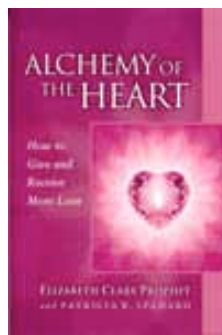


Book Study Groups
Children's Lessons
Based on
Alchemy of the Heart

By Elizabeth Clare Prophet and Patricia R. Spadaro

Alchemy of the Heart offers powerful insights and tools for wholeness based on a deep understanding of the heart. It draws from the wisdom of the world's spiritual traditions to show you how you can nurture your soul through developing heart qualities of love and mercy.



Lesson One (Based on pages 1 to 15)
Learning about Love
For Children ages 6 - 10

Parent/Teacher Preparation: This lesson is taken from chapter one, "Opening the Heart."

Review the chapter before you begin.

Review the lesson, including the activities. Please note that the text of what you can say to your child is in *italics*.

Gather the following materials you will need:

- CD and music (optional)
- Chop sticks
- 2 sticks, approx. three feet long
- Index cards (preferably pink)
- Paper, magazines and glue for collage project
- Heart stickers, pink paper, paper doilies etc. for decorating collage
- Crayons and colored pencils

Note: There are a number of sections in these lessons that include discussion with your child. Discussion is a time for reflection. There are no right answers or wrong answers. The purpose of discussion is to

provoke thought and gently lead you and your child into more practical and spiritual ways of thinking about life.

Set Your Environment:

Select a time when both you and your child are rested and happy.

Many parents like to use music to assist in creating a meditative atmosphere in the home. Harp music is associated with the heart. If you have a CD player and harp music, play it as you are preparing yourself and when you and your child begin. You may also wish to play it during brief meditations.

Suggested Music:

Harp music, such as:

Bridget Cruise/Jon O'Connor/George Brabazon
Celtic Treasure: The Legacy of Turlough O'Carolan, Narada
Collection Series.



Overview of the lesson

- The most important thing in life is love.
- God is love.
- How does love look in your life?
- How can you learn to be more loving?

Love is the most important thing in your life

Of all things we can do and have and become in this life, the most important is learning to be loving and kind. How do we know this? In the Bible, John tells us this: "This is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that you should love one another.... God is love."

Gautama Buddha, also taught us to love. One of his disciples asked him if it is true that part of our training in life is to develop more love and kindness. The Buddha said no, that is not true. ALL of our training in life is to develop more love and kindness.



Made in the image of God

If God is love and you are made in the image of God – that means that you are love too! Think of this statement -- I am love. What do you think that means? Discuss, leaving time for your child to think and freely answer what love means to him or her.

Activity 1: Eating with chop sticks



Try to eat some food with chop sticks. Now try to eat with the long sticks. It is very hard!

There is an old Vietnamese folk tale that tells of people in hell with all the food in the world but these long chop sticks – so long they cannot eat. They are unhappy and miserable because they cannot feed themselves.

Then, there is another group of people in heaven with all the food they want and the same long chop sticks. They are supremely happy because they use the long chop sticks to feed each other. They first think of each other rather than themselves because they love.

Love rubs off on others. When you are around someone who loving and kind, you start to feel loving and kind. Try it!

Activity 2: I Am Loving and Kind

The following song is set to the tune, *Home, Home on the Range*. In the first verse, “I am loving and kind,” you point to your heart. In the second verse “you are loving and kind” you point to one another and in the third verse “we are loving and kind” you hold hands. This is a great song with groups of children and adults.

I AM Loving and Kind

*I am loving and kind; I am loving and kind,
I am loving and kind all the time. (Repeat)*

*You are loving and kind; you are loving and kind,
You are loving and kind all the time. (Repeat)*

*We are loving and kind; we are loving and kind,
We are loving and kind all the time. (Repeat)*

Activity 3: Find your own special prayer to feel close to God and the love in your heart.



