

NSS Ethics and Religious Studies Curriculum Support Materials

3

Love one another (I)

2 - 19

Love one another (II)

20 - 37



Topic 11

Love one another

Suggested teaching time: 2 Periods (1 hour per period)

Main points:

1. Love one another
2. New commandments and standards
3. Darkness and Brightness
4. Realisation of the essence of love

Text Interpretations:

Throughout the life of Jesus, he showed his compassion to people through love. He showed mercy to the poor, cared about the weak, cured the sick, released the oppressed and accepted the unwanted. He spread his love to all and taught people to love one another. Jesus knew that his life on earth would soon come to an end and his disciples would become his successors who spread his teachings to others. So, he called his disciples and gave them a new instruction: “love one another”.

Jesus transformed the commandment: “Love your neighbour as you love yourself” in the Old Testament to a more harmonious and interactive standard: to love one another. The principle of “loving one another” was to emphasise selfless, sacrificial, considerate and forgiving love.

John interpreted the new commandment of Jesus, enabling the disciples to have a deeper understanding of its immanence. The new standard was not the continual of the teaching in the Old Testament: “To love your neighbour as you love yourself”. The new standard accorded with Jesus’ mission on earth. Jesus told us to love one another, just as he had loved us. It not only enlarged the scope but also the depth of love. The power of this love would be unimaginable. Jesus spent his life expressing this love and his disciples continued to spread his gospel after his death. The teaching of “loving one another” was the last instruction given by Jesus before he ascended to heaven, and it became one of the most important virtues pursued by his disciples and witnesses.

Period 1: Love One Another (I)

1. Biblical reference: John 13:34; 15:12

2. Objectives:

- To learn that before Jesus died, he gave his disciples a new commandment: Love one another
- To understand the elements included in the love Jesus advocated, such as selflessness, sacrifice, understanding and forgiveness
- To implement “loving one another” in our daily life



3. Teaching strategies

Background Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before Jesus died, he gave his disciples a new commandment: Love one another. By doing so, Jesus enhanced the previous commandment in the Old Testament “Love your neighbour as you love yourself” to a new standard. Jesus wanted us to love one another. • The elements in the love advocated by Jesus include selflessness, sacrifice, understanding and forgiveness. Jesus wanted his disciples to love one another just as he had loved them and the entire humankind.
Issues for Explorations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the values that ensure the harmony of a society?
Enquiry Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the new commandment Jesus gave to his disciples? • What were the qualities of love advocated by Jesus? • Is there anyone in the society who is able to demonstrate the love advocated by Jesus?
Learning Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By reading news articles, discuss the values which can sustain social harmony and appreciate the new commandment (Love one another) Jesus gave to his disciples before he left the world. • Through group discussions, explore the elements of love advocated by Jesus.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By reading news articles, explore if there are people or organisations in the society that practise the love advocated by Jesus.
Key Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New commandment • Love one another
Generic Skills, Values and Attitudes Involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to the 'Generic Skills, Values and Attitudes' tables included in the corresponding lesson plans.
High-order Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the impacts on the society if people are willing to demonstrate selfless, generous, humble and self-sacrificing love?
Extended Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the impact of selfless, generous, humble and self-sacrificing love on the society and the world. • By studying wars and conflicts in history, explore how hatred impact on the society and the world.

Activity One

Enquiry Questions	Generic Skills	Values and Attitudes
What was the new commandment Jesus gave to his disciples?	Collaboration skills, communication skills, critical thinking skills	Love, compassion

Teaching Steps:

Step 1. Teacher does warm-up exercise with students by asking them to imagine what would happen to the world if there is no love.

- Teacher asks students to form groups of four, hands out the newspaper of the day and asks students to cut out articles about love among people in the local news section.
- Teacher raises the question:
 - i. After the articles about love are cut out, the remaining newspaper symbolises a world without love. Describe how this loveless world will be like?
 - ii. Do you prefer to love or to hate one another? Why?
 - iii. Are there any substitutes for love? If there were no love, what values would be the most important to uphold social harmony?
- Teacher points out:
 - i. Jesus believed something is important and essential to connect people with one another.

Step 2. Teacher carries out the ‘Will of Jesus’ activity with students, allowing students to learn the final instructions given by Jesus to his disciples before his death.

- Teacher asks students to form groups of four, hands out ‘Worksheet 1’ (Will of Jesus) and asks students to suggest the instructions Jesus would give his disciples if He knew that He was about to die and leave them.
- Teacher asks students to think of 3 instructions and answer Question 1 on ‘Worksheet 1’.
- After completing Question 1, teacher invites the groups to present and asks students to share the reasons behind their assumptions.
- After discussion, teacher asks students to read John 13:34; 15:12 to find out the final instructions Jesus gave his disciples before he died. Ask students to work on Question 2 on ‘Worksheet 1’.

