

# CHARACTER

Love

December 2008



**Love: “unselfish, loyal and benevolent concern for the good of another.”**

**“Love one another and you will be happy. It’s as simple and as difficult as that.”**

**–Michael Leunig**

Love is that wonderful feeling of warmth, tenderness, and caring that arises within us for those we hold dear. Love also encompasses feelings of compassion for those in need, or who have been victims of the vicissitudes of life. Love can be as simple as a passing tender thought, or a smile accompanied by a tear. One 7-year-old boy commented, “Love is what’s in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents, and listen.”

Love is perhaps manifested most often through simple – even if mundane and unnoticed – acts of caring and service. How powerful is the love that motivates mothers to carry and give birth to, wipe, wash, nurture, nudge, teach, train, feed, fuss over, praise and applaud their children for years on end. Yet such self sacrifice spins and strengthens the cords of love ever tighter.

We frequently grow to love those we serve, as well as those who serve us. Love in many of our relationships is the fruit of invested time and energy that has resulted in understanding. In difficult relationships, love can even spring from a conscious decision. We can also employ its power to heal or bring peace.

We love those most whose needs we serve, those we take time to truly understand, and those who are able to be and share themselves in our presence. We love those who carry with them an attitude of happiness, or a spirit of optimism or gladness – those who have the ability to spread sunshine about them. Marion D. Hanks once stated, “Love listens, it hears, and senses needs in another.” A great example of this recently occurred in our family. Upon learning of a serious and challenging complication in our daughter’s pregnancy, her caring neighbor hurried to her side and brought comfort in the form of a large assortment of chocolate, a warm embrace, and some much-needed encouragement and

perspective. As further explained by Marion D. Hanks, love “doesn’t just happen, it must be brought about by people who think, care, and make an effort.”

One of the great things about making a real effort to love others is the multitude of fruit love bears. One of those is trust. When we truly love others, it evokes their trust in us. One four year old put it this way: “When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth.”

Love also fosters friendship and affection, can bring us companionship, and generates acceptance and unity. Love can help us overcome tremendous obstacles in life, as in the story of a handicapped and misshapen young student. Talented in friendliness, he had won many scholastic honors and the respect of his classmates. When queried by one of his peers about the cause of his deformity, the young man replied, “Infantile paralysis.”

“How do you get the courage to face the world?” asked the classmate.

“It’s was easy,” the boy replied with a smile. “The disease never touched my heart.”

Love, truly, can conquer all. In addition, love makes us more sensitive and generous and self-sacrificing. It helps us have more self-control, and makes it easier to forgive others. It makes us more considerate. It makes us better listeners. Love salves our wounds, gladdens our hearts, and is indeed the fountain from which all that is worthwhile in life springs.

*Marilyn Buckner  
Lindon Resident*

“YOU CAN GIVE  
WITHOUT  
LOVING, BUT YOU  
CANNOT LOVE  
WITHOUT  
GIVING.”

–AMY CARMICHAEL

“LOVE LIVES IN  
COTTAGES AS WELL AS  
IN CASTLES.”

“Love delights in  
giving attention  
rather than attracting  
it.

Love finds the  
element of good and  
builds on it.

Love does not  
magnify defects.

Love is a flame that  
warms but never  
burns.

Love knows how to  
disagree without  
becoming  
disagreeable.

Love rejoices at the  
success of others  
instead of being  
envious.”

–Father James  
Keller

## Book List



### **Weird Parents**

by Audrey Wood

### **Fanny's Dream**

by Caralyn Buehner

### **The Gift of the Magi**

by O. Henry

### **Mama, Do You Love Me?**

by Barbara M. Joosse

### **Old Jake's Skirts**

by C. Anne Scott

## Family Activities

-Do a family Christmas service project.

-Have each family member write a "letter of love" to each other family member. Each person could make a large initial of the addressee and outline it with sentences of admiration and fond remembrances. Open these on Christmas Eve.

-Build a Christmas tree shape with pretzels and large marshmallows. Like the marshmallows connecting pretzels, the sweetness of love holds relationships together.

-Clara Barton, "Angel of the Battlefield" and founder of the American Red Cross, was born on December 25, 1821. After her service in the Civil War, her love for mankind led her to offer aid at the battlefield of the Franco-Prussian War. Later, she organized relief work following American floods and hurricanes. She worked to alleviate suffering during the Russian and Armenian famines. One of her earliest efforts in her distinguished career of humanitarian service occurred when she was 11 years old. For two years she nursed and attended her brother, David, who was badly injured in an accident. *How can we put our love for others into action?*

By Laura Clement

## Kid's Corner

When I think about what love is, I think of my family. They love me no matter what. They support me in sports and school and encourage me to do my best, but also to be myself. They accept my friends and welcome them to our house. They teach me that love of family is important and that is how and where we learn to love others. Love is what keeps us together even when things get tough. It helps us forgive when sometimes we don't treat our families as well as we treat our friends. But, no matter what happens, I know my family will always love me. Friends come and go. Friends sometimes hurt us and disappoint us, but family love seems to last through hurt and disappointment. We need to love our families and always be loyal to them.

Sean Tanner

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We, at Character Connection, would like to focus on helping parents access character materials by using the web site located at [www.lindoncharacterconnection.com](http://www.lindoncharacterconnection.com).

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