

# Explore It

## FOR LEADERS



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### MOTHER'S DAY (LOVE STORY)

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Each child will need:

→ Paper, pens/pencils

You will need:

- Puppets, wooden spoon characters or pictures to share for each of the five love stories – see Tell It section
- Whisk, bandage, cough medicine, car keys, washing powder, screwdriver, storybook, exercise book and a paper heart chain – see Action It section if you need to adapt

At Christmas we explored the story of Mary and her response to God's calling on her life. This week we will explore how Mary loves and cares for Jesus as he grows. How do we love and show gratitude to those who love and care for us? Let's explore how the Bible has some great love stories.

Mother's Day is an important time to celebrate and thank our mothers and other women who have made a significant and caring contribution in our lives.

## Start It

Play a game of 'Love it or hate it'. Read out some scenarios to the children and they have to guess what you would love and hate about each of them.

For example: If I was going to be on the cover of a magazine ... I would love it if it was a comic and hate it if it was a gardening magazine.

For each scenario the children write on the paper what they think you would love and on the other side write what they think you would hate. They could use different coloured pens for each side if they want to.

Once everyone has written their answers, they take it in turns to read them out. For each scenario, read all the 'love' answers and choose your favourite answer. Then repeat with the 'hate' answers.

Perhaps after a few scenarios select a child to have a go, either using one of your scenarios or they can make up their own.

Here are some suggested scenarios:

- If something got stuck on the bottom of my shoe, I would love it if it were \_\_\_\_\_ but hate it if it were \_\_\_\_\_.
- If I opened a surprise present, I would love it if it was a \_\_\_\_\_ but hate it if it was a \_\_\_\_\_.
- If I was out in the countryside, I would love it if I saw a \_\_\_\_\_ but hate it if I saw a \_\_\_\_\_.
- If my mum made me a sandwich, I would love it if it was \_\_\_\_\_ but hate it if it was \_\_\_\_\_.
- If I won a competition, I would love it if the prize was \_\_\_\_\_ but hate it if it was \_\_\_\_\_.
- If I was only allowed to read one book in my life, I would love it if it was \_\_\_\_\_ but hate it if it was \_\_\_\_\_.

🗨 **Say:** The game today was helping us think about love and hate. Some examples we found funny, but both those words can describe strong feelings and emotions. In the Bible there are stories about both love and hate – and today we are going to be thinking about love.

- **Say:** We are going to see what stories we know that show love in action – and then because it's Mother's Day today, we are going to focus the main story on a mother and her deep love for her son.

## Tell It

- **Say:** There are many different kinds of love stories in the Bible – God's love, parents' love, friend's love and neighbour's love.
- **Say:** We are going to have a crazy five minutes where I want to share with you as many love stories from the Bible as I can. You can then decide if there is one you want to go and read for yourself later. I am going to attempt to share five stories in five minutes. So, here goes!

Try and keep this fast-paced – it's not about the children remembering all the details of each story but to know that there are loads they can read for themselves afterwards. For each story share a picture of the characters (possibly with a love heart around them) or have some puppets or wooden spoon characters or other items that can represent them.

### Love story #1

- **Say:** Abraham and Sarah – husband and wife.

The story of Abraham (Abram) and Sarah (Sarai) is found in Genesis chapters 17-18.

Abram was a good man who owned many sheep and cattle. He lived with his wife Sarai in the land of Haran. But he had no children.

One day God said, 'Abram! I want you to pack up all your things and leave your home! I want you to go to the land I will give you. I promise that I will bless you and make your family great.'

This meant that Abram would have to leave the place he knew and go to a place he didn't know. He would have to trust God that everything would be OK.

Abram and Sarai were a couple that travelled together, caused trouble together and dreamed big together! Imagine when Abram first told his wife Sarai they were going to move far away from their families. I wonder how Sarai felt – she loved Abram so much, but would she want to move away from all her family?

God changed their names to Abraham and Sarah and he made a promise to Abraham. God promised him that he would have children, and from him a great nation would come. And after they had moved far from their home, one day they had a son called Isaac.

