

# Christians Care for One Another

Psalm 23; Acts 2:42-47



### Worship Theme:



God deserves our wholehearted devotion.

### Weaving Faith Into Life:



Children will show devotion to God by thinking about ways to be instruments of God's love.

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<b>1</b> Let's Praise God! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	<b>Sing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Be Strong in the Lord" (Ephesians 6:10)</li> <li>• "Living Inside Out"</li> <li>• "Love Is" (1 Corinthians 13:4-5)</li> <li>• "Are You Going to Praise the Lord?"</li> <li>• "Love and Pray" (Matthew 5:44)</li> <li>• "Fairest Lord Jesus"</li> </ul>	<b>KidsOwn Worship Kit:</b> <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> <b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Video equipment, whiteboard, marker, yarn

## Preschool

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<b>2</b> Let's Learn the Point! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	<b>* Those We Love</b> Make models of people they love, and talk about why they love those people.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> 3 ounces modeling dough per child
	<b>* The Birthday Party</b> Compare honoring someone at a party to the way the early church honored God.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Party hats
	<b>Devotion From Me</b> Sing about showing love to God.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Red construction paper, scissors

**Elementary**

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<b>2</b> Let's Learn the Point! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	<b>The Way It Was</b> Act out how the early church showed devotion to God.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Index cards, pen, whiteboard, marker
	<b>* Wholehearted Christians</b> Compare the early church and the modern church.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Bibles, newsprint, markers
	<b>Round-the-Clock Devotion</b> Build schedules, and discuss how to show devotion in their activities.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Notebook paper, pencils

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<b>3</b> Let's Pray! <i>(up to 10 minutes)</i>	<b>The Offering</b> Offer their gifts to God.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Masking tape, paper, pencils
	<b>Spotlight Prayer</b> Pray when touched by the spotlight.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Flashlight
	<b>"Leaning on the Everlasting Arms"</b> Sing the song as a prayer.	<b>KidsOwn Worship Kit:</b> <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> <b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Video equipment

\* Starred activities can be used successfully with preschool and elementary children together.

Customize your session to fit your needs. You can separate preschoolers and elementary children for Let's Learn the Point!

Or, if you keep the children all together for the entire worship session, we suggest you choose from the starred activities.

# *Christians Care for One Another*

*Psalm 23; Acts 2:42-47*

After Jesus' ascension to heaven, the Holy Spirit came on the believers at Pentecost. That event is described in Acts 1–2. Jesus' followers—the same followers who still had doubts just after Jesus' resurrection—were empowered to speak boldly for Jesus. Not only did they speak boldly, but they also were able to speak in other languages to reach the crowds of people from other ethnic groups who had gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost. Peter gave a lengthy speech, drawing on Old Testament prophecy to help his largely Jewish audience understand where Jesus fit in God's plan and what Jesus had done for them. And after his speech, about 3,000 people became new followers of Jesus! The days that followed that dramatic event are the context for today's Bible passage.

The teaching of the apostles mentioned in Acts 2:42 is likely the reiteration of the things Jesus had done and said while on earth. Remember that there was no New Testament at that time. In fact, the teachings of the apostles comprise much of what became the New Testament. The apostles taught with authority because they were the ones who had spent three years learning from and living with Jesus.

The breaking of bread to which the early Christians were devoted was obviously more than eating together, although simply eating together was likely part of their fellowship. The breaking of bread most likely refers to the regular meeting to celebrate the Lord's Supper, which the disciples were commanded to observe during their last meal with Jesus before his betrayal and crucifixion.

All the things the believers did together apparently developed in them a true sense of unity and concern for one another. Their sharing with one another to meet needs was a demonstration of that unity seldom seen in the history of the world. Unfortunately, human nature sometimes won out, as seen in the greed and dishonesty of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11.

We sometimes complain about going to church once or twice a week. But these believers were dedicated to their mission. They met daily. And their example apparently attracted more and more followers. In fact, God blessed what they were doing as new followers were added each day!

The love the early Christians showed to one another made their faith something that others wanted to learn more about; notice that the Christians were actually well-liked for a time. Jesus had told his disciples, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35). As we treat one another with love, people around us will see that we're followers of Jesus, and they'll be drawn to him, too!