Step 3. Teacher goes further to discuss with students:

- Compare your assumptions with the actual instructions given by Jesus. What are the differences? Why are there such differences?
- Why did Jesus tell his disciples to “love one another” before he died?
- Hence, what was the impact of the new commandment on his disciples and their lives?

Step 4. Teacher summarises:

- Jesus knew that he was going to die soon, so he gave a final instruction to his disciples. If the disciples wanted to learn from him, they better grasp the last chance and pay full attention to Jesus.
- Jesus was about to begin a journey alone. Before he left, he ordered his disciples to love one another, just as how Jesus had loved them.

Step 5. Teacher distributes ‘Students’ Reference: Material 1’ (New Commandment of Jesus), briefly explains it and wraps up the activity.

Activity Two

Enquiry Questions	Generic Skills	Values and Attitudes
What were the qualities of love advocated by Jesus?	Collaboration skills, communication skills, critical thinking skills	Human welfare

Teaching steps:**Step 1. Teacher raises the questions:**

- What kind of love did Jesus refer to? The love between parents and children? The love between a man and a woman? Others?

Step 2. Teacher points out:

- In order to understand the love advocated by Jesus, we need to understand the qualities of love Jesus demonstrated upon the cross.

Step 3. Teacher carries out the ‘Love upon the Cross’ activity with students, guiding students to learn about the elements of the love Jesus taught his disciples.

- Teacher asks students to form groups of four, shows them an illustration of the crucified Jesus, and asks them to think about the qualities of love demonstrated by Jesus.
- Teacher hands out ‘Appendix 1’ (Love upon the Cross) and ‘Worksheet 2’ (Love upon the Cross) to students.
- (1) Out of the qualities listed in ‘Appendix 1’, teacher asks students to select those that can best describe Jesus’ love and write them on ‘Worksheet 2’. (2) Hence, had Jesus demonstrated these qualities of love during his ministry? (3) What elements of love were specifically illustrated?
- After discussion, teacher invites groups to present.

Step 4. Teacher goes further to discuss with students:

- The disciples saw Jesus being crucified on the cross. Did this experience enable them to have a better understanding of Jesus’ teaching on love?
- If Jesus had not died upon the cross, how would his disciples comprehend the depth of love advocated by Jesus?
- Among the different elements of love taught by Jesus, which one touches you the most? Why?

- Could anyone in history demonstrate the depth of love as Jesus did on the cross?
- Why was Jesus able to demonstrate unconditional love to the humankind?

Step 5. Teacher summarises:

- Jesus demonstrated a selfless, sacrificing, understanding and forgiving love on the cross.
- Jesus loved his disciples according to the above way. Thus, he expected them to spread this love after he died.

Step 6. Teacher distributes ‘Students’ Reference: Material 2’ (Qualities of Jesus’ Love), briefly explains it and wraps up the activity.

Activity Three

Enquiry Questions	Generic Skills	Values and Attitudes
Is there anyone in the society who is able to demonstrate the love advocated by Jesus?	Collaboration skills, communication skills, critical thinking skills	Teamwork, love, human welfare

Teaching steps:**Step 1. Teacher raises the question:**

- Is there anyone in the society who is able to demonstrate the love advocated by Jesus?

Step 2. Teacher carries out the ‘Rainbow Plan’ activity with students. Introduce to students the people or organisations in the society that practise the love advocated by Jesus.

- Teacher marks four sections on the blackboard and writes the following words into each section: (1) selfless love; (2) sacrificial love; (3) understanding love; (4) forgiving love.
- Teacher asks students to form groups of four and hands out newspaper of the day. Teacher then asks students to cut out articles about ‘love’ and categorise them by posting them onto appropriate areas on the blackboard.
- Teacher discusses with students:
 - Do you think it is important for people or organisations in a society to demonstrate these love actions? Why?
 - What are the impacts on the society if there were so such people or organisations?
 - Can you participate in these actions? Which group of people or organisation will you join? Explain your choice.

Step 3. Teacher goes further to discuss with students:

- Based on the above examples, is the love advocated by Jesus applicable in today’s society? If yes, what is the impact on the society?
- Do you agree that love is the foundation of a society? What resources can help people develop a harmonious society? Can Christianity serve as a resource?

Step 4. Teacher summarises:

- Before Jesus died, he instructed his disciples and followers to spread and to live out the qualities of love he demonstrated on the cross.
- Today, a lot of people and organisations believe that Jesus' love can transform the society and the world. They make plans and actively participate in different activities to bless the ones around them, so as to change the world.