Think of a simple prayer or affirmation that helps you feel connected to God and to the love in your heart. It might be the Lord's Prayer, or as simple as "O God, you are so magnificent" or "God is love and I am love." Write down this special prayer. Repeat it three times.

This is your special prayer that you can say any time you want to feel more connected to your heart and to God.

Activity 4: Collage of Love

Let's think of some other words for love, so we can think more about what it means to us every day. Ask your child to offer his or her ideas and write each quality of love on an index card. Keep going until you have at least ten or twelve examples. These may include such qualities as kindness, sharing, forgiving, playing nicely, helping, being cheerful and being obedient. It also may include specific examples such as feeding the dog, helping a younger sibling, etc.

Provide some magazines for your child. Ask your child to find pictures that show people demonstrating the many qualities of being loving and kind, then cut them out and make a collage. You may want to provide some paper doilies, glitter, heart stickers and so forth for decorations.

Spiritual alchemy – turning difficult feelings into love

We all get mad sometimes or feel upset about things. There are times when it is not so easy to feel loving and kind. (Allow for discussion.)



You can learn to change the way you feel. It is called spiritual alchemy. Old fashioned alchemists tried to turn metals into gold. For the alchemist of the spirit, the idea is to turn anger, fear, blame and any other painful feelings into love or into spiritual gold.

You can learn to be quiet inside and feel the love of God that is always inside of you, helping you be the master of yourself. See yourself doing everything because you have love in your heart.

Activity 5: Find your own heart ritual



An important way you can become an alchemist is to find the ways that help you feel calm and happy inside. One nine-year-old listens to Beethoven whenever he wants to be peaceful. His mother played it for him when he was a baby and now it is his favorite way to tune into his heart. An eight-year-old girl keeps a journal and she writes down her thoughts.

Some of her writings have turned into beautiful poems and songs, like this one:

Swooping in the Air

Some days I watch the birds fly over me.
Some days I wish I could fly like the birds
And feel the glory of joy sweep over me and gather in my heart.
Suddenly I rise up
And a smile comes on my face.

Then I swoop into the air
And as the sun shines on me the blue sky above spreads over me.
And I swoop into the clouds and look down at all the things below me
And wave to everything I see.

And then I come down and back to my house.
And as I lay in my bed I'm filled with thoughts of joy.

What makes you feel peaceful and joyous? Plan some time doing the activity you enjoy the most.



Activity 6: Smile!

Another thing you can do to be more loving is so simple you will hardly believe it! Just smile!

There was a very wonderful woman you may have heard of, who lived just a few years ago. Her name was Mother Teresa. She went from her home in Europe to India, where for many years she took care of the poorest of the poor who were sick. She was very inspiring in her simple and pure love for all of God's children.

A whole group of professors went to meet her and see her work. One asked her: "Tell us something that will change our lives." Her answer:

"Smile at each other. Make time for each other. Enjoy each other."

Mother Teresa

In other words, remember your heart! Don't get so busy with going to school and playing that you forget the simple kindness of smiling.

Activity 7 – Family Service



Do you know the Golden Rule? It says to do to other people what you would like them to do to you. Plan something we can do together that is going to help someone, like we would like to be helped if we ever need it.

Think of a simple family service project that you can do, whether to take a bowl of soup to an elderly relative or neighbor, walk the dog for someone who is ill or anything you can devise that works for you. Consider making family service a habit.

*Go to [How to Spiritualize Your Family Life: The Four Difference Makers](#) in the [Parents' Place](#) section of this website to learn more about how serving as a family and can help *your* family's spiritual well-being.*

Summing up

- Tell why you think that the most important thing in life is love.
- If God is love and you are made in the image of God, what does that make you? How can you live so that you are more of God?
- How does love look in your life? Give three examples of the way you express God's love in your life
- How can you learn to be more loving? Give some examples of how you can love even more than you do now.