

## Taking It Home

Because God doesn't want anyone left out, he has asked those of us who already know his great love to share his love with other people. We share God's love in what we do and in what we say. When others hear about Jesus' love from us, we are like a living Valentine God is sending to the world!

As you leave today, I am going to give you a chance to tell someone about God's love in Jesus. I want each of you to take two Valentine gifts. One of them is for you to keep. It will help you always remember God's love for you.

The other is to give away. When you get home, talk with your parents about how you will share the second Valentine gift. Think about someone who needs to know about God's love and forgiveness in Jesus. Pray with your parents about this as you ask God to help you decide. When you give away the Valentine gift, say, "Jesus loves you!" You could even invite that person to come to church with you and hear more about Jesus. Remember to give God's love away this Valentine's Day!

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The Scripture quotation is from the King James or Authorized Version of the Bible.

#VALNDS (VALNDC)



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## Valentines for Everyone

### Getting Started

Have enough Valentine's Day gifts so the children will have two each. Collect several samples of Valentine cards. Show the children the Valentine cards you brought.

## Introduction

### Ask:

- ♥ What are these?
- ♥ Do you like to get Valentines?
- ♥ Who sends you Valentines?
- ♥ Wouldn't it be sad if you didn't get a Valentine?
- ♥ Do you know how people came to celebrate St. Valentine's Day?

According to one legend, a young Christian priest whose name was Valentine lived in Italy a long time ago. He was imprisoned because of his faith in Jesus. He wanted to contact his family to let them know that he was all right. Some violets grew just outside his cell window. He picked some of the heart-shaped leaves, scratched the words "Remember your Valentine" onto the leaves, and sent them off by a friendly dove. The next day, he sent more messages that said simply, "I love you."

Valentine died on February 14th, and every year after that, Christians celebrated that day as they remembered Valentine. We don't know if this legend is true or not. Other people tell other legends about Valentine, and some parts of all the stories seem a little unlikely. But we celebrate Valentine's Day anyway. It gives all of us a chance to express love and friendship to those close to us. We celebrate Valentine's Day by telling our friends and members of our family that we love them.

## Getting to the Heart

What are some ways you can show your mom or dad that you love them? Those are all good ways to show our love. We tell others that we love them, but we also show our love in our actions. How did God show us he loved us? The Bible tells us that God loved us so much that he gave us his Son, Jesus!

John 3:16 says: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

You can learn this verse today. Repeat each phrase after me. That is a great verse to learn by heart! When we memorize words or learn them "by heart," we can remember them always. These are especially good words to learn by heart, because they remind us that God's heart toward us is a heart of love and forgiveness.

Jesus was like God's Valentine to all people here on earth. God didn't just tell us he loved us, he showed us his love. He gave us the very best gift he could give—his one and only Son, Jesus. Jesus became our Savior. He let himself be nailed to a rough wooden cross. There, he suffered the punishment we should have suffered for our sins, for all the times we hurt others instead of loving them and for all the times we disobey God.

Think of how very much God must love us to give us Jesus! Think how very much Jesus must love us to die for us! Deep down inside we all want to be loved. We don't want to be forgotten or left out. God doesn't want anyone to be left out either.

## *Taking It Home*

As a reminder that you are God's Valentine, please accept this gift. Let it remind you of the grace and power of the Holy Spirit through which you have received God's gift of love! Happy Valentine's Day in Jesus!



## *You Are God's Valentine*

### *Introduction*

*Read aloud 1 John 4:9–10.*

If Valentine's Day is all about the giving of love, it should be a celebration of the Creator of love, the Ultimate Giver of love, He who is love: God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The verses I just read sum up the love of God through Jesus Christ. They also convey an amazing message: We are God's Valentine!

These verses are all about his love—his love for the world and, more specifically, his love for us. This is love in its purest form. It is an unconditional, undying love that came to us through the death of Jesus on the cross and his resurrection that followed. We are the undeserving recipients of his perfect, life-changing love, love delivered by his Son, Jesus Christ. Scripture calls that kind of love *grace*. It's God's kind of love.