Extended Activities:

1. With reference to newspapers, magazines or the websites below, teacher guides students to study cases in which people are able to demonstrate love with selflessness, sacrifice, understanding and forgiveness. Students can explore how these people impact on the society and the world.
 - Biography of Joanna Tse:
 - <http://www.joannatse.com/site/fgbmi/lifestory.php>
 - South Korean Christian Hostages Eagerly Helped Others:
 - http://www.gospelherald.com.hk/news/wor_1243.htm
2. With reference to newspapers, magazines or the websites below, teacher guides students to study wars and conflicts in history. Students can explore how hatred impact on the society and the world.
 - Human Right Reports: Burmese Military Government Recruited Minors as Soldiers:
 - http://news.bbc.co.uk/chinese/trad/hi/newsid_7070000/newsid_7070300/7070387.stm
 - Lebanon Refugee Camps Burst Fierce Gunfights:
 - http://news.bbc.co.uk/chinese/trad/hi/newsid_6690000/newsid_6690100/6690139.stm
3. Teacher asks students to think about the following questions with references to the information collected:
 - What comments do you have towards people who are willing to demonstrate selfless, generous, humble and self-sacrificing love?
 - What comments do you have towards people whose mind is filled with hatred and revenges?
 - Can Jesus' new commandment "Love one another" help those who fail to let go of hatred and revenges? Why?
4. Teacher can invite students to do sharing in the following period.

Appendix 1: Love upon the Cross



1. Selfless Love:

Do not seek benefits for oneself but try one's best to give what he/she has to people he/she loves.

2. Possessive Love:

Hope to occupy the time and to own everything of the people he/she loves.

2. Sacrificial love:

Willing to surrender what he/she has for people he/she loves, even one's own life.

1. Love of Friendship:

Show respect and kindness to people he/she loves.

5. Understanding love:

Be compassionate and love each person, even though they are not perfect.

6. Forgiving love:

Be willing to forgive the mistakes of people he/she loves.

Material 1: New Commandment of Jesus

1. Background

- The commandment to love others existed a long time ago. In Leviticus 19:17-18, it was stated that “Do not bear a grudge against anyone...Do not take revenge on anyone or continue to hate him, but love your neighbour as you love yourself. I am the Lord.” The order originally required only the Israelites to love their fellow people of the same race. Later, in Leviticus 19:34, the order expanded the coverage to “Do not ill-treat foreigners who are living in your land. Treat them as you were a fellow-Israelite, and love them as you love yourselves. Remember that you were once foreigners in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.” Since the above commandment of love was damaged by the sins of human beings, Jesus restated it and thus it was named the New Commandment.
- Before Jesus told His disciples the new commandment, he knew he would soon leave the world. He also knew that a person among his disciples would betray him. The person was Judas. Jesus had encouraged Judas and showed him love and compassion several times. But Judas was hoodwinked and was not touched by Jesus' love.
- Jesus once told the Jews “I will go away; you will look for me, but you will die in your sins. You cannot go where I am going.” (John 8:21) However they did not understand that Jesus was going to return to his Father. Therefore, Jesus spoke more clearly to them “When you lift up the Son of Man, you will know that ‘I Am Who I Am’”. (John 8:28)

2. New Commandment

- Before Jesus left, he ordered his disciples to love one another, just like how Jesus had loved them. “And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” (John 13:34)
- The new commandment Jesus taught his disciples was similar to Jesus' teachings during his ministry in earlier years. He had taught us to love our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength. The second part was to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. (Mark 12:30-31). Jesus' new commandant provided us new insights regarding the relationships we have with others.
- John explained “This is how we know what love is: Christ gave his life for us. We too, then, ought to give our lives for our brothers and sisters.” (1 John 3:16). This unparalleled and generous love has become a sign of Jesus' church “If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples.” (John 13:35).

References:

1. Barclay, William (1955). *The Gospel of John. Vol. II (Chapters 8 to 21)* Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press. pp.173-175, 206-211.
2. 思高聖經學會（2005）：《思高聖經原著譯釋版系列—福音》，（頁 792-793）。香港：思高聖經學會。
3. 布朗著，蕭立明、陳永禹合譯（1999）：《若望福音及書信》，（頁 144）。台北：光啓。

Material 2: Characteristics of Jesus' Love

1. Selfless love

- The love Jesus had towards his disciples was a selfless love. Human beings tend to strive for blessings and benefits for oneself and they are biased. But Jesus' only wish was to love and serve people wholeheartedly.
- Jesus knew about God's salvation plan, yet he was still willing to pay the price. Nonetheless, he wanted his disciples to understand that he was not passively being victimised, but he had actively restored justice on earth. Although he knew one of his disciples would betray him, he did not choose to escape. He still selflessly sacrificed for the humankind on the cross to complete God's salvation plan.

