



## WEEK FOUR

### We have love because God is with us.

Scripture: Luke 1:57–80

#### Reflection

- When you were little and were learning about the world around you, your grown-ups spent a lot of time teaching you to be gentle. They probably said things like, “Use gentle hands with the cat,” “Use a soft touch, please,” and “Hands are for hugging!” You had to learn that no matter how much you wanted to squeeze your new kitten or bounce your baby sibling, you had to be gentle to show love.

Now you are older and know you should be gentle with animals, babies, and how you treat other people. Of course, it isn't always easy to be gentle, even for grown-ups, but it is an important way to show love. Another word for gentle is “tender.” When someone is showing tenderness, they respect the body and spirit of someone else. They interact with them gently and with consent.

God showed Zechariah and Elizabeth tenderness when their baby, John, was born.

Zechariah could see God's love in John. God's love so inspired Zechariah that he spoke a prophecy—a truthful prayer. He used the word “tender” to describe God's love:

“By the tender mercy of our God,  
the dawn from on high will break upon us,  
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

God's tenderness is like dawn or sunrise because it helps us see ahead. We know God is with us because we experience the tender love of God with every sunrise.

John grew up to be an important friend to Jesus. He had the opportunity to show tenderness to Jesus. And God was with them.



#### For Discussion

- How do you show gentleness in your home?
- What does tenderness look like in your family?
- How does your family show love to one another?
- How does your love for each other remind you of God's love?

## Family Activity: Beaded Hearts

- Noticing God's love in the world is like noticing purple shoes or green cars. At first, they don't seem common, but once you start to pay attention, they seem to be everywhere you look! In this activity, you'll practice noticing God's love all around you by making beaded hearts to share with others when you see God's love in action.

Have each person in your family make at least two beaded hearts. Begin by stringing beads onto a pipe cleaner, leaving about ½" of room on each end. Then twist the ends together and tuck them into one of the last beads. Now gently shape the pipe cleaner into a heart. As you create your hearts, have a conversation about this week's discussion questions!

As you go about your normal rhythms and routines this week, pay attention to the ways you see God's love in action. For example, when you notice someone showing love (to you or someone else), give them a beaded heart and say, "I see the love of God in you!"

You can also use these beaded hearts to practice showing love to others. Pay attention to the opportunities you have in your daily life to show God's love to yourself and the people around you. Whether you help clean up after a meal or are kind to yourself after a mistake, give yourself a beaded heart and say, "I see the love of God in me!"



### MATERIALS

- Pony beads
- Pipe cleaners

### Prayer

- Dear God, your love for us is gentle, like a grown-up holding a baby. Your love for us is kind, like a kid hugging their favorite blanket. Help us love ourselves and others in the same way you love us. Amen.

By the TENDER MERCY of  
OUR GOD ...

