

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Fundocry Poconos Homework 2017

### Love is Greater

This year at the Poconos we talked about how God's love is greater than anything we will ever face. We played games, talked and experienced the greatness of God's love in our homes, lives and world.

We are bummed that you were not able to join us at the retreat. Here's the thing about this homework...it may not completely cover all that we experienced on the retreat. One of the most important things about the retreat is getting away from home for a few days, getting to know each other a bit more and deepening our relationships with God and with each other.

Sometimes getting away from the regular routine of school – even just for a weekend – is something that helps us see the love that God showers us with and gives us opportunities to share that love in new and different ways. You are encouraged to look at some opportunities to join the Trinity youth for any upcoming getaways...to take the time to be strengthened for everyday life.

- 1) Our theme verse is John 15:13 (look it up in your Bible, highlight it and then fill in the blanks below.)

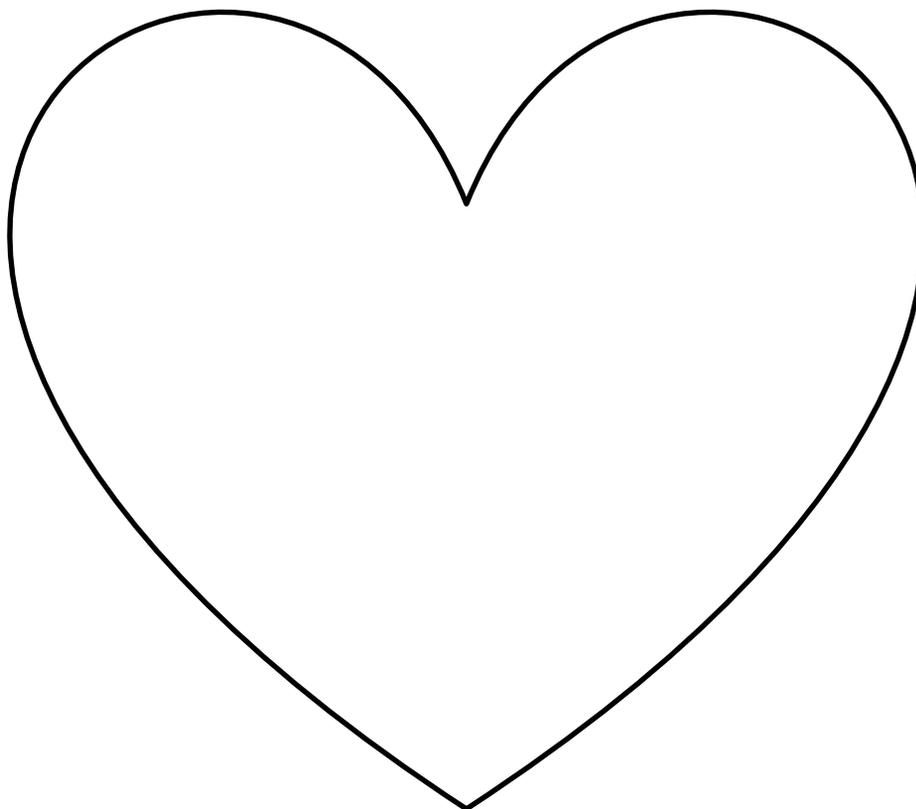
"No one has \_\_\_\_\_ love than \_\_\_\_\_, to lay \_\_\_\_\_ one's \_\_\_\_\_ for one's \_\_\_\_\_."

The verse from John was picked because it is good for us to hear and remember how great God's love is for each and every one of us. This love is shown to us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and NOTHING, I repeat, NOTHING can separate us from that love. Check out the next verse.

- 2) Read and highlight Romans 8:38-39 then fill in the blanks below:

For I am \_\_\_\_\_ that neither \_\_\_\_\_ nor \_\_\_\_\_, neither \_\_\_\_\_ nor \_\_\_\_\_, neither the \_\_\_\_\_ nor the \_\_\_\_\_, nor any \_\_\_\_\_, neither \_\_\_\_\_ nor \_\_\_\_\_, nor anything else in all \_\_\_\_\_, will be able to \_\_\_\_\_ us from the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ that is in \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus our \_\_\_\_\_.

