



TEACH IT COFFEEHOUSE SESSION 9

1. Materials

For this session each student will need—

- his or her own Bible
- optional: the student journal page for Session 9 (Using the student journal page is optional in the coffeehouse setting since table space will be limited.)

You'll also need—

- optional: Internet access and a YouTube clip of a dog howling, "I love you"
- laptop
- a pack of pencils with erasers
- optional: a few spare Bibles for students who've forgotten theirs
- a red-letter edition of the Bible

2. Session Intro

GOALS OF SESSION 9

As students experience this session, they will—

- gain an understanding of Jesus' command to sacrificially love one another.
- examine their hearts for any deficiencies in showing sacrificial love.
- discuss practical ways to live out this kind of love.

PRAYER

After your students have gathered, ask the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of truth—to guide them into truth. Pray that this session won't be "just another Bible study," but rather, an opportunity for Jesus to show himself to your group.

OPEN

Ruh-Roh Love Language

Open with a video clip of a dog howling out the phrase, "I love you." You can find this by searching on a video-sharing Web site with key words such as *howling dog* and *I love you*.

Then lead a brainstorm discussion about this question:

How do you let someone know you love him or her?

Without steering your students toward a "right" answer, give them a few minutes to share. Explain that in John 13, they'll see how Jesus answered that question.

Share that you're picking up the action near the end of Jesus' ministry. He had just entered Jerusalem days before his trial and crucifixion. Before the events of his trial were set in motion, Jesus had a long, intimate conversation with his disciples. That's why red-letter editions of the Bible (where Jesus' words are printed in red) have several pages of red ink in John 13–17.

What does the sea of red ink tell us about John 13 and the chapters that follow?

It's a long talk from Jesus.

What conclusions can you draw, just from this bit of info?

Draw out the fact that John 13–17 is like a “farewell address” from Jesus. Since it comes near the end of Jesus’ ministry, it must be important information (people often say significant things to those they love before they die). Time was now short; there was little time to waste.

3. Digging In

Read the Red

Explain that in John 13, Jesus set the stage for his departure by delivering a historic command and illustrating it with an unprecedented act. Ask the students to read John 13:1-17 from their Bibles. As they read, have them—

1. Underline anything Jesus did.

2. Circle anything Jesus said about what he was doing (i.e., any explanation, teaching, or instruction).

Look back at what you underlined—the things Jesus did. If you were to give a play-by-play of this scene, what would you say?

- 1. He got up from the meal (v. 4).*
- 2. He took off his outer clothing (v. 4).*
- 3. He wrapped a towel around his waist (v. 4).*
- 4. He poured water into a basin (v. 5).*
- 5. He washed his disciples’ feet (v. 5).*
- 6. He dried their feet with the towel wrapped around his waist (v. 5).*

Why do you think John gives us so much detail about this event?

Point out that this is a remarkable amount of info as compared to other acts of Jesus described in the Gospels. Perhaps John captures the detail because this was such an important, unprecedented act—for the Master Teacher to wash his disciples’ feet. The effect is much like a movie director using slow motion to convey the drama of a significant scene. Share that in Jesus’ day, a rabbi could ask his disciples to do almost anything for him, but not wash his feet. This task was reserved for slaves.

How does John describe this event in 13:1? What does this tell you about Jesus’ act of washing his disciples’ feet?

Jesus showed them the “full extent of his love.” This is a lofty description when you consider the fact that Jesus’ love has no limits!

Now ask the students to look at what they circled in their Bibles and to jot down, either on a napkin or on their journal pages, the promises or instructions they found.

Then ask—

What do you think Jesus was trying to get across to his disciples?

Serving each other is an essential part of being his disciple.

Knowing that this was one of Jesus’ final acts, what does this say about being Jesus’ disciple?

Loving one another by serving each other is one of the most important—maybe the most important—activities for those who want to be Jesus’ disciple.

