

“WHAT VALENTINE’S DAY REALLY MEANS!”

(Optional: If you would like, you can print out on computer paper a heart, two hands holding each other as if in a handshake and a picture of the world on separate pieces of paper, and use them as objects to teach this lesson. On the heart, write the word “Eros. On the hands, write the word “Phileo” and on the world write the word “Agape”.)

-Someone asked several children on Valentines Day what they thought Valentines Day means.

-I thought it would be fun to hear the perspective of little children who shared with a clear and open heart on what Valentines Day meant to them. So, here they are and let’s enjoy them together:

-Sydney, age 8, said: “Valentine's Day means to celebrate a special person you love. My grandfather, who takes me to parks and theaters, who has goodies for me when I visit, will be my valentine.”

-Antwanisha, age 7, said: “Valentine's Day is a special day because I get chocolates! I Love Chocolate!!!”

-Nick, age 7, said: “Valentine’s Day for me means love because I like to see people happy. This is a day to show kindness to others.”

-Emmy, age 8, said: “Valentines Day means friendship. My Valentine will be my dog, Skippy, this year. He’s my best friend.”

-Jake, age 7, said: “My Valentine will be my mom because she is always nice to me, and when I ask her if I can help her, she always says yes. And right now I am helping her for three days because my Daddy is out skiing!”

-Catheryn, age 8, said: “My valentine will be my brother, Carlos, because he’s nice, and I admire him for being so nice.”

-Anna, age 8, said: “It means to love everybody because cupid comes and shoots love arrows!”

-Children help keep Valentine’s Day in perspective, don’t they? They each share different kinds of love at this time of year that are simple and sweet but worth celebrating.

-We are actually going to talk about different kinds of love today to celebrate the greatest love known to mankind. To start with, let me ask you some questions about things we love to help us understand the different kinds of love we celebrate.

-First off, do you *love* a good cup of coffee or tea in the morning?

-What do you *love* to eat while you drink your coffee or tea?

-How many of you *love* chocolate, of any kind? What’s your favorite?

-Do you *love* a beautiful spring day? What do you *love* about it?

-Do you *love* your pet? What was their name?

-Do you *love* a wonderful friend?

-Do you *love* a child?

-Do you *love* your mate?

-Do you *love* a parent or a sibling?

-Are all of these the same kinds of love? (No)

-How are they different? (Some of these loves are for things that do not last and thereby our love for those things will pass as they do. But the love we have for people will usually last for they made an impact on our heart and lives.)

-Did you know that there are actually 3 kinds of love that God created from the beginning of time? (...)

-Can anyone guess what they are? (...)

-Well, they actually come from 3 greek words: (*Hold up your computer papers that represent each one.*) Eros, Phileo and Agape.

-(Hold up the picture of the heart) “Eros”, is a needy love that is based on physical attraction. This is what attracts someone to the opposite sex.

-(Hold up the picture of the two hands in a handshake) Then there is ‘Phileo”, this is a friendship or brotherly kind of love. The kind you have for family members and special friends.

-(Hold up the picture of the world) The last one is “Agape”, meaning the kind of love that is giving, without anything in return; an unconditional, sacrificial love.

-Let’s explore these together in our own lives and discover what God wants us to learn about these kinds of love, for without them, we would not exist, neither would Valentine’s Day.

-For our first one, Eros, let’s read Verse #1 together on our Verse Sheet to see how it began. Just remember, this is Jesus (God the Son), speaking these words: (Matthew 19:4-6 “Haven’t you read,” He replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”)

-So, who created this “physical attraction” love from the beginning of time? (God)

-Why do you think God did this? (He knew man needed a mate, a companion. He also knew it was important for man to procreate to carry on the human race. Thereby, He created this kind of love to carry on the human lineage and to give mankind companionship.)

-But, our relationships cannot survive on this Eros kind of love alone.

-Our souls need something that goes much deeper.

-Let’s continue with the other two kinds of love to understand more about the overall picture.

-Let’s talk about Phileo love next, the brotherly love or friendship love.

-The best example is Christ, Himself, with His own friends, Mary, Martha and their brother Lazarus.

-The next verse we are going to read was written at a time when Mary and Martha’s brother, Lazarus, became very ill. In this verse, it talks about Jesus’ own *feelings*

for them. Let's read Verse #2 together. (John 11:3,5 "So the sisters sent word to Jesus, 'Lord, the one you *love* is sick...Now Jesus *loved Martha and her sister (Mary) and Lazarus.*")

- According to this verse, what kind of relationship do you think Jesus had with them? (loving friendship, brotherly love, a family kind of love)
- Have you had that kind of relationship with some special friend in your own life? (...)
- Would someone like to share that person with us and why they were so special to you? (...)
- Just as many of you have had these kinds of friendships, so did Christ while here on earth. He had Mary, Martha and Lazarus, as well as His own disciples and others.
- It is important to have this kind of brotherly/sisterly love for someone else. Just as Christ gave us this example, we are also to imitate that with others.

