



TO LOVE

Jesus Christ showed us in His life that He is a friend of mankind and especially to children. Jesus also taught us that God loves all people. The children experience this love in Sunday School. Loving parents and good friends are important for the healthy development of a child. Out of this foundation children learn trust and security and they will be able to pass on this love to others. Children also learn from hearing and discussing stories about how important it is to love one another.

The children feel loved and wanted. They are encouraged, within their capabilities, to love and take responsibility.

▶ **Jesus loves the little children (Mark 10: 13-16)**

On one occasion Jesus journeys with His disciples from place to place for many hours. Everywhere Jesus goes, He tells people about His Heavenly Father. He also heals the sick. Now Jesus is tired. A group of women with their little children appear. They are laughing and singing happily. The disciples hold the women back saying: "The Lord Jesus is tired! Go home! The children are still too small, they do not understand what Jesus is saying!" The children become sad, and their mothers plead: "Could Jesus not quickly take our children into His arm and bless them? If the Lord Jesus just touches the head of my child, this will be remembered forever." Jesus hears everything and is displeased with His disciples. He says to them: "Let the children come unto me; the Kingdom of God is for them" (and all who are like them). Then He lovingly says to the children: "Come!" He takes each one in His arms and touches their heads. He draws them to His heart and blesses them. Every child knows the Lord Jesus loves them and the loving God loves them.

VII. 6

The children can draw a picture of themselves on a small piece of heavy drawing paper. With these figures, they can play along with the story and then paste them in a group picture. Where possible, this can be put on the classroom door so the children can feel every Sunday how near they are to Jesus.

II. 6

The children can sing, for example, the song, "Look, the Little Lambkin" or #440.

We try to describe the love of God:

God's love is as warm as the sun in the morning.

God's love is as

big as the ocean.

God's love is as

beautiful as...

God's love is as

soft, tender,

powerful as...

He loves me

so much,

and I love Him

also. To illustrate

God's love, we can

create a picture

or scrap book

(sunrise, ocean...)



▶ **The torn picture book**

It is evening. Sabine's parents are sitting at their small daughter's bedside. It is very nice to be together, but the little girl is sad. She did something naughty. She and Andrea had argued about a picture book in nursery school. Both had tugged so hard on the book that it tore. In horror, they hid the torn book and did not tell the teacher. Now Sabine has a guilty conscience and wants to tell her parents all about it but she does not know where to start. Her parents help her. They understand. Together they talk it over and search for a solution.

▶ We talk over the situation and try to find a solution together. It is very important to tell the teacher everything. Perhaps Sabine has the courage to do this herself, or perhaps her mother can go with her or else write a note. Other possibilities: Mother goes with Sabine to the teacher and they will see if the book is repairable. Sabine draws a beautiful picture for the teacher. Sabine gives one of her own picture books to the teacher. Sabine and Andrea pick some flowers and bring a bunch of flowers to the teacher.

▶ The children tell of similar experiences.



▶

I. 5

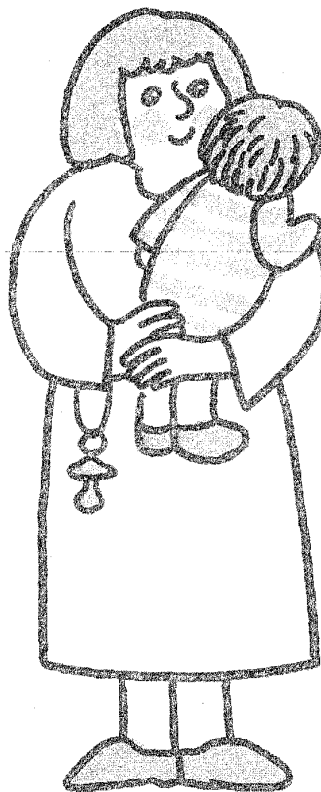
▶ **Martina's little brother**

Martina will soon get a new brother or sister. Her mother tells her what a tiny baby does. They also look at pictures of Martina when she was a baby. Together mother and daughter get the clothes and bed ready for the baby. When Martina sees her little brother for the first time, she is disappointed. She soon loves him.

▶ We look at photographs of babies. Perhaps the children can bring their own baby pictures to class. They could also bring baby clothes which they perhaps wore when they were small.

▶ The children tell about their own brothers and sisters. They can draw a family picture.

▶ Using a doll, the care of a little brother or sister can be practiced.



