



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

What You Need: Ball-pit ball

What You Do:

- Lead kids to sit around your small group table.
- Give a child the ball and invite her to tell her favorite thing that happened during December (so far). She then says another child’s name and rolls the ball to them.
- Continue until each child has a turn.
- **[Make It Personal]** If a child rolls the ball to you, tell your favorite thing.

•• **BABY JESUS**

Made to Create | An activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing

What You Need: “Baby Jesus” coloring sheet, crayons

What You Do:

- Give a coloring sheet to each kiddo and place crayons in the middle of your table for



all to share.

• While kids color, talk through this month's memory verse (*on the left column of page one of this leader guide and on the bottom of the coloring sheet*), explaining to kids that Jesus is the best example of God's love for us...and what we celebrate at Christmas time.

What You Say: "Our memory verse reminds us that when God sent Jesus to be born, God was showing us just how much we are loved. That's who we celebrate at Christmas -- baby Jesus! And that's why we celebrate Christmas...because of God's amazing love for us! [Transition] "Today in Sunday CM worship/WOW family worship, we'll learn/we learned about what we can do because we are loved so very much."

[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.

•• **EVERY SEASON** [Live for God | Application Activity]

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

What You Need: "Seasons" activity cards, "Every Season" activity cards

What You Do:

- Lead kids in a variation of "Four Corners."
- Divide your small group table into four sections. Set a "Seasons" card face up and its two corresponding "Every Season" cards face down in each section.
- Order the seasons clockwise.
- Close your eyes and tell kids to pick a season and stand by its card.
- Slowly and methodically count down from ten. When you say "one," every child must be standing by their chosen season card.
- With your eyes still closed, call out the name of a season. Open your eyes.
- Guide one of the kids standing by that season's card to pick an "Every Season" card and show it to you.
- Together, you and that child then work together to pantomime that act of compassion while the whole group guesses what you're doing. Be ready to give clues as needed to keep the guessing moving along.
- Continue either as time remains or until kids pantomime all the cards.

What You Say: "This month, we've been learning all about compassion—caring enough to do something about someone else's need. We don't show compassion just because it's Christmas. We love others—always and every day—because God loves US always and every day.

"So what are some ways you can show God's love to others all year long? (*Kids can come up with their own ideas, or they can personalize the "Every Season" cards: I can wash my neighbor's windows. I can bake cookies for the new family down the street. I can rake leaves for my granddad. I can play with my little brother when he's lonely.*) [Make It Personal] **(Tell kids a way you can show compassion as well.)**

"Those are all kind and thoughtful ways to show God's love to others. So remember: [Bottom Line] **love others because God loved you first.**"

•• **MOVE** [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

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



What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

• Review the verse and use the motions below to help your group continue to memorize it. Begin slowly, and then add challenge by going faster and faster as kids learn the motions.

—God | *pointing to the sky*

—so loved | *cross your arms over your chest*

—the world | *both hands move outward, palms facing up*

—that he gave | *both hands move forward like you are giving a gift*

—his One and only Son | *use pointer finger to show one and then fold arms like holding a baby*

—Anyone | *point to everyone*

—who believes | *give a thumbs up*

—in him | *point to sky or use one finger to touch the middle of the palm of each of your hands (sign language for “Jesus”)*

—Will not die but have eternal life. | *move hands back and forth, palms down, to say “no” then flip hands palms up and raise to the sky*

What You Say: “When God sent Jesus, God showed us that God loves us more than we can ever imagine. God sent Jesus to live on earth, to die on a cross, and to come back to life so that if we put our trust in Jesus, we can live forever with God. Wow! Now that’s an amazing love!

“But what about the people who don’t know that God loves them? Sometimes just telling them isn’t enough. We need to show them God’s love by loving them ourselves. So what are some ways you can show God’s love to others? (*I can let my friends choose what to play first. I can say kind things to my brother instead of yelling at him. I can get a BAND-AID® for someone who’s hurt.*) Great ideas! When you put others first, when you say kind things, and when you help someone who’s hurting, you’re showing God’s love to others. So remember: **[Bottom Line] love others because God loved you first.**”

●● **WE LOVE** [Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Create | An activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing

What You Need: “3D Heart Patterns” activity page, crayons, scissors

What You Do:

• Give each child a “3D Heart Patterns” activity page.

• Encourage kids to color the hearts as they choose.

• As kids work, read today’s Bible verse from 1 John 4:9-12 (*as found in the “What You Say” section below*).

• Talk about the Bible story and the truth that God loved us so much that God gave us Jesus.

• Emphasize that since God loved us this much, we have the chance to love others.

• When kids finish coloring, help them cut out the hearts and cut along the dotted line on each heart.

• Show kids how to slide their two hearts together to create a “3D” heart that can stand.

• Encourage kids to take their hearts home and set them someplace where they’ll see them often. The hearts can remind them to love others because God loved them first.

What You Say: “1 John 4 tells us: [God] sent God’s one and only Son into the world. God sent him so we could receive life through him. Here is what love is. It is not that we loved God. It is that God loved us and sent Jesus to give his life to pay for our sins. Since God loved us this much, we should also love one another (*1 John 4:9-11 NIV*).

“Wow! When God sent Jesus, God showed us that God loved us more than we can imagine. And since God loves us SO much, God wants us to love others so that they can know how much God loves them, too. We can say it this way: **[Bottom Line] Love others because God loved you first.**”

“So what are some ways that you can love others? (*I can help them. I can be kind. I can send a card. I can share.*) Great ideas! Those are