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## Getting to the Heart

Using the truths found in God's Word, let's unwrap the gift of God's love in the letters from the word *VALENTINE*:

**V**aluedô Being God's Valentine means we are highly valued!

The God of heaven and earth valued us enough to show his perfect love through his Son, Jesus Christ. And he did this while we were sinners (see Romans 5:8). He brought us life through the death of his Son.

**A**doptedô The life he brings includes adoption by the Father. He has said to us, "Be mine!" He chose us before the creation of the world to be his children. Adopted by his grace, we are now children of the King of kings.

**L**ovedô That is love! *You* are loved! The love of God is like no other. Remember the description of love in 1 Corinthians 13 (*read the chapter aloud*). These words describe God's perfect love. This is how he loves youô perfectly!

**E**ntrusted with blessingsô He has entrusted his love to our care. As sinners, we often ignore it, fail to return or share it, and even misuse it. Yet his love keeps coming to us, and along with it comes a package of other blessings. God entrusts these to our care while we live here on this earthô blessings such as his Word, food, clothing, health, strength, Christian friends, good government, peace, a good reputation, joy, and a host of others. Amazing blessings! Amazing love! All this comes to us as God's gift, his gift of love, all entrusted to our care.

**N**ew Creationô Another of the blessings that comes with the love of God is the gift of life. Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we receive true life, God's kind of life. We have abundant life through Jesus and in

him. This is not just scraping by, but life overflowing with love, a life beyond what we could imagine before we knew Christ. In Christ, we have become new creationsô the old has gone, the new has come, come to life (see 2 Corinthians 5:17)!

**T**riumphantô Part of our new lives in Christ, grounded in his love, is the triumphant victory we receive. We have victory through Jesus's sacrifice on the cross and his triumphant resurrection on Easter morning. He defeated sin, death, and the devil. It's his victoryô but in love, he shares it with us so we can live triumphantly.

**I**nsightfulô As we live triumphantly, we realize we want to grow deeper and deeper in his love. That was Paul's prayer for the people at the church in Philippi, and it's Jesus's prayer for us. He wants us to have a greater insight into just how in love with us he is! *Read Philippians 1:9-11.*

**N**eedyô While growing in God's love, we'll constantly see how often we fail him. We will sin, have no doubt! We are Valentines, but needy Valentines. We need forgiveness. We need a love that won't give up on us; a love that doesn't have limits. God knows all about our needs, and that's why he sent his one and only Son into the world to be the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Being God's Valentine means our needs are metô most important, the need of forgiveness for our sins and salvation for our souls.

**E**quippedô Bask in the glory of God's love for you. You are his Valentine. You share his life. He is truly in love with you. And through his perfect, unending, unconditional love, he equips you to love him and others. His love will shine through our lives, our words, and our actions.



Expanding the Impact of Your  
Gifts of Encouragement



## God's Great

*"You're Mine All the Time, Valentine"*  
**Promises**



Kids Event Outline



This event outline provides ideas for an hour-long event designed for Valentine's Day. It's perfect for Sunday schools that meet the second weekend in February. You might also think about adapting it for midweek classes and Bible clubs that meet during February.

We've planned your event for you—including a Bible lesson presentation, snack ideas with activities, craft ideas, and games for learners of all ages! May God bless you as you show the kids in your care Jesus' love and begin to explore all the promises he makes to us—because of his love!



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# God's Great

## "You're Mine All the Time, Valentine"

### Promises

### Kid's Event Outline

## Decorating Our Space

### Promise Hearts Everywhere

As the children arrive (or perhaps the week before), enlist everyone who will attend your event in helping to decorate for it by using items from this list to make large, decorative paper hearts.