- But, sometimes that can be difficult as well. Have any of you had a close friend or family member betray you or hurt you? (...)
- How did it make you feel? (...)
- That can be very difficult, but did you know that Jesus also had friends and family members who betrayed Him, hurt Him, used Him and left Him in times of greatest despair? (...)
- Can you name a time that that this happened to Him? (Judas betrayed Him with a kiss. Also, in the Garden of Gethsemane, when His disciples ran away while the guards were arresting Him)
- How do you think Jesus felt? (...)
- After knowing Jesus went through this as well, do you think He understands how we feel when we are hurt by others? (...)
- Do you think He would be the kind of friend you would want to have when you go through this since He understands these feelings? (...)

- Did you know that Jesus, Himself, calls us "friend"? (...)
- Let's read our next verse to see how He said it. #3 on our Verse Sheet: (John 15:15 "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, *I have called you friends*, for everything that I learned from My Father, I have made known to you.")

- Jesus calls us His friend, sharing with us His secrets, His wisdom, His knowledge, His love! The One that never, ever leaves us!
- How does that encourage you today? (...)

- On that note, let's continue on to our last one, Agape love!
- Does anyone remember what Agape love means? (...)
- This love is a pure, self-sacrificing love, *wanting nothing in return*.
- This is a perfect love, a kind of love that we as humans cannot have naturally.

- Usually, our love is given with the hope of receiving something back in return from

the other person, whether it is appreciation, respect, honor, accolades or some other form of affection.

-But, Agape love wants *nothing* in return. It is a total self-sacrificing love that only God truly knows how to give. And He did this for each one of us, before we ever even knew Him, as you will see in our next verse.

-Let's read it together on our Verse Sheet, #4: (I John 4:8-10 "Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is Love. This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His One and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: *not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*")

-Wow! What do you think of these verses? (...)

-Would you ever give your child to a group of people who hated him or her and wanted to sacrifice him or her as they did Jesus? (...)

-That's the kind of love God has for each and everyone of us! He loves the unlovable and the unlovely (us!), not because we deserve it, but because He just does. It is Who He is!

-Let's read Verse #5 together: (Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: *While we were still sinners*, Christ died for us!")

-According to this verse, did we deserve any of it? (No!)

-What were we when Christ did this for us? (still sinners)

-Did we do anything to make it happen? (No!)

-This is Agape love, The Love that comes to undeserving sinners, sending His Son to shed His perfect blood to cover our sins AND THEN provides eternal life to those who receive Him. He paid the ultimate sacrifice for those He loved!

-Now that we understand these 3 types of love in preparation for Valentine's Day, what love do you desire the most? (...)

-Hopefully it is Agape love! But, we need to take this to a practical part of our everyday living.

-Once we know this about God and we receive His love, His forgiveness, and His Son's salvation for our sins, we need to ask ourselves a question: How can we show this agape love to those around us? (...)

-We cannot do it through our own strength, but by the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in us through our salvation. God gives us His Spirit so we may be able to love others in a way that He loves us.

-At all times, God's agape love can be demonstrated through us by praying for other individuals who cross our paths everyday.

-We can also show God's agape love by caring enough to help and encourage others when we can, and when we can't help them, we trust in God to take care of them and lift them up before the throne of God and intercede for them.

-This is the kind of love that God puts in our hearts that only He can provide. It is the greatest of all loves and the one that impacts the world the most.

-So, when you think of Valentine's Day and love, I hope that it will be special for everyone, remembering that the greatest gift of love we can celebrate is God's love for each one of us.

-His love is perfect for you, full of friendship, hope, salvation and His timeless presence in your life every day.

-Our Heavenly Father loves you and calls you friend.

-What better way to celebrate Valentine's Day than to celebrate it with Him.

-Let everyday be a Valentine's Day as you remember His perfect love for you and His perfect love that He put in you.

-Friend, He loves you more than you will ever comprehend, rest on that this Valentine's Day and everyday!

What Valentine's Day Really Means Verse Sheet

1. **Matthew 19:4-6** “Haven't you read,” He replied, “that at the beginning *the Creator 'made them male and female,'* and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”
2. **John 11:3,5** “So the sisters sent word to Jesus, ‘Lord, the one you love is sick...Now *Jesus loved Martha and her sister (Mary) and Lazarus.*’”
3. **John 15:15** “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, *I have called you friends,* for everything that I learned from My Father I have made known to you.”
4. **I John 4:8-10** “Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is Love. This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His One and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: *not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*”
5. **Romans 5:8** “But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: *While we were still sinners,* Christ died for us!”