

**Vocabulary:** \*key terms to memorize

\*\*sth = something; sb = somebody. For common English abbreviations see <http://eflsuccess.com/common/>

\*adopt: to formally accept sth in a permanent way (e.g., adopting a child, or celebrating a foreign holiday)

Christian: someone who believes in the basic truths of the Christian Bible, in particular: (1) Jesus is part of the Trinity (a 3-person union of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in one God); (2) that sin (human imperfection) makes a human-God relationship as impossible as a relationship between a dirty stick and a hot fire; (3) that Jesus' death on the cross brings forgiveness of sin to anyone who believes; and (4) that Jesus' was raised from the dead to show God's power, both to do miracles and to forgive sin, and thus to allow sinful humans to nonetheless have an eternal relationship with a holy God. ("A *Christian* is not simply someone born in a western culture, but someone who is an intentional, personal follower of Jesus and his teachings.")

\*edible=eatable

\*to execute (execution): to kill someone with the authority of a ruler, government, gang leader, etc.

\*honor: the respect that you, your country (etc) receives from others who are proud of you or your achievements (verb: to give this respect)

\*jewelry: small things like rings, earrings and bracelets that people wear for decoration (金刚石?)

\*to make a big deal of sth: to treat sth as especially important when many others consider it less important

\*to observe: to watch with interest; to do what you are supposed to do according to law/custom ("Samuel *observes* Veteran's Day each year because his father was killed in a war.")

\*precise=exact; clearly expressed

root: origin; the first thing, from which later things (customs, laws, etc) grew; the underground part of a tree/plant.

\*sacred=holy; of the utmost value according to religious teachings (the opposite of "secular")

\*sentiments (often plural): an expression of one's feelings, emotion or opinion

\*to urge: to strongly ask (often in hope of getting sb to act in a positive way)

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Valentine's Day (February 14) is a holiday with an interesting history, celebrating love and friendship. Popular in the US, it has also been adopted by young people in other countries.

Valentine's Day, or Saint Valentine's Day to be more precise, dates back to an ancient Christian who loved a student in a particularly difficult set of circumstances. In AD 270, a Roman named Valentine was executed by Emperor Claudius II for being a Christian. Valentine was an educated man, so his jailer asked him to tutor Julia (the jailer's young daughter, who had been blind from birth). Valentine taught her about Rome's history, nature, math, and about his faith in Jesus. One night Julia and Valentine asked God to heal Julia's eyes. Light flooded the prison cell and Julia screamed, "Valentine, I can see!" On the eve of his death, Valentine wrote a last note to Julia, his beloved student, telling her of his love and urging her to stay close to God. He signed it, "From Your Valentine." In AD 496, the Pope honored Valentine by naming the day of his death (February 14) as Saint Valentine's Day.

In America, elementary school children celebrate by exchanging cards with colorful heart-filled decorations. Valentine candy is also popular, including tiny heart-shaped sugar pills with sentiments like "Be mine," "You're Sweet" and "From Your Valentine." Many couples make a big deal of the holiday, going out for a nice dinner, and exchanging gifts like flowers, jewelry, or edible gifts like candy or chocolates.

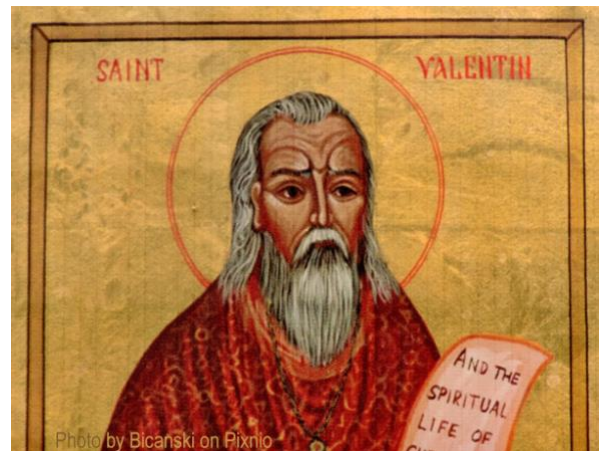


Photo by Bicanski on Pixnio

Valentine's Day has also caught on in other countries. A Chinese newspaper (*Shanghai Star*, Feb. 8, 2001) reported that the younger generation likes Valentine's Day even more than China's traditional (August) lovers' day, "perhaps because it celebrates love and passion, which are so strongly felt by the young." The article said that popular Valentine gifts in China include chocolates, roses, candles and rings, while there is also a trend toward making personal gifts like photo frames and scarves.