2. Sacrificial love

- The love Jesus had towards his disciples was a sacrificial love. He did not limit his love for us. He never regarded our desire for his love being too much.
- He was ready for the way to the cross, sacrificing his own life willingly for all the people he loved. His purpose was to use his innocent blood to cleanse the sins of the humankind and to fulfill God's plan to save all people.

3. Understanding love

- The love Jesus had towards his disciples was an understanding love. Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him, Peter would deny Him and his disciples could not truly understand Him. Nonetheless, Jesus neither blamed their weaknesses nor counted anyone's mistakes and failures. He demonstrated understanding love towards them.

4. Forgiving love

- Facing the betrayal, denial and lack of confidence from his disciples, Jesus should have felt pain and hatred. Yet He completely forgave them.
- Anyone who made mistakes and failed would be forgiven by Jesus. Jesus put his words into actions and expressed his forgiving love: the more people hurt him, the more he loved them. The power of love had helped Jesus face the biggest pain and the deepest betrayal.

5. Eternal Love

- Jesus put the needs of the entire humankind before his own life. His love exhibited on the cross was the highest manifestation of love and became our model of love. Therefore, love is not an abstraction, desire or feeling. Love is a concrete action.
- Since God's love to the humankind is unconditional, unlimited and unreserved, the love of sacrificing oneself for others fuels us to channel our love to them. This eternal love becomes the motivation for us to love one another.
- Loving one another is no longer an unattainable moral demand or an unbearable legal burden. It is a witness to God's faithfulness and compassion.

References:

1. Barclay, William (1955). *The Gospel of John. Vol. II (Chapters 8 to 21)* Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press. pp.173-175, 206-211 .
2. 蔡惠民 (2005) :《天國驛站—丙年主日講道》, (頁 119-123) 。香港: 論盡神學出版有限公司。
3. 蔡惠民 (2005) :《天國驛站—乙年主日講道》, (頁 120-124) 。香港: 論盡神學出版有限公司。

Worksheet 1: Will of Jesus

1. What instructions would Jesus give his disciples if he knew he was about to die and leave them? Try to think of 3 instructions and write them in the spaces below.

a.

b.

c.

2. Based on John 13:34; 15:12, find out the final instructions Jesus gave his disciples before he died and write them in the space below.

Final instructions Jesus gave his disciples before he died

Worksheet 2: Love upon the Cross

1. With reference to 'Appendix 1', write down the qualities that can best describe the love Jesus demonstrated on the cross.



Qualities of Jesus' Love Demonstrated Upon the Cross:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

3. What elements of love were specifically illustrated?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

2. Which incidents in Jesus' ministry can reflect the qualities of love?

	Qualities of Love	Incidents in Jesus' ministry
a.		
b.		
c.		
d.		



Material 1: New Commandment of Jesus

1. Background

- Before Jesus told His disciples the new commandment, he knew he would soon leave the world. He also knew that a person among his disciples would betray him. The person was Judas. Jesus had encouraged Judas and showed him love and compassion several times. But Judas was hoodwinked and was not touched by Jesus' love.
- Jesus once told the Jews "I will go away; you will look for me, but you will die in your sins. You cannot go where I am going." (John 8:21) However they did not understand that Jesus was going to return to his Father. Therefore, Jesus spoke more clearly to them "When you lift up the Son of Man, you will know that 'I Am Who I Am'". (John 8:28)

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- Before Jesus left, he ordered his disciples to love one another, just like how Jesus had loved them. "And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." (John 13:34)
- The new commandment Jesus taught his disciples was similar to Jesus' teachings during his ministry in earlier years. He had taught us to love our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength. The second part was to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. (Mark 12:30-31). Jesus' new commandant provided us new insights regarding the relationships we have with others.

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Barclay, William (1955). *The Gospel of John. Vol. II (Chapters 8 to 21)* Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press. pp.173-175, 206-211 .



Material 2: Characteristics of Jesus' Love

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- Jesus knew about God's salvation plan, yet he was still willing to pay the price. Nonetheless, he wanted his disciples to understand that he was not passively being victimised, but he had actively restored justice on earth. Although he knew one of his disciples would betray him, he did not choose to escape. He still selflessly sacrificed for the humankind on the cross to complete God's salvation plan.

2. Sacrificial love

- The love Jesus had towards his disciples was a sacrificial love. He did not limit his love for us. He never regarded our desire for his love being too much.
- He was ready for the way to the cross, sacrificing his own life willingly for all the people he loved. His purpose was to use his innocent blood to cleanse the sins of the humankind and to fulfill God's plan to save all people.