### Materials Needed

- ♥ Red, pink, lilac, and purple construction paper
- ♥ Markers, crayons
- ♥ Scissors (safety scissors for little ones!)
- ♥ Heart templates cut from poster board (optional)
- ♥ Red, white, pin streamers (optional)
- ♥ Foil, paper doilies (available in craft stores or bakeries, optional)
- ♥ Chenille wires (a.k.a. "pipe cleaners," optional)

Each heart the children make should include one of God's great "You're Mine All the Time, Valentine!" promises. (See the promises listed on page 3; you may want to duplicate this list for the children to use.)

Be sure the promise hearts become true "conversation hearts"! Talk to the children about the promises they add to the hearts they make and about the holy, powerful, loving, saving Lord who has made these promises to us.

### "You're Mine All the Time, Valentine!" Banner

### Materials Needed

- ♥ Paper for brainstorming designs
- ♥ Paint, markers, or other art materials
- ♥ Banner for decorating (see ideas on next page)

Enlist some of the older children in creating a theme banner for your event. Several Internet sites offer relatively inexpensive blank banners in nylon or canvas. Lengths and widths vary. Or check with sign shops or printers in your local area. A long roll of butcher paper or art paper will work, as well.

Ask your banner team to sketch out several ideas on paper before they begin to apply paint or markers to the banner itself. You may want to have the team create several options and then ask everyone to vote on which design to execute.

# Small-Group Activities That Teach

Create small groups of children (4–6 per group) and have them move from one activity to the next every 10 minutes or so. Mix older children with younger ones in each small group and assign one adult to accompany each group. Ask the adults to offer encouragement and show Jesus' love and care to the children in their group.



## Building on the Promises

### Materials Needed

- ♥ Several bags of Valentine's "conversation heart" candies
- ♥ Chart paper or a white board
- ♥ Markers

Pair the children up or let individuals work alone to see who can create the tallest "tower" of hearts in 30 seconds. Some children will want to try several times. Let them, as time will allow.

**Some of these candies say silly things. Some are serious. But suppose these candies had come to us from heaven! Suppose God sent hearts like these to us. What do you think would be on them?** Record suggestions on chart paper or a white board in colorful markers. Refer the children to the promises on some of the decorations they have made if they need help.

**If God sent these hearts to us, they would not be blank on one side. Do you know what would be on the other side? A cross! The cross tells us how much God loves us—without using any words at all! The Bible says, "God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners" (Romans 5:8).** Ask the children what they think this means and elaborate as time will allow.

Use your conversation to share the Gospel message—our sin and God's salvation in Jesus—especially with children in the group who do not seem to know Christ as Savior.

Before the children leave, pray briefly to thank God for Jesus. Give the children a few candy hearts to eat or take with them.

## A Love So Big!

Gather the children and show the cover of *A Love So Big* (item # ALAXSCTS). Tell them:

*On Valentine's Day, people celebrate friendship. Husbands and wives celebrate their love for one another. Valentine's Day reminds all of us to think about the greatest love of all, a love so big, it's amazing! This book tells about that. Listen!*

Read the book together. Encourage more mature readers to sit near you. Invite them to read the inset boxes with the "wide, long, high, deep" facts on each two-page spread. Talk about these facts.

When you finish reading, give each child a copy of the book. Point out the letter to grown-ups at home on page 16. Encourage the children to show this letter to their family members later today.

## Sharing God's Amazing Love

Give each child one of the *God's Amazing Love* pencils (item #ALAXPI12) and one or more Valentines (item #VPG8CDCA, VFG8CDCA, or ALAXCDCA). Talk together about people who might feel sad or lonely right now (for example, a sick friend, an elderly shut-in, a military family who recently sent a loved one overseas). Help one another prepare Valentines for the people you named. Older children might add one of the Scripture promise verses chosen from the promise hearts that decorate your party area. Give each child his or her own Valentine and sucker. Encourage the children to deliver the Valentines to the people they made them for, or gather all the finished Valentines to mail.