3) Read the verses from Romans a few times. Take some time in your Bible to circle or underline the words that you feel are most important in those verses. Now write those words in this heart:



4) God loves you! (Unconditionally!) How does that make you feel?

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5) Why do you think it is hard for some to believe that God loves them?

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6) How does it make you feel to know that nothing can separate you from God's love?

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Now, stop for a moment and pray.

Dear God, thank you for loving me. Thank you for surrounding me with friends and family that show your love for me. Continue to hold me in your love and help me to share that love with others. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

### ***Love is Greater than Stuff***

We live in a world that wants to fill our ego with empty calories. We pray each day that God fills us with what is good, true and real. In this breakout session, we talked about how God's love is greater than all the "stuff" we would possible have or want.

- 7) Finish this bumper sticker:
  - a. Wins.
  - b. Is eternally happy.
  - c. Is eternally sad.
  - d. Is still dead.
  
- 8) Buying and consuming tons of things we don't need with borrowed money we don't have in order to impress friends we don't like is:
  - a. Stupid
  - b. Sad
  - c. The American Way
  - d. All of the above
  
- 9) Excess materialism is closely related to which commandment:
  - a. You shall have no other gods before me
  - b. You shall not steal
  - c. You shall not covet
  - d. All of the above, and probably most of the rest if you think about it
  
- 10) Which of the following is NOT God's will:
  - a. Loving things and using people
  - b. Loving people and suing things
  - c. Sharing what you have with the poor
  - d. Living a humble, thankful life, sharing with the poor and modeling a lifestyle that will help others want to live in God's will
  
- 11) Take a few moments to jot down some of the things you are blessed with and why. At least three or four things you do well, and three or four possessions you truly value or are proud of.
 

**Things I do well:**

  1. \_\_\_\_\_ Because: \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ Because: \_\_\_\_\_

- 3. \_\_\_\_\_ Because: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_ Because: \_\_\_\_\_

**Possessions I truly value:**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_ Because: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_ Because: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_ Because: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_ Because: \_\_\_\_\_

12) Of the possessions listed above, which one is the most important one to you?

\_\_\_\_\_

Why is it most important?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Would you be able to part with it? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13) Read Luke 12:13-21. Jesus is telling a parable about possessions. (Keep your Bible open when you finish reading.)

How would you feel if you were the rich man?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

After a warning like that would you make any changes in your life? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14) Now read Luke 12:22-31. This is what Jesus tells his disciples after the parable.

What does this passage tell us about possessions?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is it easy to heed these words? Why or why not?

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Now stop for a moment and pray,

Dear God, in a world that wants to fill our ego with empty calories, fill us with what's good, true and real. Empower us to share that goodness with a hungry world. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

### ***Love is Greater than Status***

Doesn't it just stink when there's something you don't like, but there's nothing you can do about it? Sometimes, there are things about ourselves that we wish we could change. Maybe we don't like our physical appearance.

We just don't feel like we are attractive enough like we don't live up to the unrealistic expectations of popular culture. Sometimes there is something that we wished that we could be better at, but no matter how hard we try, we just don't improve, at least not in a way that satisfies.

What about when your issue is with someone else? Maybe there's a person or group of people in your life with whom you just can't get along.

It could be an attitude issue or perhaps this person treats you poorly. In the scenarios I have described, the circumstances might be different, but they point to the same unfortunate truth: we can't always make things (people) the way we want.

Sure, we can do our best to minimize the problem through fashion choices, avoiding the activity we struggle at or ignore the people who bother us, but they are still there. Life is often outside of our ability to control.

That's just... well... Life. Cheerful topic, huh? Don't you wish I could just give you the secret answer that will solve all of life's problems? In truth, I can, but it may not be the solution you are hoping for. The solution boils down to one word—acceptance.

