

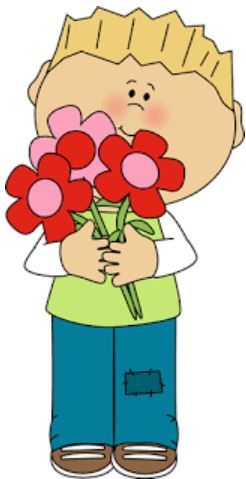
Kippington Cat

14th February 2021



A day to celebrate the power of Love

Happy Valentine's Day to you all!



Actually – I admit to being a bit of a party-pooper when it comes to St. Valentine. It is simply not a day that I celebrate – I do not buy cards, send red roses or go all sappy-goo!

In the home where I grew up, we were encouraged to say *I love you* any day of the year, and flowers were bought and given on a “just because” basis, rather than on a specific date.

Traditionally, St Valentine's Day is the day when people show their affection for another person (or people) by sending cards and give bouquets of flowers or boxes of expensive chocolates with messages of love.

But who was St Valentine and how did it all start?

Saint Valentine's Day was a feast day in the Catholic religion, added to the liturgical calendar around 500 AD. The day was commemorated for martyred saints named – you guessed it – Valentine. Differing legends celebrate three different saints called Valentine or Valentinus, but since little was known about these men and there were conflicting reports of the Saint Valentine Day story, it was removed from the Christian liturgical calendar in 1969.

But even though not much is known about the real history of the Valentines on whom the holiday is based, the legend has several versions. One says that Saint Valentine refused to convert to paganism and was executed by Roman Emperor Claudius II. Prior to his death, he was able to miraculously heal the daughter of his jailer, who then converted to Christianity along with his family.

Another legend says a bishop called Saint Valentine of Terni is the true namesake of the holiday; this Saint Valentine was also executed.

But according to yet another version (and this is how Saint Valentine became affiliated with a love-focused holiday), Valentine was a Roman priest who performed weddings for soldiers forbidden to marry, because of an Roman emperor deciding that married soldiers did not make good warriors and thus young men could not marry.

While the Saint Valentine story set the groundwork for establishing the day as a holiday for romantic love, many historians think that what truly solidified the connection between Saint Valentine and love was a poem by medieval author Geoffrey Chaucer.

Chaucer, famous still today as the author of *The Canterbury Tales*, wrote 'The Parlement of Foules', sometime in the 1380s. The poem features a parliament (or assembly) of fowl (or birds), which have gathered to choose their mates for the year. As Chaucer's narrator remarks, 'For this was on seynt Volantynys day / Whan euery bryd comyth there to chese his make.' (Isn't the old version of English odd?!)

So, we can see that over the years (and centuries), Valentine's Day has been a religious celebration, an ancient ritual day, and a commercial holiday. All that change means the meaning of Valentine's Day is truly whatever you want it to be.

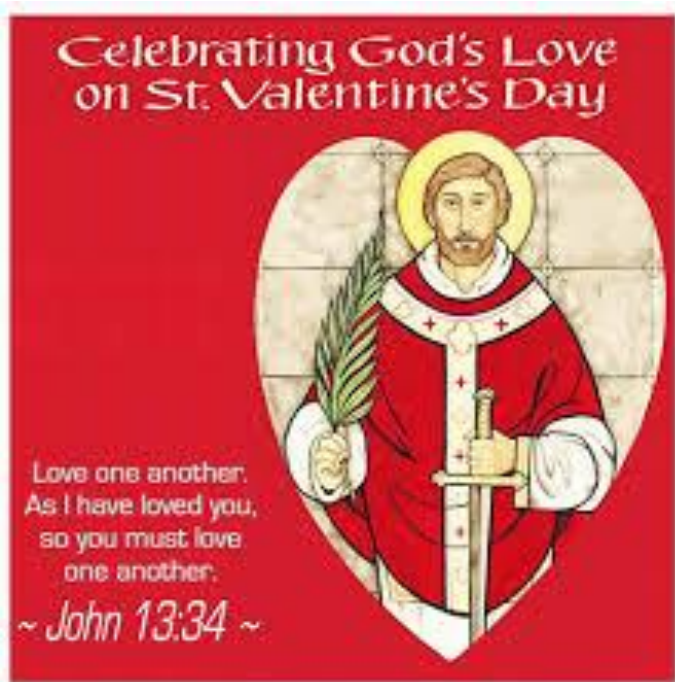


You can skip the celebrations completely, or buy *yourself* some chocolate or flowers, or express your love and appreciation for the people in your life, whether those are co-workers, romantic partners, friends, or family members.