## God's Great "You're Mine All the Time, Valentine!" Promises Charades (preparation)

### Materials Needed

- ♥ Two identical sets of large paper hearts. On one side of each heart, draw a cross. On the other side, write a promise from Scripture (see below).
- ♥ A large decorated box to hold one set of hearts
- ♥ A way to display the second set of hearts where everyone can see the promises displayed
- ♥ A box of props—some silly, others serious or practical (optional)
- ♥ A place to meet out of the sight of the other groups

When each group of children arrives, have a volunteer choose one heart at random from the box and read the promise written on it. Then have the group choose one prop and plan a way to use it as they act out a time when the promise would be helpful and encouraging. When everyone gathers later, their group will act out their scene and the other children will try to guess which promise goes with the situation they are acting out.

Encourage the older children to take the lead in planning, but make sure the younger children get to participate in some significant way in the scene they develop, too. Help all the children understand the promise they will act out. Each group will enact only one scene. One last rule: They may not use any words from the Bible promise in their skit/dialog. They'll present their skits to the large group later on.

Here are some promises and situations to get you started:

- ♥ [Jesus said,] "I am with you always." Matthew 28:20 ESV—in a scary time.
- ♥ [God says,] "I will hear." Zechariah 13:9 KJV—when we're upset about a problem and don't have anyone to talk to.
- ♥ [God says,] "I will forgive." Jeremiah 31:34 KJV—when we've hurt someone or disobeyed God's commands and feel sad and sorry about it.
- ♥ [God says,] "I will help you." Isaiah 41:10 ESV—anytime we need to do something we think is too hard for us.
- ♥ [God says,] "I have called you by name, you are mine." Isaiah 43:1 ESV—when other people make fun of us or don't want to be friends with us; when we feel lonely.
- ♥ "God is our refuge and strength." Psalm 46:1 KJV—when we have a problem too big for us to solve; when we feel afraid and weak.
- ♥ "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16 KJV—when we worry we might not make it to heaven, that God may forget about us or exclude us.

## Other Small-Group Options

- ♥ Use the *Valentine from God* boxed activity set (item #VFG9GB) with the children. Read the Scripture promises on the stickers and talk about what they mean. The free devotion that accompanies this item provides more discussion questions. You can find it at: <http://image.ctainc.com/ctainc/Images/art/VAL9DS.pdf>
- ♥ Distribute the *Valentine from God* accordion sticker books (item #VFG9AF) and use the activity to help the children more deeply grasp God's love for us in Jesus. The devotion from VFG9GB (<http://image.ctainc.com/ctainc/Images/art/VAL9DS.pdf>) will also work with the accordion sticker book.

## Large-Group Activities

### God's Great "You're Mine All the Time, Valentine!" Promises Charades (presentation)



When each group has participated in all three of the small group activities, gather everyone in a large, open area. Have them sit down near the other members of their small-group, and then call attention to the promises printed on the large hearts pinned to the board or curtain. Remind everyone that each group has had the opportunity to create a scene to act out for the others. Ask which group would like to go first. When that group has come to the front with their prop, remind them that they cannot use any of the words from the Bible promise in their skit.

Have each group, in turn, act out their skit. When each has finished, invite the other children to guess which Bible promise they were illustrating. When someone guesses the right verse, take it down from the display and give it to the person who guessed correctly.

Have each group in turn present while members of the other groups guess.

### Pump Up Cheer

Teach the group the following cheer and perform it together several times. (Each X represents a clap.) It may help at first if you have five posters and five helpers to hold them up. Label the posters **solo**, **claps**, **everyone**, **girls whisper**, and **boys shout**.

Introduce the activity: **Let's learn a cheer that reminds us about God's love. First, we'll learn the claps** (*practice the clapping pattern by clapping the line twice, once for the children and once with them*). **Next, we'll learn the cheer. Repeat after me, "You are mine all the time, Valentine!"** (*Pause and let them repeat the line.*) **Now we're ready for the whole cheer. Our sign helpers will show us the pattern, and we'll repeat the claps at the end.**



Solo: **God says . . .**

Everyone: **XX** (brief pause) **XXX** (pause) **XX** (brief pause) **XXX**

Everyone: **"You are mine all the time, Valentine!"**

Girls whisper: **"You are mine all the time, Valentine!"**

Boys shout: **"You are mine all the time, Valentine!"**

Everyone: **XX** (brief pause) **XXX** (pause) **XX** (brief pause) **XXX**

**Let's do it again!** Repeat the cheer and make fun variations of it. For example, have everyone whisper each time or shout each time, change body positions each time you repeat—stand, sit, lie down, bend over, wiggle, stretch, spin, skip in a circle.