Their story shows that although they loved each other, no one is perfect. How many marriages today are broken up because of family stress or a breakdown in relationships? Abraham and Sarah are an example of how God can bless your marriage if you stick together and learn to fully trust him sooner.

### Love story #2

- **Say:** Jochebed and Moses – mother and son.

The story of Jochebed and Moses is found in Exodus 2:1-10.

Jochebed was the mother of Moses, Aaron and Miriam. You may have heard of Moses before and possibly Aaron and Miriam too. But have you heard the name Jochebed before – did you know Jochebed was their mum? (Her name is not given in Exodus 2, but appears at 6:20).

This is one of the Bible stories about a mother's love who tries to save her son from danger. At the time of this story, the Pharaoh gave the command that every male Hebrew child was to be killed, and so Jochebed wanted to do everything she could to protect her son Moses. So she hatched a plan – she placed Moses in a basket and hid him among some reeds on the riverside. Later, Pharaoh's daughter discovered the baby and didn't know who it was, but she wanted to make sure he was looked after – so she needed a child nurse. And yes, you've guessed it, Jochebed became his nurse.

This is a good example of a mother willing to sacrifice everything to protect her child at any cost. She risked her life. It is the purest form of love and is amazing.

### Love story #3

🗨 **Say:** Abraham and Isaac – father and son.

The story of Abraham and Isaac is found in Genesis 22:1-22.

This story is about a father who loved his son so much. His son was called Isaac which means laughter or 'he laughs'. Isaac was the child Abraham and Sarah had waited so long to have.

God decided to test Abraham and said he was to take his precious son Isaac – whom he loved so much, had taken care of, played with, fed and helped Sarah to bring up – God ordered him to take Isaac to a specific mountain – and to sacrifice him!

It took three days to get the foot of the mountain, a long tiring journey that Abraham had taken with two other men. But when they got to the bottom of the mountain, Abraham decided to go up the mountain with just himself and Isaac. When they got to the place that God had showed him, Abraham built an altar and he tied Isaac on to it.

Abraham must have been crying, his heart must have been breaking, but he knew he must obey what God had told him to do. He took out his knife and ... at that very moment God sent an angel and told him not to kill his son.

Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac because he loved God more than anything in this world. But thankfully that was not the sacrifice God desired.

### Love story #4

🗨 **Say:** Jacob and Rachel – husband and wife.

The story of Jacob and Rachel is found in Genesis 29.

Jacob happened to meet Rachel when she was about to water her father's flock. During Jacob's stay with the family, he fell in love with Rachel and agreed to work seven years for Laban (Rachel's father) in return for her hand in marriage. But Laban played a trick on Jacob which meant he had to work for 14 years to marry her.

The first time Jacob kissed Rachel, the Bible says he began to weep aloud. He didn't cry because he was sad, but because he was so excited and happy!

I think every woman today would love to have a husband like Jacob. He adored Rachel and loved her so dearly that he became her father's servant and sacrificed years of his life to please her father just so he could marry her.

### Love story #5

🗨 **Say:** Ruth and Boaz – This is one of the best Bible stories which shows the love and relationship between a daughter-in-law and mother-in-law.

This story is found in the book of Ruth.

After experiencing the death of her first husband, Ruth stayed close to her mother-in-law, whom she loved dearly. Ruth and Naomi returned to Bethlehem together. It was a good thing Ruth went with Naomi because Bethlehem was very far away and Naomi couldn't have travelled all that way by herself. Ruth never complained but was a good friend to Naomi. She wasn't expecting anything in return, she just wanted to help.

When they got there Ruth decided that she should do some kind of work. It was harvest time, so she worked in the fields following behind the harvesters and picking up any barley that they had dropped. The owner of the field came by to greet the harvesters and noticed Ruth in the field. His name was Boaz.

Boaz was attracted to Ruth – he could see how kind she was to her mother-in-law, and so he began leaving extra food out for her. He wanted to try and make life easier for her – in a way, he was trying to impress Ruth.

God gives us friends when we need them, and we should treat them like a gift from God. Just like in the story, Naomi could have insisted her daughters-in-law come with her, but she unselfishly wanted them to be free to go home to be with their families. And Ruth had such a good attitude and wanted to help, that she moved away from everyone she knew and went to work to help Naomi. She didn't tell everyone what a good friend she was; she knew that she should be a friend like God wanted her to be.