4. Digging Deeper

Show and Tell

Share that shortly after Jesus showed his disciples the “full extent of his love,” he taught them about love. Ask students to read John 13:31-35 from their Bibles. Give them a heads-up that you’ll give them a quick “quiz” on the info when they finish reading. You can offer the quiz as a multiple choice or simply ask for the correct answer (which we’ve denoted below with a verse reference).

How much longer was Jesus going to be with them?

- a. a lot longer
- b. a little longer (v. 33)
- c. three years
- d. 40 days and 40 nights

What did Jesus command?

- a. Teach the children.
- b. Love one another (v. 34).
- c. Minister to the least of these.
- d. Love your enemies.

What kind of command did Jesus say that this was?

- a. old
- b. simple
- c. new (v. 34)
- d. zippy

How are we supposed to love one another? To what extent?

- a. as others love us
- b. with all our heart, soul, and mind
- c. to the fullest extent allowable by law
- d. as Jesus has loved us (v. 34)

What will happen if we obey this command?

- a. God promises not to destroy the earth by water.
- b. All will know that we are Jesus’ disciples (v. 35).
- c. God promises not to destroy the earth by fire.
- d. God will bring protection in the land.

5. Taking It Inward

The Love Connection

Help the group process these truths by asking these questions:

Whom, specifically, did Jesus tell the disciples to love?

He told them to love one another.

Can you think of any others we’re told to love in the Bible? How does this command compare?

We’re told to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44), God (Matthew 22:37), our neighbor (Matthew 22:39), and those who don’t love us back (Luke 6:32-35). Here, Jesus is emphasizing that Christians should love other Christians.

When Jesus told his disciples to love one another as he had loved them, what do you think he meant?

People often think Jesus meant that we’re supposed to be willing to die for each other—and in a sense, he did mean that, in that we must die to ourselves in order to serve others. But Jesus hadn’t yet died on the cross when

he said these words. Elicit from the group that he must have been referring to something else—perhaps the example he had just given of washing their feet. Jesus was showing us that we must humbly serve one another in order to love as he loved.

Do you think it's really possible to love as Jesus loved? Why or why not?

Some people dismiss Jesus' command to love as he did since we aren't able to die for anyone's sin. They say this commandment is unattainable. But by focusing on Jesus' example in John 13, your group should be able to come up with several practical, attainable ways to love one another as Jesus loved.

Why do you think Jesus made such a strong connection between loving one another and the world seeing us as his disciples?

At this point you may want to share the Insight from Prep It on the Greek words for love and disciple. The purpose of being a disciple was to imitate the teacher in order to become like him. Jesus is love. Since love is his defining characteristic, Jesus' true disciples will exhibit that trait as well.

What kind of thought process would a nonbeliever go through to conclude that someone must be a disciple of Jesus because of how that person loves?

A nonbeliever would have to see a love that's deeper and greater than what's generally seen from the world. This would trigger a realization that something is different, maybe unusual—maybe even supernatural.

6. Cross-Checking

The Look of Love

Since our loving one another is hugely important to God, it's time to get a handle on what Jesus is asking us to do. Ask your group members to read 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12 from their Bibles and to look for the information for which the chart below asks. Then discuss the questions that follow.

	What commands to love do you see?	To what degree (how much) are we supposed to love?	What can happen when we love this way?
1 Thessalonians 4:9-12	<i>We've been taught by God to love each other (v. 9).</i>	<i>We're to do so more and more (v. 10).</i>	<i>Our daily lives will win the respect of outsiders (v. 12).</i>

Think about our youth group (or church or campus-ministry group). Can outsiders look at our love for the people in this group and know that we're Jesus' disciples?

Is there anybody in our student ministry whom you have not loved as Christ loved you?

Jesus told us to do as he did and to love as he loved. What did Christ do in John 13 to show his love for his disciples?

Whose feet do you need to wash?

7. Wrapping It Up

The Lock of Love

Give students an opportunity to think of a simple act they can do between now and tomorrow to show love for someone in your youth ministry. Ask them to write an idea on a napkin or in the space on their journal pages if you're using them, and encourage the students to keep each other accountable to following through on the action. You may want to set up a phone chain as a tool for students to check in on each other.