## ***Devotion for Leaders***

It's impossible to grow in faith—or help others come to faith—without the influence of Christian community and genuine love for others. Our relationships with other Christians should reflect our relationship with Jesus.

**Weaving Faith Into Your Life:** Sometimes—oftentimes—we complicate our relationships with Jesus and others. We introduce unnecessary elements while overlooking the few things Jesus is encouraging us to do. Take a moment to read and reflect on Psalm 23. Read slowly, pausing after each phrase. What kind of life is the psalmist describing? This is the life Jesus offers you and everyone you know! How can you simplify your relationships with Jesus and others, focusing on what Jesus wants?

## Why We Worship for Leaders

The early church demonstrated a kind of devotion to God that the modern church would do well to model. The people of the early church were devoted to teaching, fellowship, and prayer. They worked together, ate together, and helped each other—not just on the Sabbath but throughout the week—praising God through it all. God worked wonders and miracles through his people, who were filled with awe. As outsiders saw what was happening, they joined in the fun, worshipping the one true God. The early church shows how every aspect of the Christian’s life can be an act of worshipping God and how God blesses this devotion, which glorifies his name and increases his kingdom. Use this session to help children learn to worship and love God with wholehearted devotion.

## Easy Prep for Leaders

### Let’s Praise God!

- Make sure your video equipment is ready.
- Set up a whiteboard near the entrance. Provide a marker for children to use. At the top of the board, print “How I Show My Love for God.”

**The Way It Was**—Write the following on separate index cards:

1. “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching.”
2. “They devoted themselves...to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”
3. “Everyone was filled with awe.”
4. “Many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.”
5. “All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.”
6. “Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts.”
7. “They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.”
8. “And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

If your group includes more than 40 children, make two sets of cards.

**The Offering**—Use masking tape to outline a large heart on the floor near the front of the room.

**Preschool Activities**—Refer to the preschool pages for preparations.

## 1 Let’s Praise God!

Play KidsOwn Worship music videos as children arrive. Greet children by name. As you show each child the whiteboard, say, “Welcome to children’s church! Please sign in. Write your name and one way you show your love for God.”

When you’re ready to begin, welcome the children warmly.

**Say** Welcome to children's church! We are here to worship God together, and that's what we're going to do! Today, as you worship God, try to focus your whole mind on him. Think of how awesome God is instead of wondering what's for lunch. Think of all the great things God has done instead of all the bad things the bully down the street has done. Don't let your mind wander! We are here to show love to God. Let's start by singing "Be Strong in the Lord."

▶ Sing "Be Strong in the Lord" (Ephesians 6:10).

**Say** We all know that God created us. But have you ever wondered why God created us? Turn to a neighbor, and tell your neighbor one reason God may have created people. (Pause.)

The next song we'll sing says that we should do good. Today we're going to talk about loving God with our whole heart. When we love God that much, it'll show in how we live.

▶ Sing "Living Inside Out."

**Say** God created us to love him and to share his love with others. When we love God and obey God, God uses us to help other people. Let's sing about the love we give other people because God loves us.

▶ Sing "Love Is" (1 Corinthians 13:4-5).

**Say** Because God made us and saved us and loves us so much, we should praise him all the time. Are you going to praise the Lord? Let's sing that song now.

▶ Sing "Are You Going to Praise the Lord?"

**Say** Right now, I want everyone to turn to a neighbor and tell about a time someone helped you in a scary situation. (Pause.)

Now tell your neighbor how you felt about the person who helped you. (Pause.)


**Ask**

- When has God helped you in a scary situation or with something really hard? (Answers will vary.)
- How should we feel toward him? (We should feel grateful; we should trust God.)

**Say** God made all of us. God put people in our lives who care for us and help us grow. And if we pay attention to God, God can use us to help other people.

**God sent his Son, Jesus, to save us from our sins. And what's more, he did this, not because we deserve it or because he owes us something, but because he wanted to.**

**God loves everyone. When we are devoted to God, we can spread God's love to others. We show by our actions what a wonderful, loving God we serve. Let's sing about sharing God's love with people even when it's hard.**

 Sing "Love and Pray" (Matthew 5:44).

