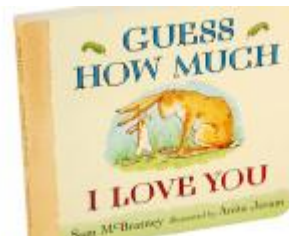


CHRISTMAS: LOVE FOR THE LONG HAUL

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Maybe your child doesn't like doing homework. Imagine for years, you sat beside her to make sure that every question was complete. When your child expressed frustration, you reminded her, "I'm doing this because I love you." Then one day when you go to check if her homework is done, you see her helping her younger sibling with homework, just as you have helped her for years. "Great job," you tell both of them. "I'm proud of you for working together."



We model love to our children every day in the simplest ways. Just as we model love for our children, so God models love for us. The apostle John wrote, "since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:11).

The Hard Work of Love

Love is not always easy, but by regularly practicing love in action, we can become more like Jesus. Love takes work, because people are not always loveable. Jesus says that you must love even those who hate you: "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them" (Luke 6:32).

Love also requires perseverance. It's not a direct cause-and-effect, like baking a cake or making a craft. You might not see the outcome for many years or even in your lifetime, but you can be confident that God is still working in the lives of others. Your actions of love have an impact, even if you can't see the results right away.

Modeling Love in Action

- Choose someone to pray for that needs your family's love. Maybe it's a difficult neighbor or classmate who bullies others. Include their name in your prayers for a week, a month, or a year. Pray for God's blessings and show them God's love.
- Share important scripture verses (such as [Mark 12: 30-31](#), [Matthew 5:33-34](#), [John 15:13](#), [1 Corinthians 13:3](#)) as a family. Post them on the bathroom mirror or on the fridge door.
- Find age-appropriate service opportunities, like toy drives, to create a Christmas tradition of giving back to the community. Learn about organizations like World Vision and together with your child, make a family donation to a cause that needs your love and support. **Check out the [Gifts of Kindness Advent Calendar and Devotionals](#) for some suggestions.**

Want to dig deeper? Check out Family Fire's article [Connecting Children to God's Story](#)

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