

Sending Messages of Love to Children in Their Own Language

Ready!

- This unit could take from 30 to 60 minutes depending on how much information you cover and the amount of discussion you draw out.
- This unit is intended to help parents consciously design acts of love for each of their children in order to be more effective at nurturing them.
- This unit is intended for parents of children who are at least 2 years of age.
- Read or review the unit “Sending messages of Love to Children in Their Own Language” at http://www.arfamilies.org/family_life/parenting/nurture/sending_messages_of_love_to_children_in_their_own_language.asp From www.arfamilies.org select “Family Life” then “Living/Loving in Families” then scroll down until you find the unit title.
- Read through the teaching suggestions that follow and customize them to your personality, objectives, and the group you will be teaching. You may trim certain questions in order to fit your time slot. You may choose to make your own abbreviated outline to teach from or to highlight key points in this teaching guide.
- With some groups it may be useful to hand out copies of the web unit for them to take.

Grab!

- Take a copy of the worksheet for each participant.
- If you plan to evaluate the session, take a copy of the evaluation form for each participant.

Go!

Today we will learn about languages of love. What is something that someone in your family has done for you that made you feel especially loved?

[Allow several people to share. Show interest and support for every answer.]

Some people have said that there are three languages of love:

“Tell me” people want to hear words like “I love you.” “You’re so important to me.”

“Show me” people may believe that talk is cheap. They want to see actions.

“Hug me” people love to hug, cuddle, or be held.

[You may write “Tell me” “Show me” “Touch me” on a poster or whiteboard.]

Is one of these languages of love more effective for you than the others? How do you like to be loved?

[Encourage comments. Comment on the different ways a person likes to be loved.]

There are so many ways in which people like to be loved! A way of being loved that works well with one person may not work at all with another person. For example, what are some different reactions to the words “I love you?”

[Answers will probably range from happiness to discomfort or disbelief.]

Let’s apply this idea of different languages of love to our efforts to show love to our children. One of the most important things we can ever do for our children is to help them feel loved. Yet, just as for you, children have different ways they like to be loved. What differences have you discovered in the way your children like to be loved?

[Encourage discussion. If your group needs prompting, be prepared to share your own ideas or experiences. You may also suggest that some children like to sit and talk while others like to be involved in active play and still others like to read or draw.]

There are several ways of discovering how your child likes to be loved – something we call their love language. We can ask ourselves: What has worked to show love to that child in the past? Or what have I done with that child that seemed to help the child feel loved? How does that child show love? What does your child ask for?

[Provide a worksheet to each class member. If any participant has more than three children, you might provide an extra copy of the worksheet.]

Let’s make a list of some of the things you have done that seem to effectively show love to each of your children. Please write the name of each of your children on one of the lines at the left. In the boxes to the right of the name, write down ways that child may like to be given love through showing, telling, or hugging. Think about specific incidents where you have effectively conveyed love to that child. You may choose to do several things in one area (or column) or a few things in each area depending on what you think will be most effective at conveying your love to each child.

[This is the heart of this session. Work with individuals to come up with ideas. Encourage sharing if it is helpful. See if every participant can think of an idea or two for a child in only one column. If so, that might be that child’s main language of love.]

What did you learn about your children and how to be more effective in loving them?

[Encourage comments.]

Do you think you now know everything about your children's love languages?

[No. Discovering and fine-tuning an understanding of each child's love languages takes a lifetime.]

Maybe you see some ways of showing love for each child that you would like to try out. Look over your list and mark something that you would like to try with each child.

[Pause a few seconds while participants make marks.]

How can you keep refining the way you show love to each child?

[Answers might include: Pay attention to what works. Try new things. Talk with others. Ask the child.]

If you customize your messages of love to match your children's preferences, do you think it could strengthen your relationship?

[Yes! Encourage comments.]

Try the things on your list. Notice how well they work. If you continue to find ways to show your love to your children, you can become a master of the language of love. You and your children will be better for it.

[For further study, participants can also be given copies of the web unit.]

Original work by H. Wallace Goddard

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| | “Show me.” | “Tell me.” | “Hug me.” | Other |
|-----------------|---|---|---|--------------|
| Examples | Play with child. Take walks with child. Prepare your child’s favorite meal. | Saying, “I love you!” Saying, “I love to be with you.” Sending notes. | Snuggle at bedtime. Snuggle for story time. Rub child’s back, arm, etc. | |
| Child: | | | | |
| Child: | | | | |
| Child: | | | | |

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Please answer the following questions in order to help us know whether this session was helpful to you.

1. This workshop gave me specific ideas that will be helpful to me.

- I strongly agree.
- I agree.
- I neither agree nor disagree.
- I disagree.
- I strongly disagree.

2. I think this session will help me be a better family member.

- I strongly agree.
- I agree.
- I neither agree nor disagree.
- I disagree.
- I strongly disagree.

3. I am glad I attended this workshop.

- I strongly agree.
- I agree.
- I neither agree nor disagree.
- I disagree.
- I strongly disagree.

Comments or suggestions: