



# Unit 1



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# Unit overview

**This unit dives into the immense concept of God’s boundless love. As humans we are bound by our limits, judgments and brokenness, so our love is not boundless. We will pray, listen, laugh, learn and wonder about the greatness and fullness of God’s love in comparison to our love.**

The two sessions differentiate between God’s love and our love, not only for the world but also for ourselves. The hope is that you start by imagining what God’s love looks like for all of humanity and then begin to reflect on God’s boundless love for **you**.

**Session one:** God's boundless love for humanity (all you can imagine and beyond)

**Session two:** God's boundless love for us (self). How do we love ourselves with a boundless love like God’s? How does loving ourselves allow us to love others?

We will spend additional time in these two sessions to build a foundation for your group. Whether there are three or 30 of you, it is important to build a base of love, mutual respect and understanding.

Watch to recognize icons and fonts throughout this curriculum:

- Take-home sheet — Each lesson has a sheet for post-lesson reflection. Use these to make connections at home and with the congregation.
- ***Bold italics*** indicates words that should be read aloud by the leader.
- **Regular font** indicates the lesson plan and leader information.



**Clock** to tell you how long each section should take. Feel free to use more or less time depending on your group.



**Bible** to tell you when you need your Bibles and are reading from Scripture.



**Video** to tell you when you are playing a video. Videos can be found on the Gathering resource list on the Gathering website.



**Music** to tell you when you are using music or a song in the lesson. Songs can be found on the Gathering Spotify playlist (@elcagathering). Just search for the unit name (boundless love, boundless creation, etc.).



**Computer** to provide alternative tips and suggestions if your group is meeting online.



**Social media** for opportunities to add to the conversation online. Take note of the Gathering handles below.



FB.com/YouthGathering  
FB.com/ELCAthetAble  
FB.com/ELCAMYLE



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#ELCAYG2022

## UNIT 1 – SESSION ONE:

# God's boundless love for humanity

### Overview for adult leaders:

In this lesson, we are diving into the vastness of God's love. We are exploring what God's love looks like for all of humanity. Our prayer is that this lesson will start to lay the foundation for your group. Love is the best place for us to start, trying to understand God's great love for humanity and how we can begin to share that love.

Videos and songs are important to this lesson. Please find a way to play this for your group. We encourage you to search for and print out lyrics so that people can listen and/or read along to get the full impact of the words of these songs.



#### “Love Has No Labels”

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

#### “Who Is Your Everyone?,” Joe Davis Poetry

<https://youtu.be/xLSbVaN4QdQ>



#### “We'll All Be Free,” William Matthews, Lisa Gungor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kgG0jltdeek>

*(Access this song and more via the ELCA Youth Gathering's "boundless love" playlist on Spotify [here!](#))*



**If you are doing this session online** see “suggested uses for this resource” on page 9 for ideas to be able to share in a digital meeting.

## *suggested supply list*

- Markers
- Paper
- Post-It notes
- An internet-connected device on which to show videos/play music
- Lengths of rope
- (5) copies of “Love Box” skit ([available on page 18](#))
- Copies of the take-home sheet for each participant ([available within this curriculum](#))
- Copies of the lyrics to “We'll All Be Free” for each participant (We encourage you to do a web search for the lyrics.)

## gather | building of your group

### Warm-up:



As participants enter your space, have music playing (see playlist) and either a large sheet of paper on the ground or several large sheets of paper around the room. On each piece of paper, in bold marker, write (large and bold): “Love is... ” or “God’s love is like ... ” or “Draw a picture of what love looks like.” Ask participants to take time to write on each sheet of paper as many words/pictures as they can think of; try to fill the papers. Once everyone has had a chance to write and/or draw, read some responses or ask participants to share. Allow them to read anything on the paper; they do not have to read their own response. (This gets people moving and talking. It also helps set the tone for your time together.)

### Invitation:

***You are invited into this space and this time with a daring vision to see God’s boundless love, which is so much wider, deeper, stronger and more powerful than you could ever possibly imagine.***

### Team building/ice-breaker:



Part of showing God’s love to one another is getting to know each other. One way we do this is by learning each other’s names. No name is too difficult to learn. It might be hard to pronounce and you may have to ask someone to repeat it for you, but do not assume they want a nickname or that their name isn’t worth learning — they are a child of God. Take the time to learn to say their name.

Another way to show care for someone is to ask for their pronouns: “Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and my pronouns are ‘he, him, his,’ ‘she, her, hers,’ or ‘they, them, theirs.’” What is your name, and what pronouns do you use? Please make sure to acknowledge that naming pronouns can be a risk for some and a challenge for others. This will help you in creating a space that is both safe and courageous. You may be surprised to realize that someone has been longing to introduce themselves to you in this way. Even if you already know everyone’s names, ask again and add an interesting question such as, “What makes you feel loved?” (Example: “My name is \_\_\_\_\_, my pronouns are she, her, hers. I feel loved when my mom sends me a text saying how much she loves me and adds a million emojis.”)

## GATHERING CONNECTION

***In Saint Paul’s letter to the church of the Ephesians, he wrote, “I want you to know all about Christ’s love, although it is too wonderful to be measured.”***

When you attend the 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering in Minneapolis, how will you measure your experience? Will it be in miles traveled or days enjoyed? Could it be in hours of preparation or moments of anticipation? Will it be counted in a stadium crowd of 30,000 or in a small group of 13 praying in your hotel lobby? There will be so many ways to measure your week in Minneapolis. Any one of them will do, but none will be as significant as the measurement of love. Make sure you measure your Gathering experience in love. The distance we go to show love to one another. Our time spent with God’s people united together in love. The volume of love that fills a football stadium. Best of all, five remarkable days getting to know all about Christ’s love. A boundless love, too wonderful to be measured.

**Activity:**

For this activity to work you must explain it just as written. Depending on your group size you may want to divide into several groups, about six to eight people in each group. Once you have your groups, ask for a volunteer from each group ask that person to step aside from their group. If your group is gathering with social distancing guidelines in place, we suggest providing pieces of rope that participants would hold each end of to achieve the necessary space but still close the circle. Then read this exactly:

- **“Form a circle with your group.”**
- **“Get in close, tight circles.”**  
(Wait for them to do this. They should have nice, close circles, nothing special. It doesn’t matter whether they are touching or not. If you are modifying the activity to create more distance, hand out the pieces of rope for participants to hold and close the circle.)
- **“Now, my volunteer (or volunteers)...try to get into the center of the circle, without crawling on the floor.”**  
(Do not give any other instructions or answer any questions. Say only, “Try to get in the center of the circle, without crawling on the floor,” repeat it exactly if you have to and see what happens. Let them do this for about a minute.)
- What happens about 99% of the time is that the group chooses to not let the volunteer in. They will close up and do anything to not let them in. Some clever participants may choose to let them in, or the whole group might decide to do this. Let this be a launch pad for discussion.
- Questions to ask the group:
  - **Why did you decide to not let them in?**
  - **What were my instructions?**
  - **Why is that our instinct?**
  - (If a group chose to let them in)  
**Why did you let them in?**
- Wrap up: **I think we behave this way because we believe resources are limited. THIS is the exact opposite of God’s love. God’s love is not limited. It is not scarce. It is abundant. It is limitless. It is boundless.**

**Prayer (youth led/read):**

***Ever-loving God, help us as we try to comprehend the vastness of your love. Help us to love one another through a lens of kindness, compassion and abundance. Guide our time together, open our hearts and open our minds that we might catch a glimpse of God’s enormous love in this world. Amen.***

## word | learn about God’s word and connection to our lives

*“I want you to know (head) all about Christ’s love (heart), although it is too wonderful to be measured. Then your lives (body) will be filled with all that God is (community).”*



Read this passage twice, then ask two different people to read it slowly. Tell each person to wait for your signal before starting to read. Allow time for awkward silence (30-45 seconds). Tell the group to take a deep breath after each reading.

