

Keys to I.S.R.A.E.L. FOR KIDS





LESSON 6

I.S.R.A.E.L. — Love Your Neighbor

LESSON OBJECTIVE

This lesson will help Christian children understand that:

1. God commands us to love our neighbor
2. Jesus called “loving our neighbor as ourselves” one of the greatest commandments given to both Christians and Jews
3. Our neighbor is anyone we know of who is in need.

BIBLE BASIS

2 Kings 5:1-19; Luke 10:25-37

KEY VERSES

“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself.” — Leviticus 19:18

“‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

— MATTHEW 22:37-39

MEMORY VERSE

“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself.” — LEVITICUS 19:18

SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR THIS LESSON

- Index cards
- Index cards or whiteboard
- Small adhesive magnets
- Crayons
- Nametags
- Cardstock
- Glue
- Colored pencils or thin markers
- Bible
- Scissors

Getting Started (*optional*)

HELP YOUR NEIGHBOR CHARADES

Prepare for the game

Before the children arrive, have some index cards printed with various ways of helping another person that can be acted out without using words. Have nametags prepared with an equal number that have “NEIGHBOR” and “HELPER” on them.

Here are some examples:

Help a neighbor learn to tie shoes	Help a neighbor pick up dropped items
Help a neighbor cross the street	Open the door for a neighbor
Invite a neighbor to play	Give a neighbor your seat
Help a neighbor who has fallen down	Help a neighbor with homework
Help a neighbor carry something heavy	Help a neighbor who has hurt themselves

As the children come in, pair them up and give each child a nametag with NEIGHBOR and HELPER. When all the children have a partner and nametag, tell them,

We are going to play a game called “Help Your Neighbor.”

1. One of you is the HELPER, and one of you is the NEIGHBOR.
2. In a few minutes, I am going to hand you and your partner a card with an action on it that is about helping someone. I’ll give you a few minutes to talk with your partner about how you will act this out. You can use props around the room, if you would like, but no words!
3. You will work together in acting out this action — but you can’t say anything!
4. The rest of the class will try to guess how the NEIGHBOR is being helped.

Everyone ready? Let’s start!

Once everyone has had an opportunity to act out their card, wrap up the game by saying:

Great job, everyone! You did some terrific acting. That was a fun way to think about how we can help others. Can you think of other ways we can help our neighbors?

Allow for some answers, then say:

Those are all great ways to help, but I have another very important question for you. *Who* is your neighbor?

Telling the Story

Introduce the first bible story by saying to the children:

Jesus told a story called “The Good Samaritan” when he was asked by an expert in the Jewish law, “Who is my neighbor?” Do you remember that story?

Tell the children that the story can be found in the New Testament, in the book of Luke, then tell the story:

A Jewish man was walking along the road when bandits robbed him and beat him.

As he lay wounded on the roadside, a Jewish priest came by, saw the man, crossed to the other side of the road, and passed him by. Then a man who worked in the Temple came by. He, too, saw the man, crossed to the other side of the road, and passed by the wounded man.

Finally, a Samaritan, a group of people considered by many Jews to be their enemy, came by. When he saw the wounded man, the Samaritan quickly ran over to him, helped him onto his donkey, took him to an inn, and took care of his wounds.

When Jesus was done telling the story, he asked the expert, “So who do you think was a neighbor to the man who needed help?”

What do you think the expert replied?

Allow for some answers, then say:

Yes, it was the Samaritan — the only one who stopped and showed love to the man by caring for him.

So who do you think are our neighbors?

Again allow for some answers, then say:

Our neighbor is anyone we meet or know about who is in need — whether they live next door, in another town, or across the globe! Whenever we help another person in need, we are being that person’s neighbor and fulfilling one of God’s greatest commandments.

NOTE TO TEACHERS:

If your students are older, have them read the story of “The Good Samaritan” in Luke 10:25-37.

Listen to what Jesus taught us about the two greatest commandments:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” — MATTHEW 22:37-39

When Jesus said this he was quoting from the Jewish Bible, what Christians call the Old Testament:

“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself.” — LEVITICUS 19:18

NOTE TO TEACHERS:

For older students, have them look up the Bible verses and read them aloud.

