



Steadfast Love, Lovingkindness, Mercy

Psalm 89:1 - "I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations."

PRE-HUDDLE BIBLE STUDY

GOAL

Connect the more familiar “Agape” Love of the new testament to the prevalent theme of God’s “Hesed” found in the Old Testament. This will show students that Jesus is not a change in God’s character, but the fulfillment of His love displayed from the beginning.

Middle School Huddle
April 17-18, 2026

::: BREAK THE ICE:

Start with this question:

"When you hear the word love what comes to mind?

(crush, family, friends, kindness, "vibes" favorite food, etc)

Say: Today we will look at how the Bible uses a kind of love that's way bigger than feelings. It's love that acts.

READ IT TOGETHER:

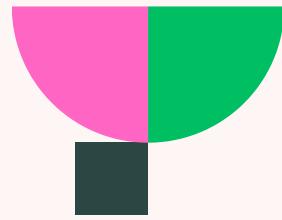
1 JOHN 4:9-10

Read the text two times by two separate students.



Say: Original texts of 1 John are written in Greek. The Greek word we translate for love in this passage is the Agape (ἀγάπη). Agape is love that chooses to give, even when it's costly, Love that does what's best for someone who doesn't deserve it. Agape love is "no-matter-what" love. Agape love is the love Jesus showed to others.

Discuss: Scripture gives many examples of times Jesus acts towards people with Agape Love, what are some that come to mind? (examples include: His many miracles were done out of love and not due to any worth on behalf of the recipients. He heals, raises dead, forgives, protects, calm's storms, and of course He dies on the cross on our behalf.)



LET'S TALK:

Say: The Bible doesn't say that we were "mostly fine" and God just boosted us. It says sin that traps us, and we are hopelessly lost in our sinful condition. More than this the Bible says "that you were **dead** in the trespasses and sins..." (Ephesians 2:1 emphasis added).

Ask:

- What are ways that we fail to show love to those around us?
- What are ways that we fail to show love to God?
- How do we sometimes try to "make up" for our sins? Does our effort get rid of our sin?

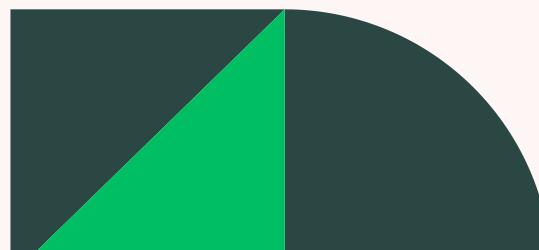
Say: Even our most heartfelt and kindest efforts to "make up" for our sins leave ourselves and those we have hurt with scars and distrust. We can't repair the damage we have done, and we just seem to keep piling-on new damage and hurt by our own actions.

SOLUTION



Read 1 John 4:9-10 again.

God doesn't wait for us to become lovable. He "Agape"ed you first. Agape isn't God cheering you on from far away. It's Jesus stepping in, taking your place, and winning forgiveness for you." And God's Agape love doesn't just show up in Jesus.



The Old Testament was written mostly in Hebrew and there we find the word “Hesed” and it sounds a lot like Agape.

Read Psalm 103:8-12 and note how this love feels a lot like the love of Jesus.

Ask: -How does knowing that God has always acted with Hesed love enlighten, shape, or “flavor” the way we might read the Old Testament?

WRAP UP

“I will sing
of the **hesed**
of the **ORD**, forever”
Psalm 89:1”

God is love: Hesed in the Old Testament, Agape in the New Testament. Found fully enfleshed in Jesus, the Christ. The Same God, same loving heart. All for you.

Closing Prayer

“Lord Jesus, thank You for loving us first. Forgive us when we try to earn what You freely give. Help us trust Your steadfast love and show that love to others. Amen.”