3. Understanding love

- The love Jesus had towards his disciples was an understanding love. Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him, Peter would deny Him and his disciples could not truly understand Him. Nonetheless, Jesus neither blamed their weaknesses nor counted anyone's mistakes and failures. He demonstrated understanding love towards them.

4. Forgiving love

- Facing the betrayal, denial and lack of confidence from his disciples, Jesus should have felt pain and hatred. Yet He completely forgave them.
- Anyone who made mistakes and failed would be forgiven by Jesus. Jesus put his words into actions and expressed his forgiving love: the more people hurt him, the more he loved them. The power of love had helped Jesus face the biggest pain and the deepest betrayal.

References:

Barclay, William (1955). *The Gospel of John. Vol. II (Chapters 8 to 21)*. Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press. pp. 173-175, 206-211.

Period 2: Love One Another (II)

1. Biblical reference: 1 John 2:7-11, 3:11-18

2. Objectives:

- To learn that the teaching of John on love is to love one another and do not hate others. People have to put their love into actions and be willing to sacrifice for others.
- To understand the background of John's teaching on love being an old commandment and also a new commandment. Jesus' love for the humankind had manifested the essence of this command.
- To reflect on the difference between living a life filled with love and that with hatred, and to understand that living with love is happier and more meaningful.



3. Teaching Strategies

Background Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John restated Jesus' redefinition of the commandment in the Old Testament: "Love your neighbour as yourself". The new commandment given by Jesus was "Love one another". • John taught people to live a life filled with love, to love one another and do not hate one another, to put love into actions and be willing to sacrifice for others.
Issues for Explorations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of life is depicted in John's teaching of loving one another?
Enquiry Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did John consider the teaching of loving one another a new commandment? • How should people treat one another according to John? • What is the difference in the quality of living between living a life filled with love and that with hatred?
Learning Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through group discussions and Bible reading, understand the meaning of John's teaching of loving one another. • Through comparing the attitudes of treating others among people in modern times with that taught by John, understand John's teaching on how to treat one another and its characteristics. • Through discussing and studying real life examples, understand the differences between a life with love and that with hatred. The life filled with love is happier and more meaningful.

Key Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Love• Light• Darkness
Generic Skills, Values and Attitudes Involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refer to the 'Generic Skills, Values and Attitudes' tables included in the corresponding lesson plans.
High-order Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is John's teaching applicable to people in modern times?
Extended Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore the case of Desmond Mpilo Tutu, Archbishop of the Anglican Church in South Africa leading the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to promote love among people in South Africa.

Activity One

Enquiry Question	Generic Skills	Values and Attitudes
Why did John consider the teaching of loving one another a new commandment?	Communication skills, collaboration skills, problem solving skills	Love, care

Teaching steps:**Step 1. Teacher does warm-up exercise with students by asking them to think about the impact of hatred on people.**

- Teacher raises the questions:
 - Have you ever been angry with anyone? How did it feel being angry?
 - Will anger bring us happiness and satisfaction?
- Teacher distributes some newspapers to students and tells them to look for an article that is related to hatred. Ask the students:
 - In the article, what made hatred emerge?
 - In the article, what consequences did hatred bring? Did it cause accidents or tragedies?
 - In the article, what was the condition of the person with hatred so that he/she did what was reported?
- Teacher can visit the following website
<http://hk.news.yahoo.com/080304/12/2pyah.html> and asks:
 - Have you ever heard of “hatred index”? (One of the indexes in the “Survey Report on How do Hong Kong People Deal with Interpersonal Conflicts?” conducted by the City University)
 - Do you think people in Hong Kong get angry with others easily?
 - Were there any incidents around you that were triggered by hatred?
 - What is your comment on “the impact of hatred on people”?
- Teacher can visit the following website to let students know more about the Rwandan Genocide between the Hutu and Tutsi tribes in Africa in 1994. Teacher can show extracts of clips showing how hatred led to the genocide.
 - <http://zh.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=%E5%8D%A2%E6%97%BA%E8%BE%E5%A4%A7%E5%B1%A0%E6%9D%80&variant=zh-cn>
 - <http://taipei.tzuchi.org.tw/rhythms/magazine/content/95/rwanda.htm>

Step 2. Teacher points out:

- Hatred does not benefit oneself and other people. One's life will be filled with darkness.
- John said, "Those who say that they are in the light, yet hate their brothers and sisters, are in the darkness to this very hour." (1 Jn 2:9) and "All who hate others are murderers, and you know that murderers have not got eternal life in them." (1 Jn 3:15) John clearly stated that "hatred" and "love" are two extremes, they repel each other. There is no middle-point between the two. Are you scared by John's teaching about "hatred equals with murder"?
- What is the Christian insight on interpersonal relationships? How does Christianity teach people to deal with hatred?