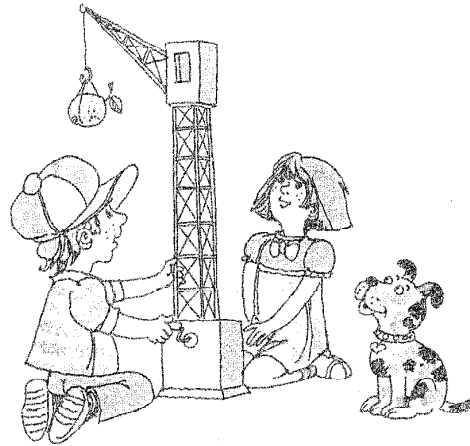
▶

▶ **A friend helps me**

Roger and Michael are good friends. They live in the same house and often play together at the playground. Today they are very excited. Construction workers have dug a large ditch to repair a pipe. After the workers have left the site, the children play in the pile of earth. That is fun! Ever more daring, they start to jump over the ditch. Roger and Michael also join in. Suddenly Roger falls into the hole. He is not hurt, but he cannot pull himself out. Some children laugh at him but Michael hurries to help his friend. He finds a piece of pipe and lowers the pipe down to his friend. Now Roger is able to pull himself out. Thankfully he looks at his friend. He whispers to him: "You are my best friend."


▶ Use role playing to go deeper into the story. Using a few chairs or poles, mark out the ditch. One child jumps in and the others laugh or run away. Only Michael helps.

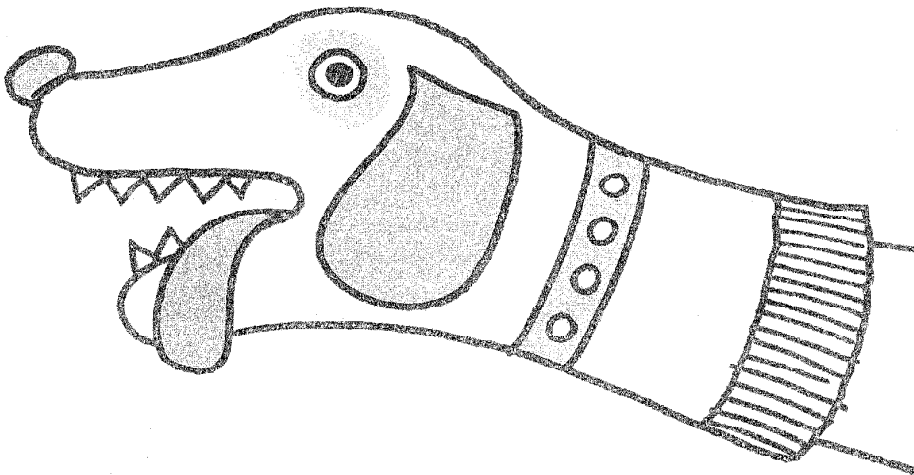
▶ Find situations where the children can help each other: playing, tying shoes, borrowing things.



A new friend

Sandra and Melanie attend the same nursery school. Even though they live in the same house, each child walks home alone. Nursery school is finished for the day. Melanie is still in the cloakroom busily tying her shoes while Sandra is already on her way home with some other children. At the intersection the children say good-bye to each other and Sandra continues on her way alone. Suddenly a big dog appears in the middle of the sidewalk. It growls and shows its sharp teeth. Frightened, Sandra turns and runs back towards the nursery school. She encounters Melanie walking towards her and tells her about the scary dog. Together they ponder over what they should do. They decide to wait on a front porch together until the scary dog is gone. After a while they both continue their walk home without further fear. Proud of themselves, they tell the class the next day about their experience and how they solved it together. Now the girls often do things together and have become good friends.

- IV. 14  The story should be interrupted after the first paragraph and ask the children for possible solutions to the problem. The dog's part can be demonstrated with a hand puppet.



Make a game of it. Two children hold hands and walk in a circle singing: "The more we get together, together, together (repeat) the happier we will be..." The rest of the children join in until a chain is formed.





With a friend you are never alone

An elderly gentleman lives in a small cottage at the edge of the woods. Every day he lovingly tends his garden. This makes him happy and his beautiful flowers are his pride and joy. But still sometimes he is sad and feels all alone. One day he makes an acquaintance with a bird that has landed on his window. The bird picks at a piece of cake the man has left there. The old man's initial anger over the 'little thief' fades and a friendship develops. The man feeds the little bird which becomes more and more tame and the bird repays the man with its song and companionship. Both are happy and glad.

IV. 16



Assemble a picture of this story on a flannel board or perform it with a hand puppet.



In conversation work out the benefit both the man and the bird get from each other.



Let the children create a cooperative picture (house, garden with flowers...) The team effort will knit the group closer together.



Search for ways to bring joy to someone (in the congregation/at home...)





A friend helps in the time of need

The two field mice, Florian and Sebastian, are neighbors. Their tunnels are close together. They meet each other every day and are good friends. After a night of heavy rain, Florian does not show up as usual to play. Sebastian is worried about his friend. He decides to look for him. He finds Florian at the entrance of his tunnel. Florian is very upset because the rain has flooded his tunnel. He does not know where he can spend the night. Sebastian comforts his friend and at the same time invites him to stay at his place where he can stay until the water recedes. Happily and thankfully Florian accepts the help of his friend.

