

Love is...

Mark 12.28-34

After Jesus gets the better of the various factions who have tried to trick him on points of law, a scribe asks a more fundamental question: Which is the most important law? Jesus cites the words of the Jewish Shema (from Deuteronomy 6.4-5) as being the encapsulation of all the laws.

Now read **Mark 12.28-34** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

The scribe is reassured that Jesus gives the 'right' answer and echoes the importance of loving God and loving others. He recognises that these are the most important aspects of his faith. How might you complete the sentence, 'Love is...?'



On this wall in Montmartre, 'I love you' is written in 250 different languages. **Ask yourself:** How would you illustrate a commitment to love others?



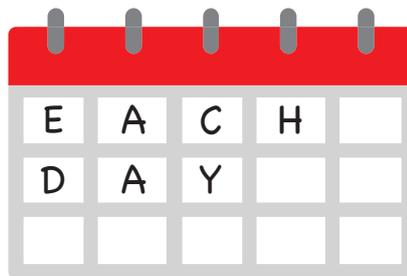
Since the 1970s there has been a continuous supply of 'Love is ...' cartoons published in a newspaper. The most well-known are about love between a couple. But love is bigger than that. Sketch some situations in which love makes a difference in everyday life, or in global issues.



It is hard to explain what 'love is' in words. We can't see it, but there are ways to show it. On a day of suitable weather this week, go for a walk in an open space, woodland or park. Breathe in the smells of autumn and enjoy the crunch of leaves. If possible, spend time gathering a natural bouquet from the autumn foliage, or collect coloured leaves to make a collage. Give your offering to someone who wasn't able to go on your walk, as a sign of love.

Love NOT LAW

If there was a law that stated that everyone should love eating tripe and sprouts, would that change how everyone felt about these foods? Many of us would be guilty of breaking that law and would feel justified in doing so. Yet a law against committing murder seems reasonable. On your own, or with others, look again at God's 10 laws given in Exodus 20 and at the two that Jesus gives in Mark 12. Do they cover every situation in today's world? Are there grey areas where the law is not the answer? Do we need love as well?



Listen to or read the day's headlines, the big stories and perhaps some more local news. In what ways is love shown in the event being reported? If the answer is not very positive, look at the events and characters involved in the story. What could have been different, if someone had chosen to act out of love for God or for others? Can you rewrite a headline to reflect how love would have made a difference to the outcome? In your own day, think about the decisions you make and the words you use, to see if you too can improve the day by adding a bit of love to it.

LOVE GOD

On the last day of October there are events and 'celebrations' of Halloween. In its present form, it has become very commercialised and macabre. Our Christian faith is centred on life after death promised by the gift of resurrection through Jesus – that is something to be celebrated. Create a poster to go in your window tonight that focuses on light, life in this world and the next, the love of God. If you are expecting Trick or Treat visitors tonight, make up a small pack of treats, along with a simple card that expresses God's love.

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

One day, one of the scribes came to Jesus with a question. 'Out of all the commandments, which one is the most important?' Jesus replied, 'It is this: "You must love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength." The second most important one is this: "You must love your neighbours – other people – just as much as you love yourself."

The scribe said to him, 'Well said, Teacher; I agree. To love God with all your heart, all your understanding, and all your strength, and to love others as yourself – this is far more important than any other gift that can ever be given to God.'

Seeing how wisely the scribe had spoken, Jesus said to him, 'You are very close to God's kingdom.'

After that, no one dared to ask Jesus any more questions.

Mark 12.28-34



Did you know?

- The soul is the essence of you or your spirit.
- God's kingdom is not a physical place, but it describes when people recognise God is in charge.

Mark 12.28-34 (NRSV)

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, 'Which commandment is the first of all?' Jesus answered, 'The first is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.' Then the scribe said to him, 'You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that "he is one, and besides him there is

no other"; and "to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength", and "to love one's neighbour as oneself",—this is much more important than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.' When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.' After that no one dared to ask him any question.