Certainly, florists and the makers of greetings cards like us to mark the occasion, but – and I know this will be an unpopular opinion with some of you – I really do think that a bunch of lovely meadow flowers gathered on a Spring or summer day, tied together with string or ribbon and given to someone you love “Just because” is oh-so-much more special and meaningful!

Some people love Valentines Day, and others really dislike it. I am not keen, but do think that any time we express our love for one another it is a good thing.

And, of course, we who believe in God know that there is another love: bigger, greater, all-encompassing, non-judging, everlasting love ... the love our Father has for us.



The Bible says:

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. (1 John 4:7)

And:

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. (1 John 4:16)

So, this February 14th, when we tell each other that we love, we are expressing God's love through our own – now that **is** a nice thought!

Father,

Thank You that You love me,
and that You will never stop loving me.

Help me to remember and give thanks for Your love every day
and teach me how to love like You do.

Teach me to put other people first,
and to love unconditionally
not expecting anything in return,
but celebrating when love comes back to me.

And help me, Father God, to praise You and love You every day of my life.

This I ask in Your holy name.

Amen.

*Love is one of the greatest gifts
we can give or receive.
Tell and show people that you care
about them every day ...*

With love, K.C.



ALTHOUGH ROVER MEANT HIS
GIFT TO BE AN EXPRESSION OF
LOVE, PRINCESS BELIEVED IT WAS
AN ATTEMPT TO POISON HER.

And please do not forget ...

No matter how much you love
your pet - human chocolate is
poisonous for them - so no
sharing with them if you are
fortunate enough to be given
some this weekend!



What the cat has been
laughing at this week...

... about LOVE!

Q: What did the stamp say to the envelope on Valentine's Day?

A: I am so stuck on you!

Q: How did the phone propose to his girlfriend?

A: He gave her a ring.

Q: What did one sheep say to the other?

A: I love ewe.

Q: And how did the other sheep respond?

A: You're not so baaaaaa-d yourself!

Q: What did one cat say to the other cat on Valentine's Day?

A: Never change, my darling - you are purrrfect.

Q: What kind of flowers should you not give on Valentine's Day?

A: Cauliflowers!

Q: What do you call two birds in love?

A: Tweethearts!

Q: Why might you get arrested on Valentine's Day?

A: For stealing someone's heart.



"I did not know that!"



Another interesting word origin ... TRIVIA.

The dictionary will tell you that this is a noun, with the meaning:

Details, considerations, or pieces of information of little importance or value.

An example of it in a sentence could be:

"We fill our days with meaningless trivia".

But when and how did the word originate?

There are two possible starts for this word.

One is that it comes from the Latin 'trivialis,' meaning "found everywhere, commonplace." This is supported by the fact that one meaning of 'trivia' is "unimportant matters."

But the **literal** meaning of the Latin *trivium* is "a place where three roads meet."

Now, this is getting interesting! What does a three-way crossroads have to do with interesting morsels of mostly useless information?

The Roman Empire was famously connected by public roads, many of which still exist across Europe today. The intersections of these roads, especially three or more, were a great place for people from different, local places to meet, hang out and trade goods. In this way, crossroads came to be known as places where inconsequential or trivial things were said and done.

The word trivial appeared in English as early as the 1500s, but "trivia" took longer to get there. It was the name of a book about streets and crossroads in 1716.



The sense of trivia meaning "fun facts" came around after 1902 when Logan Pearsall Smith published a series of books called *Trivia*. Smith was known for his clever sayings and essays, and his Trivia books were full of interesting little observations about public life and human behaviour.

By 1965, trivia had become the name of an informal college game where players would quiz one another, and then it was fully popularized in 1982 with the boardgame *Trivial Pursuit*.

The Competition – A story about love.

