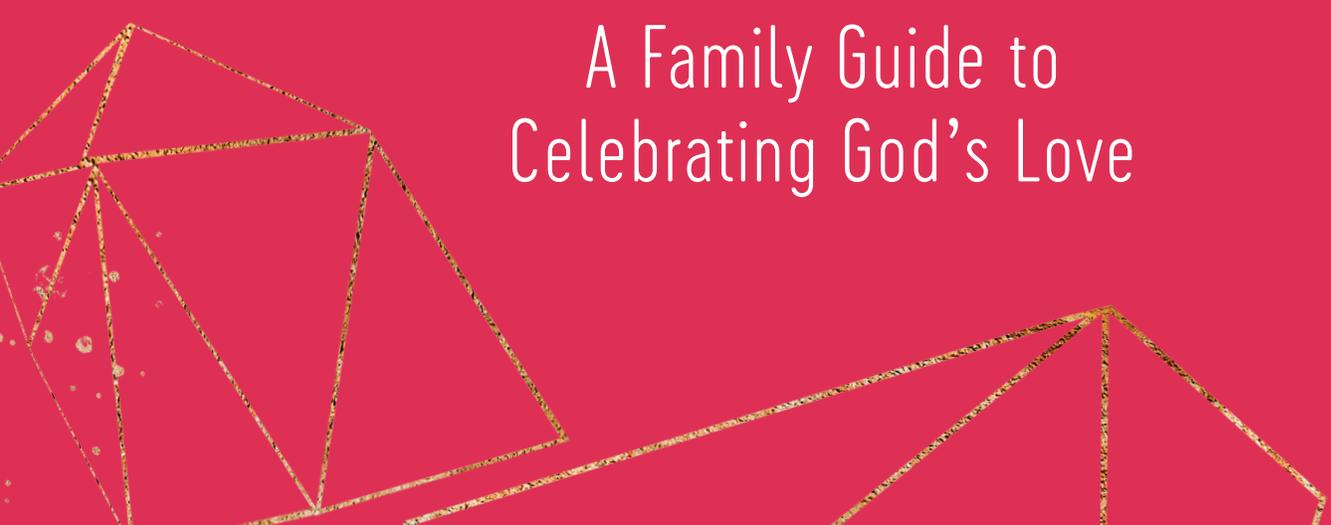


VALENTINE'S

AT HOME

A Family Guide to
Celebrating God's Love



INTENTIONAL VALENTINE'S IDEAS

LOVE PROJECTS

Valentine's Day is a great time for families to focus on serving others. Create handmade Valentine's Day cards or craft items for neighbors, people in nursing homes or hospitals. Cook a meal for someone or be a blessing to someone who has a need. Find ways to show God's love to those around you.

LOVE MAIL

Make a family mailbox. Each day leading up to Valentine's Day, each person in the family draws or writes a note of appreciation, blessing or love to one other person in the family and puts it in the family mailbox. At the end of the day, open the mailbox and enjoy all the letters. Another option is saving all the letters and opening them all on Valentine's Day.

GIFTS OF LOVE

Gifts of love are acts of kindness, blessings or showing love to others that money cannot buy. Catch each other showing gifts of love to others. For each gift of love you see, write the name and gift of love on a card and consider putting in a special basket or hanging on a small tree. On Valentine's Day, spend time thanking God for the most wonderful "Gift of Love" in sending Jesus to die for our sins and be our Lord and Savior. Then, go through and read each card as you celebrate His great love.

LOVE VERSES

Choose a verse about love for each day of February leading up to Valentine's Day. From February 1-14, read a Scripture each day about love together as a family and talk about what that verse means. Look for ways each day to live out that verse (*you can even report back at the end of the day all the ways of showing God's love*). Consider writing out the verses on hearts and hanging them on a Valentine's tree, near the family table or somewhere special. At the end of 14 days, you will have a beautiful reminder of God's love on display! For a free printable of 14 verse hearts, go to homepointe.org/valentines

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Valentine's Day is a fun celebration each year and is actually named after a real person called St. Valentine. There are many stories and legends behind who the real St. Valentine was, but most scholars agree that he was a martyr, a person who is killed for their beliefs. As we celebrate this season, we find this holiday is deeply rooted in our faith.