***All beings in heaven and on earth receive their life from [God]. <sup>16</sup>God is wonderful and glorious. I pray that [God’s] Spirit will make you become strong followers <sup>17</sup>and that Christ will live in your hearts because of your faith. Stand firm and be deeply rooted in [God’s] love. <sup>18</sup>I pray that you and all of God’s people will understand what is called wide or long or high or deep. <sup>19</sup>I want you to know all about Christ’s love, although it is too wonderful to be measured. Then your lives will be filled with all that God is. <sup>20-21</sup>I pray that Christ Jesus and the church will forever bring praise to God. [God’s] power at work in us can do far more than we dare ask or imagine. Amen. —Ephesians 3:14-21 CEV***

## Our head:

**As you listened to this passage three times, what words stood out to you?**



**We are deeply rooted in God’s love, a love so big it’s unimaginable. Yet we can understand how that love makes us feel. It should make us feel free. Let’s use a song to think about how God’s love makes us feel. God’s love liberates, so let’s listen to a song about being free.**



“We’ll All Be Free,” William Matthews — Pass out [lyric sheet](#). (If tight on time, stop the video between 2:10 and 2:30.)

- **How can we begin to understand God’s love?**
- **Let’s talk about what God’s love is.**  
(Ask your group for ideas, have people shout out. Below are some examples.)
  - Releases, liberates and frees you.
  - God’s love of justice, mercy, the poor.
  - God’s love is without limit, without condition, without end.
  - God frees us to love.
  - We can understand things only through our human lens, which is limited, but the Bible reminds us of an important promise: If it’s not for everyone, it’s not of God.
- Share this additional Scripture passage:  
**1 John 4:8: “Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”**



Let’s watch a video that demonstrates that Love has no label and no limits and no condition. God’s love is beyond measure: “Love has no labels” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnDgZuGhHs>

## Our heart:

After the video, we will ask some wondering questions. Feel free to break up into groups of two or three for discussion or talk as a large group, depending on what works best in your setting. Make sure to share with the large group the discussions you had about this.

- Wondering questions:
  - What keeps us bound? What limits our ability to love others?

- What does God’s love do? Frees? Liberates?
- What doesn’t God’s love do? Ask your group for ideas, have people shout out. Here are some examples: God’s love doesn’t... condemn, judge, restrict or weaken.
- When you return to your large group after small group convos share these words.
  - **God’s love never fails. That’s God’s love. Human love is messy. Complicated. Difficult. Everything that makes our love tricky is simplified by God. There is no box. No label. No definition. No bounds.**
  - **If it isn’t love, it isn’t God. Hear that. If it isn’t love, it isn’t God, because God is love.**
  - **Take a breath. That air in your lungs is love. Take another, breathe in deeper — that is God’s love. God is closer to us than our own breath. As plentiful as the breaths we take. God’s love is limitless. No end. boundless love.**

## Our body:

- Have five participants perform the “Love Box” skit (at end of this lesson)
- After the skit, ask your group:  
**Thoughts? Reactions?**
- Listen to their answers and then share with them this: **God’s love can’t be contained! You will be bursting to share it. It’s not about scarcity: God’s love is abundant! Love moves us ... to act. To cry. To change. To run into the streets sharing God’s love.**
- **What does God’s love move you to do?**



## Our community:



- “Who Is Your Everyone?,” Joe Davis Poetry <https://youtu.be/xLSbVaN4QdQ>
- **How does your church demonstrate God’s love?**
- **How have you loved a neighbor? An enemy?**
- Galatians 3:28: “Faith in Christ Jesus is what makes each of you equal with each other, whether you are a Jew or a Greek.” (Worldly divisions don’t define us — our relationship with God does.)



