

HOW MUCH DOES JESUS LOVE YOU?



THEOLOGICAL QUESTION

Why did Jesus die on the cross?

BIG IDEA

Jesus died on the cross to take our place and make complete payment for our sins so that we could spend an eternity with Him forever in heaven! He chose to die for us rather than live without us.

SCRIPTURE USED

Romans 5:6-11: *When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, no one is likely to die for a good person, though someone might be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's judgment. For since we were restored to friendship with God by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be delivered from eternal punishment by his life. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God--all because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us in making us friends of God.*

OPENER

Play "Honey, if you love me."

Divide your students into groups of 10-15. Each group sits in a circle facing inward. One member of the group is "it." The objective is for this person to make another smile. He goes around the circle, picks a person, kneels in front of them and asks him/her, "Honey, if you love me, will you please smile for me?" The person must respond with, "Honey, I love you, but I just can't smile for you," without smiling. If he/she smiles, that person becomes "it," replacing the first. If the person "it" does not manage to make the person smile, he/she must approach another until he/she does. The person who is "it" may do any gestures he/she wants to make the person smile (e.g., make funny faces, do a stunt), but cannot touch the other person. This is a circular game, meaning it does not end. A good length for this game would be 10 minutes, or when most of the group has been "it."

After the game, gather your students' attention back up front.

ASK

- Why does this game embarrass people?
- Was it difficult to ask people if they love you? Why or why not?
- Why do some people smile easier than others?

LESSON

EXPLAIN

It seems like anytime you throw the word “love” into a conversation or game, it gets kind of interesting. Some people are comfortable with it, some aren’t. The word “love” has so many different meanings and so much baggage behind it that it frequently brings up a variety of feelings. There is one thing, though, that we, and actually all people, have in common: we all want to be loved! It starts when we are born and really never goes away, and depending on different circumstances and relationships in our lives, sometimes we feel loved and sometimes we don’t.

Today we are going to talk about a truth from the Bible that you can rely on when it comes to being loved. It starts with an old saying you may or may not have heard before, but it goes like this:
I asked Jesus how much He loved me.

He answered “this much.”

Then He stretched out His arms and died for me.

ASK

- Have you ever heard or read this phrase before?
- What makes it so meaningful?

EXPLAIN

Jesus stretched out His arms so wicked people could nail Him to a cross.

That’s how much He loves us.

He stretched out His arms to take on the sins of the entire world.

That’s how much He loves us.

He stretched out His arms so His blood could be spilled as a sacrifice.

That’s how much He loves us.

He stretched out His arms so we wouldn’t have to.

That’s how much He loves us.

The cross of Christ is the clearest, loudest, most powerful message of love ever proclaimed.