It was the week before Valentine's Day and the whole of Mrs Drew's class was getting excited. She had told them that each day, she would be setting them a challenge, all around the subject of love – and that the top three pieces of work submitted each day would each get a gold star and – yay! – there would be special prizes for those children that made the "Golden List" at the end of the week. There would be one extra-special prize would be given to any child who managed to achieve a gold star every single day – if that were even possible!

On Monday, in their English lesson, they learned about poems. Mrs Drew explained all about the difference between poems that rhymed and free verse, where no rules applied. She taught them about haikus and sonnets and even about limericks! Then she set them the challenge of writing a poem about the love of friendship.

Jason was particularly pleased with his Haiku, for which Mrs Drew gave him a gold star. It read:

As sweet as sugar / Is the loving and warm heart / Of the friend who cares.

On Tuesday, they had Art, and Mrs Drew talked them through different styles – like using oil paints, or watercolours, or poster paints. She set them the challenge of a piece of art that depicted the human love of animals.



Jason found this one a lot harder. His family did not have any pets (even though he and his sister kept begging for a puppy or kitten, his parents had yet to agree ...).

But then he remembered seeing a photograph of when he was a baby, trying to chase a butterfly! So, that was what he did, using silhouette as his style, black on white. Mrs Drew really liked it and said how original it was: as everybody else had drawn dogs, cats and hamsters. And now he had TWO gold stars!

On Wednesday, they had PE in the main hall. There were lots of giggles as all the children tried to guess how Mrs Drew could possibly link sports activities to love ... but, of course, she could!

After a competitive game of basketball, she called them into the middle of the gym to sit down and get their breath back. She divided them into pairs and challenged them to think of a sport that would show trust in action, as trust – she explained – was an important part of love.

Jason was paired with Tommy – not one of his best friends and he would much rather have been put with Simon or Tim, or Lottie. He sulked a little bit (but tried not to let it show, gold stars were at stake!) but he and Tommy soon started to put ideas forward to each other.

How about football, where you had to trust your team-mates, or rugby? How about cheerleading, where you had to trust the others to catch you, or hold you on their shoulders?



In the end, the boys decided to say that their choice was doubles in tennis. Mrs Drew asked them why they had chosen that, rather than football (which she knew was their favourite sport). They explained that whilst football players did have to trust team-mates, it was quite easy to do so, as they could see each other on the pitch – but that in a tennis doubles match, you had to trust your partner to cover you – even when you could not see them! Mrs Drew was really impressed by their arguments, and they both got given a gold star.

Thursday, and Mrs Drew chose Biology as the "Challenge Lesson". That term, they were learning about birds of all types – from farmyard chickens to exotic lovebirds and gorgeous birds of paradise. Her challenge was an overnight one – to find a bird that paired up for life, write a couple of sentences about it and illustrate it with either a photograph or your own drawing.

The next day, the children were asked to come to the front of the class one by one, to show what they had discovered about their chosen bird. Oh dear! It soon became clear that they had all selected either the swan or the lovebird. Finally, it was Jason who was called up to the front. He nervously cleared his throat and unfurled his poster to show – Barn Owls!



Oh, he was SO glad that he had decided to not use the swan as his choice!

It had been a really close call – and very tempting to use swans because of the way they bend their necks and almost make a heart shape ... but he had plumped for the Barn Owl – and he was the only one in the class to have a different bird from anyone else.

Mrs Drew was really impressed by his research, and she loved what he had written about them too: "Once these cute birds find their mate, they are set for life. The female barn owl attends to the nest while the male brings food to the female and chicks. Teamwork makes the dream work!"

Friday had started just brilliantly, with another gold star – if he could only get a final one in the Challenge Lesson today, he would have the coveted Big Prize!

When the children came back in after morning break, they saw that beside her desk, Mrs Drew had a bucket full of red roses.

"Here is your final challenge, children!" she said, with a smile. "There are enough roses in this bucket for each of you to take either one or two. You are to spend the next ten minutes thinking about who you would like to give a red rose to – and why. For now, just write your message – your reason for selecting that person – onto paper, putting your own name at the top. Work independently, and no talking, please."

The room fell silent, with just the occasional sniff, or cough, or fidget.