Introduce today's Key to I.S.R.A.E.L.:

Loving our neighbor is one of the most important commandments for both Christians and Jews, and that's why our final KEY TO I.S.R.A.E.L. is **L** for **L**ove Your Neighbor!

Listen to some other verses in the Bible about loving others and showing kindness:

“The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.” — LEVITICUS 19:34

And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt. — DEUTERONOMY 10:19

*Do not say to your neighbor,
“Come back tomorrow and I'll give it to you”—
when you already have it with you. — PROVERBS 3:28*

*It is a sin to despise one's neighbor,
but blessed is the one who is kind to the needy. — PROVERBS 14:21*

“And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.” — MATTHEW 10:42

“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.” — JOHN 15:12

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. — 1 JOHN 4:11

VIDEO

Introduce the video:

Over and over again, in both the Jewish and Christian Bibles, we are commanded to love one another, be it our neighbors, strangers and foreigners, or whoever we happen to meet or know about who needs our help. We are to love others because God loves us!

We can show love to our neighbor in many different ways, and our Bible story today is about a man named Naaman, who had a serious disease, and who needed help. We'll discover who helped him and who his neighbor was!

Let's watch a short video about our KEY TO I.S.R.A.E.L. today and our Bible story.

Show the video:



BIBLE STORY (2 KINGS 5:1-19) — ELISHA HEALS NAAMAN**Introduce the story by saying:**

Our story takes place many, many years after the children of Israel had settled into the Promised Land. At the time of our story, the nation of Israel had been divided into two kingdoms — the Northern Kingdom, called Israel, and the Southern Kingdom, called Judah. When our story begins, we are introduced to Naaman, the great general of the Aramean army.

Aram was Israel's neighbor to the northeast, but the two countries had rarely been on friendly terms. In fact, Aram was growing in power and had been sending out bands of Arameans to raid Israel and bring back captives — even children — to their land.

Naaman was a mighty warrior and hero throughout Aram. But he suffered from a terrible skin disease known as leprosy. During Bible times, leprosy was very painful and greatly feared because it often led to death. More than anything, Naaman wanted to be cured of this deadly disease.

Now in Naaman's home there lived a young girl from Israel who had been captured during one of these raids and taken back to Aram. She was now a servant to Naaman's wife. This young girl knew that her master suffered greatly. So she told her mistress, "If only my master would see the prophet who is in Israel! He would cure him of his leprosy."

When Naaman heard this, he immediately went to the King of Aram and asked permission to seek out this prophet in Israel. The king agreed, even writing a letter to the King of Israel and giving Naaman gold and other gifts to give to the prophet in exchange for a cure. However, when the King of Israel read the letter, he was really upset because he thought this was a trap! "Why is the king sending me this man to heal of his leprosy?" the king wailed. "He is only trying to find an excuse to invade us again!"

The King of Israel surely would have sent Naaman back to Aram, but God's prophet, Elisha, heard what the King of Israel said, and he told the ruler, "Have this man come to me so that he will know that there is a true prophet of God in Israel!" Elisha wasn't worried about armies and enemies and raids. He wanted to be obedient to God and be His faithful servant in loving others.

NOTE TO TEACHERS:

For older students, this is a great story to have students play-act. Read through the story first, and then have students play the roles of Naaman, the King of Aram and King of Israel, the servant girl, Elisha, Elisha's servant, and Naaman's men.

Naaman wasted no time and went with all his horses, chariots, and men to Elisha's house. Elisha sent out a messenger to Naaman, and the servant gave him Elisha's instructions: "Go wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River, and then you will be completely cured!"

Naaman was furious! Why didn't Elisha himself come out to meet him? Naaman complained, "I thought that he would surely come out to me and call on the name of the Lord his God, wave his hand over the spot, and cure me of my leprosy." Naaman was even angrier that Elisha told him to wash himself in the Jordan River. "The Jordan River?" he grumbled. "Aren't the rivers of Damascus so much better than the rivers of Israel?" And Naaman stalked off in a rage.