**Say** ▶ **Let's play a game to learn more about giving our wholehearted love and devotion to God.**

Have children form two straight lines, facing each other. Give a ball of yarn to the first person in one line. Have this person name a way people can share God's love by caring for one another. For example, the child might say, "Pray for someone." Have the child then hang onto the end of the yarn and toss the ball to the first child in the second line. This child should tell who might be helped by the activity the first child named. For example, the child might say prayer would help someone who is sad. This child should then hang on to the yarn and toss the ball to the second child in the first line. Continue in this way, with children in the first line listing ways to share God's love and children in the second line telling who the named activity might help, until every child has had a turn and is holding a section of yarn.

- Ask** ▶
- **What is this yarn doing to our group?** (It's connecting everyone.)
  - **What else connects us as a children's church?** (Praying together; helping each other learn about God; having fun together.)
  - **How does being connected in the church show devotion to God?** (God wants us to love each other; God can use us to help others.)

**Say** ▶ **When we worship God together with wholehearted devotion, we become united as a team. This makes us stronger as Christians, and it makes us closer to God. It makes our church stronger, too. We are all God's children, so he is pleased when we join together to worship him wholeheartedly.**

**Let's give God the worship he deserves. Stand with me and sing "Fairest Lord Jesus." Jesus is the ruler of all nature and Lord of all the nations. Let's sing this song as a prayer to our wonderful God, and let's cherish, honor, praise, and adore him forevermore!**

 Sing "Fairest Lord Jesus."

### **Worship Leader Tip**

If time allows, arrange children in each line from youngest to oldest. This will allow younger children to give the more obvious answers. It will also give older children time to think of more creative answers.

## 2 Let's Learn the Point!

### Preschool Activities, pages 133-134

At this time, have the preschool leader invite the preschoolers to go to their own room for this section of activities. Tear out the Preschool Activities page, and give it to the preschool leader. Have the preschool leader bring the preschoolers back to participate in Let's Pray! with the older children. If you prefer to keep all the children together, do the starred (\*) activities. They will work well with both elementary and preschool children.

#### Worship Leader Tip

You may choose to summarize the eight activities in the following ways:

1. learned about God
2. worshipped together
3. realized how awesome God is
4. saw miracles
5. shared with those in need
6. met together at church
7. visited in one another's homes
8. grew as a church

### Elementary Activities The Way It Was

Have kids form eight groups. If you have more than 40 children, have them form 16 groups and use a second set of cards. Make sure you mix age levels.

Give each group one of the index cards you prepared before worship. Explain that the words on the cards come from Acts 2:42-47. Ask children to plan a way to act out the words on their group's card.

**Say** **Acts 2:42-47 shows us the intense devotion that people in the early church showed toward God and each other. We can learn from that example. The people in the early church loved God wholeheartedly. That means they devoted their lives to loving God in everything they did. Let's see what each group has to show us about the early church. With your group, read the verse on your card and come up with a way to act out what the people in the early church did.**

Give the children two minutes to work. Then let groups take turns acting out the portions of Scripture. While one group is acting, have the others come up with one sentence to describe what the group is doing that shows devotion to God. Write each sentence on the whiteboard.

When all groups have finished, compare the actual Scripture verses with the group's sentences.

- Ask**
- **How does** [summary of activity from one of the cards] **show wholehearted devotion to God?**
  - **Why would God want the church to** [summary of activity from one of the cards]?
  - **How do we do this the same in our church?**

**Say** **The early church met often to worship, share fellowship, pray, learn, help, and bring others into God's kingdom. People spent their lives giving wholehearted devotion to God. He deserves this kind of devotion from us, too.**



# Christians Care for One Another

Session 11

Psalm 23; Acts 2:42-47

## Worship Theme:



God deserves our wholehearted devotion.

## Easy Prep for Leaders

**Devotion From Me**—Cut a large heart out of red construction paper.

## Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo teach the “Devotion From Me” song.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today’s worship session.



## \* Those We Love

Give each child a 3-ounce lump of modeling dough. Have children make models of people they love. When children finish, have them stand by you one at a time. Let each child show his or her model and tell who it is.

- Ask**
- Why do you love [name the person]?
  - Does God love that person, too? Why or why not?

For example, a child might say she loves her best friend. Help children understand that God loves the friend, too. God wants us to love each other and help each other.

Talk about each child’s model.

- Say** There are lots of things in life that we love. We love our moms and dads, and we love our brothers and sisters. We might love baseball or ponies or cookies.
- But God wants us to love him the very best. God wants us to love him and obey him with our whole hearts. When we love God with our whole hearts, God can use us to help others.