Jason was in turmoil. He really did not see how he could pick just two people to be given a sign of his love. There was Mummy, and Daddy, and his sister Jodie. Then there was grandma, all on her own – he loved her loads as well – and had not been able to meet up with her for months. And Granny and Granddad S. Oh, and Auntie Kay. And Lottie here in his class. And ...

Time was up and he had not written one single message of love on his paper. Mrs Drew was coming down the row, collecting the children's work. She hesitated when she saw his paper, blank except for his own name, but collected it along with all the others.

She started reading what the children had written, calling each one up to collect one or two roses and gift tags, on which, she explained, she would like them to write those love messages for the recipients to cherish.

After all the other children had collected their roses, she called Jason name and he went up to her desk. "Jason," she asked, her kind face looking concerned, "Why have you not written any names down? Hesitantly, he explained his problem of picking just two names when there were so many people he loved and how he would prefer not to give ANY roses rather than have someone feel left out. "I just don't think that love should be a competition!" he said, almost in tears.

Mrs Drew smiled at him. "I think that is rather lovely of you!" she gently said, and he went back – with no roses in his hands – to take his seat. Some of the other children were sniggering at him, and he sat quietly and still, not making eye contact with any of them.

Later that morning, just before the class went for lunch, Mrs Drew said she was going to announce the Golden List winners. One by one, she read out the names of all the children who had managed to get a gold star during the Challenges that week. They each got applause from their classmates as they were given a small box with three heart-shaped chocolates inside.

Then she said:

“Only one person managed to get five gold stars – one for each day – so the winner of the Big Prize is ... Jason, whose fifth gold star was awarded for his realisation that love is, indeed, NOT a competition.



“We can love lots of different things and people, and none of them should ever diminish another. You do not love your sister less because you also love your father. Nor do you love one friend less because you have four other friends!

“Love is not like a cake, that once you cut it into slices and hand them out, there's no cake left.

“Love doesn't get divided – it multiplies! So, for each person or thing you love, there is more love to go around – always!”

Do I hear you ask what was the Big Prize?

Well, it was a giant box of chocolates and a whole bunch of 15 roses!

Jason being Jason, he shared the chocolates with all his classmates (and Mrs Drew!) and then was able to hand out roses to all the people he loved without missing anyone off his list.

And that night, before bedtime, he got down onto his knees and prayed a special prayer to thank God for all the love he had in his life.



What would YOU have chosen to write as a poem, draw as a picture, chose as a sport or an animal, do you think? And to whom would you have wanted to give a rose, and why?

Why not try all those challenges for yourself?

BOREDOM BUSTERS... WHY DON'T YOU TRY...

... Making a Heart Butterfly Card?

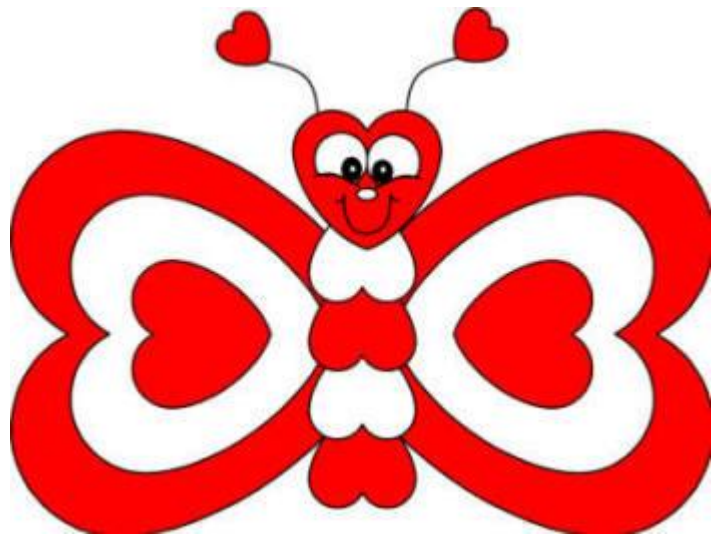
You will need:




Either

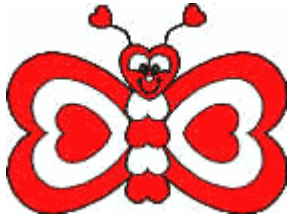
- Three squares of white card

Or

- Two squares of white & one of red
- Glue
- Scissors
- Red and black felt tips or crayons



