

SMALL GROUP INITIATIVE

PUREST  
**LOVE**  
IMAGINABLE



BROADWAY  
CHURCH



**MESSAGE FROM  
DARIN**



**PUREST LOVE IMAGINABLE - SMALL GROUP  
SCHEDULE 2018**

- Week One – September 24– 30 – Get Acquainted
- Week Two – October 1-7 – How to Stop Hiding from God (and Start Enjoying Him)
- Week Three – October 8-14 – A Closer Look at Agape Love
- Week Four – October 15-21 – How Agape Love Works in You
- Week Five – October 22-28 – Is the Agape Love of God Working Through You?
- Week Six – October 29 – November 4 – Putting Agape Love to the Ultimate Test
- Week Seven – November 5-11 – Group Feedback Week
- Week Eight – November 12-18 – Celebration/Regroup

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## **Get to Know Each Other**

Take time to have each group member respond to the following questions:

1. What made you smile today?
2. What is one weird or random thing that only a very few people know about you?
3. Where did you grow up and what brought you to Vancouver?
4. What do you value most in a friendship?
5. For what in your life do you feel most grateful?
6. What has been the greatest challenge you've faced this year?
7. What has been the highlight so far this year?
8. What brought you to small group?
9. What kind of person do you want to become?

## **Pray**

Split into groups no larger than five and pray for each other.

## Your Group's Covenant:

Take some time to establish some agreed upon expectations for your Small Group.

### I will honour my commitment

I will commit to the group that will meet every \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ pm starting on October \_\_\_\_\_ to November \_\_\_\_\_. I will give group meetings priority, and I will let the group leader know ahead of time if I will be absent or late.

### I will observe confidentiality

I will honour others by not repeating what is shared during small group nights outside of the group.

### I will respect others

I recognize that we are all invited to share, but it is not a requirement. I will be mindful of time limitations and allow others to share. I will also be attentive when they speak, not using my cell phone during discussion and prayer.

### I will not attempt to fix, save, or set people straight

I acknowledge that I am not an expert, so I will not give any unsolicited advice or try to solve someone's problem. I will respect where people are in their lives and trust the work of the Holy Spirit.

### Other Group commitments unique to your group:

#### VIDEO: Trailer

### Homework This Week:

**Read:** John 13:34-36 – *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*

Love is to be the defining characteristic of the community of Christ followers. In what ways do you see Agape love in evidence at Broadway Church?



## HOW TO STOP HIDING FROM GOD (AND START ENJOYING HIM...)

### *Why Do We Exist?*

*"The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever."  
- The Westminster Shorter Catechism...*

### **A. Why Should We Glorify God?**

1. God is the greatest conceivable being...
2. God is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, holy, and eternal...

### **B. Why Should We Enjoy God?**

1. One word: agape...
  - a. It is the ancient Greek word for a unique form of love.
  - b. It is the word for unconditional affection; it is the purest form of love imaginable.

***"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God.  
Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.  
Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."  
(1 John 4:7-8)***

### ***The Big Idea...***

The less you can enjoy God, the less you actually know God.

You may watch the full sermon video of this message at \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

## Group Interaction Guide – Week Two

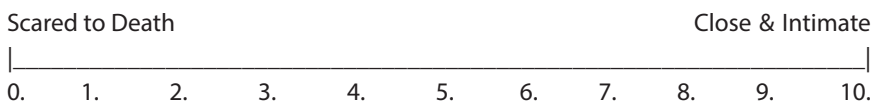
**VIDEO: Introduction Clip - 3 minutes.**

**VIDEO: Sermon Clip #1 – The Meaning of Life – 4 minutes**

1. Why do you think that so many struggle with the idea of being ‘relaxed’ and ‘comfortable’ in the presence of God? To what degree is this a struggle you have personally experienced?
2. What is it about God that compels you to love him? What is it about God that compels you to love other people?