## \* The Birthday Party

Gather the children in a circle.

- Ask** • Who’s the most special person at a birthday party?
- Say** You have some very good ideas. The most special person at a birthday party is the person whose birthday it is. Let’s pretend we’re having a birthday party today.

Give every child a party hat.

- Say** Birthday parties remind me of coming to church.
- Ask** • When we come to church, who gets to be the most special?
- Say** The Bible tells about a church where everyone knew that God is always the most special. Whenever the people got together, they had a

celebration for God! Let’s look at some of the things they did and see if we do some of those things at birthday parties. The first thing the Bible says they did was devote “themselves to the apostles’ teaching.” That means they listened to what Jesus’ friends told them about God.

- Ask** • What do we learn about birthday people at their parties?
- Why do we want to learn about our friends? about God?
- Say** The next thing the people in that early church did was devote themselves “to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” That means they were good friends together, they ate together, and they talked to God.



## Preschool Activities

### \* *The Birthday Party (continued)*

- Ask** • How do people spend time together at parties?
- Why is it good for God's people to spend time together?
- Why is it good for people to spend time talking to God?

**Say** Next the Bible tells us that "everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles." To be filled with awe is to be amazed and surprised—to say, "Wow! That's awesome!"

- Ask** • What is awesome about God?

**Say** The Bible also tells us that the people in the early church shared what they had with each other.

- Ask** • How do people share at birthday parties?

Let children act out giving presents and receiving treat bags.

- Ask** • What can we share with each other and with God when we're at church?

**Say** The most important thing the early church did was praise God. When the people praised God, they told God how wonderful he truly is and how much they loved him. At birthday parties, we tell the birthday person that he or she is very special.

- Ask** • How can we tell God he's special?

**Say** The Bible tells us that when people outside the church saw all the fun the church people were having, they were happy. They wanted to become part of the church. Every day, the party for God grew bigger and bigger as more people joined in!

- Ask** • How could our time at church be like a party for God?

**Say** When we meet together to show love for God and for one another, we show wholehearted devotion—true love for God!

## Devotion From Me

Gather the children in a circle. Teach the following song to the tune of "The Mulberry Bush."

Our God deserves  
Devotion from me.  
Devotion from me.  
Devotion from me.  
Our God deserves  
Devotion from me.  
I'll give him all my love.

Once children are familiar with the words to the song, have them pass the construction-paper heart while they sing. When they finish the song, ask the child holding the heart one of these two questions:

- Ask** • How did the early church show love to God?
- How can you show love for God?

Play several times, and alternate the questions.

**Say** Wholehearted devotion is a great, big love for God.

(continued from page 132)

## \* *Wholehearted Christians*

Help the children form groups of three or four. Pair younger children with older children.

**Say** ➤ **God wants us to be as wholehearted in our devotion to him as people in the early church were. God wants us to care for one another as they did. Let's explore how we can do that.**

Give each small group Bibles, a sheet of newsprint, and several markers.

**Say** ➤ **Look up Acts 2:42-47 in your Bibles. Think about what people today could do to be just as wholehearted in their devotion to God and as loving to one another as the people in the early church were.**

**Draw a person on your newsprint who's wholehearted toward God. Be sure to include information in your drawing that shows what the person does.**

Have the children look up Acts 2:42-47 and develop a model for a wholehearted Christian. Give the kids about 10 minutes to work. As they work, walk from group to group to offer help and examples of what wholehearted devotion might look like. For example, they could draw someone who's sharing food, praying with someone, or bringing a friend to church. When groups are finished, have them share their drawings with the rest of the kids.

- Ask** ➤
- **Why was it important that the early Christians shared with those in need?** (Everyone could spend more time learning about God; they could help each other have faith.)
  - **Why did so many people want to be part of the early church?** (People were helping each other; people could see God's love in the early church.)
  - **What can we do in our church to be more like the early Christians?** (We can listen to people's prayer requests and pray for them; we can share our stuff with people who don't have as much.)
  - **What specific things can you do *personally* to be more like the early Christians?** (Sing praise songs; visit kids from children's church and talk about God; help a friend in children's church who needs help with homework or something.)

