

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 26**  
**Lesson Plans for Younger Children**

**Scripture: Mark 12:28-34**

**Background:** During the last weeks of Ordinary Time in Lectionary Cycle B, the Gospel of Mark, our primary guide, continues. The kingdom of God is open for all people. We hear this message in the readings about the rich man, the disciples jockeying for position, the blind man, the saints, the poor widow, and even Pilate as he queries Jesus about being a king. We don't have to pass an entrance exam; we are already in the kingdom. Through all the changes that occur in our lives, what will not change is God's love for each of us. The kingdom that Jesus is proclaiming is already here and yet is also still to come – the undercurrent of Advent, which is coming near.

**A Notation for This Week's Gospel**

The question from the scribes this week is not meant to be one to challenge or trip Jesus up. Rather, it is common in Jewish tradition to ask if there is a way to summarize commandments. Jesus, in turn, gives a rather traditional answer, citing Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (*Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might*) and Leviticus 19:18 (*You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord*). Jesus uses these two passages as a foundation for becoming a whole person of God. For Jesus, these are the core texts of faith and belief.

**Theme: Love God, Neighbor, and Self**

**Before Class:** You will need enough copies of the two signs below for everyone as well as popsicle sticks, glue, markers or crayons, and other art supplies for the children. You may want to pre-cut this signs to make it easier for the children.

**Beginning:** As the children gather, ask them how their week was.

After most of them are there, ask them what laws or rules they have to follow each day. Ask them if they think it helps or not to have laws and rules for all of us to live by. Ask them how they know about the laws...are there signs (like stop signs) that help show us the way?

**Opening Prayer:** Gracious God, thank you for giving us rules to follow and for sending Jesus to help us understand what your rules mean. Amen.

**The Story: Mark 12:28-34:** Some of the people around Jesus were arguing one day. When Jesus found them, they asked him, "Which commandment or law is the first?" Jesus said to them, "The first commandment or law is that you love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. The second commandment or law is that you should love your neighbor as you love yourself." Jesus told them that there were no other commandments or laws that were more important than these two. Those around him were amazed at what he had told them.

**Activity:** Today, Jesus told the disciples what commandments or laws they needed to follow. Do you remember what those were?

(Allow the children to respond and you can prompt them if needed, or read the story again.)  
I wonder what both commandments or law have in common? (love)

What are ways that we know about the laws that we have to follow? (signs – like stop signs or walk signs)

Today we are going to make signs that remind us of Jesus’ commandments or laws for us.

Hand out the two signs below, “Love God” and “Love neighbor and self” and invite them to color, decorate, or create a sign that helps them remember Jesus’ laws for us.

When they are done with their decoration, help them glue or staple the signs to the popsicle stick.

**Getting Closure:** If there is time allow the children to share their signs with one another.

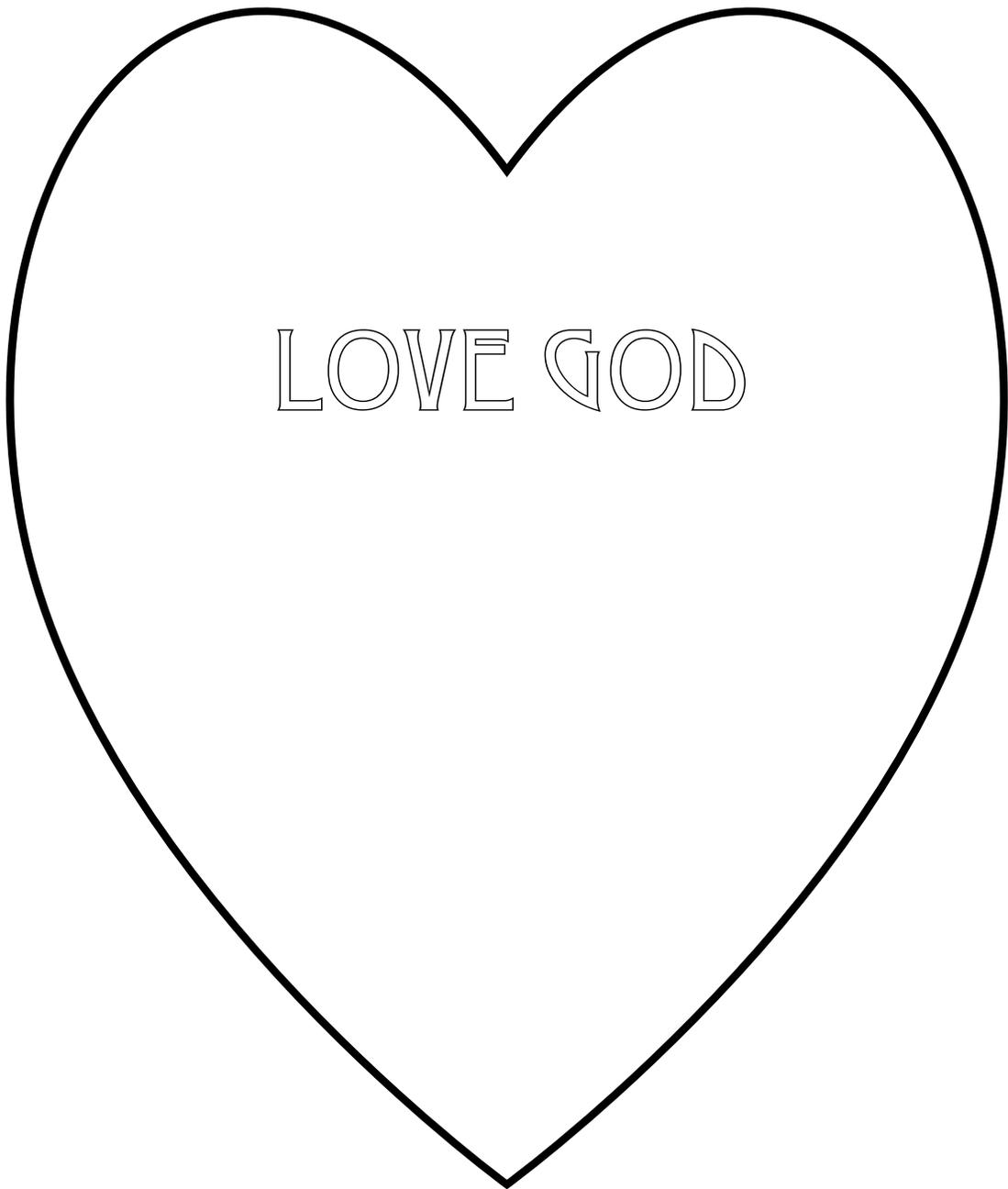
If you have time, you can teach them the “Love Round” found below.

Love, love, love, love  
Children, we are made for love  
Love each other as yourself  
For God loves all  
God loves all.

The tune can be found here:

<http://www.songsforteaching.com/campfiresongs/loveround.htm>

**Closing Prayer:** Loving God, thank you for opening your word to us today. Be with us as we strive to love you, our neighbors, and ourselves. Amen.





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