## sending

reflect on what we  
have learned and  
ask questions

- Include your local group announcements here.
- Refer to the calendar/timeline on pages 76-81 in your Official Gathering Handbook for timely announcements.
- Closing prayer (youth led/read):  
***boundless God, teach us to see what your love looks like in this world. Show us love. Remind us that we are loved beyond measure or comprehension, more than we could ever dare to dream. Helps us to experience it, be it and share it with everyone we meet. We pray that Christ Jesus and the church will forever bring praise to God. God's power at work in us can do far more than we dare ask or imagine. Amen.***



### Dismissal/blessing — call and response:

Leader: ***God's love is ...***

Participants (place hand over heart): ***boundless***

Leader: ***God's creation is ...***

Participants (open arms wide): ***boundless***

Leader: ***God's forgiveness is...***

Participants (cross wrists): ***boundless***

Leader: ***God's invitation is...***

Participants (uncross wrists, cradle open palms outstretched): ***boundless***

Leader: ***God's promise is...***

Participants (cross on another's forehead or hand): ***boundless***

***Pass out the  
take-home sheet!***

## CONGREGATION CONNECTION

***Keep your youth connected with their congregation in the months leading up to the 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering.***

Take advantage of opportunities to make the church aware of what you are learning and how you're preparing for the Gathering. Doing this will provide many benefits for the youth and adult leaders. Not only will the congregation members be made aware of the Gathering details, they will also be more likely to support attendees with their prayers and offerings.

A great way to start this process would be to perform the "Love Box" skit for your congregation. The skit is a fun and effective way to communicate the theme of God's boundless love. Talk with your worship leader to see if your youth would be able to perform the skit during a Sunday worship service. If that is not available, find a Sunday-school hour or fellowship opportunity to act out the play. Have fun as you teach your congregation all about Christ's love.

# “Love Box” Skit

(Five people are needed; please print this out.)

**Narrator:** Leilani finds herself in need of God’s love. She prays and receives a big box of God’s love. She’s pretty proud of that love and holds it out for everyone to see (an imaginary box in her hands).

**Friend #1:** Hey, Leilani I’m really sad. Can I sit with you for a little bit?

**Leilani:** Well, I’m really busy at the moment, Maybe later? (She sends them away.)

**Narrator:** Just then, Leilani noticed that the box of God’s love in her hands seemed smaller.

**Friend #2:** Hi, Leilani, I’m having a really hard day. Can I hang out with you and talk? Oh ... what’s that you have?

**Leilani:** What? This? It’s God’s love. I’m actually saving it for something else. I’m sure you can find someone around here to give you some.

**Narrator:** She sends them away. This time, Leilani notices that her box of God’s love has gotten even smaller. She starts to worry and decides to lock it away in her room for safekeeping.

**Friend #3:** Hey, I lost my dog. I’m so worried, I’ve been looking everywhere. Can you help me?

**Leilani:** Sorry, I have a lot going on right now and can’t help you.

**Narrator:** Leilani races over to her box and finds it empty. Distraught, she drops to her knees and asks God to forgive her. God does and gives Leilani another big box of God’s love. She has a huge smile on her face.

**Friend #1:** Oh, hi, Leilani. I’m still feeling pretty sad...

**Narrator:** Leilani looks at her friend and looks at her box of love from God.

**Leilani:** I’m sorry you’re feeling sad. Would it help if I just sat with you?

**Friend #1:** Yes, thanks so much. (They exit.)

**Friend #2:** Hi, I’m still having a hard day today.

**Leilani:** Really? I hope your day gets better! I want you to know you’re a great friend and I’m so lucky to know you. (Friend #2 smiles and walks away.)

**Friend #3:** Puppy! Puppy! I still can’t find my dog.

**Leilani:** Hey, I have some free time. Could I help you look for your dog?

**Friend #3:** That would be awesome.

**Leilani:** The more love I give, the more I get to share with my friends, family and neighbors. Thank you, God!

*End skit*

## Take-home sheet for Unit 1 – Session one:

# God's boundless love for humanity

*We want you to find ways to share the boundlessness of God with your friends, family and congregation. What happened here today should be shared, and we hope that the lesson doesn't end here, that it continues in conversations on the car ride home, with families around the dinner table, at school tomorrow... that this multiplies and becomes boundless!*

Focusing on love is the best place to start to understand God's great love for humanity and how we can share that love with one another. We are deeply rooted in God's love, a love so big it's unimaginable, but we can understand how that love makes us feel. It should make us feel free.