So, even though the sacred roots for this holiday are largely unknown, St. Valentine might still be pleased to know that his love for a student gave birth to an international holiday celebrating love—which he surely counted among God's

greatest gifts to the world. And whether you are single or have found your true love, why not observe this annual holiday as an excuse to let those you love know how you feel? It does not have to cost a lot to say "I love you" and it is a phrase that most people love to hear! (427 words)

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**Questions:** (Do you want to ask the teacher about anything in the article?)

1. What are some of the things Valentine taught Julia? What was your favorite subject in high school, and why?
2. The text said that Valentine "loved" his student. Do you think the word "love" can describe the relationship between a teacher and student? Why or why not?
3. Tell us how Valentine's Day (or any celebration for lovers) is celebrated in your country.
4. Talk about the different kinds of "love." If your language translates several words as "love," see if you can tell us the difference. (Hint: In English, we can say I love my phone, my dog, my girlfriend, my career, my teacher, my Mom, my God.... What is the difference between these kinds of "love"?)
5. We read that Valentine was executed for being a Christian. Throughout history, why have governments often persecuted or executed religious people? How common do you think such persecution is today?

The word "love" appears in the Bible over 570 times, so it must be important! Read this passage, from "the love chapter" in the Bible, which is often quoted at weddings:

"Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud, or rude. Love isn't selfish or quick tempered. It doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do. Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil. Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting. Love never fails!"^

6. What do you think of "the love chapter"? Do you agree with Paul (the first century author) about what love is? Explain.
7. Do you know anyone who loves like that? Tell us about him/her.
8. Is this kind of love easy? Why aren't more people this way?
9. Where do you think someone gets the power or will to "love" in such a perfect way?

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^The quote is from 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8, in the Contemporary English version of the Bible. If you want to read some of the other things that the Bible says about love, look in "1 John" (near the back of the Bible), especially these verses: 2:5, 4:7-16, and 5:3.

You can find a longer version of this article, plus additional information about Valentine and Julia, at <http://eflsuccess.com/valentine/>

====Lower English level====

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Christian: someone who believes in the basic truths of the Christian Bible^ ("A *Christian* is not simply someone born in a western culture, but someone who is an intentional, personal follower of Jesus and his teachings.")

\*edible=eatable ("Edible gifts are popular on Valentine's Day.")

\*to execute (execution): to kill someone with the authority of a ruler, government, gang leader, etc.

\*jewelry: small things like rings, earrings and bracelets that people wear for decoration (首饰)

\*to make a big deal of sth: to treat sth as especially important when many others consider it less important

\*to observe: to watch with interest; to do what you are supposed to do according to law/custom ("Samuel *observes* Veteran's Day each year because his father was killed in a war.")

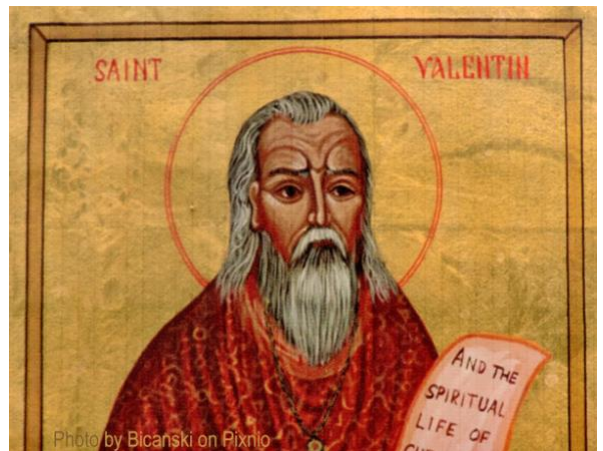
\*sacred=holy; of the utmost value according to religious teachings (the opposite of "secular")