Use Valentine's Day as a time for learning about the greatest love — God sending His one and only Son — and sharing that with your family. You will find ideas and resources to be intentional during this Valentine season with family and friends. Feel free to adjust the activities and ideas to fit what is best for you.

Let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

1 JOHN 4:7-11

COUPLES: THE LOVE JOURNAL

The Love Journal is a great way to encourage, express appreciation and love to your spouse.

ADVANCE PREPARATION

- Plan a time (*date night, quiet moment at home, etc.*) to discuss incorporating the Love Journal into your relationship
- Purchase a journal or notebook together or give it as a gift from one spouse to the other

THE PROCESS

- 1 Take turns passing the journal back and forth.
- 2 Leave the journal for your spouse to find in specific locations such as the bathroom counter, each other's pillows, etc.
- 3 This journal can be passed through the generations, leaving a legacy of love to share with others. They will have no doubt about your love and commitment to one another.

THE NOTES

Use the following as ideas to help craft meaningful love notes:

I Appreciate You Share the gratitude you feel for how he or she serves/sacrifices for the family.

I Admire You Let your spouse know the qualities that you see in him/her such as character, strength, patience, grace, etc.

I Affirm You Tell them when they respond well to different situations or circumstances.

I Am Sorry For Express a sincere apology in times when you need to ask for forgiveness.

My Prayer For You Write out a prayer that you are praying for your spouse. This is a great opportunity if you know something specific that will be happening that day that he/she might be worried about.

Scripture Choose a specific scripture to write out as an encouragement or prayer for your spouse.

Just Because You can simply write “I want you to know how much I love you and am so thankful to be married to you.”

Special Occasions Take some time for a birthday, anniversary or holiday to share a love note in your journal.

FAMILY ACTIVITY: THE LOVE MIRROR

The Love Mirror is a fun activity to help your family experience unselfish love.

ADVANCE PREPARATION

- Plan a time for a fun family activity
- Make sure you have the following on hand: A snack or dessert that can be fed to someone else, paper, markers, scissors and a Bible

THE ACTIVITY

- 1** First, invite a child to sit about 3 feet directly across from another family member so the two are facing each other in a mirror image manner.
- 2** Appoint one of them to be the “looking in the mirror” role – meaning they will decide what movements to make – such as scratching their head or making a silly face, etc.
- 3** Appoint the other to be the “mirror on the wall” role – instructing them to mirror every move of the other. You may want to demonstrate first.
- 4** Keep track of how often the “mirror” successfully reflects the actions of his or her partner – then switch roles. This will show both how challenging it can be to remain focused on the actions and expectations of others.
- 5** Read I Corinthians 13 together describing the characteristics of true love. Discuss how remaining sensitive to and responding well to the needs and expectations of others is one way we “mirror” the love of Christ to others.
- 6** Now serve dessert, but make a rule that no one can eat their dessert by themselves. They must feed one another in an unselfish fashion.
- 7** Have everyone make Valentines card for a grandparent, uncle, friend or someone to whom they want to share their love.
- 8** Finish up your time praying together and thanking God for the most unselfish display of love in sending His Son for us.
- 9** Memorize this jingle – “Unselfish love is from above.”



GOING FURTHER

5 Love Languages by Gary Chapman

Love and Respect by Emerson Eggerichs

God Gave Us Love by Lisa T. Bergren

The Story of Valentine's Day by Nancy J. Skarmeas

God's Great Big Love For Me by Max Lucado

Take the Love Language Challenge:

A 5-Week challenge that helps you to show love to your spouse by completing a weekly challenge. Each challenge will be tailored to your loved one's language and each week you will be reminded to complete your challenge with ideas specific to their love language. To sign up for the Love Language Challenge, go to lovelanguagechallenge.com or download the free Love Language Challenge App.

5 Love Language Kit:

A free kit available to help you learn your family's love languages and tools to help you love them well. Available at lifeathome247.com/five-love-languages