



Weekly Resources for Schools

**PHASE: SECONDARY**

# **HOW DO WE KNOW WE ARE LOVED?**



## KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

***“My great hope is ....(to) try to love somebody and have the courage to accept the love in return.”***

***— Maya Angelou***

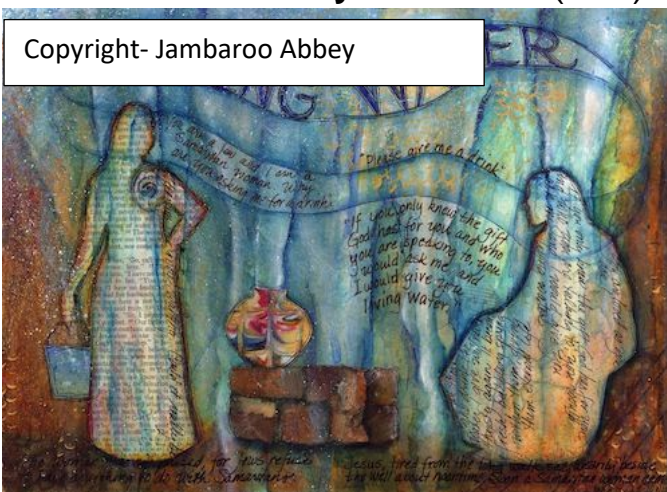
***Research suggests\* the perception of brief feelings of love throughout the day appear to be associated with an individual’s psychological well-being. Yet sometimes we can doubt whether we are loved or are worthy of love. In the Bible, Jesus commands his followers to love one another and says it will be one of the ways people can recognise those who are his disciples.***

\* 27 Nov 2019

Published on Psych Central.com

## BIBLE PASSAGE OF THE WEEK:

### John 4 4-26 (NIV): The woman at the well



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Now he (Jesus) had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a

drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw

with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?” Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.” He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.” “I have no husband,” she replied. Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.” “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.” “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.” The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

## Gathering

### What makes people feel loved?

Try showing some pictures or film clips of cute dogs and babies and see what response they bring out in our students! Students may have some of their own they would like to share. Studies that show that simply making eye contact with dogs increases their owners' levels of oxytocin, also known as the 'love hormone'!



A study by Heshmati and Oravecz identified some behaviours that all participants agreed would make people feel loved; these were the kind of scenarios agreed on

1. When someone shows compassion toward them in difficult times
2. When a small child or toddler snuggles up to them
3. When their pets are happy to see them
4. When someone tells them "I love you"



**Consider-**What would you add to the list about things that help you feel loved?

None of the 4 above are associated exclusively with romantic partners and the authors concluded that "people feel loved in a range of settings, including momentary interactions and experiences with friends, pets and family.

## Engagement

Read the passage about the woman at the well from John 4: 4-26. Then watch this video which is a modern-day monologue version of our Bible passage. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q49Bbfglbto>

After the video ask your students to reflect individually or corporately upon the meaning.

If needed the posts on YouTube under the video could be considered and students could be asked to consider why this passage and this version of it seems to have such an impact on people today.

### **Questions for Reflection**

'To be known is to be loved and to be loved is to be known' What does this mean to you?  
How many people know us? How many people love us?

## Response

### For Reflection

Our human tendency is to judge others because of stereotypes, customs, or prejudices.

Our culture and society judges' people on the job we have and the amount of money we have, the friends we have, the car we drive, the way we look and smell, our life choices.

In the Bible passage about the woman at the well, Jesus treats her as an individual, accepting her with love and compassion.

**Pose some questions for personal reflection not discussion: Leave pauses after each question.**

- Have you ever stereotyped and dismissed someone a lost cause because of their background?
- Has this ever happened to you?
- How hard is it to see the good in everyone?
- What can you do to break down your prejudices?

## Sending



Some may have heard of the 'Random acts of kindness' campaign or the 40 Acts challenge some use at lent, in the time leading up to Easter.

<https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/>

These focus on small actions that will show care and love for others and help them to know they are cared for and important.

Some schools or tutor groups have given themselves a challenge to carry out random acts of kindness. Try the links above for ideas or why not work together to generate 10 random acts of kindness that you think others in your school would value.

Kindness boomerang Watch this video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwAYpLVyeFU>

What will you do today?

***"The greatest love you can give is to those who don't deserve it."***

***- Brian Vaszily***

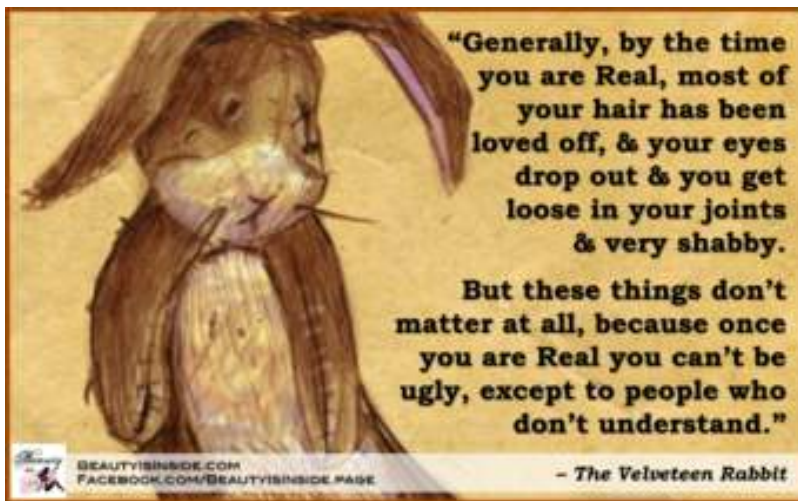
www.intenseExperiences.com



## SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

*(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)*

### EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:



The Velveteen Rabbit is a well-known story book aimed at young children written by Margery Williams Bianco.

