

Teaching Guide Live in Loveland

Goals

1. Learn the key elements of loving children effectively.
2. Identify specific ways to apply those elements to my relationships.
3. Make a plan to show love more effectively.

Preparation:

Provide a Loveland Travel Guide for each participant.

Study the Teaching Guide and Travel Guide. Consider stories you might share.

Make copies of the evaluation at the end of this Teaching Guide.

Introduction:

Each unit in the Parenting Journey can form a 30 – 90 minute lesson. This guide will provide you specific ideas for teaching Loveland and general ideas for creating a lesson from any of the other Travel Guides in the Parenting Journey. You can easily use the Travel Guides and your own experiences to create lessons on any of the Parenting Journey units.

Welcome

Welcome to Loveland along the Parenting Journey.

[Give any necessary instructions for housekeeping tasks. You might add a get-acquainted activity if you have the time and you want to build the relationships among your participants. Look for icebreaker activity ideas at www.cyfernet.org .]

Start by stating the main idea:

Kindness, caring, healthy relationships—All of this is possible for those who live in Loveland. Nothing helps children become good people as much as being loved. Loveland may be the most important place in your parenting journey.

Discussion:

How do you feel when people scold or criticize you?

How do children feel when we scold and criticize them?

[If we often scold and criticize our children, they may feel bad and unloved. That's very discouraging for them! We may try to show our love for them, but we may show it in ways that they don't recognize.]

Would you like to be better at showing love to your children? Below are some ideas for showing love effectively.

Points of interest

1. Show love effectively.

One of the best ways to show love effectively is to learn each child's "language of love." Each person likes to be loved in a slightly different way. If you learn your child's preferences, you can show love more effectively.

[Tell a story of discovering one of your children's languages of love or invite class members to share their experiences.]

Let's talk about the three most common languages of love.

Some children like to be **shown** love. Such children may want you to play games with them, buy them a gift or to make time to be with them, to take them for ice cream or repair their bikes. We call them "show me's."

Can you tell us about a child you know who is a "show me?"

Some children like to be **told** that you love them. They want to hear words like: "I love you." "You're important to me." "I love to be with you." Some children enjoy notes that include words like these. We call them "tell me's."

Can you tell us about a child you know who is a "tell me?"

Some children like to be **held** and **hugged**. They love to be rocked, cuddled or snuggled. We call them "touch me's."

Can you tell us about a child you know who is a "touch me?"

You can learn a lot about how a child likes to be loved by noticing how she shows love. You can notice what has helped him feel loved in the past. And you can notice what she asks for.

Of course, there are times when a child who normally likes to be hugged just wants you to help with an immediate need. The key to loving effectively is noticing what is important to the person you love and providing what he or she wants.

As we discover the ways our children like to be loved, we can show love more effectively. Later, we will invite you to make a plan for how you can show love to your children.

2. Listen with your heart.

Do you remember the challenges you faced as a child?
Do you remember feeling afraid or embarrassed?
Do you remember feeling lonely or foolish?

[Encourage participants to share their stories of times in childhood when they wish compassion had been extended to them—and times when it actually was. Emphasize the healing power of compassion.]

Children live in a world where most people have more knowledge, experience and power than they do. They often feel powerless or self-conscious.

We can help them by trying to understand what they are feeling, by being patient with them as they learn, and by showing understanding with their troubles.

For example, if your child tells you about being picked on at school, you can try to imagine what that is like for the child.

What are some things you might say to show understanding?

[Suggest saying something like, “That must have been very frustrating.”]

Emotional injuries are like physical injuries. Preaching and advising are not helpful. When a person is hurting, he or she needs our compassion. We can listen and try to understand.

[Many more examples of showing understanding can be found in the book “*Between Parent and Child*” that is in the county office’s Guiding Children Successfully book collection. Use them or your own experiences as time allows.]

Showing compassion and understanding is one of the hardest things we humans ever do. We tend to deny or dismiss children’s feelings by saying, “It’s not that big of a deal.” But it is a big deal to the child. We can help children heal by trying to understand their feelings and by using words that show our understanding. One example of an understanding statement would be: “I can see that you’re upset.”

3. Show kindness.

Children grow best if they get about five positive comments for each negative one. That means that we need to be actively looking for the good in them and reacting to the inevitable problems with kindness.

For example, if a guest in our home spilled a glass of milk, we would not yell: “You clumsy fool! How could you be so stupid?” What would we say?

[We would probably say, “Accidents happen. I’ll grab a cloth to wipe up the milk.” We would say kind things because we value the relationship.]

When children make mistakes, we should respond in a kind way. It shows them that we value them. It is reasonable to have children wipe up the milk they spill, but it is not helpful to be angry with them or to call them names.

Conclusion:

One of the best things we can do for our children is spend time with each child doing something he or she loves to do. We might take a walk together, make a snack together,

read a book together or simply listen to the child tell us about her day. When we gladly give time to each of our children, it assures them that we love them.

Loveland is the place we want to live.

Plan your stay.

[These questions could be answered by each participant directly on their Loveland Travel Guide.]

After you have discussed the three main ideas in Loveland, think about the things you have learned. Here are some ideas for showing love:

Notice how each of your children likes to be loved. Come up with ideas that might help each child feel loved. Try out your ideas and notice how they work. Ask your children what they like to do with you. Listen to your children's concerns and worries. Do little things to show love to each child. Appreciate each child's efforts. Think about what it feels like to be that child. Love them.

Pick something to work on this week with one of your children. Maybe you want to notice how your daughter likes to be loved. Maybe you want to take time out for a one-on-one with your son.

Map out the details of your plan. What exactly do you plan to do? When will be the best time? Do you need to do anything to prepare the child to take part in your new plan? Do you need to do anything to prepare yourself? For example, do you need to relax and plan to be calm in case your child does not respond positively to your efforts?

Decide some small thing you can do this week and write out your plan:

What you plan to do:

The best time to do this:

Ideas to prepare my child:

How I can prepare myself:

People who can help me:

Loveland is so important! We hope you will have a great time there AND become an expert at finding your way around. Maybe you want more help to explore Loveland. If so, you might:

-read more about Loveland on the Parenting Journey web site: www.arfamilies.org.

-read a book about nurturing children such as Haim Ginott's "*Between Parent and Child*"

-read a book about love languages such as Gary Chapman's "*The Five Love Languages of Children*"

-look for a class in your area on loving, nurturing or love languages

-get ideas from another person who is very good at nurturing and loving

-get more ideas by going to the national extension family Web site, www.cyfernet.org, and searching on nurturing, loving children or languages of love

Teaching Guide Development Team: H. Wallace Goddard, James P. Marshall, Chris Hughes, Melissa Potter.

United States Department of Agriculture, University of Arkansas, and County Governments Cooperating.

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