

Palentine's Day

Celebrating Valentine's Day and Love with Your Youth

Valentine's Day: the day of poems, roses, chocolates, and sometimes a classy date. Recently this holiday has also included a celebration of Palentine's Day, a day to celebrate bromances, sisterhood, and friendships of all sorts! Here are some fun ideas for celebrating either or both with your youth group.

Framing Love

For all of the options below, first read 1 John 4: 7–12, 18–21, and discuss the following:

- According to this passage, how do we know love?
- Whom are we called to love?
- Name the people we love and what that looks like in our lives.
- How is Valentine's Day fun? How is it difficult?
- Have you ever celebrated Palentine's Day with your friends? If so, how?
- Sometimes it's hard to remember we are loved. Sometimes we forget to show those we love that we love them. Sometimes we forget the calling from God to show love to all our brothers and sisters. We are called to love and share God's love with others.

Option 1—Group Date Night

Valentine's Day is often associated with the perfect date, from dinner to flowers to a movie. For a fun twist, include activities associated with a typical date night in your youth group session.

1. **Dinner:** Have a classy dinner—not your regular meal of pizza. Perhaps chicken parmesan, Caesar salad, and some sparkling grape juice. Use tablecloths, real dishes, and centerpieces. Another option would be to meet at a restaurant intown.
2. **Cards:** Decorate and write cards about why you appreciate your youth group, church, or both.
3. **Jewelry, Flowers, or Cookies: Make** bracelets (beaded or braided), origami flowers, or cookies and donate them to a local mission partner (such as a children's home or an emergency shelter for families).
4. **Movies or Dance:** Finish the date with popcorn and a fun Valentine's Day movie, such as *Lady and the Tramp*, *My Girl*, or *Beauty and the Beast*, or go out to a movie showing locally. Another option would be to host a dance competition by playing the game *Just Dance* on Wii or Xbox Kinect—or simply follow along with *Just Dance* videos on YouTube as a group without worrying about scoring.

Option 2—Love Stations

Have youth rotate through any combination of the following love stations to explore love for a variety of people.

1. Treat Yourself

- a. Frost a cookie and eat it!
- b. Paint your nails.
- c. Write yourself a love note about how you rock and why you are amazing!

2. Valentine's Day

- a. Make friendship bracelets.
- b. Text a friend to set up a time to see one another this week—a movie, ice cream, or a walk in the park.
- c. Text a youth group friend you haven't seen at church in a while and say that you miss seeing him or her at church.

3. Make Sure All Feel the Love

- a. Make care packages for a local shelter.
- b. Bake dog treats for a local animal shelter.
- c. Can you think of someone who may be lonely right now? Make a plan to reach out to this person and to include him or her in something you do this week.
- d. Write Valentine's Day cards to people in your church who are sick or can't make it to church often anymore.

4. It's OK to Show Your Affection for That Special Someone

- a. Write a note of appreciation for a significant other or a best friend.
- b. Ask your boy/girlfriend or best friend what his or her favorite dessert is and then share it together later this week.

5. It's All about the Family Love

- a. Offer to do another family member's regular chores this week.
- b. Text your family and set up a night soon to have an unplugged family night—an old-school evening of games, dinner, roller-skating, bowling, a yoga class, or conversation!
- c. Have family far away? Text them and set up a FaceTime or Skype date.

Option 3—Share the Love

Focus your Valentine's Day at youth group on mission and service to others. Choose from the following field-trip service ideas or split your group into teams and do more!

1. **Decorate Cards** for church members who lost their spouse in the last year and remind them that they are loved by their church family. Deliver the cards in person.
2. **Rearrange Flowers** from worship (if not already allocated for another purpose) into small bouquets and deliver them to a nursing home.
3. **Make Candy Grams** by taping candy to a note that says "You are loved!" Put them on car windshields in a nearby parking lot. (Check with vendor of parking lot to get the OK!)
4. **Say Happy Valentine's Day** by writing it on the sidewalk with chalk and making posters that say so! Stand in a safe outdoor space where passing cars can read your posters. Share some love as they drive by!
5. **Deliver Wish-List Items** to an animal shelter and thank staff for loving all God's creatures!

Closing

This prayer poem can be said together or texted out to the youth after the evening:

Roses are red, violets are blue,
Always share love, as God loves you.
Amen.

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