

LOVE IS...

1 Corinthians 12:1-8A // The Greatest Gift

This worship service uses 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a to highlight a biblical framework for love. Perhaps a biblical understanding is not that far from Thomas Merton's definition: "Love seeks one thing only: the good of the one loved. It leaves all the other secondary effects to take care of themselves. Love, therefore, is its own reward." Here are some materials to help you create your own worship service.

MAIN THEME: *What is love, and how do we show love to the world?*

CHOOSING MUSIC // FOR SINGING

•✪• **10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)**

Text and Music: Matt Redman and Jonas Myrin

© 2011 Thankyou Music, Said and Done Music, sixsteps, Music SHOUT! Publishing

•✪• **By Our Love**

Text and Music: Christy Nockels

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•✪• **Goodness is Stronger Than Evil**

Text: from An African Prayer Book, Desmond Tutu

© 1996 Desmond Tutu, admin. Lynn C. Franklin Assoc., Ltd.

Music: GOODNESS IS STRONGER, John L. Bell

© 1996 Wild Goose Resource Group, Iona Community, Scotland

GIA Publications, Inc., exclusive North American Agent

•✪• **My Jesus I Love Thee**

Text and Music: William R. Featherston and Adonirum J. Gordon

Public Domain

•✪• **One Thing Remains**

Text and Music: Brian Johnson, Christa Black, Jeremy Riddle

Performed by: Kristian Stanfill and the Passion Band

© 2010, Bethel Music, ChristaJoy, Mercy/Vineyard

•✪• **They'll Know We Are Christians**

Text and Music: Peter Scholtes

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(This can be found in a hymnal, but we like the new arrangement by Jars of Clay, track #13)

•✪• **Your Love Never Fails**

Text and Music: Anthony Skinner and Chris McClarney

Performed by Jesus Culture 2008 Thankyou Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing)

Out Of The Cave Music (Admin. by Integrity's Alleluia! Music) Integrity's Alleluia! Music

CREATING DRAMA // FOR HEARING

King Fisher Church in Gloucester created this video paraphrasing the scripture reading, and they have made it available on YouTube. Consider allowing your congregation to reflect on it before your service, with or without volume.

This is a familiar passage to many people. If you are in a congregation whose members represent different cultures, have it read in 3-4 different languages: English, French, German, Korean, Spanish, or some other combination.

Finally, Worship House Media [www.worshiphousemedia.com] has a video that addresses love as defined by 1 Corinthians, albeit with a romantic twist.

FINDING ART // FOR SEEING

“Love is kind.” Check out this colorful depiction of kindness in a mural by Daniel Cascardo at Oak Park Jewish Community Center in Detroit, Michigan. This art can illustrate one part of the 1 Corinthians passage. With permission from the artist, the mural could be displayed while worshipers are asked to reflect on and share acts of love they have experienced. You can also use the story of this mural creation as a sermon illustration, or use it for inspiration to create a mural of kindness in your own worship gathering.



Create your own art: a few weeks before worship, invite a photographer in your midst – or all worshipers – to take pictures that they think represent love as defined in 1 Corinthians. Have them submit them through social media to a single person who collects them and creates a print or digital collage that is displayed in the worship space.

LIVING WORSHIP // FOR DOING

Give worshipers something tangible as they leave worship – like a paper heart. Ask them to carry it around this week. When they touch it in their pocket, find it in their bag, or see it on their nightstand, ask them to pray a quick prayer asking God to remind them that love never fails.

As a pre-worship activity or group activity in worship, give worshipers a reason to know that they are loved and appreciated for who they are. Place each one of them in front of a white board and have other worshipers write reasons that person is loved. Take a picture of them, and send it to them later in the week.

MAKING SPACE // FOR WORSHIPPING

Before worship gather a group of friends to create origami hearts, tie them together with twine, and place them in your worship space. You can find instructions to make the hearts online through a number of sites. If you don't have time to make them, get permission to buy different versions at reasonable prices. You may want to write words that from 1 Corinthians 13 that describe love on some or all of the hearts. If you are using all four weeks in this module, watch how we suggest you add materials to the worship space each week.

WRITING POETRY// FOR PRAYING

Consider using this ancient prayer from the 12th century minister, St. Francis of Assisi in worship:

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

After the reading or presentation of 1 Corinthians 13, invite worshipers into an open-mic prayer time where they give thanks for those who have shown them love as defined in 1 Corinthians. If you're not comfortable with an open-mic prayer time, do the same exercise in small groups.

SAMPLE WORSHIP SERVICE

Love Is... // 1 Corinthians 12 // The Greatest Gift

PRE-WORSHIP ACTIVITY

Use the “Mural of Kindness” from The Toolbox as an example and have worshipers create a Mural of Love. To do this, you’ll need space on a wall, a large piece of butcher paper, or some other material to create the mural with. When worshipers enter, ask them to go to the mural, reflect on acts of love they have experienced, and add words and drawings to the mural. Keep it in the worship space throughout this entire series on love.

WELCOME

Say hi to other worshipers and welcome them in the name of Christ

SONGS OF PRAISE

Your Love Never Fails
Bless the Lord, O My Soul
My Jesus, I Love Thee

PRAYER OF PRAISE

Offer a prayer of praise to God for God’s love

SONG OF LOVE

They’ll Know We Are Christians By Our Love

SHARING STORIES

A few days before worship, invite 2-3 worshipers to prepare brief stories completing this statement: “I know I am loved when ...” Sing the refrain of “*They’ll Know We Are Christians*” in between each person’s story.

SCRIPTURE READING

1 Corinthians 13

SONG OF SURRENDER

I Surrender All

READING SCRIPTURE TOGETHER

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10, Galatians 2:20

[Download and use the video “1 Corinthians 13” displayed on the Toolbox resource page that was made available by King Fisher Church in Gloucester.]

MESSAGE

PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE

Invite worshipers to gather into small groups. Instruct them to pray together with these prompts:

- give praise to God the source of love
- express thanksgiving for those who have shown them love
- pray for those in the world who have not experienced the love of God
- pray for those in the world who have not experienced love from others
- ask them to be agents of love as described in 1 Corinthians

CLOSING SONG

Your Love Never Fails
[Use this song to conclude the prayer time.]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

~ St. Francis of Assisi

BENEDICTION

One: Go in peace and share the love of Christ.
All: **With God’s help, we will.**