Preparing for the Program

Contact three people to help you with a PowerPoint and/or musical selection, a prayer, and an object display. Match the activity to the gifts/interests of these helpers. Also try to involve a young person. Collect materials and make instruction cards for each of the Bible study activities to be used during the program.

PowerPoint or Music

For the Scripture reading, ask someone to create a PowerPoint to illustrate 1 Corinthians 13, using public domain photos from the Internet or someone’s private collection. The presentation should include the full text of the chapter and have one picture for each phrase. Present the slides while someone reads the chapter.

If PowerPoint is not available, ask someone to collect as many photos as possible to illustrate each verse. Display these on the wall, with their relevant texts.

Prayer

For today’s prayer choose one of the following activities:

● Ask one person to write a prayer activity based on 1 Corinthians 13. This person could write a prayer praising God for each of the aspects of His love listed in verses 4–8. Then that person could pray that each of these characteristics will grow in our hearts and be evident in our relationships with each other.

● Invite members to praise God for an aspect of His love beginning with each letter of the alphabet. Have people contribute praises randomly. Spend a few moments during the week writing an aspect of God’s love beginning with each letter of the alphabet; then you can help or prompt if people get stuck. For example, Q is for the God who quiets us. For X, use words beginning with the prefix ex such as praising God for His extreme love of us.

Object Display

Invite someone to find as many small objects as possible that illustrate the aspects of God’s love. Have that person arrange these objects on a tray before the program and place the tray on one of the activity tables. Examples of objects may be a heart-shaped puzzle (patience); soft cotton balls (kindness); candle (hope); tissues (comfort); soap (forgiving), etc. This will be used during the activity time.

The Activity Tables

Collect the required items and create an instruction card for each table in advance. The instructions for each table are included in their descriptions later in the article. Place the items and instructions on each table. If you have a large group, you may need several tables per activity.

Exploring God’s Word

Ask the class or group: “What have you done with your friends this week?” You can write the answers on a board or large sheet of paper. Ask how the different activities helped them to understand their friends better. Say: “When we have friends, we enjoy exploring our relationship with them in different ways. Our Bible study time is an opportunity to explore our relationship with God in the same way. God has given us all different gifts, interests, ministries, and passions. He knows we all have different ways we learn best. When we understand how we learn best, we can choose different approaches to Bible study.

God used a variety of ways for His people to experience Him through the ages. The sanctuary and its services were learning tools full of symbols. The feasts were rich, multisensory learning activities. The prophets learned about God through their inspired visual experiences. Jesus taught through parables and through His practical caring ministry.

“God asks us to love Him with all our heart and soul and strength (Deut. 6:5). Our “heart” is about understanding His love and our love for each other and about discovering our passion for what God is passionate about. Our “soul” is about using our learning styles, educational background, curiosity and interests to enrich our relationship with God. Our “strength” is about using our spiritual
gifts, physical abilities, and talents to explore God’s love. The Holy Spirit needs to guide all our ways of learning about God so that God is the center of our study and activity.

“Now we are going to explore different ways of studying the Bible. There are several activities you can try. They are . . . (describe each activity and where it can be found). You have 10–15 minutes to explore the activity you feel most comfortable doing, or the activity you feel most excited about trying.”

Exploring 1 Corinthians 13—Activity Tables
Instruction card:

Writing

● Read “The Father’s Love Letter” and 1 Corinthians 13.
● Write a love letter from God to yourself about what you think God would love to write to you today.
● Personalize verses 4–8. For example, “God is patient with me when I . . .”
● This week, journal how God shows His love to you each day.

Silent reading. Provide a quiet space for this activity along with pens and paper in case people want to write down their thoughts.
Instruction card:

Silent Reading

Read 1 Corinthians 13 slowly. As you consider each verse, ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand what God is saying to you.

