



DEEPER BIBLE Never-Ending Love

[15 min]

Supplies

- Bible
- large buckets of water (1 per adult or teen helper)
- disposable cups (1 per child, plus a few extras)
- plastic spoons (1 per child)

Easy Prep

- Fill each bucket at least $\frac{2}{3}$ full of water.

Tip

- Have a water pitcher or some extra cups of water available to add water to kids' cups if they didn't get enough out with the spoon in the first activity.

Take Some Away

Say: **Today we heard about a boy who hurt his dad's feelings and made some wrong choices. But his dad's love was so big and deep that he never stopped loving his son. That's like God's love for *us* because we are deeply loved. Let's use these buckets of water to help us think more about that.**

Form as many groups as you have adult or teen helpers, dividing kids evenly among the groups. Have groups spread out throughout the room. Give each leader a bucket of water, and give each child a cup and a spoon.

Say: **When we make wrong choices, it hurts God's heart.**

Ask: • **Talk to your group about some wrong choices people make.**

Ask leaders to get the conversation started by suggesting a wrong choice such as lying, stealing, or hurting others. Then encourage kids to share their own ideas. With each wrong choice listed, ask kids to each take a spoonful of water out of the bucket and put it in their cups.

After giving kids some time to brainstorm wrong choices, direct groups to look at the water in their buckets.

Say: **Even after we took water out of the bucket, it still looks just as full. That's because there was so much water in it that our little spoons don't really make much of a difference. When we make wrong choices, we might think God will love us less. But God's love is so big and deep that it doesn't change, no matter what.**

Add Some More

Say: **Sometimes people think they need to do a lot of good things so God will love them more.**

Ask: • **Tell about some good choices people make.** Have leaders help kids get started by suggesting good choices such as loving people, sharing, or being kind. Then encourage kids to share their ideas. With each good choice listed, ask kids to each put a spoonful of water from their cups into the buckets. If necessary, add a bit of water to kids' cups.

After a few minutes to share, direct kids' attention to their buckets again.

Talk About It

Say: **Wow! After spooning all that water into the buckets, they don't look any different. There was already so much water in the bucket that we didn't need to do anything for it to be full. We are already so deeply loved.**

We don't need to do *anything* for God to love us more. He already loves us with a great big love!

Listen to what the Bible says. Read aloud Ephesians 3:18. As you do, have kids stretch their arms out in front of them for "wide," out to the sides for "long," as high as they can reach for "high," and to the ground for "deep."

Say: **Your choices, right or wrong, don't change God's love for you because you are so deeply loved. Let's pray and thank God that he loves us with a great big love!** Lead kids to pray.



CRAFT Glowing Centerpiece

[20 min]

Supplies

- colorful tissue paper (1 sheet for every 2 kids)
- construction paper (1 sheet for every 4 kids)
- glue sticks
- tape
- heart-shaped stickers
- flashlights (1 per adult or teen helper)

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.
- Cut each sheet of tissue paper into two 13x20-inch pieces. Fold the pieces to make one 13x10-inch piece for each child.
- Cut each sheet of construction paper into four 12-inch-long strips.



Talk About Special Meals

Say: **Today we heard a story Jesus told about a son who left home. When the son came back, his dad was so excited that he had a great big party with lots of yummy food.**

Share a food *you* like to eat at special occasions.

Ask: • **What's *your* favorite food to eat at a special dinner?** Kids may say birthday cake, mashed potatoes at Thanksgiving, or a Christmas dish Grandma makes.

Make Centerpieces

Say: **Sometimes when we have a special dinner, we put fancy things on the table to make the meal more fun. Let's make something beautiful we can put on our tables when we're having a celebration, or just for fun.**

- Give each child a folded piece of tissue paper, two construction paper strips, and a glue stick.
- Have kids spread glue onto each construction paper strip.
- Help kids glue the strips along the short edges of the tissue paper.
- Lay the tissue paper so the construction paper strips are facing up.
- Give kids heart-shaped stickers to add to their craft. (Encourage them to avoid putting stickers on the construction-paper edges.)
- Roll the tissue paper into a cylinder, with the construction-paper edges on the top and bottom. Help kids tape the ends of the construction paper strips together.

See the Light

Say: **This special craft can sit in the middle of your table. You can even put a light under it like this.** Dim the lights and hold a flashlight up to the bottom of your sample craft to show how light shines through.

Say: **The dad in Jesus' story loved his son very much, even though his son had made wrong choices. We are deeply loved by God. God's love shines for us, even when we make wrong choices. When you see light shining in your craft, the hearts can remind you that God always loves you.**

Encourage adult or teen helpers to take flashlights around the room to each child's craft to show kids how the light shines through it.