**Say** ➤ **People who love God find ways to express that love. God wants us to love him wholeheartedly and to share his love with one another. We please him when we're loving toward others. Our lives should be filled with activities that show God how much we love him and are devoted to him.**

### **Extra Impact**

During the "Round-the-Clock Devotion" activity, let each group record its schedule and ideas for devoting activities to God on a separate whiteboard or section of a whiteboard so that children can see each group's ideas as the group is presenting them. The whiteboard will also make additions and changes simpler throughout the activity.

## *Round-the-Clock Devotion*

Have the children form three groups. If each group has more than 10 kids, form six groups and double the schedules. Give each group a sheet of notebook paper and a pencil. Have Group 1 print "Weekday Schedule" at the top of its paper. Have Group 2 print "Saturday Schedule" on its paper. Have Group 3 print "Sunday Schedule."

**Ask** • **What are some things you do every weekday at the same time?**  
(Get up and get dressed; eat dinner; go to school.)

**Say** **These things are part of your weekday schedule. We all do certain things about the same time every day. We plan the other things we want to do around these things. That's our schedule, which helps us know what to do and when to do it in order to get everything done. With your group, come up with a typical schedule for the day I've asked you to plan.**

Give kids time to do make their schedules.

**Say** **As we've learned, people in the early church planned every part of their lives around serving and worshipping God. They were wholly devoted to God. We can serve God with wholehearted devotion, too. Look at each activity on your schedule. Think of a way to express devotion to God with every activity. For example, at mealtime, which is on every schedule, you thank God for your food. You may be able to spend time with other Christians at mealtime, too.**

Let groups complete their lists. Then have them share their ideas. Encourage children who are not part of the sharing group to offer ideas for that group, too.

**Ask** • **Why does God deserve our wholehearted devotion?** (Because God loves us; because God made us.)

• **Why should we express this devotion throughout the week instead of just on this one day of the week?** (So we'll remember all the time to worship God; so God will be first in our lives.)

**Say** **God loves us all the time. He is our heavenly Father and our best friend. As members of his family, we should devote every day to loving and helping one another and getting to know our God.**

## **3** *Let's Pray!*

### *The Offering*

Give each child a small piece of paper and a pencil. Stand behind the masking-tape heart.

**Ask** • **How does giving to God show wholehearted devotion to God?**  
(We give to God instead of getting something for ourselves; it shows we obey God.)

• **Besides money, what can we give to God?** (We can show God's love to other people; praise; thanks.)

- **How can our actions and attitudes be offerings to God?** (When we do what God wants us to, our actions are offerings; when we share with others, it's like we're sharing with God.)

**Say** **Giving generously shows wholehearted devotion to God because it shows that we know everything we have comes from God. It also shows that we want to help God's kingdom grow.**

**To give your offering today, bring it up front and arrange it inside this masking-tape heart. Let's see if we can fill the whole heart to show our wholehearted devotion. Besides giving money, you may also write actions and attitudes that you want to offer God on the piece of paper I gave you. Put the paper in the heart as an extra offering to God.**

## *Spotlight Prayer*

Have children stand in a circle around the room. Choose one volunteer to stand in the middle. Give a flashlight to the volunteer.

**Say** **Let's ask God to help us help other Christians.** [Volunteer's name] **is going to close his [or her] eyes and spin around. When he [or she] stops, whoever the flashlight points to will pray a one sentence prayer by saying, "God, help me help others by ..." and completing that sentence. After you pray, you will get a turn to spin with the flashlight.**


Dim the lights just enough to let children see the light from the flashlight, and let the volunteer spin. Have the child that the flashlight catches complete the sentence prayer. Give help only as needed. Continue as time allows. Children who aren't chosen to pray aloud will have prayed silently because they'll have completed the sentence in their heads in case the flashlight should catch them.

## *"Leaning on the Everlasting Arms"*

**Say** **Today we've explored ways the early church gave God wholehearted devotion. We can give God wholehearted devotion, too.**

**Ask** • **How can we give wholehearted devotion when we sing?** (By thinking about only God as we sing; by meaning the words.)

**Say** **If we mean the words and sing them straight to God, we show wholehearted devotion. Let's sing about leaning on him.**

 Sing "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms."

**Pray** **Heavenly Father, thank you for lessons learned from the people of the early church. Thank you for their example of wholehearted devotion. Help us serve you with the same love. You deserve all we have to offer and more. In Jesus' name, amen.**