Practical caring. Provide paper, pens, and articles and books about caring ministries.
Instruction card:

Practical Caring

● Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you focus on one of the aspects of love listed in these verses.
● List ways in which you could show practically that aspect of God’s love to others.
● Choose at least one caring activity you could do next week to share God’s love.
● How has this activity brought you closer to loving others as God loves them?

Discovery. On this table place Bible encyclopedias, commentaries, the Index to E.G. White’s writings, some of her books, and any other reference books you can find. Add some bookmark-shaped strips of card and colored pens.
Instruction card:

Discovery

● Use the books and resources on the table to research something about 1 Corinthians 13 that interests you.
● Discover more about Corinth, love, patience, hope, Paul, etc.
● Write one new insight you have discovered on a bookmark and take it with you.
● Choose one other way you would like to learn more about 1 Corinthians 13 during the week ahead.

Art. On this table place postcard-sized pieces of drawing paper, crayons, glue sticks, various colored papers, scissors, etc.
Instruction card:

Art

● Use anything on this table to illustrate a phrase or verse in 1 Corinthians 13 that most inspires you.
● Draw an image that illustrates one of the aspects of love in this chapter.
● Design a poster advertising an aspect of God’s love.
● How has working on this project helped you to understand more about God’s love?

Music. On this table place some sheets of plain paper and some music manuscript paper. Add pens, pencils, and erasers.
Instruction card:

Music and Song
Start to write a song based on 1 Corinthians 13.
Choose some pieces of music that most illustrates the different aspects of love described in 1 Corinthians 13.
What piece of music could you listen to at home while you study God’s love to?

**Inspiring Objects.** Place a tray on the table with the objects found by your helper.

**Instruction card:**

*Inspiring Objects*

Jesus often used everyday objects and experiences to help people understand spiritual matters. He used things like sheep, flowers, bread, water, seeds, birds, trees, etc. Read 1 Corinthians 13. Then look at the objects on the tray.

- Which objects would you choose to illustrate each of the different aspects of God’s love listed in verses 4–8, and why?
- What other objects could you use to illustrate different aspects of God’s love?
- Which object best illustrates the aspect of God’s love you most need to experience today?
- When you return home, set aside a jar or bowl. Fill it with objects that remind you of God’s love.

**Creativity.** Provide some Play-Doh© or similar modeling compound, and other creative scraps. Provide scissors, paper, cardstock, glue, etc.

**Instruction Card:**

*Creativity*

- Use anything you on the table to create something that illustrates an aspect of God’s love found in 1 Corinthians 13.
- Take your object with you when you have finished.
- What small thing could you make at home this week to express an aspect of God’s love?
- How could you use it to share God’s love with another person?

**Bible study guides.** Provide a selection of Bible study guides and correspondence courses available in your country. Add paper and pens if they are required.

**Instruction card:**

*Bible Study Guides*

- Choose any one of the Bible study guides.
- Read through it and look up the Bible verses.
- Which aspects of God’s love, as listed in 1 Corinthians 13, are revealed in this guide?
- How easy are they to discover?
- What could you add to this study to help the student discover more about God’s love?
- What would you like to study in the Bible this week to give you a deeper understanding of God’s love?
- How could you share your learning with someone else?

**Exploring 1 Corinthians 13—Sharing Time**

Allow at least 10 to 15 minutes of activity time. Then invite each person to find a partner and have them share something they learned about God’s love from their interactive study time. They also can show each other what they wrote or created.

**Exploring 1 Corinthians 13—Discussion Time**

- Why is it important for us to be aware of some of the different approaches for enriching our Bible study?
- What different ways of exploring the Bible have you found useful?
- What new approaches to Bible study would you like to explore in the future?
- How can we practically encourage each other to study the Bible?
- How can Bible study enhance our outreach, fellowship, and world mission?

**Exploring 1 Corinthians 13—Close**

Close by challenging each person to try a new approach to Bible study in the following week. Suggest that they write some of their ideas on index cards or email them to a person who will post them on a bulletin board, print an idea in the bulletin each week, or compile them into a booklet to be shared with other church members.