**VIDEO: Sermon Clip #2 – The Purest Love Imaginable – 4 minutes**

3. The “Enjoy God Scale” (Scale – 1-10). Where are you on the scale? Why did you put yourself there?



4. The Big Idea in this message is, “The less you can enjoy God, the less you actually know God.” How true is this in your own experience? What one thing would help you enjoy God more?

**VIDEO: Interview Segment (5 Minutes)**

1. What does it mean to glorify God?
2. What are some ways you personally enjoy God?

## Homework This Week:

What is the **most important idea** for you from reading 1 John 4:7-12?

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.*

[illegible]

## THE "PUREST LOVE IMAGINABLE" SERIES WEEK THREE

### A CLOSER LOOK AT 'AGAPE' LOVE

#### *A Working Definition...*

Agape is the ancient Greek word for unconditional affection.  
It is the purest form of love imaginable...

#### *Today's 'Big Idea'...*

Agape is not what God does; Agape is who God is.

#### **A. Agape Under The Microscope...**

***"(Agape) Love is patient, (agape) love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. (Agape) Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.***

***It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. (Agape) Love never fails."*** (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a)

1. ***"(Agape) love is patient"***: it has a long fuse.
2. ***"(Agape) love is kind"***: it is more concerned about others than oneself.
3. ***"(Agape) love does not envy, does not boast, is not proud, does not dishonour others, is not self seeking"***: it doesn't tear down or humiliate others.
4. ***"(Agape) love is not easily angered"***: it doesn't quickly fly into a rage.
5. ***"(Agape) love keeps no record of wrongs"***: it doesn't keep a scorecard of failures.
6. ***"(Agape) love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth"***: it is thrilled when others experience truth.
7. ***"(Agape) love always protects"***: it shelters from deceit and destruction.
8. ***"(Agape) love always trusts and always hopes"***: it never gives up.
9. ***"(Agape) love always perseveres"***: it stays behind when others run away.
10. ***"(Agape) love never fails"***: it promises victory.

You may watch the full sermon video of this message at\_\_\_\_\_.

## Group Interaction Guide – Week Three

### VIDEO: Introduction Clip - 3 Minutes

### VIDEO: Sermon Clip #1 – God is Love – 5 minutes

1. Today's Big Idea is "Agape is not what God does; Agape is who God is." Why do you think this teaching is important to grasp?
2. In what ways or at what times have you experienced the love of God in your own life? What might prevent you from accepting the love of God for you?

### VIDEO: Sermon Clip #2 – What Agape Does – 11 Minutes

1. Of the ten characteristics of God's love from Paul's description, which ones resonates most significantly in your life? Why?
2. What challenges have you faced in trying to express to others the kind of love Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 13? What needs to change for you to love more others more readily?

### VIDEO: Interview Segment (5 Minutes)

1. If God is love, how do you reconcile the God of Joshua in the OT with the God of John in the NT?
2. What about the love of God do you find most compelling?

## Homework This Week:

**Meditate on** John 13:34-35, "*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*"

Jesus indicates here that love is the defining mark of a Christ follower. In what practical ways can you demonstrate the kind of love Jesus is talking about?

## THE "PUREST LOVE IMAGINABLE" SERIES

### WEEK FOUR

#### HOW 'AGAPE' LOVE WORKS IN YOU

##### *A Working Definition...*

Agape is the ancient Greek word for unconditional affection.  
It is the purest form of love imaginable...

#### I. HOW DOES AGAPE LOVE CHANGE US?

##### A. Four Foundational Ways...

1. Agape love is received via our spirit...

***"They asked each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?'" (Luke 24:32)***

2. Agape love reshapes our will...

***"...do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?" (Romans 2:4)***

***"...for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose." (Phil 2:13)***

3. Agape love regulates our emotions...

***"The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." (Galatians 5:18-23a)***

4. Agape love renews our intellect...

***“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...” (Romans 12:2)***

### **Today’s “Big Idea”...**

We are not changed for God’s love; we are changed by God’s love.

You may watch the full sermon video of this message at \_\_\_\_\_.