I'm going to start with the second scenario first. Take a moment to read through these questions and really think about honest answers to them. I would like you to answer honestly....only I (Pastor Jen) read through the homework...and I will not share these answers with anyone.

Who is the person or persons in your life that you are having a hard time accepting?

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Why do you have a hard time accepting this person(s)? (It is entirely possible that you have every reason to dislike this person. He/she might treat you poorly, might do things to you that Jesus would frown upon. That, however, doesn't change God's solution.)

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15) Read and highlight Colossians 3:12-13, then fill in the blanks.

Therefore, as \_\_\_\_\_ chosen people, \_\_\_\_\_ and dearly \_\_\_\_\_, clothe yourselves with \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Bear with each other and \_\_\_\_\_ whatever grievances you may have against one another. \_\_\_\_\_ as the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ you.

A few things to remember about the above passage:

- a) God chose you to be holy.
- b) As holy as we are, we aren't perfect.
- c) We are called to forgive just as God forgives us.

We all have flaws, but even though we know this, it is hard to get past the flaws we see in ourselves. Popular culture often doesn't help with this.

For someone to truly live up to the "ideals" we see in the media, he/she would have to be obscenely rich, have access to the best plastic surgeons in the world, and be willing to sell his/her very soul to achieve "perfection."

Here's the saddest truth of all: there are plenty of people in the world right now with the means to do just that, and guess what, they are some of the most unhappy people alive.

The truth is that God doesn't make mistakes. God created you and loves you for who you are right now. Next time you have a chance, look in a mirror and study the person looking back at you. (Actually, stop right now, and go look in a mirror.) Look at yourself, at this person who is so amazing in God's eyes that God was willing to sacrifice His only Son so that He could spend an eternity with you. Let's look at a few things the Bible says about how God sees you.

16) Read and highlight Ephesians 2:10, then write it below:

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17) Read and highlight Psalm 139:14, then write it below:

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In the passages above....where you see the word 'you' that's you....God is talking about YOU!  
Where you see the word 'I' that's you, too! Be proud of who God created you to be!

Which is harder for you, accepting others or accepting yourself? Why?

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How can you start making allowances for other people's faults starting today?

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What does it mean to be "fearfully and wonderfully made"?

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What are some ways that you feel God has shown you that He loves you just the way you are today?

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Now stop for a moment, fill in the blanks and pray:

Dear God, thank you for loving me. Thank you for creating me in your image and for your great love in my life. When I worry about things like \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, help me to see the bigger picture. Thanks for showing your love to me by \_\_\_\_\_. Be with me this day and all days. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

### **Love is Greater than Fear**

When we got together in this session we talked about God's love being greater than all the fears we have faced and the ones we have yet to face. We talked about how there are irrational fears...like my fear of frogs, or my fear of dropping my cell phone in a porta-potty. See, I may call those things fears, but it's more that I hope that I don't run into a frog, or drop my phone in a porta-potty. Then we talked about rational fears...these got a little more serious.

Take a moment or two to think about some fears you may have. Maybe this question and some prompts will help you think of some: What are you afraid of today?

*Maybe it is your future.*  
*Maybe it is what others think about you?*  
*Many people fear death or someone you love dying.*  
*Maybe it is that someone will find out something that you are ashamed of.*  
*Maybe you are afraid of love.*  
*Of disappointing someone.*  
*Are you afraid that God will judge you?*

The list could go on and on...but take a moment and write some of those fears here:

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While in the Poconos, we went around the small group and shared our fears. We noticed that some people had the same fears about their day-to-day lives and their futures. We talked about how this list of what we fear would also change depending on where we are in life or what type of community we live in. There are some places in the world today where people worry about violence or what they will eat. They worry that war will break out or that their lives are in danger. For them, fear is real and it is life or death. Can you imagine living every day with that level of fear? Just think about how your body feels when you are really afraid. Sweaty palms. Your stomach gets all queasy. Every single inch of your body is on alert. And each of us responds to fear in different ways. Some of us freeze. Others run. And some of us fight, but regardless, we all know what it is like to be afraid. Fear can truly be paralyzing and it can be very difficult to think clearly when you are truly afraid. It is no surprise, then, that the Bible talks a lot about fear and being afraid.

