

# Devotionals

## “This is Love” Youth Rally 2017

### Friday: What is love?

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 (NLT)

*If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. <sup>3</sup> If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing.*

*<sup>4</sup> Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud <sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. <sup>6</sup> It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. <sup>7</sup> Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.*

*<sup>8</sup> Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages[b] and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever!*

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There are three type of love in the bible: **Eros, Philos, Agape.**

**Eros:** selfish love that has expectations, focus on personal gain or happiness. Like having a relationship with someone and you expect for them to make you happy.

**Philos:** Brotherly or sisterly love, like loving a brother, sister, companion, friend, or pal.

**Agape:** Universal love. This is unconditional love that serves regardless of circumstances. This is the love that God shows us.

According to the world, love is about your feelings for someone and theirs towards you. The bible, however, says that love is about how you behave and treat others. Agape love is the unconditional love that God shows us. Your past doesn't define you. God loves you, regardless of your past. We should think of God as the definition of love.

We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.

1 John 4:16 NLT

By living a loving life, you are living a Godly life. It's amazing that God's love doesn't change for us, no matter what.

**Questions for Discussion:**

1. How would you define love? Is it a verb? Noun?
2. What makes you feel love?
3. Why is God so amazing / inspiring? What is it about him?
4. What type of love do you see most often in the world today?
5. What are some joys and concerns, especially this weekend?

[End with a prayer]

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## “This is Love” Youth Rally 2017

### Saturday: How to love

Scripture: Luke 6:27-30: “But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you.<sup>28</sup> Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you.<sup>29</sup> If someone slaps you on one cheek, offer the other cheek also. If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt also.<sup>30</sup> Give to anyone who asks; and when things are taken away from you, don’t try to get them back.

1 Peter 4:8-11: Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.<sup>9</sup> Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay.

<sup>10</sup> God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.<sup>11</sup> Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 4:2: Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love.

Matthew 25:31-40: “But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne.<sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.<sup>33</sup> He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left.

<sup>34</sup> “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world.<sup>35</sup> For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home.<sup>36</sup> I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.’

<sup>37</sup> “Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink?<sup>38</sup> Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing?’<sup>39</sup> When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?’

<sup>40</sup> “And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’

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Jesus commands us to love people in a nearly impossible way. He calls us to love in the same way that He did, unconditionally. We are called to love even our worst enemies, who would gladly cause us harm. While we were undeserving of his grace, God sent his Son, Jesus, to die for us because of his unconditional, agape love and mercy. While it is difficult to show Christ’s agape love to everyone it is important for your walk with Christ and your journey to become more like him.

#### Questions for Discussion:

1. What has agape love done for you in your life? (God’s love, parents love, etc.)
2. Why is it important to love unconditionally in today’s world?
3. Who do we consider to be the least of these in our society, who need us to show them love?
4. How can we express love to others that may not look like or believe in Jesus? How can we express or show love to our enemies?
5. What are some joys and concerns, especially this weekend?

[End with a prayer]

# Devotionals

## “This is Love” Youth Rally 2017

### Sunday: A Gift out of God’s Love for Us: Baptism

#### Materials Needed:

- A shell for each student
- A large bowl of water

#### Say something like –

One of the Bible passages for our devotion this morning comes from Romans 5:8. It says, *“But God showed his love for us, because while we were still sinners Christ died for us.”*

#### Reflect

Though we are all sinners and broken people, Christ chose to die for all people – even for you and me. Maybe some of you have experienced the love of God this weekend. Maybe you have made a recommitment to your faith. Maybe you have made a decision to trust in Jesus Christ for the first time.

[Have your youth share some about their experience]

[Have your youth read these two Bible passages]

1 Peter 1:3 says, *“May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be blessed! On account of his vast mercy, he has given us new birth. You have been born anew into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”*

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, *“This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!”*

#### Reflect

Scripture says that when we put our faith in Jesus Christ, we are transformed. It is like we are reborn as a new person because our old life is gone and our new life has begun. This doesn’t mean that everything will be wonderful. It doesn’t mean that all our problems will go away. It doesn’t mean that we won’t face temptations or make mistakes or sin. However, it does mean that God has begun doing something good in us.

Baptism is a gift from God that symbolizes our rebirth and the work God has started in us. The water used in baptism symbolizes our sins being washed away; our old self being washed away. It symbolizes us being reborn as a new person in Christ just as we were first born out of the waters of our mother’s womb.

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### “This is Love” Youth Rally 2017

**Sunday: A Gift out of God’s Love for Us: Baptism** (continued)

#### **Remember Your Baptism Service**

**Say something like**

Today is Baptism of the Lord Sunday. Many Christians around the world celebrate Jesus’s baptism on this day.

Maybe some of you were baptized as an infant and don’t remember your baptism. Maybe some of you have been recently baptized. No matter how you were baptized the truth is that God has started a good work in you. I encourage you to come forward and take a shell out of the water and to think about that good work God has started.

Maybe some of you have yet to be baptized. I encourage you to also take a shell out of the water because God has started something good in you too. Maybe your next step is to be baptized. If you have made a decision to put your faith in Jesus for the first time or have recommitted your life to Christ, you are being welcomed to experience the gift from God of baptism. I encourage you talk to me about it.

All of you are welcome to come forward and receive a shell from the water.

[Wait until everyone has a shell]

**Say something like**

These shells that we are using today represent your former self. You have cast your former self off and are growing into a new person. Will you continue to follow Jesus?

**[End with a prayer]**