Step 3. Teacher carries out the "New command" activity with students, allowing students to understand why John thought that Jesus gave a new meaning to the teaching of love.

- Teacher asks students to form groups and read 1 John 2: 7-11 and 3:11, 16. Each group deduces why John suggested that loving one another was a new commandment.
- Teacher can suggest students refer to the following Biblical references:
 - "Do not take revenge on anyone or continue to hate him, but love your neighbor as you love yourself. I am the Lord." (Lev 19:18)
 - "And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." (Jn 13:34)
- Teacher invites students to present and asks students to complete 'Worksheet 1' (Love one another).
- Teacher discusses questions on the worksheet with students:
 - Why did John think that the commandment of loving one another was an old commandment? (John thought that it was an old commandment because God had already asked people to "love your neighbours as yourself". (Lev 19:18))
 - Why did John think the commandment of loving one another was a new commandment?¹ (In the Old Testament, God had asked people to "love your neighbours as yourself" (Lev 19:18), but Jesus restated the commandment and set a newer standard, i.e. asking us to love one another. Jesus showed us his example of loving and sacrificing for the humankind. Thus, John thought that it was a new commandment.)

¹ If we look at the background when these verses were being written, another reason why this is a new command is because this command is originally from Jesus (Jn 13:34). To the readers of John, this had become an "old command" then, because they had heard about this "from the beginning" (1 Jn 2:24, 3:11) or since they believed in Jesus. This could be an old command to old believers, but this can always be a new command to foreigners who are merciless and brutal (Ro 1:31, Eph 5:8, Col 1:13). This command was realized "on Him" Jesus because not only did He set up this command, He has illustrated the essence of this command with His life example.

Step 4. Teacher discusses with students:

- Between the old commandment and the one with the new standard, which is better? (Teacher can guide students to answer according to the characteristics of Jesus' love to people. For instance, the new commandment was based on Jesus' love to the entire humankind, expanding the scope of love and deepening the depth of love. Detailed answers can be found in 'Students' Reference: Material 1' (The teaching of loving one another in 1 John).

Step 5. Teacher summarises:

- John said that the teaching of loving one another was an old commandment restated by Jesus. In the Old Testament, God had already asked people to "love your neighbour as yourself" (Lev 19:18).
- John said that the teaching of loving one another was a new commandment because Jesus asked us to love one another just as he had loved us. Jesus had conferred a new standard on the commandment with his example of loving and sacrificing for the humankind.
- The new commandment was based on Jesus' love to the entire humankind. It did not only expand the scope of love but also raised love to a deeper, higher, broader and farther horizon.

Step 6. Teacher distributes 'Students' Reference: Material 1' (The teaching of loving one another in 1 John), briefly explains it and wraps up the above activity.

Activity Two

Enquiry Question	Generic Skills	Values and Attitudes
How should people treat one another according to John?	Communication skills, collaboration skills, problem solving skills	Love, self-reflection

Teaching steps:

Step 1. Teacher carries out the “Qualities of love” activity with students, allowing students to understand John's understanding of love.

- Teacher points out:
 - What did John teach us about how to treat one another in the new commandment? What are the differences compared to how we treat one another in our daily life? (Students are not required to answer.)
 - What attitudes do people have when treating one another in modern society? (Teacher encourages students to give as much answer as they can.)
- Teacher asks students to form groups of four, hands out ‘Worksheet 2’ (Attitudes of treating others), and asks them to complete the worksheet after reading 1 Jn 2:7-11 and 3:11-18.
- Teacher discusses questions on the worksheet with students:
 - How do people in modern society treat one another?
 - Which of the following is the most common attitude? Indifference, contempt, dislike, as enemies, as brothers?
 - What did John teach us about how to treat others (brothers)? (The four ways to love one another: i) to love your neighbours as yourself; ii) do not hate one another; iii) to put love into actions; iv) to learn to sacrifice for one’s brothers just as Jesus loving and sacrificing for the humankind.)
- After discussion, teacher invites students to present their ideas.

Step 2. Teacher discusses with students:

- Comparing John's teaching on love with how people in modern societies treat one another, which enables people to live a happier and more harmonious life? Why?
- Was the love promoted by John a kind of high quality love? If yes, please explain with reasons. If no, what factors should be added to enhance its quality?

Step 3. Teacher summarises:

- John taught people to love one another and do not hate one another because hatred affects one's emotions and the ability to make decisions.
- “Hatred” means refusing to love one another according to the ways mentioned in 1 Jn 3:16-17. Everything which is not love is hatred. Those who hate others are against the truth (2 Tim 2:10). Since they deliberately violate the truth, they will be totally blinded by the untruth (Jn 9:39, 12:40; Isa 6:9-10). Their thoughts and morality will go astray, and they will not be able to rescue themselves but go farther and farther away from the truth (Jn 11:10, 12:15; Mt 15:14).
- Besides, John taught us to put love into actions so that our love will not be merely words. We should also learn to sacrifice for our brothers just as Jesus loving and sacrificing for the humankind.

