

Agape Love
(1 John 4:7-8)

1. The English term “love” is used to describe many types of relationships. It can describe an interest, affection, or intense feeling. What do you use the word “love” to describe?

2. The New Testament, originally written in Greek, uses the noun **agapaō** and the verb **agapē** for the love from God. This concept of love is not found in any other writings of the time. What do you observe about this type of love?

Beloved, let us love (**agapaō**) one another, for love (**agapē**) is from God, and whoever loves (**agapaō**) has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love (**agapaō**) does not know God, because God is love (**agapē**). (1 John 4:7-8, ESV)

3. God’s love is a deep and challenging subject to understand. What do you observe about love in these passages?

For God so loved (**agapaō**) the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (John 3:16-17, ESV)

And Jesus, looking at him, loved (**agapaō**) him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. (Mark 10:21-22, ESV)

“And you shall love (**agapaō**) the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love (**agapaō**) your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:30-31, ESV)

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Teacher Notes

In preparation of this lesson, it is suggested that the 4 biblical passages (1 John 4:7-8; John 3:16-17; Mark 10:21-22; Mark 12:30-31) be written on a white board so that they can be read together as a class. It allows you the teacher to circle or highlight parts of the text to help a student with his observation and understanding of the passage.

1. The English term “love” is used to describe many types of relationships. It can describe an interest, affection, or intense feeling. What do you use the word “love” to describe?

What do you love? This question explores how our culture uses the term “love.” Help the student understand how broadly the word is used to describe the different degrees of affection people express.

“I love football” or “I love my friends” describes a general attraction to something or someone in the context of interest or devotion.

“I love my mom / dad / grandparent” describes a familial attraction / natural affinity to family or someone very close.

“I love my husband / wife” describes a longing love for someone intimate. This type of love has a transcendent aspect as it involves sensual desires, expression and experience.

Other languages, like Greek, avoid the confusion of having one word describe all degrees of love by having a different word for each type of love (phileō, storge, and erōs).

2. The New Testament, originally written in Greek, uses the noun **agapaō** and the verb **agapē** for the love from God. This new concept of love was introduced to the world by the Bible. What do you observe about this type of love?

Beloved, let us love (**agapaō**) one another, for love (**agapē**) is from God, and whoever loves (**agapaō**) has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love (**agapaō**) does not know God, because God is love (**agapē**). (1 John 4:7-8, ESV)

Help the student listen carefully to the text as you read it or with their reading of the passage.

1. God is agapē love.
2. No human being can agapē love unless they have faith in God.
3. Believers should agapē love each other.

3. God’s love is a deep and challenging subject to understand. What do you observe about love in these passages?

For God so loved (**agapaō**) the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (John 3:16-17, ESV)

Help the student listen carefully to the text as you read it or with their reading of the passage.

1. God agapē loves the world.

And Jesus, looking at him, loved (**agapaō**) him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. (Mark 10:21-22, ESV)

2. Jesus agapē loves the world.

“And you shall love (**agapaō**) the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love (**agapaō**) your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:30-31, ESV)

3. Believers should agapē love the world.