



# PAUL'S LETTERS TO US

## Love is the Greatest

Supplies Needed: paper, pencil, envelope



## TEACHING INSTRUCTIONS

**Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13** together. Read it to the children or have them take turns reading. (See student handout)

**Say,** “Paul wrote this passage in between two other passages that talk about spiritual gifts and the power of God. Many people want the power of God but don’t understand the love of God. Paul points out that spiritual power without love means nothing. Then, he lists what love is like, and talks about how all the spiritual gifts will one day end, but God’s love will never end. Everything on earth will pass away when Jesus returns and makes all things new, but His love will remain. Let’s talk about some more interesting points from this passage.”

**Read the “Did You Know?”** points together. Read it to the children or have them take turns. Help the children look up the Scriptures mentioned. For added fun, have them say “amen!” when they find it. (See student handout)



**Say**, “1 Corinthians 13 is commonly read at weddings, but its true meaning is often misunderstood. People know it talks about true love, and they assume it means love between a husband and wife. Love in a marriage is the truest love the world understands. Spouses should love each other this way, but this passage is about much more. It’s about having the love of God poured into your heart and then pouring that love to God and other people. It’s more than a word for husbands and wives, it’s a command for all who follow God. Jesus said that loving God and people are the greatest commandments (Matthew 22:37-40). Without love, all we say and do means nothing”

## OBJECT LESSON

### Pointless Power

Items: paper, pencil, envelope



Before class, **write** “God Loves You” on a piece of paper, fold it, and put it aside, out of sight. **Say**, “God’s Word says that a spiritual gift without the love of God is nothing. Let’s illustrate this. I have an envelope. What normally goes in an envelope?” Allow for responses. **Say**, “Right, messages, letters, and cards. I’m going to have everyone close their eyes while I hide this envelope somewhere in the room.” Hide the envelope, but don’t make it too difficult to find. **Say**, “Okay, now everyone can open their eyes and we’ll spend a few minutes searching for the envelope. Let’s see who finds it first.” After someone finds it, have everyone sit down while the finder stands in front of the class. **Say**, “(Name of student) found the envelope, so I’m going to ask him/her to open it and give you the message.” The child opens the envelope and finds that it’s empty. **Say**, “Oh, it’s empty. So, this envelope is useless. Even though (Name of student) had the ability to find it and present it to you, there was no message inside, so it’s nothing. However, if I add a message inside...” take the “God Loves You” folded paper and put it in the envelope. Then, give the envelope back to the student. **Say**, “Now, (Name of student) will open the envelope and give the message.” Once the message is read, **say**, “The love of God is what gives any ability or gift its meaning. It’s the reason why we use our spiritual and physical gifts, to love God and love people, just as He commanded.

## GAMES

### Love is the Greatest



The greatest of these is love. Write all the spiritual gifts on slips of paper and put them in a bucket or basket. Use the list from 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11, and 1 Peter 4:11. On one slip, write "LOVE". Put all the papers in a basket or bucket and get a ball or make a paper ball. Each student will take turns trying to toss the ball into the basket from a determined length. If they make it, they get a slip of paper from the basket. They cannot look at it yet! Let everyone take turns until the slips of paper are distributed among all the players. Then, have everyone read and share what their slips of paper say. The person who happened to get "LOVE" wins the game! Even though the gifts are great, love is the greatest

### \*\* Optional Memory Verse Game \*\*



#### Hot Potato- 1 Corinthians 13:7

Have students sit in a circle. Pass a "hot potato" around the circle, which can be a bean bag, ball of paper or any small object. Play the memory passage song. When the music stops, the person holding the "hot potato" must say the first word of the verse. The music starts again and the game continues. The next person holding the potato when the music stops must say the first two words. This continues until the entire passage is recited.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

What two things does Paul compare to having the gift of tongues without love? (verse 1)

2

What are the greatest commandments? (Matthew 22:37-39)

3

Can we love the way we're supposed to without God's help? Why or why not?