<p>First, cut out the following shapes from the red card:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 very large hearts 2 medium hearts 2 small hearts 	<p>And, from the white card, cut out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 large hearts 3 small hearts <p>If you are using white card for all & colouring in, add the numbers up to cut out, and colour in the red hearts as per the list to the left.</p>
<p>Do make sure that the butterfly shape will fit nicely onto the white background, by folding the background piece of card in half to make a greetings card ...</p>	
<p>To make a wing, glue the very large, large and medium hearts inside one another.</p> <p>Repeat for the second wing.</p>	
	<p>To make the body, stack the smallest hearts one on top of another and glue together. Position so the hearts are all upside down.</p>
<p>Draw a face onto the third small white heart with a black felt tip and colour in as per the illustration.</p> <p>Glue the heart with the face onto the top of the body so it is right side up.</p>	



Glue the wings onto the back of the body to complete your butterfly and then glue the whole thing onto your "card".

You might want to put something heavy over the top to weight it down while the glue is setting.

The finishing touch is to draw and colour in two tiny hearts over the head and draw a wibbly line to make the antenna.

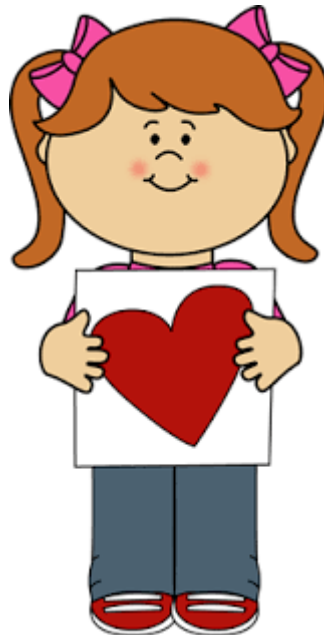


If this is all bit complicated, you can forget the wings entirely, and make a heart **caterpillar** instead, just adding a few small hearts to make a longer body!

Now you can write your message inside the card and give it to someone you love.

One suggestion for the inside could be "You make my heart go flutter!"

Or you could write a poem in one of the forms we saw in the story and add that to the card – whatever you think would please the person you plan to be the recipient!



I love you for a lifetime,
Not only for a day.
I love you for who you are,
Not what you do or say.

... How about playing these Snowy-Wintery outdoor games?

Snowball targets

Assuming the snow has not all disappeared by the time you read this (in which case, remember it for next time!), create a variety of bull's-eyes to make a "throwing range".

Make targets by drawing chalk squares on a wall (or see how high you can throw your snowballs at a tree trunk). Or make targets on the ground with hula hoops, a circle of twigs, or stones – the further away from the "throw-line" the higher the score.

Snow castle

Pull out your buckets and spades and make the castles of your dreams. Pack snow into the buckets just like you would do with sand on the beach to make your castle, then decorate it with any nature elements you can find, such as a leaf for a flag or twigs for a hedge, or small pebbles to suggest a path to the palace doors.

Paint the snow!

Fill spray bottles with water and food colouring. There is no limit to the designs you can create! "Paint" a picture and photograph it to make a very personalised greetings card!

Snow obstacle course

The combinations and permutations of this activity are endless! Put together your own course. If you are stuck for ideas, you could consider:

Hurdles made of snow to be jumped, a track to be run. How about activity spots where challenges could include doing three jumping jacks; rolling five snowballs, then throwing them into a bucket at a certain distance away; spinning a hula hoop ten times around your middle and could end with crawling ten feet through the snow to the finish line.

And then dash inside for a warming bowl of soup and a hot bath to get warm again!



And if it is just too wet / cold / all the snow has melted (!!) here are two indoor games you might enjoy:

Mirror, Mirror

Stand face to face with a parent or sibling, about a foot apart, and have them attempt to copy all your movements. Reach up and stretch to the sky. Do 10 jumping jacks. Run in place. Act like a monkey. Then switch – you will both be giggling like crazy in no time!

Penguin Waddle

Place a balloon between your knees and waddle across the room without letting it drop. You can make it more challenging by adding in an obstacles course around furniture. If you drop it, you must start over.

How about ... Making Chicken Bagel Burgers?