🗨️ **Say:** How did I do – did I get all five stories in five minutes? We've heard about some great stories already – and there are loads more that you can read for yourself.

🗨️ **Say:** Today is Mother's Day – so I wonder who do you think in the Bible was a very special mother? Yes – Mary the mother of Jesus.

Using the whiteboard, draw a stick person in the middle to represent Mary. Ask the children to write or draw things around Mary that she may have done to show her love for Jesus.

Watch a clip that shows Mary and her son Jesus and some of Jesus' life as he was growing up.

*Mary's Great Moments* by Superbook

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ARqU7U95c9o>

🗨️ **Say:** Let's just think about some of the things Mary did that showed how much she loved Jesus.

1. Not long after Mary became pregnant, she offered a wonderful prayer to God, one of the most beautiful prayers in all of Scripture. We call it the Magnificat, which is the first word of the prayer in Latin, meaning 'My soul praises' (Luke 1:46-55).

Mothers who follow Mary's example are deeply prayerful and speak to God from their hearts day by day.

2. On the first Christmas Mary gave birth to her son, and she immediately wrapped Jesus in swaddling clothes – she cared for his physical needs (Luke 2:7).

Mothers care for their children's physical needs as they feed them, clothe them, change their nappies, rock them to sleep, take them to doctor's appointments, and nurse them through illness.

3. Several weeks after Jesus was born, Mary, along with Joseph, took Jesus to the priest in the Temple. By doing this, Mary was asking God to bless Jesus. She knew that God had a plan for her son and agreed to do everything in her power to do what God intended for him (Luke 2: 22-38).

Christian mothers ask God's blessing on their children when they dedicate them or have them christened, and promise to do everything possible to help their children do what God wants in their lives.

4. Next, evil King Herod tried to kill Jesus, so Mary fled to Egypt to protect her son (Matthew 2: 13-15).

Mothers try and keep their children away from evil forces that could harm them, like violent or abusive adults, bad influences, bad friends, bad television programmes ...

5. Mary and Joseph took their son Jesus to the synagogue in Nazareth each week on the Sabbath, and they took him to the Temple in Jerusalem once a year for Passover (Luke 2:41).

Mothers who follow Mary's example go to church regularly, and they take their children with them, because it is important to pray with others and be connected to other families of faith.

6. When Jesus was crucified, Mary stood at the foot of the cross and suffered with him. She never abandoned her child, even when he was an adult and things were at their worst (John 19:25).

This is a sort of never-ending love. Children get into trouble, sometimes for the right reasons, sometimes not, as children or as adults. Mothers like Mary stand with their children throughout life, especially when things go bad, even if they are unable to stop things happening. They offer love and support in whatever way they can.

## Sing It

This lovely song is upbeat and fun, and it encourages kids to share God's love with others!

If your children like to watch videos and sing along:

'Give it away' by Lifetree Kids

<https://youtu.be/ywCiDhbD-Js>

If your children like to dance as well as sing along:

'Give it away' by Dance for Christ  
[https://youtu.be/NSJBHh\\_N4WY](https://youtu.be/NSJBHh_N4WY)

## Action It

Have the group of household objects ready.

🗨️ **Say:** Mums play very different and important roles in family life. As I show you some different items, maybe you can tell me how they can help us to think about how mums show their love for us.

Whisk: they cook for us

Bandage: they look after us when we are injured

Cough medicine: they nurse us when we are ill

Car keys: they take us to places (to school, church, friends) and bring us back safely again

Washing powder: they wash and iron our clothes

Screwdriver: they fix things

Storybook: they tell us bedtime stories

Exercise book: they help us with our homework

Paper heart chain: they go on and on loving us, even when we are naughty

**Ask:** Are there any objects in your house that you can run and find, that can show how your mum or someone else in your house loves and cares for you?

## Pray It

Ask each child to choose one item and say a one-line prayer thanking God that mums do particular things for us. Or if the children are not comfortable praying out loud, a leader can say a prayer including all these things.

## Explore It

Remember to send home the Explore It (For Me) and Explore It (Together) ideas for children and families.