Naaman's men tried to reason with him. "Sir," they said, "if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, wouldn't you have done it? So, surely, you should obey him when he says simply to go and wash yourself and be cured." Finally, Naaman calmed down and agreed to give it a try. He went down to the Jordan River and dipped himself into the river seven times, just as Elisha told him. On the seventh time, just as Elisha had promised, Naaman was completely cured!

Naaman and all his men went back to Elisha, and Naaman said, "*Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel*" (2 Kings 5:15). And Naaman offered Elisha all the gifts and gold he had brought. But Elisha refused them all, and said, "*As surely as the LORD lives, whom I serve, I will not accept a thing*" (2 Kings 5:16).

After finishing the story, Ask the children:

Who do you think acted as Naaman's neighbors in the story? How did they help him?

Do you think it was hard for the servant girl to help Naaman? Why? Why do you think she wanted to help her master?

Why do you think the King of Israel was afraid to help Naaman?

Why do you think Elisha was willing to help Naaman?

How do you think Naaman might have changed because of the people who had helped him?





TODAY'S STORY

Introduce today's story by saying:

This story is based on the life of Rabbi Elijah Hayim Meisels, a great rabbi who lived in Poland during the 1800s. His selflessness and self-sacrifice for others were legendary.

Many years ago, in a small village in Poland, there lived an old and righteous rabbi, Rabbi Elijah Hayim Meisels. Rabbi Elijah had dedicated his life to helping widows, orphans, the poor, and the needy. Sometimes, Rabbi Elijah even sold his own possessions so that he could help others.

During one particularly freezing winter, Rabbi Elijah put on his warmest coat and went to see the wealthiest man in his community, Isaac, a very successful banker. Rabbi Elijah knocked on the door of Isaac's mansion. The butler answered the door and was surprised to see the saintly old rabbi standing outside in the frigid night air. "Won't you come inside?" the butler asked. "There will be hot tea waiting for you. This is no night to be standing outside!" However, the rabbi politely refused to enter the home. "It's not necessary," he said. "Please ask Isaac to come see me by the door."

The butler was confused, but did as the rabbi asked. When Isaac heard that the rabbi had come to see him, he rushed to the front door. "Rabbi, come inside! I have the fireplace going strong, and my butler will bring you some hot tea. There is no need for you to wait outside on such a cold night!" But again, the rabbi replied, "That's ok. Everything I need to accomplish can be done right here. And anyway, why should I dirty your home with my snow-covered boots?"

Isaac didn't know what to do! The rabbi would not come inside and the freezing air was blowing into his home. Isaac did not want to close the door and talk outside because it was too cold. Come to think of it, Isaac was beginning to freeze just standing in the doorway! Isaac decided to plead with the rabbi once more. "Please Rabbi," Isaac said through chattering teeth. "I d-don't know about you, but I am f-f-freezing! P-p-please come inside!"

But the rabbi did not budge. Instead, he began talking about some of the unfortunate members of the community. The cold was really getting to Isaac now. He begged the rabbi, "P-p-please c-come inside. I'll g-g-give you anything y-you n-n-need!"

Finally, the rabbi accepted the invitation. He followed Isaac into the den where a warm fire was blazing. Then the rabbi said, “I need firewood for 50 families who don’t have enough money to buy their own wood this winter.” Isaac smiled. “Of course I will help supply the wood. I commit to buying the wood for all 50 families. Just one question, rabbi,” Isaac said. “You know that I am always forthcoming with giving charity. Why did you make me stand in the cold? I would have given the money anyway.”

The rabbi explained, “I know that you give. But I wanted to make sure that you understood what these poor people are going through. I knew that five minutes in the cold would give you a different perspective than if I would have asked you while you were basking in the warmth of your own fireplace.”

That night, 50 families received the gift of warmth. And Isaac? He was already warm, but now his heart was warmed, too.



Talk about it!