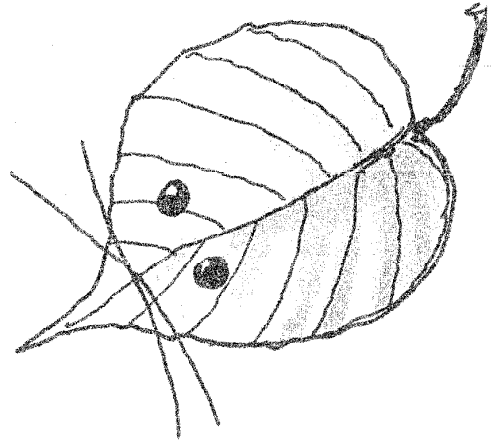
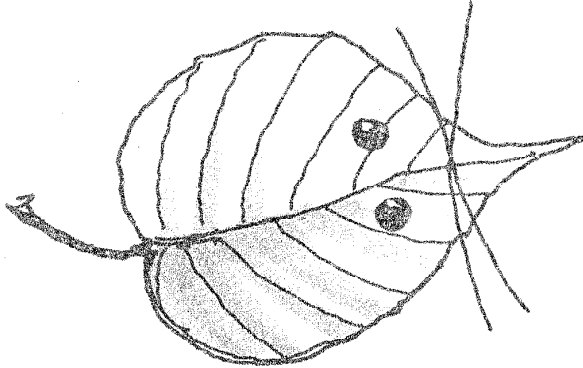


The children can use plasticine or nutshells to make mice. Act out the story and elaborate on it.

II. 2



The children can sing: "Raining, Raining."

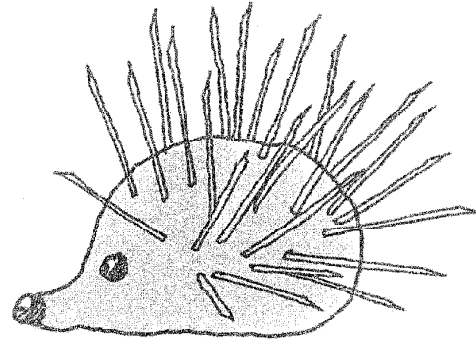




Caring for a porcupine

Autumn has come. Four year old Julia and her mother are busy cleaning the patio. Under a pile of leaves they find a tiny porcupine. It is too small and thin to survive the winter hibernation.

They decide to care for the little animal. They make a home for it out of a cardboard box and place it in the basement where it is not too warm. They feed the little porcupine regularly. While it is cold outside, the little porcupine becomes steadily stronger and it survives the winter. In spring they return the little porcupine to the garden. At first it stays close to the food which is strewn about. Then the porcupine becomes self-sufficient. Julia is sad because she does not see the porcupine very often any more. One day she discovers something very beautiful. At the very same spot where Julia first saw the porcupine, there is a beautiful sparkling stone. To Julia it seems like a wonderful 'thank you' for the care she had given to the porcupine.



The instructor demonstrates the story with a toy porcupine.

VIII. 5



The children can form a porcupine out of plasticine and stick toothpicks on its back. They can make a home for the porcupine in a box using leaves.



The children can talk about their pets and the responsibilities connected with owning a pet.

III. 7



Under a cloth, hide some materials that are characteristic of certain animals (feathers, pieces of fur, wool...) Let the children feel them and guess to which animal the pieces belong.



▶ **George accepts responsibility**

George often walks the neighbor's dog. He does this gladly because he is very fond of the animal. The neighbor is very happy that he looks after this task for her and often gives him little expressions of appreciation. Today the weather is very beautiful. All the children are outside. While George is walking the dog, he meets his friends who are playing ball. He would like to join them but he must look after the dog. The boys convince him to tie up the dog and play along. George thinks: "Why not?" He ties the dog to a bush and joins the action. Because the game is very exciting, George does not notice how much time has gone by. When he thinks about the dog, he notices the dog has disappeared. The dog has broken loose and run away. Now what? George sends a quick prayer heavenward: "Heavenly Father - help!" The children search for the dog without success. With a heavy heart George makes his way to the neighbor's house. On the way he meets an elderly gentleman whom he knows well. He tells the man of his troubles. The man recalls that a while ago he saw a dog run past him. George is somewhat relieved. He runs to the neighbor's house. The dog is actually sitting by the door and greets him with a happy bark. Happily, George returns the dog to the neighbor. He is determined to take more care in the future.

▶ The instructor can cut a dog out of cardboard. It can be colored and fastened to a stick (lash). The children can act out the story using the cardboard dog as a prop.

▶ Discuss with the children why George was worried. What could have happened to the dog? George has learned that he must take his responsibility seriously.

▶ The children can ponder if there are more situations in which someone (i.e. mother or father) trusts and depends on them (for example to baby-sit a younger brother or sister, to watch something cooking on the stove, not to run out into the street...)