



Mission of Love Leader's Notes

(Leaders and participants are encouraged to look up Bible passages for most effective study. Passages are printed below for ease in presentation.)

With a partner or your group, share what you think about when you hear the word "mission." Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. Make it clear that everything confided within the group stays within the group. The leader should start to begin discussion with an example of her own. Answers might include such ideas as missionary work in foreign lands; a mission statement that explains the goals of an individual or a group; mission grants or a mission goal.

Opening Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, Thank You for sending Your Son to become a human, live a perfect life, suffer, and die for the sins of the world. Through Your amazing love and by Your Spirit's power, we have faith in our Savior. Embolden us to share the Good News of salvation in Jesus alone with those we meet. In the loving name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

HIS Love

Understanding Christ's mission while on earth helps us to understand the mission He has given to His redeemed and believing children. Read the following Bible passages; identify and write down concisely what Christ's mission was. Answers will vary, but may include:

At just the right time, Jesus, true God, became true man to live as a human.

He did not sin, but suffered the punishment of death for the sins of the entire world.

He rose to life, and because He lives promises all who believe in Him life forever in heaven.

He is the Word incarnate.

He speaks His Word to us and gives believers His grace, salvation, and eternal life.

John 1:14, 16

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁶ For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

John 3:16-17

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ 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 6:68

Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

Galatians 4:4-5

⁴ But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

1 Corinthians 15:3b

Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures.

Read **Jeremiah 31:3b** and **John 3:16**. What is the reason our God sent His Son to be our Savior? His everlasting love is for His world. He desires us all to have eternal life.

Jeremiah 31:3b: I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

What description does **1 John 4:8b-10** give about God and His love? **God is love. God is the source and giver of love (v. 10). He showed that love to us by sending His Son to die, that we might live through Him.**

1 John 4:8b-10: ... because God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Faith Talk: Read **Ephesians 3:14-19**. Describe the breadth and length and height and depth (Ephesians 3:18) of Christ's love. **Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share.**

Ephesians 3:14-21: For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

What means does the Spirit lovingly use to "call, gather, enlighten, and sanctify" His people (Apostles' Creed, First Article meaning)? See **Romans 10:17**, **Titus 3:5**, and **Matthew 26:26-28**. **The Holy Spirit uses Word and Sacraments (Baptism and Holy Communion) – The Means of Grace to do these important faith building activities in our lives and hearts.**

Romans 10:17: So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Titus 3:5: he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 26:26-28: Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." ²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, ²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

My Response

In response to Christ's mission of love, what does He embolden His people to do? Look for specific actions of God's people in **Deuteronomy 6:4-9**, **Psalms 96:1-3**, **Isaiah 52:7**, **John 20:21-23**, **2 Corinthians 5:14-15**, and **1 John 4:7, 11**.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Love the Lord, teach His Word to children, talk about Him and what He has done in your home.

Psalm 96:1-3: Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth! ² Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. ³ Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples! Sing to the Lord, tell of His salvation, declare His glory and works to all.

Isaiah 52:7: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." Tell the Good News of salvation and peace in Christ.

John 20:21-23: Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld." Jesus sends His Church to proclaim the Good News to the world and gives His Spirit and the power to forgive or to not forgive (the Office of the Keys).

2 Corinthians 5:14-15: For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. We are controlled (NIV, compelled) to let Christ's love guide us and to live for Him.

1 John 4:7, 11: Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. Love one another as God loves us.

What did Jesus tell the formerly demon-possessed man to do after he was healed in **Mark 5:19b**?

"Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." Specifically to go home and tell his friends what God has done!

What did He promise to His disciples in **Acts 1:8**? The Holy Spirit Where did He tell them to begin their mission, and what "ripple effect" would that have? Begin at home (in Jerusalem), rippling out to the nation and into the world. How can Jesus' witnessing plan be used by each believer? Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. Witnessing, by the Spirit's power, happens first at home, then into our communities, our nation, and into all the world.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Identify the places and the messengers of God's love and salvation through Christ in **Acts 4:20** and **17:6**.

Acts 4:20: "for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." Peter and John in Jerusalem before the Council, chief priests, and elders

Acts 17:6: "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also." Paul and Silas in Thessalonica

How had they turned the world upside down? Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. The Spirit-led disciples had started a worldwide movement, which both those in Jerusalem and those in other countries were noticing. Who gave them the boldness to witness about the Good News of salvation in Jesus? The Holy Spirit

Faith Talk: Do you remember these words to song from the past? "What the world needs now is love, sweet love ..." An edited version of this phrase could read, "What the world needs now is Christ's love, His love." Discuss the mission of every believer. Answers will vary, but encourage

everyone to share. God's directive to believers is to tell the Good News of salvation to those around us; to share His saving love in Christ Jesus with the world.

Read **Philippians 2:1-4** and **1 Corinthians 13:4-7**. What practical advice does Paul give to believers in the Body of Christ — His Church?

Philippians 2:1-4: So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7: Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

In the Spirit, love one another; be of one mind; be humble; look to the interests of others; be patient and kind; rejoice with the truth; bear, believe, hope, and endure all things; don't be envious, boastful, arrogant, rude, irritable, or resentful.

What promise does our Savior give in **Matthew 28:20b**? He will always be with us. [Jesus said:] "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Faith Talk: Take five minutes right now to write a personal mission statement. Ask yourself: "In response to God's love, how will I love?" Be concise and try to keep it to about 25 words. If you are comfortable, share it with a partner or your small group. **The leader should encourage each participant to do this. The leader might begin by sharing her own mission statement with the group.**

Faith Walk:

1. Read and study the Apostles' Creed and the meanings to its three Articles, along with **Philippians 2:5-11**. Use them as a guide in your witnessing.
2. Tell someone in your life the Good News about salvation in Jesus. Be intentional and tell what the love of your Savior means to you.

Closing: Pray the Lord's Prayer together and sing "Jesus Loves Me" (LSB 588).

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