Use the following questions and discussion to help children understand how God's children needed to believe and trust in the truth and how Christians today need to learn about Israel and God's people by educating themselves and trusting in the truth. Use as many of the questions below as you like to discuss the main points of the lesson with the children. Your students may not know the answers to all the questions, but challenge them to think about possible responses before you share the answer. Choose questions that you think will enhance your discussion, and use others for background information if students have questions.

Why do you think the rabbi felt that Isaac would have a different perspective on supplying the firewood after standing in the cold for just five minutes?

The Bible directs us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

But unless we know how our neighbor is feeling, it's hard to want to help them with all our heart.

The rabbi knew that once Isaac felt just a bit of the pain that these poor families were experiencing, he would want to help them with all his heart.

Why do you think the rabbi thought that it was important for Isaac to have this different point of view?

The rabbi wanted Isaac to really understand what the poor people were going through so that he wouldn't just be giving his money, but also his love. The rabbi knew that Isaac would always give to others, but the rabbi wanted to give Isaac the opportunity to express his love for others and thereby fulfill the biblical directive to love your neighbor as yourself.

When we feel what another person is feeling, we call that "empathy." What do you think empathy has to do with loving your neighbor as yourself?

Empathy means that we can understand how our friend feels when he or she is left out because we have felt that way, too. Or we can

imagine what it is like not to have enough food to eat, because we were hungry once. When we have empathy for people in need, we feel their pain like it is our own and we want to help them.

In the Bible, God reminded His people over and over again to love the "foreigner" among them because they were once foreigners, too, in a strange land. They knew what it was like to be a stranger. That's loving our neighbor like ourselves!

How can we have more empathy for each other?

When we notice that someone looks upset, we can ask that person what's wrong and take the time to really listen to what is bothering them. Then we can think of a time when we felt a similar way. That will help us know how to help our friend. It will also make them feel better just to know that we care so much about how they are feeling.

How can we have more empathy for those in need in our communities and in Israel?

The first step is to know how people are hurting. Then we might be able to imagine what it would be like to be in such a difficult situation.

Next, we can “love our neighbor like ourselves,” just like God wants us to by doing what we can to help make their situation better. For example, we might visit an elderly person who feels lonely, or we can help raise money to help feed hungry people in Israel.

All those are ways of being a good neighbor and loving others like ourselves!

Apply It!

Say to the children:

For these six weeks, we have been using each letter of the word ISRAEL to:

- Help us understand more about God's people
- His love for them and for His land
- How we can help others by showing kindness and loving them.

Ask for volunteers to say the letters I.S.R.A.E.L. and what each letter stands for.

Then say,

That's right!

I is for **I**mportant to God

S is for the modern **S**tate of Israel

R is for **R**ighteous Giving

A is for **A**liyah

E is for **E**ducate yourself about Israel, and

L is for **L**ove Your Neighbor.

That's called an acrostic.

We are going to make our own acrostic using the letters from the word LOVE to help us remember all the ways we can love others. When you have completed your acrostic, draw a picture to illustrate one of the letters.

NOTE TO TEACHER

Before class, have some examples of words students could use for each letter. For younger students, write some words on a whiteboard or on index cards. Talk about the words with your students and allow them to select which word they want to use. Some sample words are below:

L—Love, Listen, Like, Learn, Lead, Lend, Lessen, Loan, Laugh, Lighten

O—Obey, Offer, Open, Order, Organize, Oppose, Operate

V—Value, Visit, View, Voice, Volunteer, Vouch, Validate, Vindicate

E—Encourage, Educate, Embrace, Enjoy, Enlist, Enable, Empower, Ease, Empathize

MY ACROSTIC FOR LO.V.E.

Make an acrostic with words that begin with the letters from the word LOVE to help you remember ways that we can love others.

When you have completed your acrostic, draw a picture to illustrate one of the letters.

L

O

V

E

Activity — Love Your Neighbor Magnets

Prepare for the activity

For this project, you will need:

- Cardstock
- Colored pencils or thin markers
- Glue
- Small adhesive magnet for each student
- Scissors

Introduce the activity

To help you remember to be a good neighbor at all times, we are going to color and create a magnet for you to take home and put on your fridge as a reminder.

