

The Four Loves

These Are a Few of My Favorite Things

Directions: Reflect on and answer the questions below.

1 What is your favorite food?

2 Who is your favorite singer or band?

3 Who is your best friend?

4 What is your favorite thing about your mom and dad (or guardian)?

5 What is your favorite possession?

6 Do you have a pet? What kind of pet do you have? What is his or her name?

7 Do you have any siblings? What is your favorite thing to do with your sibling/s?

8 Who or what is something else you love? Why?

9 Think about your favorite things and the people and things you love. Do you love them all in the same way? (i.e., Do you love pizza the same way you love your parents?) Why or why not?

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Directions: Read about the four kinds of love. Then decide which type of love is described by each example.

The ancient Greeks understood that we love different things in different ways. Unlike modern English speakers, who often use just one word, *love*, for all the ways we love, the Greeks used four different words for love: *storge*, *philia*, *eros*, and *agapē*. Let us learn more about each of these words for love.

Storge

Storge is the feeling of affection or enjoyment we have for someone or something. It happens naturally when we do something like enjoy a good movie, play with a favorite toy, eat our favorite food, or spend time with our family or people we like, or our pets.

Philia

Philia is the love between friends. It happens naturally when two people grow beyond being merely companions. They discover they have similar feelings, interests, and tastes that they do not share with others and that each had thought only they had. These shared treasures or burdens form a bond of common purpose between the two friends.

Eros

Eros is passionate love. It is most often thought of as the romantic love between a man and woman who get married. It is what we usually mean by “falling in love” or “being in love.” *Eros* happens naturally. But *eros* is more than just romantic love. It reveals within us a desire to be perfectly happy and complete — a desire for the divine. While marriage may allow us to glimpse this kind of perfect happiness and



***The Return of the Prodigal Son* by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (ca. 1667–1670)**

completeness on earth, this desire can only be truly satisfied by God.

Agapē

Agapē is sacrificial, or self-giving love. *Agapē* is the Greek word for “charity.” It is the highest form of love — the kind of love God has for us. *Agapē* is unconditional love. It wants only the well-being of the other person and puts his or her well-being before one’s own. It is an act of free will and not merely a feeling. Significantly, it does *not* happen naturally as feelings do. We must freely choose *agapē*, often despite how we feel. It is the kind of love Jesus calls us to have for one another. When Jesus commanded us to love our neighbor as ourselves, He commanded us to have *agapē* love. It is the highest Christian virtue. The way Jesus loves us is the perfect example of *agapē* love.

- 1 Manny loved going to his grandma's house for the holidays because she made the best food he had ever eaten.

Type of love:

- 2 Tim and Janelle dated for nine months and loved one another deeply. They both wanted to start a family. One night, Tim and Janelle returned to the place they met. Tim got down on one knee and proposed marriage to Janelle. She said "yes"!

Type of love:

- 3 Meredith and Kelley are best friends who met years ago on a mission trip. Because of their shared concern for the poor and homeless in their community, they decided to open a food pantry at their parish.

Type of love:

- 4 "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37–39).

Type of love:

- 5 "But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

Type of love:

- 6 "The way we came to know love was that he laid down his life for us; so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If someone who has worldly means sees a brother in need and refuses him compassion, how can the love of God remain in him? Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth." (1 John 3:16–18)

Type of love:

- 7 "I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34–35)

Type of love:

Love Is...

Directions: Follow along as your teacher reads aloud from St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Pause to discuss the questions with your class.

1 Corinthians 13:1–8, 13

If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing. **1** Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. **2** It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. **3** . . . So faith, hope, love remain, these three; **4** but the greatest of these is love. **5**



- 1** Why are having great abilities or doing good works “nothing” without love?
- 2** Who is the object of St. Paul’s definition of love — ourselves or others? What makes you think so? What does it mean that love rejoices with the truth?
- 3** Which of the four loves do you think St. Paul is speaking of? Why do you think so?
- 4** What are faith, hope, and love that St. Paul speaks of?
- 5** According to this passage, why is love the greatest of the three (faith, hope, and love)?

