

# LOVE IS THE WAY

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

# WEEK ONE

Chapters 1&2: What is love?

*“Love is the most overused word in the English language. It is confusing to everyone. Some people live their whole lives and never get it right.” –Jamie Maguire*

Welcome everyone to the this first session. Read the quote above, and invite people to check in by sharing their responses to the questions below. Call on each person one at a time to share.

## Connecting:

Invite the group to reflect aloud on these questions:

- What are all the times you used the word “love” this past week? Introduce yourself to the group and share one of those loves in your life.
- What prompted you to join this discussion group on “Love is the Way,” and what are you hoping to receive from this time together?

Close this section with prayer. You might do the prayer to the right in unison.

## Covenanting:

We want to create an environment that embodies the very thing we are reading and striving to put into practice. So how do we want to be together as a group? Are there some practices we would like to commit to that will help us make love the way in our time together?

Let the group brainstorm. You might want to suggest some things, like listening attentively to one another, using “I” statements when speaking, allowing for some silence, and asking curious questions versus debating and defending positions. After brainstorming, rehearse the list with the group, and ask if each person can say “yes” to this covenant on how we will be together.

## Bible Study: I Corinthians 13 (CEB)

This scripture is often read at weddings, but it was written to a conflicted church in Corinth. Each side was puffed up, presuming its way was better. Each thought it was more important, more right, more righteous than the other faction. This is Paul’s word to them:

*“Love is patient, love is kind, it isn’t jealous, it doesn’t brag, it isn’t arrogant, it isn’t rude, it doesn’t seek its own advantage, it isn’t irritable, it doesn’t keep a record of complaints, it isn’t happy with injustice, but it is happy with the truth. Love puts up with all things, trusts in all things, hopes for all things, endures all things. Love never fails.”*

Loving God, fill my heart with the love that you freely give. Make love my first and last thoughts. May I love others and freely give to them. Make my spirit a spirit of joy, happiness, and love for both my friends and my enemies. Help me love abundantly as you have loved me. Amen.

*Based on John 13:34  
DailyPrayerGuide.net*

Invite the group to reflect aloud on these questions:

- What catches your attention in this description of love?
- When or where have you seen this kind of love in action? What made it possible?
- What would be different in our church community if we were fully living into this scripture?

**Video:** Watch this week's video with Rev. Laurie Kantonen.

Depending on the size of your group, you may want to move into breakout groups/rooms of three to allow for deeper sharing.

### **Going Deeper:**

Invite the group to reflect aloud on these questions (courtesy of author Kate Bowler, written by Erin S. Lane):

- "Agape" is the Greek word for love that seeks the well-being of another. It's also the same word used to describe the love of God in the New Testament. Therefore, Bishop Curry says, if we want to turn on "God's GPS," we simply have to ask, "Is this just about me or is this about we?" What aspect of your life is easiest or hardest to orient to this kind of love?
- Bishop Curry reflects on a moment during his mother's cold, winter burial when Mrs. Bullock pulled him into her and provided "a soft landing for a boy's suffering." Of that time, he writes, "We were always resting in the loving hands of our church community. Which is to say, in God's hands." When have you experienced a soft landing for your suffering? Who pulled you into their coat? Who held you in their hands? What did this memory memorialize in you?

### **Going Out:**

Invite the group to share responses to these questions:

- What is your takeaway idea from this week's reading/video?
- What is one action step you will take this week in an effort to make love your GPS?

### **Closing:**

Show "The Gift of Love" at <https://tinyurl.com/giftoflovesong> or read it together from #408 in the United Methodist Hymnal as the closing benediction.

Remind the group to read Chapters 3 and 4 for next week.