Or you can share this with someone who might need some encouragement from a friend!

How to create the 'Love Your Neighbor Magnet'

- Give each child a copy of the “Love Your Neighbor” illustration, a piece of cardstock, and a magnet.
- Have the children color the illustration, glue it to the cardstock and then cut it out.
- Have them adhere the magnets to the back of the cut-out.

‘Love Your Neighbor’ Magnet

1. Color the illustration
2. Glue it to the cardstock and cut it out on the blue line.
3. Glue the magnet to the back of the cut-out.



Let's Learn Hebrew

Listen to our Hebrew words for this lesson at www.ifcj.org/keys.

Ahava
אהבה
Love

Shachen
שכן
Neighbor

Ezra
עזרה
Help

Lev
לב
Heart

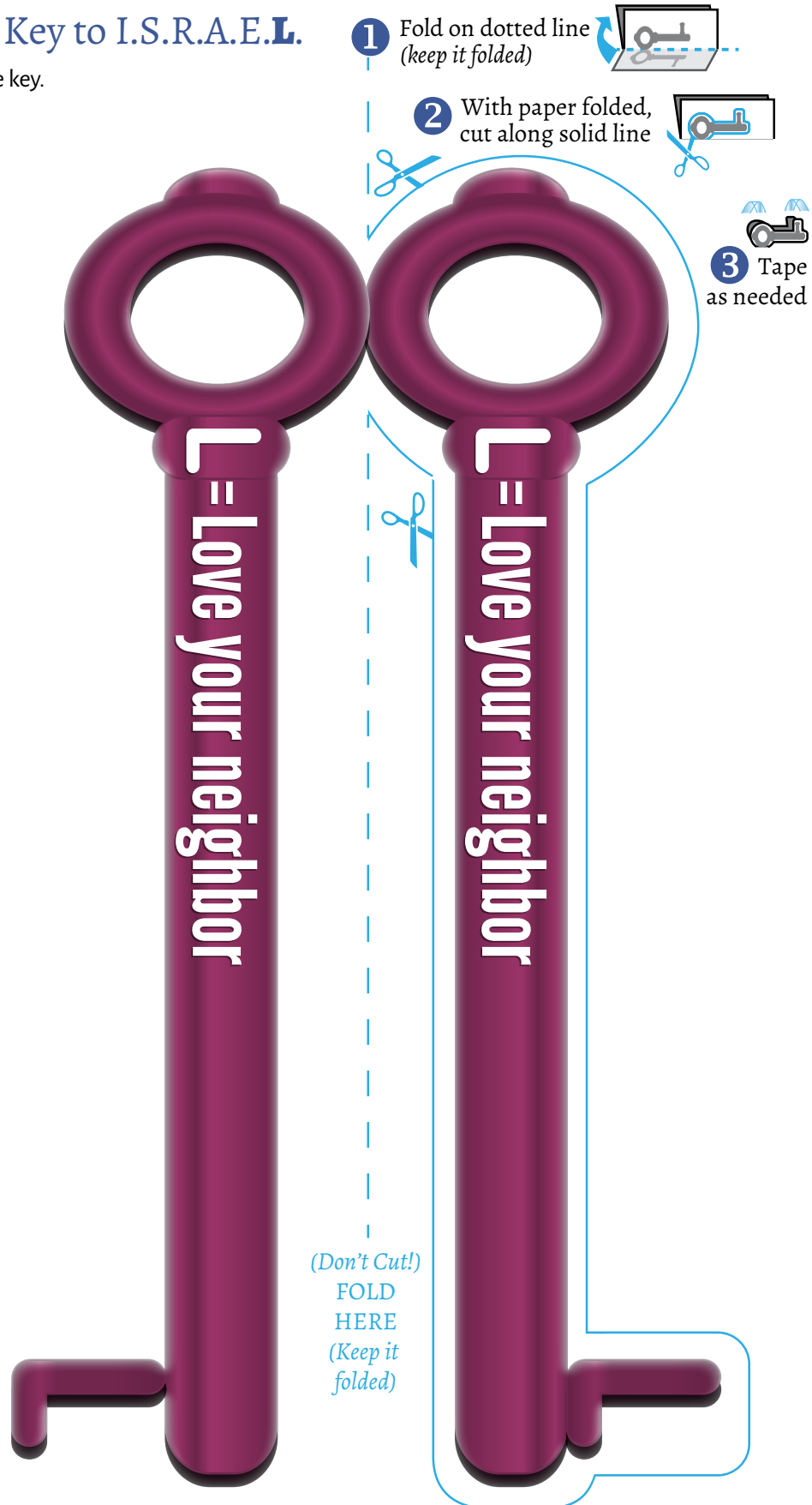
Yedid
ידיד
Friend

Yedidut
ידידות
Fellowship



Your Key to I.S.R.A.E.L.

Make the key.



Family Time

THE HALLMARK OF OUR FAITH

“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.” — LEVITICUS 19:18

Hillel the Elder was a great sage who lived in the Holy Land during the first century BCE. He was once challenged by a man who demanded: “Teach me the entire *Torah* while I am standing on one foot!”

Now, the man had already challenged other rabbis of the time, and none of them would consider such a ridiculous request. After all, who could teach about the Five Books of Moses (the *Torah*), the books of the Prophets, and the Holy Writings (including Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon, etc.) while someone stood on one foot!

But Hillel was different, and especially known for his patience. He was kind to the man and took up the challenge. While the man stood on one foot Hillel taught: “What is hateful to you, do not do to others. The rest is commentary – go study it!”

Hillel's reply was another way of saying the Bible verse telling us to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18). In other words, Hillel was teaching that loving others is essentially what the Bible is all about! (Try saying that on one foot!)

In Psalm 118:19 we read: “Open for me the gates of the righteous; I will enter and give thanks to the Lord.” In the Jewish tradition, the sages teach that this verse refers to when a person enters heaven and stands before the heavenly tribunal in judgment. Each person will be asked: “What was your occupation?” In other words, “What did you spend your life doing?” If one answers: “I fed the hungry,” the tribunal will say: “This is God's gate. You, who fed the hungry, may enter.” If a person answers: “I gave drink to the thirsty,” the tribunal will say: “This is God's gate. You, who gave drink to the thirsty, may enter.” And so on. The sages were teaching that all who performed acts of kindness, and those who gave charity, are permitted to enter God's gate.