18) Read and highlight Isaiah 41:9-10, then fill in the blanks.

"I took \_\_\_\_ from the ends of the earth,  
 from its farthest corners I called \_\_\_\_.  
 I said, '\_\_\_\_ are my servant';  
 I have chosen \_\_\_\_ and not rejected \_\_\_\_.  
 So do not \_\_\_\_, for I am with \_\_\_\_;

Do not be \_\_\_\_\_, for I am your \_\_\_\_\_.

I will \_\_\_\_\_ you and \_\_\_\_\_ you;

I will uphold \_\_\_\_\_ with my righteous right \_\_\_\_\_.”

This scripture is one that we all should probably memorize because it is so important. Is there really anything that we should be afraid of when we have God with us? But it is almost like God knows that we will struggle with fear, isn't it?

God reminds us that he is with us.

And God tells us to not fear.

Why?

Because God is with us.

19) Look back at your list of fears. Now list them again, but this time after each fear write this: Do not fear: God is with me!

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

20) What times are the hardest for you to remember not to be afraid?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

21) When you think about your future, what causes you fear?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

22) How does it make you feel knowing that God is with you? Does it help you to face your fears?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Now stop and take time to pray.

Dear God,

Thank you for loving me. Thank you for listening to me when I share my fears. God I know you are with me, so remind me each time I am afraid that I should not fear because you are with me. Continue to be with me as I face the future and maybe an unknown path. Always be with me. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

As our weekend drew to a close on Sunday morning, we worshipped together. Part of our closing worship included a passage from 1 Corinthians. Find 1 Corinthians 13:4-13, read and highlight it and then fill in the blanks.

Love is \_\_\_\_\_, love is \_\_\_\_\_. It does not \_\_\_\_\_, it does not \_\_\_\_\_, it is not \_\_\_\_\_. <sup>5</sup> It does not \_\_\_\_\_ others, it is not \_\_\_\_\_g, it is not easily \_\_\_\_\_, it keeps no record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup> Love does not delight in evil but \_\_\_\_\_ with the \_\_\_\_\_. <sup>7</sup> It always \_\_\_\_\_, always \_\_\_\_\_, always \_\_\_\_\_, always \_\_\_\_\_.

<sup>8</sup> Love \_\_\_\_\_ fails. But where there are prophecies, they will \_\_\_\_\_; where there are tongues, they will be \_\_\_\_\_; where there is \_\_\_\_\_, it will pass away. <sup>9</sup> For we know in \_\_\_\_\_ and we prophesy in part, <sup>10</sup> but when completeness comes, what is in part \_\_\_\_\_. <sup>11</sup> When I was a \_\_\_\_\_, I talked like a \_\_\_\_\_, I thought like a \_\_\_\_\_, I reasoned like a \_\_\_\_\_. When I became a man, I put the ways of \_\_\_\_\_ behind me. <sup>12</sup> For now we see only a \_\_\_\_\_ as in a mirror; then we shall see \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. Now I know in \_\_\_\_\_; then I shall know \_\_\_\_\_, even as I am fully known.

<sup>13</sup> And now these three remain: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. But the greatest of these is \_\_\_\_\_.

The above passage is often read at weddings, because it talks so much about love. But here's the thing. It's not love between spouses that it is talking about...but about the love that God has for us. This deep, amazing, unconditional love is for you. And nothing, NOTHING in the world can take that away from you. God loves you no matter what! God's love is greater than the challenges you will face, the struggles you will experience and it's even greater than all the amazing victories and celebrations you have. It's greater because God first loves us....and then we love and serve and care for others.

Now stop, fill in the blanks and pray.

Dear God,

I thank you because I am marvelously made. Search me out and know my heart.

These are things that I am happy about right now \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Here are some things that are bothering me \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Help me to see each and every day that your love is greater than all of these things and is always with me.

In Jesus' name I pray, amen.