Activity Three

Enquiry Question	Generic Skills	Values and Attitudes
What is the difference in the quality of living between living a life with love and that with hatred?	Communication skills, collaboration skills, problem solving skills	Being enthusiastic, care and concern

Teaching steps:**Step 1. Teacher raises the question:**

- John taught people to live a life with love and without hatred. What are the differences in the quality of living between living a life with love and that with hatred?

Step 2. Teacher carries out the “The border between love and hatred” activity with students, allowing students to understand the differences in the qualities of living between living a life with love and that with hatred.

- Teacher asks students to form groups of four and hands out ‘Worksheet 3’ (Living with love and living with hatred).
- Teacher asks students to complete the worksheet with reference to 1 Jn 2: 7-11 and 3: 11-18.
- Teacher asks students to present after discussion. Please refer to the reference answers (Living with love and living with hatred (Reference answers)).
- Teacher points out:
 - John cited the example of Cain murdering Abel to explain who were the son of God and the son of the Evil respectively. John raised the idea of “hatred” right after he mentioned the commandment of loving one another. He stated that the reason why Cain became angry and committed murder was because he belonged to the Evil One, meaning he was from the Evil One or he became the son of the Evil One (1 Jn: 3:8-10). John said that justice is sometimes “attacked” by evil ideas. He wanted the believers not to be shocked by the “evil world” because justice will always be able to beat the sins of the world. Since the beginning until the end of the world, light and darkness, justice and evil, sons of God and sons of the Evil are always incompatible. Thus, generations of Christ's followers faced persecution. Jesus had already foretold about it (Jn 15:18-25). Believers should not be afraid to be in conflict with the evil world because it proves them a real Christian. Real Christians pass through death to a new life through loving one another (Jn 5:24). “Death” means sins. When sins are forgiven, believers will be rewarded a new life.

- John further pointed out that, “All who hate others are murderers.” just like Cain. Murder springs from hatred. Although the person who hates does not kill, the idea of getting rid of the one he hates is always on his mind. Therefore, John said, “murderers have not got eternal life in them.” It means hating others is just like killing others, and both are serious sins (Jn 8:44, Mt 5:22, Rom 1:29, Gal 5:21).
- John described living with love and living with hatred with the words light and darkness, which are two contradictory lives. If someone changes from living in the dark to living in the light, his life will have great changes. There are many real life examples. The following example of Little Yin's stepmother is one of them.
- Teacher can choose to continue the discussion on the Rwandan Genocide, extracting the clips of the main character trying hard to live a life with love.
- Teacher shows ‘PowerPoint 1’ (The story of Little Yin's stepmother) to let students learn the story of Little Yin's stepmother or the killing between the Hutu and Tutsi tribes. Students are expected to understand the differences between living a life with love and that with hatred, and to understand the differences brought to the stepmother and others after she leave the life of darkness for the life of light.
- Teacher can explain with how the Palestinians and the Israelites abandoned hatred and learnt to love each other. Teacher can visit the following website: http://savagemanman.blogspot.com/2007/05/blog-post_19.html

Step 3. Teacher discusses with students:

- According to the impact of living a life with love and that with hatred on oneself and others, was John's explanation of light and darkness appropriate?
- Why does Christianity emphasise so much on abandoning hatred for a life of love? How does this teaching influence oneself and the society?
- Is John's teaching applicable to the modern world? Explain.

Step 4. Teacher summarises:

- John compared living in light to living with love, and living in darkness to living with hatred. His teaching has had significant impact on the lives of Christians, letting the Christians realise the importance of loving one another.
- John pointed out the formula of this new commandment: If a person loves God, he/she surely loves his/her neighbours, vice versa. Hatred is the incarnation of murder. Jesus perfected the new commandment with his own life.
- The teaching about living with love becomes guidance for people in modern times. It helps them understand that living with love is happier and more meaningful than living with hatred.

Extended Activities:

1. Teacher asks students to study the story of how the South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu led the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to strive for fair racial policies during the period when the South African government enforced the racial segregation (apartheid) policy. The group hoped that the blacks and the whites in South Africa could love one another. Teacher can visit the following websites:
<http://goods.ruten.com.tw/item/show?11070414529509>
<http://www.newtaiwan.com.tw/bulletinview.jsp?bulletinid=22294>
2. Teacher asks students to think about the issue from the following perspectives:
 - What kind of organisation was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission led by Tutu?
 - What was Tutu's faith?
 - What were the objectives or advocacy of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?
 - How did the Truth and Reconciliation Commission strive for their goals?
 - What had the Truth and Reconciliation Commission achieved?
3. Teacher can invite students to do sharing in the following period.



