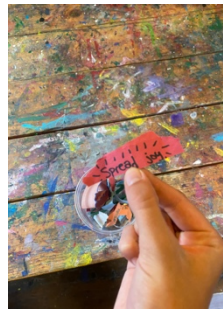


Agape

Love Letters to Community and Earth

Agape means love and this kind of love is used many times throughout the Bible. Agape love is unconditional and abundant, the kind of love that God gives us, and we should give to each other. There are many ways to show love to the people and world around us, one way is writing letters/notes. Here are some different ways that you can do this at home:

- Write someone you love a letter
 - This doesn't have to be anything fancy; it can be on a card or any piece of paper that you can find, even one you make (see video or instructions below). Write what you feel and tell them to save it for a rainy day, or a day that they feel sad and may need a little extra love.
 - Materials:
 - Notecard or any piece of paper
 - Writing utensil
 - Envelope (optional)
- Write happy notes
 - On any scrap piece of paper you can find, write little notes of encouragement, quotes from movies or songs, or anything to leave a smile on your face. Put all of these happy notes in a jar that you can find at home, and when you are feeling down, pull one out as a little way to show yourself or someone around you some love. You can either keep the jar of happy notes or give it to someone you care about.
 - Materials:
 - Scrap paper
 - Writing utensil
 - Jar/container



- Paint flowerpots
 - A really easy way to show someone you love them is to paint them a flowerpot! It is easy and doesn't cost a lot of money, and you can leave it anywhere, like a community garden, or the garden you have at home. You can also plant some beautiful flowers in your new pot to show the Earth that you love it too. This craft shows your creativity and thought to just how much your love for the people around you.

- Materials:
 - Flowerpot (any size)
 - Paint
 - Paintbrush
 - Soil (optional)
 - Flowers or seeds (optional)



- Letter to the Earth
 - This is a super fun way to show the Earth that you love it just as much as the people around you. Make your own paper (with the video or the instructions below) and write about what/how much you love the Earth. You can even put seeds in the paper and plant it, so that your letter can grow into a new creation when you plant it!
 - Materials
 - Paper
 - Recycled paper
 - Construction paper
 - newspaper
 - Toilet paper
 - Non-waxy cardboard
 - Water
 - Large bowl
 - Blender
 - Bin/sink
 - Rectangular sheet/frame
 - Window screen
 - Cookie sheet
 - Wire hanger& tights
 - Decorations
 - Seeds
 - Small leaves
 - Food coloring
 - Liquid starch (allows you to write on the paper)
 - Tin/aluminum foil
 - Empty water bottle

- How to make homemade paper:
 - Tear/cut paper into small pieces and put into a large bowl and soak with boiling water.
 - This helps soften the fibers in the paper to make it easier on the blender.
 - Fill blender 2/3 full of warm water and 2 teaspoons of liquid starch and the softened paper
 - Blend
 - Pour mixture onto your cookie sheet/screen. Make sure it's even by gently rocking the sheet from side to side. It will also help to pour some extra water on the mixture to help it spread out.
 - You should have a bin or sink to place it over to catch the excess water when it drains.
 - Add your decorations such as seeds, flower petals or leaves
 - Flatten a piece of aluminum foil and lightly roll with an empty water bottle to smooth out the mixture.
 - Remove extra liquid by letting it sit and dry, using an extra cookie sheet to press excess liquid out, or use a sponge to soak up any extra water. You can also let it sit out in the sun and wait for the left-over water to evaporate
 - If you put something on the mixture to squeeze out the water, you should have foil on it to keep it smooth.
 - Wait for your paper to dry, then create whatever you want, write a letter or draw a picture.



There are so many different ways to show the Earth and the people around you that you love them. In the Bible story for the Agape theme (John 13: 1-17), Jesus washes his disciples' feet. In a way, that is his love letter to his friends, but instead of writing how Jesus felt, he got down on his knees and washed the feet of his friends. While it may not look the same, your love letters or flowerpots send the same message that Jesus gave to his disciples. You can pick your favorite way to show someone you love them and remember that God loves us unconditionally, with Agape, and we should love each other and the Earth with Agape too.