## **Group Interaction Guide – Week Four**

### **VIDEO: Introduction Clip - 3 minutes**

### **VIDEO: Sermon Clip #1 – Agape Changes Our Spirit & Will – 10 minutes**

1. The Agape love of God is life-changing. Like bleach, it changes everything it touches. Can you recall an example of a life changed by the power of love? How about an example from your own life? What happened?
2. Agape love is first received by our spirit. When have you experienced a moment when your heart ‘burned within you?’ What was that like and how did it make a difference in your life?

### **VIDEO: Sermon Clip #2 – Agape Changes Our Emotions & Intellect – 8 minutes**

1. There is a story that shapes your life. In what ways does Agape love influence your thinking and the story you live by? How do you think differently when you know you are loved?
2. On the basis of what you learned today, how does Agape love regulate our emotions? How have you experienced the fruit of the Spirit in your own life? What fruit would you like to see more of in your life?

## VIDEO: Interview Segment (5 Minutes)

1. What do you feel are the two or three biggest reasons the love of God is not more dynamic in helping Christ followers become more like Jesus?
2. In what ways have you found God's love defining or shaping your own life?

## Homework This Week:

**Meditate on Romans 5:6-11:** *For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

How does it make you feel to realize that God's love for you is unconditional (you don't deserve it, you can't earn it, but God loves you nevertheless)? How will you respond to that love?

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## IS 'AGAPE' LOVE FLOWING THROUGH YOU?

### A Working Definition...

Agape is the ancient Greek word for unconditional affection.  
It is the purest form of love imaginable...

***"One of them, an expert in the law, tested him (Jesus) with this question:  
'Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?'***

***Jesus replied: '(Agape) Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.***

***And the second is like it: (Agape) Love your neighbour as yourself."***

(Matthew 22:35-39; See also 1 John 3:11)

1. We are called to Agape love the One within us, and the ones around us.

### Today's "Big Idea"...

We are called to be rivers, not puddles.

## I. IS AGAPE LOVE FLOWING 'THROUGH' YOU?

### A. Four Certain Signs...

***"(Agape love) always protects, always trusts, always hopes,  
always perseveres."*** (1 Corinthians 13:7)

1. You are known for protecting lives, not rejecting lives.
2. You are known for clinging to the best in the presence of the worst.
3. You are known for being future-focused, not failure-focused.
4. You are known for refusing to walk away.

You may watch the full sermon video of this message at \_\_\_\_\_.

## Group Interaction Guide – Week Five

### VIDEO: Introduction Clip - 3 Minutes

### VIDEO: Sermon Clip #1 – Puddles or Rivers – 8 minutes

1. In today's message, you learned that the Agape love of God has not been given to us to absorb and keep to ourselves, but to share and give away. Do you tend to be more of a river or more of a puddle when it comes to loving others?

### VIDEO: Sermon Clip #2 – Signs Agape Love is Active in Your Life – 6 minutes

2. How easy do you find it to love others as yourself? What gets in the way of you loving like this? What helps you love this way?

### VIDEO: Sermon Clip #3 – Signs that Agape Love is Active in Your Life – 5 minutes

3. When Agape love has changed our hearts, it shows in these four ways: "*Agape love*) always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." (1 Corinthians 13:7). Which of these statements most describes you?
  - You are known for protecting lives, not rejecting lives.
  - You are known for clinging to the best in the presence of the worst.
  - You are known for being future-focused, not failure-focused.
  - You are known for refusing to walk away.
4. God expects us to love others the way he loves us. What did you learn today that gives you hope that you can actually love like he does? What could you do this week to exercise Agape love to someone in your sphere of influence?

**VIDEO: Interview Segment – 5 Minutes**

1. How can I expand my capacity to pass love on to others? How do I increase my ability to love people who are unlike me or are even hostile to me?
2. How do I recover if I have failed to show love in some way?

### Homework This Week:

**Think about the Great Commandment:** *"Jesus replied: '(Agape) Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: (Agape) Love your neighbour as yourself.'" (Matthew 22:35-39; See also 1 John 3:11)*

How have you tried to be intentional about obeying these commands?  
How could you take this to another level in your sphere of influence?