Share what you remember. Try to retell our story from today, Ephesians 3:14-21, or look it up in your Bible app (We were using the CEV: Common English Version.). Another piece of Scripture to help support these themes would be 1 John 4:8 - God is love, and anyone who doesn't love others has never known God.

Share on social media a picture of that time you experienced God's boundless love. Make sure to tag us, using the hashtags **#ELCAYG2022** and **#boundlesslove**.



### Wondering questions

#### (discuss these questions with someone at home):

- How did this passage help you understand God's boundless love? What was a time when you experienced God's boundless love?
- How can our imagination limit or expand our understanding of God?
- What does it mean to have a life filled with "all that God is"?
- What are the things that we imagine but stop ourselves from asking?

### Prayer of the lesson:

boundless God, teach us to experience what your love looks like in this world. Show us love. Remind us that we are loved beyond measure and comprehension, more than we could ever dare to dream. Help us to experience it, be it, and share it with everyone we meet. I pray that Christ Jesus and the church will forever bring praise to God. God's power at work in us can do far more than we dare ask or imagine. Amen.

### Dismissal/blessing – Call and response:

- God's love is (place hand over heart) boundless.
- God's creation is (open arms wide) boundless.
- God's forgiveness is (cross wrists) boundless.
- God's invitation is (uncross wrists, cradle open palms outstretched) boundless.
- God's promise is (make the sign of the cross on another's forehead or hand) boundless.



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## UNIT 1 – SESSION TWO:

# God's boundless love for us

### Overview for adult leaders:

God's boundless love for us (self). How do we love ourselves with a boundless love like God's? How does loving ourselves allow us to love others? We will dig deeper and explore some vulnerable feelings. Encourage youth that this is a brave space where feelings are okay. If you feel they aren't ready to dig deeply, give them a minute to breathe, relax and prepare.

Videos and songs are important to this lesson. Please find a way to play these for your group. Be mindful that visuals and sounds are important because we all learn in different ways. We encourage you to search for and print out lyrics so that people can listen to and/or read along to get the full impact of the words of these songs.



#### “Write a Love Letter to Yourself”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ojUrs28LeGM>



#### Lauren Daigle, “You Say” Tauren Wells, “Known”

(Spotify playlist [@elcagathering](#) or YouTube;  
no visuals needed, just the song)



**If you are doing this session online** be sure that you and all participants have the latest update of your online meeting software. Recent updates in Zoom include allowing emojis in the chat. This will come in handy for the first activity.

## *suggested supply list*

- Markers
- Large paper
- Post-It notes
- Pencils
- Lined notebook paper
- An internet-connected device on which to show videos/play music
- Copies of the take-home sheet for each participant
- Copies of song lyrics

## gather | building of your group

### Warm-up:

As participants enter, have music playing from Gathering Spotify (@elcagathering) “boundless love” playlist. Place pens and Post-It note stacks around the room, maybe four to five different areas. Each area should have a different question written on a large sheet of paper. Ask participants to stop at each one, write responses to the questions on Post-It notes and place these on the paper.

- Favorite thing about your heart?
- How do you feel when you use this emoji?



- What helps you know you are loved?
- Who loves you the most?
- What makes you lovable?

### Invitation:

**“When you start to feel like things should have been better this year, remember the mountains and valleys that brought you here. They are not accidents, and those moments were not in vain. You are not the same. You have grown and you are growing, you are breathing, you are living, you are wrapped in endless, boundless grace. And things will get better, there is more to you than yesterday.”**

—Morgan Harper Nichols (poet and artist),  
@morganharpernichols

### Team building/ice-breaker:



Arrange your group in a circle of chairs or couches, with enough seats for everyone but one person, who stands in the middle. You, as the leader, will start. You will say, “The person in the middle will say, ‘I love that I am a great listener!’ And anyone who thinks that they themselves ARE a good listener should get up and change seats. You can’t move to the seat next to you!” Everyone scurries to find a new seat, leaving someone in the center without a seat. That person will say, for example, “I love that I’m a good friend.” Make sure everyone gets a turn; sometimes people end up in the center a few times, so if that happens, yell, “Jesus loves all the little children!” and everyone has to move to a new seat.