Do please ask for adult help putting in and taking out of the hot grill!



Makes six burgers, taking about 15 minutes to prepare and 15 minutes to cook.

Once we are allowed to have parties again,
why not use the same quantity of fillings spread among 12 mini bagels,
and make as yummy party food – I am sure they would go down well!

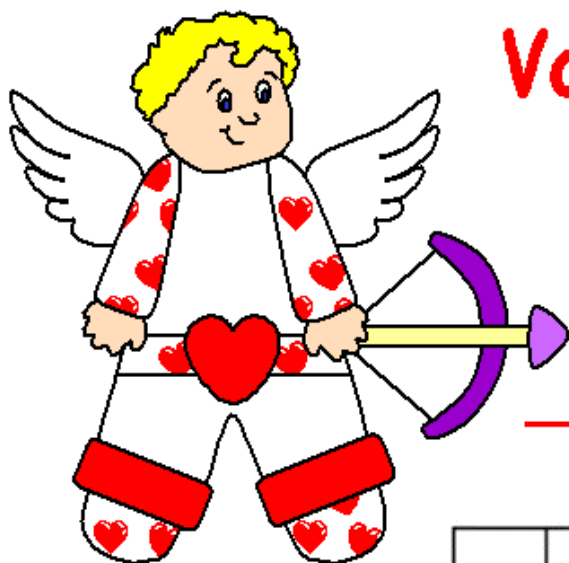
Ingredients: 200 g can chickpeas, drained. 1 small onion, finely chopped. 1 garlic clove, crushed. 500g chicken (or turkey) mince. 1 small sweet potato (about 100g), grated. olive oil for brushing.	To serve: 6 bagels. 2 tablespoons mayo. ¼ iceberg lettuce, shredded. 2 tomatoes, sliced. ¼ cucumber, sliced.
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- Heat the grill to medium.
- Whizz the chickpeas in a food processor and put into a bowl with the onion, garlic, mince and sweet potato. Mix well and season (Note: the mixture could be frozen at this stage for up to one month).
- Line a baking sheet with foil and divide the mixture into six, shaping them into burger shapes. Place onto the baking sheet, brush with oil and grill for 10-15 minutes, turning once (it would be best to ask an adult to do that bit!).
- Note that you can, if you need to, chill the burgers and cover before putting into the fridge, to be reheated later in the microwave for two minutes on High...but they are nicer if all the cooking flows through to them being dished up!
- Split the bagels and lightly toast them under the grill. Spread the mayonnaise, and then put on the burger, lettuce, cucumber and tomatoes before “lidding” them with the bagel top.