Helping others through acts of kindness has always been extremely important in Judaism. As Hillel the Elder demonstrated, it is the main lesson behind the entire Bible. God counts on us to provide for the needy and to use what God has given us for the less fortunate.

In that way, we show our regard for God as Creator of all people, share His goodness with others, and draw others to Him. At the same time we contribute to the overall mission of all humanity. Judaism refers to this as *tikkun olam*, which means, “fixing the world,” making it a place of goodness and godliness. That is our purpose and our privilege.



We find this same teaching in the book of John in what Christians call the New Testament, when Jesus taught his disciples, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:34-35).

The hallmark of both the Jewish and Christian faiths is love — for God, for family and friends, for our neighbors, for one another, and for the world.

FAMILY TALK

1. How can we help the people in our family more than we may be already? Go around the table and allow each family member an opportunity to give an answer.
2. As a family, discuss how you might assist your neighbors. Do you know someone who is lonely? Do you know someone you can help out by doing yardwork or other chores around the house? Does a single parent need help with babysitting? If you can, make a list of those you can help and how you can help them.
3. As a family, discuss how you might be able to serve your community better. Perhaps there is a local soup kitchen where your family can volunteer once a month. Or maybe everyone can go through their closets and donate gently used clothes to a shelter.
4. As a family, discuss how you can show love to God’s people, Israel. *The Fellowship* has more than 400 projects helping Jewish families, children, and elderly in Israel. Visit **www.ifcj.org** and explore how you might get involved.
5. As a family, discuss how you might help all of God’s children around the world. Are there refugee families living in your community who need help adjusting to their new home?
6. As a family, share the lesson that taught you the most about Israel. Which lesson did you enjoy the most?