

## Aim of lesson

To learn from Paul's teaching about love.

## Bible background

1 Corinthians 12:12-31; 1 Corinthians 13.

## Outline of lesson

### Division

Remind the class of the problem at Corinth of the members of the church forming groups who each thought they were the best and the most important, and that the others were in some way inferior. You may like to do this by giving each member of your class a role in that situation. For example, tell one that he was baptised by Paul, another that he was baptised by Apollos, another that he had been baptised recently by someone else at Corinth, and had not heard any of the apostles speak. Ask the class what sort of statements each might make to show off their own importance and belittle the others.

### One body

Remind them of Paul's teaching that this attitude was childish and that all the members at Corinth had been baptised into Christ. He was the one who had died for them. Explain further how the members of the church should pull together, not pull apart. Paul gives an illustration in 1 Corinthians 12:12-31.

Ask the class to turn to their workbooks and discuss and complete the section on the body. Help them to think about the application of the 'parable' to the body of Christ. Each member should build and serve the others, not criticise and belittle. 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 can be read either in short sections or altogether during this process.

### Love is ...

The right-hand page of the workbook is designed to help the class consider some of the positive teaching about love in 1 Corinthians 13. You may like to read the whole chapter first, or at the end. The first part is for the class to write, for example, 'Though I can pass all my exams and score the winning goal for the school team, if I have no love, I am nothing'. The last box is for the class to write some of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. They could choose one phrase they would like to try to remember. They could write out the whole passage, or they could re-write the passage using the converse of each statement, e.g. 'Love is not impatient or unkind. It is glad when someone else gets something good, it keeps quiet when it has done something good itself' etc. This has the advantage of making the class think what each phrase means, in practice.

## Digging deeper

### Where does all this love come from

This section looks further at where love comes from, how great God's love is, and how it should influence us.

## Relevance to our lives

You may like to have the class discuss which particular phrase in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 they each find hardest to carry out. Perhaps they could each decide which to pray about, and put into practice during the week.

## Prayer

Ask the class to write a prayer about learning to love as God loves us, for your large class prayer sheet.

## Other suggestions for activities

- The class could each make small posters, using different quotations about love from 1 Corinthians 13.
- After they had read this teaching about love the class could write the script of a discussion between several members of the church at Corinth. Did they apologise for their attitudes? What had they learned about valuing others?