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## THE "PUREST LOVE IMAGINABLE" SERIES

### WEEK 6

#### PUTTING AGAPE LOVE TO THE ULTIMATE TESTS

##### *A Working Definition...*

Agape is the ancient Greek word for unconditional affection.  
It is the purest form of love imaginable...

***"(Agape) Love is patient, (agape) love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.  
(Agape) Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.  
It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.  
(Agape) Love never fails."*** (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a)

##### *Today's "Big Idea"...*

Agape loves the people and lives the truth.

#### **A. How Does Agape Respond To Someone Holding Opposing Political Views?**

1. Agape empowers you to protest the policy yet not detest the person.

#### **B. How Does Agape Respond To Someone On The Other Side Of The Abortion Debate?**

1. Agape empowers you to hate what is being done yet not hate the one doing it.

#### **C. How Does Agape Respond To An Invitation To A Gay Wedding?**

1. Agape empowers you to say, "No" to the position and say, "Yes" to the person.

You may watch the full sermon video of this message at \_\_\_\_\_.

## Group Interaction Guide – Week Six

### VIDEO: Introduction Clip - 3 Minutes

***“But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”***

(Luke 6:35-36)

1. Jesus did not teach love as theory. He taught and demonstrated love in action. He taught and modeled love for family, friends, and foes. When you read the passage above, what things strike you about what Jesus is saying about love put to the ultimate test?

### VIDEO: Sermon Clip #1 – Politics – 5 minutes

2. How have you tried to disagree agreeably over political issues important to you?

### VIDEO: Sermon Clip #2 – Abortion – 5 Minutes

3. In practical terms, how do you respond to what is being done without hating the one doing it? How might this tension surface in situations other than the cultural debate?

### VIDEO: Sermon Clip #3 – Same Sex Marriage – 6 minutes

4. In this message, three Agape principles were mentioned in relationship to current cultural issues. Of these, which is easiest for you to grasp and follow through on? Which of these is the most difficult for you to do? What other principles might you add to these three?
  - Agape empowers you to protest the policy yet not detest the person.
  - Agape empowers you to hate what is being done yet not hate the one doing it.
  - Agape empowers you to say, “No” to the position and say, “Yes” to the person.

**VIDEO: Interview Segment (5 Minutes)**

1. Agape love is a costly love. How do Christ followers develop the courage and wisdom to live in the tension between treating people with respect while refusing to compromise the truth?
2. What do you feel are one or two more issues in our culture where this courage is called for?

### Homework This Week:

**Consider 2 Timothy 2:23-24:** *“Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, **correcting** his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.”*

What does this passage teach us about showing Agape love in the context of the culture we live in?

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### BRAINSTORM AND STRATEGIZE

**VIDEO: Introduction Clip – 3 minutes**

***Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.*** (1 Peter 2:12)

Today, we want to get as practical as we can in answering this question. How can we make Agape work in our congregation and community? What kinds of things would make Broadway a community where Agape love is experienced by everyone who comes our way? How can Broadway Church become famous demonstrating Agape love in Greater Vancouver? Your group's feedback will be considered in our future ministry endeavours. We will also have an evening in January where our groups can gather to hear the results of each group's contribution.

Take some time to talk through specific ways in which we can go beyond talking about Agape love to demonstrating it in observable ways. Use the following categories to organize your thoughts.

1. **How can we practically demonstrate Agape love in our personal lives?**

2. **How can we practically demonstrate Agape love in our church family?**

3. **How can we practically demonstrate Agape love in our surrounding community?**



**CELEBRATE**

**VIDEO: Introduction Clip – 3 minutes**

Today, the main idea is to express gratitude for our time together and to enjoy one another. As a part of the evening's festivities, please take time to talk about the following:

1. What is the best thing that happened to me through this course?
2. What will I do differently immediately as a result of what I have learned?
3. Do we want to regroup in January?
4. What topics would interest the group going forward?

## WHAT NEXT?

### Suggested Resources



