

# Unconditional Love

By Nance Keyes

for use as  
STEP 1

## Lesson 1 Focus:

Jesus loves us even though we sin.

## Lesson 1 Bible Basis:

Luke 5:27-32

## Lesson 1 Memory Verse:

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. —Romans 5:8.

ECHOES: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

—1 John 1:9.

**Students will understand that we all sin and will discover that God's love for us is greater than our sin.**

### Materials:

Internet access

In January of this year, the Baltimore Ravens played against the Los Angeles Chargers in the professional football season playoffs. Going into the game, the Baltimore fans credited Lamar Jackson for helping them get all the way to the playoffs. But during the game, the fans' appreciation for Jackson turned from cheers into boos. Here is what happened, in Lamar Jackson's words:

Show the following video [1:16].

A tough day at the office for Lamar Jackson, but Ravens fans shouldn't despair

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-0108-ravens-hope-20190107-story.html>

Lamar Jackson made a number of mistakes and played poorly in a game that cost the Ravens a chance to play in the Super Bowl. When Jackson entered the field for the fourth quarter, the fans booed. They continued to boo as he played. Some fans even left. In the interview video, Jackson did not seem upset about the fans' response, but others on the team were angered by the way the fans rejected Jackson.

➤ **How do you think it might feel to be booed or rejected by the people you disappointed?** (Answers will vary; students may say that you might feel unloved—like a failure, hurt, worthless, etc.)

Lamar Jackson did not play a poor game on purpose. He made mistakes. Making mistakes is a part of being human. Sometimes, however, when we mess up, it is because of choices we made even when we knew better. We might feel ashamed or alienated as a result of those poor choices.

➤ **When have you felt unloved or unaccepted because of poor choices you made?** (It

may be difficult to get students to share an answer; you will have a better chance of getting someone to open up if you share your own experience first.)

**We are all sinners. We all mess up—sometimes on purpose, sometimes unintentionally. Let's see what an invitation, a dinner, and a group of tax collectors can show us about Jesus' response to sinners.**

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

upper elementary



Lesson 1 / March 3, 2019

# Unconditional Love

for use as  
**STEP 4** 

Lesson 1

**Focus:**

Jesus loves us even though we sin.

Lesson 1

**Bible Basis:**

Luke 5:27-32

Lesson 1

**Memory Verse:**

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. —Romans 5:8.

ECHOES: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. —1 John 1:9.

**Materials:**

- Internet access
- Brown chenille wires
- Craft foam heart shapes
- Fine tip permanent markers
- Self-adhesive magnet strip
- Hole punch
- Scissors

Before class, read through the steps to the activity. If you need a visual to be able to imagine the finished product, you can use the diagram found here.

[Insert link to pdf diagram here.](#) Amy, the pdf for this will be located in the file on Box.

**In the video we saw earlier, we heard about Lamar Jackson's mistakes. When he was not playing the way he should have, the fans booed. They blamed him for the team losing its chance to play in the Super Bowl. His teammates, on the other hand, hugged him at the end of the game and continued to support him.**

Share the following video [:49].

Despite uneven playoff performance, Ravens predict bright future with Lamar Jackson

<https://www.nbcsports.com/washington/ravens/despite-uneven-playoff-performance-ravens-predict-bright-future-lamar-jackson>

➤ **What do you think it felt like for Lamar Jackson to receive support from the very team he let down?** (Answers will vary but might include that he felt loved, accepted, like he mattered to them more than winning or losing mattered, like he was being given a fresh start or another chance.)

**In today's lesson we learned about Jesus inviting Levi to follow Him. Jesus ate at Levi's home with a number of tax collectors—people in that day who were known for dishonest practices, people whom the Pharisees called sinners, people who let God down.**

➤ **What do you think it felt like for the tax collectors to be loved and accepted by Jesus?** (Answers will vary; they felt a sense of relief and gratitude to Jesus.)

➤ **How do you think God responds when He sees you sin? Do you imagine God booing or God wrapping His arms around you? Explain.** (Answers will vary.)

➤ **What is it like for you to know that even though you sin, Jesus still loves you and that He loved you enough to die for your sins?** (Answers will vary.)

**Remember the first video we watched about Lamar Jackson? He was honest about how he messed up—he didn't try to cover up anything or make excuses to justify his mistakes. When we confess our sins—when we own up to mistakes we've made and tell God about them, He has promised to forgive us and wipe away all our unrighteousness. Have a volunteer read 1 John 1:9.**

**When we are busy with school and daily life, when we mess up or feel down, we may not spend much time considering the love Jesus has for us. We are going to make symbols of God's love to keep in our lockers this week. These will be reminders that while we are sinners, Christ died for us. No matter how badly we mess up, on purpose or unintentionally, Jesus still loves us.**

Distribute two brown chenille wires to each student. Demonstrate making a cross by wrapping one stem around the other.

**The wires that form the cross shape represent the Cross on which Jesus died so our sins can be forgiven. We are going to bend it inward to form arms, so the cross shape will also represent loving arms reaching around and embracing us with God's love.**

Distribute foam hearts.

Demonstrate punching a single hole near the edge of each half of the fullest parts of the heart. Ask the students to use the markers to write their name on their heart. Alternatively, if there is enough room, they may write "Jesus Loves (student's name)."

Demonstrate threading the end of each "arm" of the cross through a hole in the heart and bending the stem just enough to form "hands" to hold the heart. Make sure the students' names are facing out from the vertical stem of the cross.

Cut and distribute pieces of the magnet strip. Instruct the students to peel off the backing and press the adhesive side of the strip across the back of the heart, sticking it to both the heart and the chenille wire.

**Use the magnet to hang this inside your locker door. Each time you open the door this week, use this symbol as a reminder to stop for a moment and think about the love Jesus has for you. Confess any sin and thank God that Jesus loves us even though we sin.**

Before closing, offer time after class if anyone wants to talk privately with you about what it

means to repent and accept the love Jesus has for them. Then offer a prayer of gratitude, thanking God for loving us so much that while we were sinners, He gave His only Son to die for us.

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