Worksheet 3: Living with love and living with hatred (Reference answer)

	Living a life with love	Living a life with hatred
a. How did John describe the quality of living a life with love and that with hatred?	- Living in <u>light</u>	- Living in <u>darkness</u>
b. What are the impacts on oneself and others as brought about by living a life with love and that with hatred?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People will not stumble and sin - People will hate themselves for their sins - Love attaches people to God, people are willing to put love into actions in daily life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eyes are blinded, lose directions in life - Being under the power of death - Equivalent to murdering someone, will not be rewarded with an eternal life
c. Can you give some real life examples according to the impact stated in b?	- (Open ended)	- (Open ended)

Material 1: The teaching of loving one another in 1 John

1. A new commandment

- To love one another was an old commandment because it was stated that one should “love your neighbour as you love yourself” in the Old Testament (Lev 19:18).
- Jesus restated the old commandment to tell his disciples to “love one another”. He had conferred a new standard on the old commandment. People should love one another just as how Jesus had loved us.
- The scope of love was broadened. Jesus was willing to love each and every one of us including the sinners. The love advocated by Jesus was new to people because it was everlasting. Everyone would be embraced by love.
- The depth of love was also deepened. Jesus’ love would not change no matter how he was treated and how people were indifferent towards his love. Even when Jesus was crucified on the cross, he forgave the people who crucified him and prayed for them.
- Jesus transformed the “loving one another” commandment in the Old Testament into a new commandment because Jesus’ love was unprecedented. People should follow Jesus’ guidance and love others according to the new standard.
- John summarised what he said from the beginning and what the audience heard about the Gospel into one sentence, “love one another” (Reference: Jn 13:34, 15:12). Whoever obeys this commandment will fulfill the law (Rom 13:10). “Love” is the sign of a real Christian.

2. Ways of treating one another

- “Love your neighbour as you love yourself”. Do not hate each other because hatred affects one’s emotions and the ability of making decisions.
 - At first, John used the bad example of hating and murdering others to warn the readers. In verses 16-18, he used the good example of Jesus sacrificing his life for the humankind to illustrate the real meaning of love. Jesus died on the cross in order to save the humankind. He shows us what true love is.
- Learn from Jesus and sacrifice for one’s brothers.
 - Jesus was willing to die for the humankind and he showed us what love is. He also taught us that his death was meaningful because God was honoured and people were saved by his death. (Jn 10:11, Mt 16:25).
 - Sacrificing one’s life for others is virtuous and heroic because life is the most precious for everyone. If one can give up his life for others, he must be really virtuous and compassionate.

- However, sacrificing one's life is not something everyone can do. Therefore, John made use of something that everyone is able to do to measure people's love, that is to provide poor people with material help. If a rich (refers to food in the original text) person sees others without food or drinks but does not show sympathy or offer help, that person does not have the heart of God because loving God and loving people are inseparable.
- One should put love into actions because love should not be merely empty words.
 - John advised the readers not to love others with empty words (Jas 2:15-16). Rather we should put love into "actions", that is to do things to help people and give material help to people in need.

References:

思高聖經學會 (2008):《思高聖經原著譯釋版系列—宗徒經書下冊》。香港:思高聖經學會。

Worksheet 1: Love one another

1. Why did John say that the teaching of loving one another was an old commandment as well as a new commandment? Write the answers in the spaces provided below.

- a. Why did John think that loving one another was an old commandment?

- b. Why did John think that loving one another was a new commandment?

Worksheet 2: Attitudes of treating others

1. What attitudes do people have when treating one another in modern societies? Complete the following table by putting down the most commonly observed attitude on the left column and relevant real life examples on the right column.

Indifference, contempt, dislike, as enemies, as brothers

What attitudes do people have when treating one another in modern societies?	Real life examples



2. Read 1 John 2:7-11 and 3:11-18 and answer the following questions.

What did John teach people about treating others (brothers)? Write down the four ways of treating others in the spaces provided below.
a.
b.
c.
d.

Worksheet 3: Living with love and living with hatred

1. With reference to 1 Jn 2:7-11 and 3:11-18, complete the following table.

	Living a life with love	Living a life with hatred
a. How did John describe the quality of living a life with love and that with hatred?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Living in _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Living in _____
b. What are the impacts on oneself and others as brought about by living a life with love and that with hatred?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
c. Can you give some real life examples according to the impact stated in b?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>





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