**Zoom alternative could be “Something In the Room Reminds Me Of.” Ask the group to bring something to the screen that reminds them of the following: Something in the room that reminds you of your friends, then your family, and finally ask for something that reminds them of their faith. Allow time for everyone to show their item and give an explanation.**

### Prayer (youth led/ read):

**God, we invite you into this space, this holy ground where we gather to learn about your love for us. We often forget how precious we are to you, forget how worthy of love we truly are. Help to remind us of that love. Use this lesson and these words and feelings shared to help us love ourselves just a little more today than we did yesterday. Amen.**

## word | learn about God’s word and connection to our lives

*“I want you to know (head) all about Christ’s love (heart), although it is too wonderful to be measured. Then your lives (body) will be filled with all that God is (community).”*



**All beings in heaven and on earth receive their life from [God]. <sup>16</sup>God is wonderful and glorious. I pray that [God’s] Spirit will make you become strong followers <sup>17</sup>and that Christ will live in your hearts because of your faith. Stand firm and be deeply**

**rooted in [God’s] love. <sup>18</sup>I pray that you and all of God’s people will understand what is called wide or long or high or deep. <sup>19</sup>I want you to know all about Christ’s love, although it is too wonderful to be measured. Then your lives will be filled with all that God is. <sup>20-21</sup>I pray that Christ Jesus and the church will forever bring praise to God. [God’s] power at work in us can do far more than we dare ask or imagine. Amen. —Ephesians 3:14-21 CEV**

**us from God’s love for us in Jesus Christ. If you sin, God loves you. If you fail, God loves you. If you lie, God loves you. If you cheat, God loves you. If you’re depressed, God loves you. If you have anxiety, God loves you. If you’re angry, God loves you. If you’re sad, God loves you. Now I want all of you to add some responses. If you \_\_\_\_\_, God loves you.**

## Our head:

**This verse reminds us again how we are deeply rooted by our faith in God’s love and that it is too wonderful to be measured, working within us more than we could ever dare imagine. That is where we will start today. God loves you more than you can ever dare imagine.**

- **How does that make you feel?**
- **Why is it important to know this?**



## Our heart:

 Pass out lyric sheets for Lauren Daigle’s “You Say.” Ask your group to follow along with the lyrics, pay attention to the words being sung and how these words make them feel.

- After the song is over, read this lyric out loud: **“In you I find my worth, in you I find my identity.”**
- **What things do you think keep you from God’s love? From loving yourself?** (Ask participants to share responses.)
- Read this lyric out loud: **“Every single lie that tells me I will never measure up.” God’s love reminds us who we are. Our vulnerability gives us strength.**



## Bible response:

 Romans 8:38-39 (youth led/ read.): **I am sure that nothing can separate us from God’s love — not life or death, not angels or spirits, not the present or the future, <sup>39</sup>and not powers above or powers below. Nothing in all creation can separate**

- Have participants add more, either out loud, on sheets of paper, or in a Zoom chat.
- **God’s love reminds us that we belong, we are wanted, we are desired and we fit in, even when everything in us screams that we don’t.**
- **God’s love reminds us that we are all equal. Every human is worthy of love. There are no requirements to be loved by God. There are no tests to pass. No classes to take. Nothing. Nothing you do can stop God from loving you with a never-ending, never-ceasing, unrelenting love. Nothing.**
- **My hope for you is that you begin to love yourself in that kind of way. What could stop you if you loved yourself that way? Who could stand in your way? In the next section we will explore these questions.**

## Activity:

 Write a love letter to yourself. (Watch this first as inspiration for what to write.) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ojUrs28LeGM>



Pass out paper and a pencil to each person in the room and give them five minutes to write a love letter to themselves. Play music in the background. If participants are willing, have them read their letter out loud, either in small groups, with partners or to the whole group.