Carefully read through this extract from the book.

What point do you think this extract is making?

What does it say to you?

"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

"Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit.

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt."

"Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," he asked, "or bit by bit?"

"It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

— **Margery Williams Bianco, The Velveteen Rabbit**

### ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS: Using poetry to aid reflection

#### *A Well Reflection by Macrina Wiederkehr*

What makes this world so lovely  
is that somewhere it hides a well.  
Something lovely there is about a well  
so deep  
un-piped and real  
filled  
with buckets and buckets  
of that life-giving drink.  
A faucet (tap) will do in a hurry,  
but what makes the world so lovely



is that somewhere  
it hides a well!

Sometimes  
people are like wells  
deep and real  
natural (un-piped)  
life-giving,  
calm and cool,  
refreshing.  
They bring out what is best in you  
They are like fountains of pure joy  
They make you want to sing or maybe, dance.  
They encourage you to laugh  
even, when things get rough.  
And maybe that's why  
things never stay rough  
once you've found a well.

Some experiences are like wells too.  
People create them  
They are life-giving happenings  
They are redeeming experiences  
They are wells,  
Wells of wonder,  
Wells of hope.  
When you find a well  
and, you will someday,  
Drink deeply of the gift within.  
And then, maybe soon

you'll discover  
that you've become  
what you've received,  
And then you will be a well  
for others to find.

So, lift up your eyes and look around you:  
Over the mountains, down in the valley  
out in the ocean, over the runways  
into the cities, into the country  
sidewalks and highways  
paths in the forest  
into the hearts of a thirsty people.

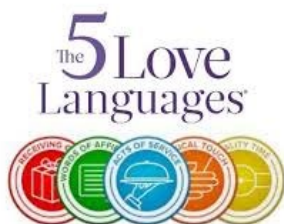
Look!  
And I beg you  
don't ever stop looking  
because what makes this world so lovely  
is that *somewhere*  
it hides a well,  
a well that hasn't been found yet.

And if YOU don't find it  
maybe no one will!  
And if you don't be one  
maybe  
nobody will find you!

### **Some reflection questions on this reading from Jamberoo Benedictine Abbey, Australia.**

- Where do I need a well in my life at present?
- What kind of a well am I to others?
- Am I selective in my well giving?
- Am I open to finding the well deep within others?

### **CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES:**

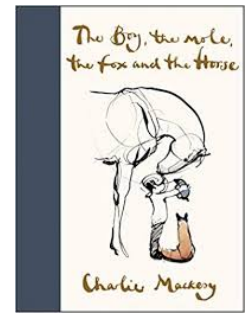


In his New York Times bestseller, *The 5 Love Languages*, Dr. Gary Chapman presents the idea that relationships grow better when we understand each other. He highlights that everyone gives and receives love differently. The link below goes to a website where there is an option to complete a quiz to identify how we each express love and this can help us understand what makes us feel loved;  
<https://www.5lovelanguages.com/quizzes/>

This could be used when gathering to help begin further reflection on what makes people feel loved.

\*Discuss ideas to put into place that will help students staying connected with each other, whether they can physically see each other or not.  
Ideas could include- Sharing a joke a day/ Hold a 'virtual' lunch/ All read the same book and then 'meet' to share your thoughts on the book/ Have a theme day and post pictures in a group chat.

\*'The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse.' By Charlie Mackesy – is a book that could be read together, sharing the pictures and the pages that made you think.



\*Could you raise money for something together? Or gift something to someone else – often we feel love when we show it to others...

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP – OUR APPROACH

### INVITATIONAL

Everyone is welcome to take part in collective worship, as much or as little as they or their parents and carers are comfortable with. This means we use invitational language and consider carefully our choice of words and songs. Children are invited to pray but are not compelled or expected to do so; they always have a choice. We invite them to pray or reflect in whatever way they would usually as a family, if that is part of their home experience.

### INCLUSIVE

Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, we choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When we present Christian teaching, we make it clear that this is 'what Christians believe', saying things like:

'I wonder why this story might be important to Christians?'

'The story today comes from the Bible (the holy book of Christians), which teaches that ...'

Our worship should be accessible for children and young people with a range of different backgrounds, and so we take care that activities do not require expensive resources. We also offer a variety of activities, so that children and young people with differing needs can all find something they can engage with.

### INSPIRING

We aim for our acts of worship to inspire those engaging with them. How might it engage their emotions, enabling a sense of peace, comfort, hope or motivation? How might it inspire them into action, into thinking differently and considering their behaviour or actions? How might it inspire them to reflect on their faith or beliefs, and on the faith or beliefs of others?