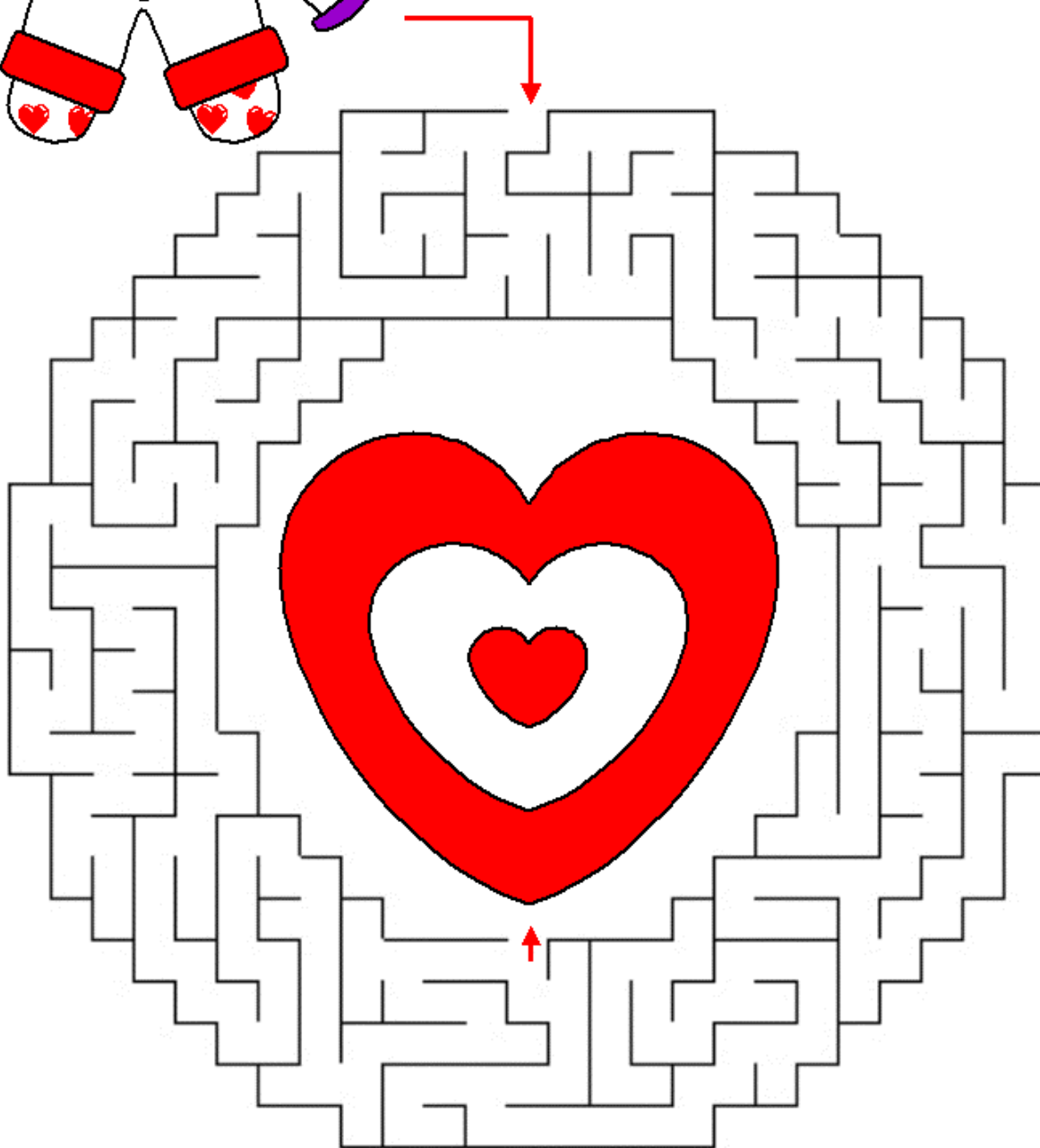
I like some dill pickles on mine, and fries on the side – some sweet potato and some ordinary potato, all mixed together – but that is a purely personal preference!

