



DECEMBER THEME

**UNDERCOVER
CHRISTMAS**
Make Others Your Mission

BIBLE STORY

1 John 4:9-12

I Will Follow | God Showed His Love

BOTTOM LINE

Love others because God loved you first

MEMORY VERSE

“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life.”

John 3:16, NIV

LIFE APP

Compassion | Caring enough to do something about someone else’s need

BASIC TRUTH

I should treat others the way I want to be treated...and with God’s help I can!

FOR LEADERS ONLY

GOD VIEW: the connection between **COMPASSION** and God’s character, as shown through God’s big story.

THIS WEEK—Key Question: How will you love others? Showing God’s love to others is an important part of following Jesus. We want to help families figure out a plan for how they can show compassion to others and help them realize how much God loves them.

We finish our series on compassion in **1 John 4:9-12**, where we read about God’s great love for us when God sent Jesus to pay the price for our sins. John reminds us that no one has ever seen God, but when we show love to others, people see God through us.

Bottom Line: Love others because God loved you first. This week, we want to help families connect their compassion to the source of compassion. We show love to others, not just because it’s a good thing to do, but also because it’s what God did for us and what God calls us to do for others.

SOCIAL: PROVIDING TIME FOR FUN INTERACTION

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today’s story.

Before kids arrive, **PRAY** for each group member by name. Thank God that we can show compassion and spread God’s love during every season, not just the Christmas season. Pray that kids would be encouraged today to continue their journey of compassion and loving others because God loved us first.

•• EARLY ARRIVER IDEA

Made to Connect | An activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: Ball-pit ball

What You Do:

- Guide kids to sit around your small group table.
- Give a ball to one kid. Tell her to share her favorite thing that happened during the Christmas season (so far) and then toss the ball to someone else.
- Continue until all kids have had a chance to share.
- If time allows, play again sharing something kids hope will happen sometime during the remainder of the Christmas season.

•• WHAT HAPPENED FIRST?

Made to Imagine | An activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment

What You Need: “What Happened First?” activity pages, pens

What You Do:



- Divide kids into teams of three and give each team a “What Happened First?” activity page and a pen.
- Read the story aloud. Kids will likely be confused.
- Explain that this is the ending of the story. They get to decide what happened first.
- Instruct teams to each write a short beginning to the story.
- Allow teams to share their story beginnings with the others.

What You Say: “Those were some pretty funny story beginnings! When we just had the ending, we knew a little bit about what happened, but we didn’t know WHY the kids were laughing. We didn’t know what happened first. It’s a cause and effect thing. What Kamika did was the cause, and the laughing was the effect. When you wrote what she did, we knew why she laughed. **[Transition]** Today in Sunday CM worship/WOW family worship, we’ll hear/we heard the beginning of an awesome love story!”

[Sunday Leaders: Lead your group to the Family Room for Children’s Ministry worship. Wednesday Leaders: Continue with the study.]

GROUPS: CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

- **REASONS** [Talk about God | Bible Story Review | Application Activity]

Made to Reflect | An activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Go around your small group table and ask kids to tell you two or three things they do to help out. These can be kind things like helping a neighbor shovel snow or just everyday things like cleaning their room or doing their homework.
- Go around the table again. This time, ask kids to tell you the reasons why they do the things they mentioned earlier, such as: “because my mom asked me to” or “because it helps me learn” or “because it’s the kind thing to do.”

What You Say: [Bottom Line] “Love others because God loved you first. That’s our Bottom Line for today, and it’s one of the most important things we can remember in this life. God loved us first—God loved us so much that God gave us the greatest gift of Jesus. And that’s why we should love others—because God loved us so much to do that for us.

“It’s easy to love people sometimes, isn’t it? Like when your dad spends time with you or your little brother isn’t screaming his head off. But other times it can be hard to love someone, like when your friend tells somebody your secret or when your big sister makes fun of you in front of her friends. But even in those moments, we can remember why we should love those people EVEN if we think they don’t deserve it. Because God loved us first, even when we didn’t deserve it. Let’s show compassion toward the people around us at all times. **[Bottom Line] Love others because God loved you first.”**

- **FOUR SEASONS OF LOVE** [Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Move | An activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

What You Need: “Seasons” activity cards

What You Do:

- Divide your small group table into four sections. Set a “Seasons” card in each section.



- Tell kids that you'll read a way they can love others, and they should stand in the season when they could do that activity.
- If/when the kids are standing in different spaces, ask them to explain why they chose which season they did.
- If they complain that they can't stand in more than one season at a time, tell them to stand in the season that they would most prefer to the activity.

Activities:

- Weed your grandma's garden.
- Play your little sister's favorite game with her.
- Give your teacher a gift card to her favorite restaurant.
- Go to the zoo with your friends.
- Send your aunt a homemade card.
- Take your outgrown clothes and toys to a shelter.
- Rake your neighbor's leaves.
- Help a parent change the oil in the car.
- Tell your mom you love her.
- Record yourself singing a song and send it to your grandpa.
- Make snow angels with your cousins.
- Donate money to a water project in Africa.
- Help plan a water park party for your friend's birthday.
- Add more activities that will resonate with your kids and/or let them choose some.

What You Say: "Showing others love and compassion isn't just something we can do at Christmas time, but it's something we can—we SHOULD—do all year long. There are some things we can do anytime, and there are others we can only do at certain times of the year. But the fact remains that there's always something we can do to show love to the people in our lives and even to people we've never met. Compassion is a year-round thing. And why should you show compassion and love to others? **[Bottom Line] Love others because God loved you first.**"

●● **ROLL THE DICE** [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Play | An activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: Bible, dice, "John 3:16" activity page

What You Do:

- Work with your group to look up John 3:16 in a Bible. Read and repeat it as a group until everybody has the verse memorized.
- If you think your group needs it, you can put the "John 3:16" activity page in the center of your table to use as a reference during the game.
- Choose one kid to roll the dice.
- Whatever number is rolled, count that number of people to the right of the kid who rolled the dice. That kid should say the first word of the verse and then roll the dice.
- Count that number from the kid who rolled the dice. That kid says the second word of the verse and rolls the dice again.
- Continue until the entire verse has been said.
- Play again, allowing kids to say more than one word if they wish.

What You Say: "Our verse tells us how much God loved us. God loved us so much that God sent Jesus to earth so that we can believe in him and live with God forever. This is why we should also love others. **[Bottom Line] Love others because God loved you first.** We serve others not just because it's a good thing to do but because it's what God has done for us, and it's what God calls us to do for others. What is one way you can show someone you love them this week? *(Pause for responses.)* **[Make It Personal] (Tell kids one way you will show love to someone this week.)** Okay, now let's go out and do it!"