- **How did writing the letter make you feel?**
- **How did hearing others’ letters make you feel?**

***Until 2015, the Orfield Laboratories in Minneapolis held the honor of being named the “quietest place on earth” by the Guinness World Records. The laboratory has an anechoic chamber that absorbs 99.99% of all sound. A person alone in this intensely quiet chamber can hear their own heartbeat, their pulse and even the noise their smile makes.***

Conversely, the loudness that filled the streets of Minneapolis as people marched and chanted in protest following the murder of George Floyd can flood our senses with a similar intensity. Our bodies may respond to these vastly different experiences with a similar heightened awareness. We may find ourselves overwhelmed in the midst of loudness and/or frozen by blaring quietness.

When we encounter such situations of either thundering silence or agitated noise, it can be helpful to ground ourselves in our bodies. One simple way to do this is through breathing -- an act so natural and critical to how we live that we rarely think about it, and yet we become immediately aware of it when, as happened for George Floyd, it is an impossibility.

Participants attending the Gathering may be drawn to the chaotic quiet of Orfield Laboratories or the peaceful noise of George Floyd Square. It’s important for us to consider the reason we are drawn to either location and our potential impact on this part of God’s creation, particularly before venturing into the neighborhood where people are living, breathing and recovering from trauma.

Ask yourselves, what are you seeking? If you are seeking a tourism experience, it may be best to visit a site that is set up to receive tourists, like Orfield Laboratories. If you choose to go to George Floyd Square, remember that you are entering someone's community. Consider how you will honor the hospitality of your hosts, what gifts might you bring, and how you can walk softly, listen deeply, and see the sacredness of the community.

You can learn more about George Floyd Square, its impact and significance by following ELCA leaders and others who have been on the ground there since before the incident:

## GATHERING CONNECTION

- George Floyd Global Memorial - [georgefloydglobalmemorial.org](http://georgefloydglobalmemorial.org)
- Marsha Howard on TikTok - [marshahoward38thstreet](https://www.tiktok.com/@marshahoward38thstreet)
- 38th & Chicago “George Floyd Square” on Facebook
- Twin Cities Interfaith Movement Chaplains - [tcchaplains.com](http://tcchaplains.com)
- Kelly Sherman Conroy, doctoral candidate - [kellysconroy.com](http://kellysconroy.com)

Let’s be honest, that while the addition of 30,000 Lutherans to the 3.3 million residents of the Twin Cities will certainly make God smile, the inclusion and presence of Gathering participants won’t make for a quieter location. So many of God’s people in one place will generate a loud, busy and crowded environment. For many of us, and for the communities we visit, such conditions can be overwhelming. It will be important to make use of quiet moments each day, to find peace among the excitement. Adult leaders can model this practice and aid their youth in finding needed moments of respite. Quiet time may be hard to come by, but an intentional time out to sit and rest can make a difference.

Be sure to find your own quiet chamber and take some moments to be still and hear the breath of God within you. Try this with your group: Take a deep breath and then let it out slowly. Breathe in peace ... exhale worry. Breathe in the love of Christ ... breathe out Christ’s love for others. Breathe deeply and slowly. Repeat as necessary. May these quiet moments give you peace and remind you of the boundless love God has for you.

## Our body:



**After this session, on your way out, draw hearts and messages of love for people as they come to your church. Heart. God loves you. You are loved ... etc.**

Pass out chalk as participants leave.

## Our community:



**How will people at our church respond to the chalk messages and drawings? How will it make them feel? In what other ways can you share God's love? Do you think a chalk heart or reading "You are loved" could brighten someone's day?**

## sending

reflect on what we have learned and ask questions

- Include your local group announcements here.
- Refer to the calendar/timeline on pages 76-81 of your Official Gathering Handbook for timely announcements.

## Closing prayer: (youth led/ read)



**God of love, remind us that we are precious, we are adored, we are loved more than we could ever dare imagine. We are worthy of love. Even though there are days when we do not feel like we love ourselves, we know you never stop loving us. Nothing can separate us from your love. I pray that Christ Jesus and the church will forever bring praise to God. God's power at work in us can do far more than we dare ask or imagine. Amen.**

## Dismissal/blessing — Call and response:

Leader: **God's love is ...**

Participants (place hand over heart): **boundless**

Leader: **God's creation is ...**

Participants (open arms wide): **boundless**

Leader: **God's forgiveness is...**

Participants (cross wrists): **boundless**

## CONGREGATION CONNECTION

**The 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering will be a dynamic week of faith formation for all who are involved. Some in your congregation will be aware of this, while others may not.**

