

Family Page

Background Focus

Today's chapter focuses entirely on the Greatest Commandment as Jesus taught it: to love God and to love others as we love ourselves. In teaching this commandment, Jesus summarized and simplified the Law of God in terms even a child can understand. This demonstrates his insight and brilliance as a teacher. Of course Jesus makes clear that this love includes the Ten Commandments and other teachings of God's Law. (See Matthew 23:23–24.)

This chapter also introduces the term *Sacred Scripture* as an alternative for "the Word of God" and "the Bible." We look to Scripture for our knowledge and understanding of God and his plan for us. If we want to follow Jesus, we will listen to his Word in Scripture and love as he loved.

Family Strategies

Love really is the answer to everything. But parental love requires frequent explanations, especially when children ask "Why?": "Why do I have to go to bed now? Why can't I go to the movies with the older kids? Why can't I stay overnight at Robbie's?" In frustration, the answer that leaps to mind might be, "Because I said so." The deeper answer is, "Because I love you—Because I love you, I want you to get proper rest so you will be ready for tomorrow; I want you to watch movies you will enjoy, not movies that will frighten or upset you; I want you to understand that family plans can take precedence over individual desires."

A child's growth in reasoning powers requires ideas to chew on and grapple with. Explanations and reasons are helpful to that growth. Children who understand *why* they are asked to do things cooperate more willingly. Love is the answer, but explanations help!

Family Activities

- Read together the Featured Story, "Love Is the Greatest Commandment" (Mark 12:28–31), on page 1556 in *The Catholic Children's Bible*. You may want to find some of the following Scripture quotations, highlighting Jesus' teaching of love, and read them together as a family: John 13:34–35, Romans 13:8–10, or 1 Corinthians 13:1–13. Discuss ways your family shows love to one another and to all you meet.
- Make a LOVE mosaic. Cut magazine pictures into ½-inch squares. Write the word *LOVE* in open block letters on a sheet of paper. Glue the squares on the letters. Hang in a special place for all to see.
- Watch together the YouTube video "Help Each Other & Love Each Other. Never Stop Sharing" (5:42). This video shows that we can share God's love with others in small but significant ways. Discuss ways each member of your family can be part of a chain of love.

Pray It!

Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross.

Lord, help our family to love one another and to love all those you bring into our lives. May we share your love with all. Amen.