Summarize briefly: **You are God's "valentine." He loves you enough to die for you! He will never, never stop loving you—Jesus' cross and all of God's wonderful promises prove that!**

## Snacks

### Valentine Cupcake Walk



#### Materials Needed

- ♥ One cupcake for each child (could be prepackaged cupcakes)
- ♥ Numbers taped to the floor—as many numbers as there are children
- ♥ A bag, box, or fishbowl filled with number call cards corresponding to the numbers on the floor
- ♥ A CD or cassette of Bible songs

When the music starts, the children begin to walk around the room. When the music stops, they should step on the number closest to them, one child per number. Have a volunteer pull a number from among the call cards. The child standing on the number called gets to choose a cupcake and sit down. Remove that number from both the floor and the pack of call cards. Continue until every child has a cupcake.

### Valentine Punch



#### Materials Needed

- ♥ 1 liter raspberry sherbet
- ♥ 2 ounces pineapple juice
- ♥ 2 liters white soda (7-Up, Sprite)
- ♥ God's Amazing Love plastic tumbler (item #ALAXPT; optional)

Put the sherbet in the punch bowl. (It works best if it's half-melted.) Add the pineapple juice. Wisk together until smooth. Add the soda slowly, mixing continuously until the punch bowl is full.

### Valentine Smoothie



#### Materials Needed

- ♥ Low-fat strawberry yogurt
- ♥ Frozen strawberries
- ♥ Frozen bananas
- ♥ Orange juice
- ♥ Kiss candies
- ♥ Low-fat whipped topping
- ♥ A blender

Put the yogurt, berries, and bananas in a blender. Pour a little orange juice on top and blend on high until well mixed. Pour the smoothie into tall glasses and top with a little low-calorie whipped topping and a candy kiss.

## Gelatin Hearts

### Materials Needed

- ♥ Strawberry gelatin
- ♥ Finely chopped strawberries
- ♥ Fresh strawberries
- ♥ Baking dish
- ♥ Heart-shaped cookie cutters

Prepare a package of strawberry gelatin according to package directions. Fold in a few finely chopped strawberries at the end. Pour the mixture into a baking dish and allow it to set.

Use heart-shaped cookie cutters to cut out hearts. Top each heart with half a strawberry (cut lengthwise).

## Saying Good-bye

As the children prepare to leave, give each child one of the *God's Amazing Love* goodie bags (item #ALAXTS12). They should use these to carry home treats from today. You might include a copy of the *God's Amazing Love* picture book (item #ALAXSC). Older children would also enjoy the *God's Amazing Love* activity book and pencil (item #ALAXAP). In the weeks and months to come, these items will help reinforce the message of God's love for us in Jesus.

Warmly invite each child—and other family members, too—to return for Sunday school, worship opportunities, and other events you offer in your regular programming.

## Closing

Gather everyone and use one of the free Valentine's Day Ministry Messages from CTA ([www.CTAinc.com/FreeResources](http://www.CTAinc.com/FreeResources)—click on Ministry Message Index and scroll down to Valentine's Day) as your closing worship thought. Distribute the gift associated with it.

Then repeat today's "Pump Up Cheer" one last time. Thank everyone for coming and make sure they have their take-home items. In addition, give visiting children a letter, brochure, or some other preprinted invitation welcoming them and those in their family to become a part of your church family if they don't already have a church family of their own.

After the event and cleanup, gather volunteers and pray for the children who attended, asking God to bless the Word he has planted in their hearts and that his eternal love for them will remain forever their most precious possession.