Puzzles

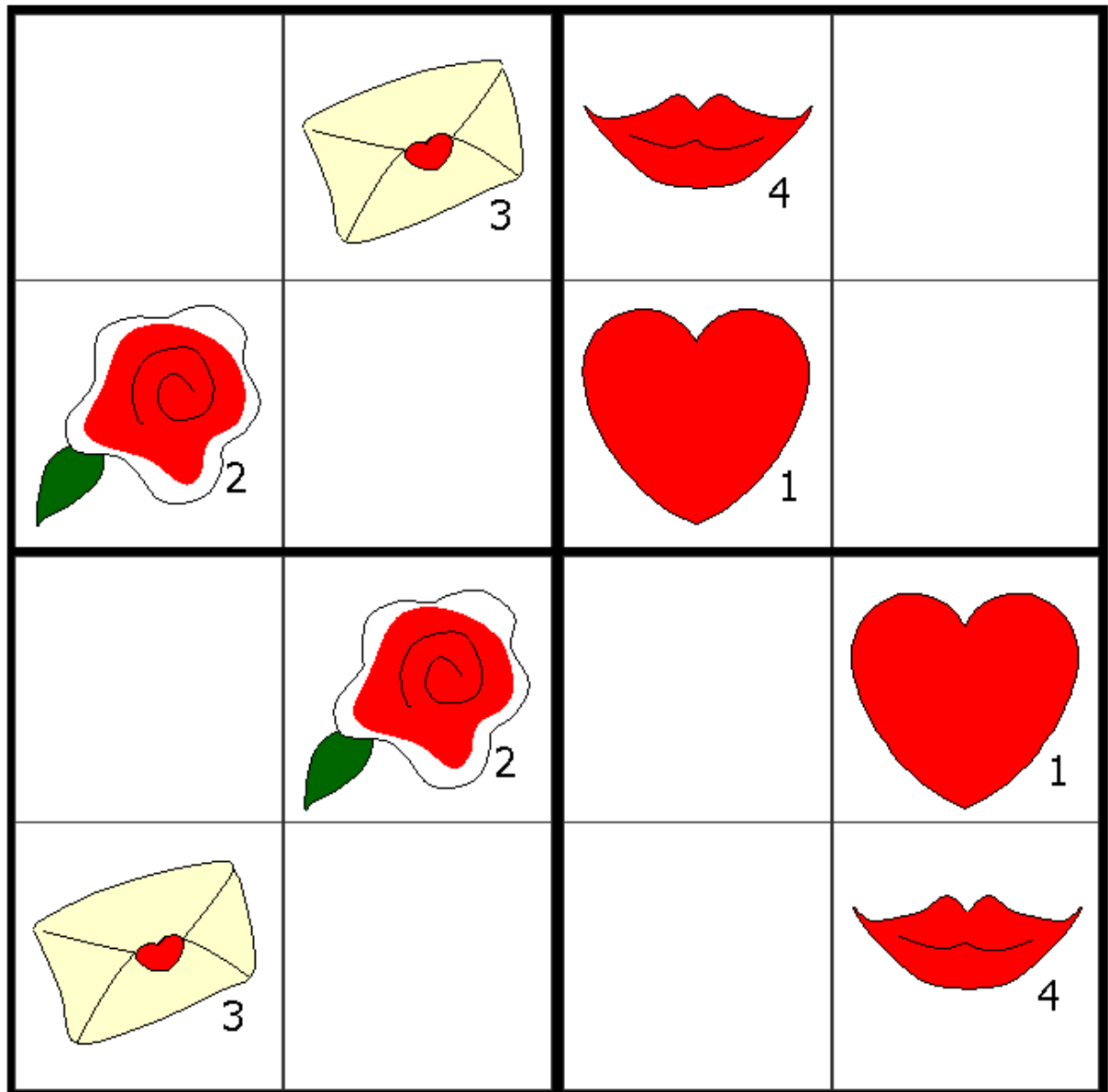
Valentine's Day Maze



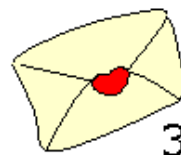
Help cupid aim
for the heart.



Love hearts and Roses Sudoku





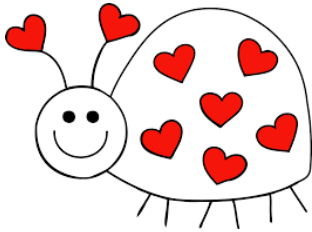


Each row, each column and each of the large four squares should have one of each image. Fill in the blanks!



GIFT to LOVE Word Ladder

Change just one letter at a time, in response to the clues, to get to the target word.
(I continue my kindness by including picture clues again ..!)

<p>A present.</p>	<p>G</p>			<p>T</p>	
<p>A fast way to get to a higher floor in a tall building.</p>					
<p>Cats are reputed to have nine of these (a mouse only one)</p>					
<p>"One, two, three, four, five ... Once I caught a fish a----"</p>					
<p>What Valentine's Day celebrates.</p>	<p>L</p>			<p>E</p>	

Answer at the foot of next page.

Thank You, Lord, for the power of Love.
Thank You that it can make me feel strong and confident.

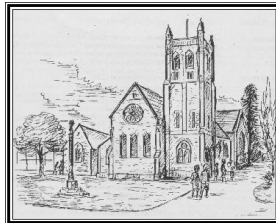
Thank You for the gentleness of Love.
Thank You that it can make me feel safe and valued.

Help me to realise that not everyone has the comfort of human love,
but to know that ALL of us have YOUR love.

Help me, Father God, to love others:
to be for them the source of healing, warmth and acceptance.

Oh, thank You, God, for Your love!
Amen.

*As a cat, I LOVE being loved!
Cuddles have as much power as sunshine on my fur ...
Both make me feel all warm and wonderful!*



Created by Kippington Cat
of the Church of St Mary, Kippington
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Word Ladder: Gift, Lift, Life, Live, Love