Nothing at all can ever separate us from God's love. That's because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done.

1 John 3: 16-18

<sup>16</sup> We know what love is because Jesus Christ gave his life for us. So we should give our lives for our brothers and

## 9:00 Service

sisters. <sup>17</sup> Suppose someone sees a brother or sister in need and is able to help them. And suppose that person doesn't take pity on these needy people. Then how can the love of God be in that person? <sup>18</sup> Dear children, don't just talk about love. Put your love into action. Then it will truly be love.

Summary:

**Hold up the stop signs included in the belief bag at the appropriate times and have kids repeat “Nothing can separate us from God’s love!” after you read each sign.**

Today we're going to be talking about God's love. God loves us so much! And today we will learn that there is truly not anything that can separate us from God's love. Paul, an apostle who led the early church, wrote letters to remind the people that nothing could separate them from God's love.

The early church did not meet in buildings. Different people gathered in homes to learn, worship, and become more like Jesus. Even though the people didn't have buildings to meet in for church, they loved God and knew that nothing could separate them from His love.

The early Christians faced many troubles, but they knew that God loved them and was with them. They shared their food and prayed for each other during troubled times.

Paul said no evil or enemy of God could take away God's love. Paul reminded them God's love will never change.

Another follower of Jesus, John, called God's people the children of God. He told early Christians that God's love changes people and helps them make right choices. God's love is meant to be shared.

Jesus showed us amazing love when He died to save us all. We can love others by showing compassion and helping one another. This shows God's love to others. We can remember that no matter what happens, nothing can separate us from God's love.

### Word of Wonder

#### WORD OF WONDER

**The three most important things to have  
are faith, hope and love. But the greatest of  
them is love.**

—1 Corinthians 13:13 (NirV)

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- What did this verse tell us are the three most important things to have?
- When have you felt God's love for you?



## Faith

### LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

*Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.*

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#### Circle Time: Sticky Love

**SUPPLIES:** construction paper (6 sheets), scissors (prep only), marker (prep only), paper clips (7), basket, u-shaped magnet

Before the kids arrive, use scissors to cut out six hearts from the construction paper. Number the hearts 1–7 with a marker. Attach a paper clip to each heart and place the hearts in a basket.

Gather kids to sit in a circle. **Today we have been learning about God's love. What are some things you have learned about His love?** Allow kids to respond. **God's love is so special because it will never leave us! We can never be separated from God's love. Let's talk more about that in our activity.**

Place the basket of hearts in the middle of the circle and give the first kid the u-shaped magnet.

**When it is your turn, you can go to the basket and use the magnet to pick up one of the hearts. Tell me what number is on your heart, and then I will ask a question. Ready?**

Guide kids to use the magnet to select a heart from the basket. Refer to the Discussion Questions below as they select hearts. For groups with more than seven kids, you can place the hearts into the basket again and have kids answer the questions once more.

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### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Where did the first Christian churches meet?** *(in houses)*
- **What were some of the difficult circumstances the early Christians faced?** *(not having church buildings, not having enough food, being treated badly, sadness, fighting)*
- **What can separate us from God's love?** *(nothing)*
- **How does God's love help us?**
- **What makes you feel loved by God?**
- **How did Jesus show us what real love is like? How can you show other people God's love?**

**There will be hard things that happen in our lives. That doesn't mean that God has forgotten us or doesn't love us. Nothing can ever separate us from God's love! Let's talk to God now in prayer!**

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That's OK! Encourage them to pray silently and to thank God for His love, which never leaves us.





## Identity

### LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

*Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.*

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### Responding in Worship: Shout the Truth

**SUPPLIES:** blanket, whiteboard, dry-erase marker

**Wonder Ink RESOURCES:** music from the Early Childhood flashdrive.

Gather kids together.

Write the words "God's Love" on the whiteboard in large letters. Draw a heart around the words.

**We've talked a lot today about how nothing can separate us from God's love. But sometimes it's hard to remember that truth when things are hard or when we get upset or get in trouble. Let's think about different situations in our lives, and then remind ourselves that nothing can separate us from God's love.**

Invite the kids to sit on the floor in front of the whiteboard.

Have the kids close their eyes and imagine they are at the park. Ask them to imagine something difficult that might happen while at the park. Trouble with friends? Feeling lonely? Being afraid of a certain playground toy? Being upset when it's time to go home? Falling down and getting hurt? If kids are comfortable, they can share one thing with someone next to them or with the whole group. If they'd rather not share, reassure them that's OK too.

**When we are at the park and having a hard time, is God's love still with us?** Invite kids to respond.

Hold up the blanket in front of the whiteboard so that the words "God's Love" are covered. Invite a kid to come up and pull the blanket down. As she does, invite the kids to shout out, **"Nothing can separate us from God's love!"**

Now encourage the kids to think of a time at home when they might feel sad, discouraged, or lonely. **Maybe you have a sick family member or an older brother or sister is being unkind.** Repeat the activity by having kids share and then having one kid pull down the blanket as you shout, **"Nothing can separate us from God's love!"**

Continue the activity with a few more scenarios that the kids in your ministry may experience—with friends, at church, during sports practice, etc.

## 9:00 Service

### Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them, thanking God for loving us all the time—through the good times and the bad times.

**Dear God, thank You for loving us no matter what happens in our lives. Thank You for Your promise that nothing can ever separate us from Your great love. Help us remember this and trust in You even when things are hard. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

**Blessing:** May you feel God's great love for you this week, and may you remember to show God's love to others. Whatever might happen, know that nothing can ever separate you from God's love!