As your group begins this curriculum, along with your registration and preparation for the trip, now is the time to announce to your congregation your commitment to the Gathering. Introduce the "boundless: God beyond measure" theme along with the accompanying Scripture of Ephesians 3:19 CEV. Plan multiple strategies to communicate your excitement and expectations for the event. Some of these may include making announcements during worship services, writing articles for the church newsletter, posting pictures and information on social media, or hosting an informal meeting to discuss the Gathering and show Gathering promotional videos and materials. Additional promotional ideas can be found on the Gathering website ([elca.org/Gathering](http://elca.org/Gathering)) or on page 19 of the Official Gathering Handbook.

As the word spreads around your church, the excitement will build. Invite the congregation to join with you in the process. Not everyone will attend the Gathering, but all can be included on the journey. This is your opportunity to let everyone in church know what it means to have their lives filled with all that God is.

Leader: **God's invitation is...**

Participants (uncross wrists, cradle open palms outstretched): **boundless**

Leader: **God's promise is...**

Participants (cross on another's forehead or hand): **boundless**

**Pass out the take-home sheet!**

## Take-home sheet for Unit 1 – Session two:

# God's boundless love for us

*We want you to find ways to share the boundlessness of God with your friends, family and congregation. What happened here today should be shared, and we hope that the lesson doesn't end here. Let the lesson continue in conversations on the car ride home, with families around the dinner table, at school tomorrow... that this multiplies and becomes boundless!*

God's love for us is boundless. Our worth and value as a child of God is through who we are and whose we are. You can't love other humans without loving yourself. Self-doubt, lack of self-worth and knowing our value is something we all struggle with.

Share what you remember. Try to retell our story from today, Ephesians 3:14-21, or look it up in your Bible app (we were using the CEV: Common English Version). Additionally, Romans 8:38-39 CEV: "I am sure that nothing can separate us from God's love—not life or death, not angels or spirits, not the present or the future,<sup>39</sup> and not powers above or powers below. Nothing in all creation can separate us from God's love for us in Christ Jesus our Lord!" can help support the theme of boundless love.

### congregation connection

Share your love letters to yourself with your congregation and ask if you can lead this activity for others in the congregation.

#### Chalk hearts:

How will people at your church respond to the chalk messages and drawings? How will it make them feel? In what other ways can you share God's love? Do you think a chalk heart or reading "You are loved" could brighten someone's day?

Take a picture of your **#ChalkHearts** and post it to your Instagram or Snapchat story for your friends and family to see. It might just be the reminder of God's boundless love they need. Make sure to tag us **@elcagathering** and use our hashtags **#ELCAYG2022**, **#boundlesslove** and **#ChalkHearts**.



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FB.com/ELCAthetAble



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@elca\_myle



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**#ELCAYG2022**

## Wondering questions

### (discuss these questions with someone at home):

- How did this passage help you understand God's boundless love? When was a time that you experienced God's boundless love?
- Does your worth come from "likes" and "views," or from God?
  - How do we shift our focus on finding our worth from humans to finding it from God?
- What is stopping you from loving yourself?
- What walls have you built up, what lies do you tell yourself?
- How can you love yourself more tomorrow than you did today?

### Prayer of the lesson:

boundless God, teach us to experience what your love looks like in this world. Show us love. Remind us that we are loved beyond measure or comprehension, more than we could ever dare to dream. Helps us to experience it, be it and share it with everyone we meet. We pray that Christ Jesus and the church will forever bring praise to God. God's power at work in us can do far more than we dare ask or imagine. Amen.



### Dismissal/blessing — Call and response:

- God's love is (place hand over heart) boundless.
- God's creation is (open arms wide) boundless.
- God's forgiveness is (cross wrists) boundless.
- God's invitation is (uncross wrists, cradle open palms outstretched) boundless.
- God's promise is (make the sign of the cross on another's forehead or hand) boundless.



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