\*to urge: to strongly ask (often in hope of getting sb to act in a positive way)

^the basic truths of the Christian Bible include: (1) that sin (human imperfection) makes a human-God relationship as impossible as a relationship between a dirty stick and a hot fire; (2) Jesus is part of the Trinity (a 3-person union of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in one God); (3) that Jesus' death on the cross brings forgiveness of sin to anyone who believes; and (4) that Jesus' was raised from the dead to show God's power, both to do miracles and to forgive sin, and thus to allow sinful humans to nonetheless have an eternal relationship with a holy God.

Valentine's Day (February 14) is a holiday with an interesting history, celebrating love and friendship.

Saint Valentine's Day dates back to an ancient Christian who loved a student in a difficult set of circumstances. In AD 270, Valentine was executed by Rome's Emperor for being a Christian. His jailer asked him to tutor his young daughter, who was blind. Valentine taught her about history, nature, math, and more. One night, when Julia and Valentine prayed, God flooded the prison with light and Julia screamed, "Valentine, I can see!" The night before he was killed, Valentine wrote to his beloved student, urging her to stay close to God. He signed it, "From Your Valentine." He died on February 14, and in AD 496 the Pope named the day "Saint Valentine's Day."



In America, school children celebrate by exchanging colorful cards and heart-shaped candy that says things like "Be mine," "You're Sweet" and "From Your Valentine." Many couples make a big deal of the holiday, going out for dinner, and exchanging gifts like flowers, jewelry, or edible gifts like candy or chocolates.

Valentine's Day is also observed in other countries. A Chinese newspaper reported that young people like Valentine's Day, "because it celebrates love and passion, which are so strongly felt by the young."

So, even though the sacred history of this holiday is largely unknown, St. Valentine might be pleased to know that his love for a student gave birth to an international holiday celebrating love—one of God's greatest gifts to the world. When February 14 comes, why not celebrate by saying "I love you" to someone special? It is a phrase most people love to hear! (277 words)

**Questions:** (Do you want to ask the teacher about anything in the article?)

1. What year did Valentine die? How did he die?
2. What country did Valentine live in?
3. Who was "Julia"?
4. What are some of the things Valentine taught Julia? What was your favorite subject in high school, and why?
5. Name some things that people give each other on Valentine's Day.
6. The text said that Valentine "loved" his student. Do you think the word "love" can describe the relationship between a teacher and student? Why or why not?



7. Tell us how Valentine's Day (or any celebration for lovers) is celebrated in your country.
8. Talk about the different kinds of "love." If your language translates several words as "love," see if you can tell us the difference. (Hint: In English, we can say I love my phone, my dog, my girlfriend, my career, my teacher, my Mom, my God.... What is the difference between these kinds of "love"?)
9. Choose a vocabulary word, and create a sentence using it.

If you have more time:

Read this passage, from "the love chapter" in the Bible, which is often quoted at weddings:

"Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud, or rude. Love isn't selfish or quick tempered. It doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do. Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil. Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting. Love never fails!"^

Discuss: What do you think of "the love chapter"? Do you agree with Paul (the first century author) about what love is? Explain. Is this kind of love easy? Why aren't more people this way?

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^The quote is from 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8, in the Contemporary English version of the Bible. If you want to read some of the other things that the Bible says about love, look in "1 John" (near the back of the Bible), especially these verses: 2:5, 4:7-16, and 5:3.

You can find a longer version of this article, plus additional information about Valentine and Julia, at <http://eflsuccess.com/valentine/>

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These lessons were created or adapted by the staff of International Friendship Ministries, P.O. Box 12504, Columbia SC 29211; ifmusa.org; info@ifmusa.org. IFM is grateful to Kathy Williams for most of the original work. Some lessons were adapted from EFLsuccess.com (with permission). IFM makes these lessons available to our participants, but this does not imply our consent for others to publish these lessons online or in print without permission.

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