

Fruits of a Loving Heart

Month: Feb.

Week #: 23

Day: d. Thur. Time: 30 min.

# Gifts from the Heart

Life Tree Learning Systems ©

**Objectives/Aims**

The students will: recognize that true generosity involves giving from the heart.

**Materials**

either handmade or store bought Valentines

**Illustration**

The girl, Zoe, made a 'heart-felt' card for Clair who is touched by her friendship. Zoe must have put a lot of time, effort and thought into that card!



**Background**

According to some ancient Christian stories, Valentine used to secretly send little notes of love and encouragement to his Christian friends while he was in prison. Many people believe that this is why we send Valentines on his feast day. Other people think that the Valentine custom is celebrated on February 14 because that was the day of the year when Romans, whom the Christians regarded as pagans, used to choose their

boyfriends and girlfriends. When these Romans converted to Christianity, they kept up this custom but carried it out in honor of St. Valentine. (See References.)

Today, Valentine's Day is celebrated by the giving of flowers, candy and cards. Amongst adults, it is typically a day of romance, while for children and students, it is more of a day of fun and parties. To make this day, and week, more meaningful and relevant for you students, I've taken the idea from the Roman Catholics, for whom St. Valentine is the patron saint of love and friendship, and decided to focus on the attributes of friendship: Fruits of a Loving Heart. These fruits include: kindness, gentleness, patience, generosity and joy.

**Group Activity**

Note: The information for this activity can either be disseminated earlier in the week, so that the students can work on their Valentines at home, or you can provide in-class time for the students to make their personalized Valentines.

1. Say, "Does anybody know what the word 'generous' means? A: Merriam-Webster Online dictionary defines it as: being 'liberal in giving' which means you give others a lot. This is good, but in our culture, people get more than enough stuff and a lot of times that stuff doesn't mean very much. By a show of hands, how many of you have gotten Valentine cards that were cheap, store bought, and didn't have either the giver's name or your name written on it? A: Probably all. How did they make you feel? A: No feeling; good if candy attached, all right, etc. Now how many of you have received a handmade or personalized Valentine? Personalized meaning words were

### **Group Activity (continued)**

written specifically for you, or a compliment was given; anyway, you knew that the card was made, or picked out, especially for you. How did receiving such a card make you feel? *A: Good; happy, like somebody cared, etc.*

The dictionary also defines generous as: characterized by a noble or forbearing spirit, which I interpret to mean that the person doing the giving is willing to sacrifice some of themselves for another. This means that they care about the other person. The giving is personal, not just an empty gesture or something you do because everybody else is doing it... like giving Valentine cards. So, we are still going to give each other Valentine cards, but with a difference. These cards are going to be given from the heart, and since we are studying 'fruits of the heart,' this makes sense. This means that cards need to show, in some way, that you truly care about the other person. It can be a handmade card where you do your best job possible to make a card the other person would like. It also can be a store bought card, but with something personal written on it like a compliment, or a funny joke or poem. And if it's store bought, you'll try to pick out one that fits the other person, one that they would truly like. Who can tell me what the rules are for this activity?"

2. Pass out the Valentine cards.

### **Group Discussion Questions (After the cards are handed out.)**

1. What did you like about this activity?

A: Answers will vary.

2. What is the difference between a heartfelt gift and one that is given without much thought?

A: A heartfelt gift is personalized in such a way, to show the other person that you really care about them.

### **Variations/Extensions**

#### **Conclusion**

Saying, "Giving a gift that isn't personalized is really a waste of your time and materials and the other person doesn't need more meaningless stuff. So when you give something to another person, make it beautiful, make it special, and most importantly, make it a gift from your heart!"

Feb. 23 d. Thur.

## Fruits of a Loving Heart: Gifts from the Heart



**The girl, Zoe, made a ‘heart-felt’ card for Claire who is touched by her friendship. Zoe must have put a lot of time, effort and thought into that card!**