

The Fruit of the Spirit is Faithfulness

(Galatians 5:22-23)

Pre-Session Warm Up

Today we're going to learn about faithfulness. [Teacher, do the **Buddy Trust** game as a pre-session warm up activity.]

Opening Prayer

Father, we want to learn how to be loyal to You, no matter what people say or do. Teach us this morning how important it is for us to remain faithful to You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts. (2 Timothy 2:22 NLT)

Lesson

We have been learning about the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

The first fruit is **love**. Love is not just a feeling, it's an action word. And, if we truly have the fruit of the Spirit, we choose to love people with God's kind of love, even when they don't deserve it or even when it's inconvenient to us.

The second fruit is **joy**. True joy comes from having Jesus in your life and knowing that you will live forever with him in heaven. True joy comes from the inside out; not from something that happens *to* us.

The third fruit is **peace**. Because Jesus paid for our sins on the cross, we have peace with God. Now it is our responsibility to do all we can to live in peace with everyone; we're to be peacemakers.

The fourth fruit is **patience**. Patience is trusting that God has a difficult situation under control and being willing to wait for Him to solve the problem. It's being willing to forgive others when they do things that bug us because you know that God has forgiven you for so much. Patience is not something that you are born with; you have to develop it. It takes great courage and faith to wait upon God's timing and for His purposes in your life to be fulfilled.

The fifth fruit is **kindness**. Just like love, joy, peace, and patience; kindness is not just a feeling, it's an action word. God's kind of *kindness* is self-sacrificing; it's having compassion on others and being willing to do something for them without expecting to get anything in return.

The sixth fruit is **goodness**. Goodness involves doing things that are right, but it goes way beyond staying out of trouble. Doing things God's way, instead of the way everyone else does them, is the definition of real goodness. We show goodness by choosing to obey God, even when it is hard. We should be actively looking for opportunities to do what God says is the right thing to do.

The next fruit is **faithfulness**. Faithfulness means being true to your word.

Did you know that dogs are called people's faithful friends? Dogs become attached to their owners, love them unconditionally, protect them, and help them. Dogs are used to guide the blind because they are reliable, steady, and trustworthy. Dogs can be counted on!

Can people say that about you?

We've all been disappointed by people who have broken their promises, haven't we? Tell me about a time someone has made a promise to you that they didn't keep. [Let the children respond.]

Faithful people can be counted on to do what they say they will do. They don't change their minds based on what other people think. God will help you to be faithful to Him, too, just like Daniel.

God wants you to be faithful, that is, to do right all the time—even when the people around you don't agree with you, or even when doing right may get you into trouble.

Today we'll learn how Daniel determined in his heart to be faithful to God, no matter what happened.

Daniel was one of the most important leaders in the country of Babylon. Daniel had lived in Babylon ever since he was just a young man. During all those years he had served as an advisor to several kings. Now he was over 80 years old and serving King Darius.

Because Daniel was so wise and honest, King Darius made Daniel the governor of the whole kingdom. That decision made some of the other governors very jealous! They searched and searched to find something Daniel might have done wrong in his job as governor, so they could point it out to King Darius. But it was no use! Daniel never did anything wrong or dishonest in his work.

Since they couldn't think of any other way to stop Daniel, the jealous governors decided to use Daniel's faithfulness to God to get him into trouble!

Let's read the story together from the book of Daniel.

Daniel 6:3

Daniel soon proved himself more capable than all the other administrators and high officers. Because of Daniel's great ability, the king made plans to place him over the entire empire.

The king liked Daniel so much, that he planned to make him the leader of the whole kingdom. And, that made some of the other leaders very jealous of Daniel. Jealousy is sin; it puts murder in your heart. They tried hard to catch him doing something wrong so they could report that to the king and get him in trouble.

Daniel 6:4

Then the other administrators and high officers began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs, but they couldn't find anything to criticize or condemn. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy.

It was no use! They couldn't find anything Daniel did that was wrong. Daniel faithfully prayed to God three times every day. He always asked God to show him what to do each day.

So the leaders decided to trap him. They knew there was only one way they could trap him into doing something wrong...

Daniel 6:5

So they concluded, "Our only chance of finding grounds for accusing Daniel will be in connection with the rules of his religion."

Some of these men went to see King Darius to make a proposal.

Daniel 6:6-9

So the administrators and high officers went to the king and said, "Long live King Darius! (7) We are all in agreement—we administrators, officials, high officers, advisers, and governors—that the king should make a law that will be strictly enforced. Give orders that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions. (8) And now, Your Majesty, issue and sign this law so it cannot be changed, an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked." (9) So King Darius signed the law.

Since the officers had said that all the leaders liked this law, King Darius probably figured Daniel approved of it, too. And since this law seemed like a good way to honor himself, King Darius wrote it and signed it, just as the leaders suggested he should do.

In those days a king often thought himself to be like a god. He would have been pleased to think of others bowing down only to him. Pride kept Darius from seeing the true reason for the decree. It led him to accept worship that belonged to God, and it put his friend, Daniel, in a difficult situation. The penalty for disobedience was death by being thrown into the lions' den.

When Daniel heard about the law, did he quit praying? No! Daniel would never disappoint God. He chose to keep praying as he always

had—even though it could mean death. He trusted that God would help him to remain faithful to Him.

God will help you to be faithful to Him, too. Being faithful means standing firm in your heart and mind to please God, no matter what anyone else is doing or saying. Don't let anyone lead you off the track. For example, in the lunchroom at school, God can help you to pray before you eat, even when others around you are not. God can help you to tell what you believe from the Bible, even though others may disagree. At home, God can help you get up on Sunday morning to go to church, even though no one else in your family may go with you. Sometimes when you are faithful to God, others may not understand or may even oppose you, but don't let others stop you from doing what is right. God will help you be faithful, just like He helped Daniel.

Now, some people in Daniel's place might have chosen to pray secretly, maybe in a closet where no one would see them. After all, God doesn't care where you are when you pray. And He can hear you when you pray silently because He knows every thought that you think. But, not Daniel! Lions or no lions, Daniel knew what he had to do. And, Daniel's enemies were ready and waiting outside Daniel's house. Would he open his shutters and pray, as he always did?

Daniel 6:10

But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God.

Daniel knew that disobeying the law meant he would be thrown into a lion's den. But, he walked up the stairs to his room, opened the window facing Jerusalem and prayed to God in the morning, at noon, and in the evening.

And, yes! Daniel's enemies saw him kneeling down, praying to God! So, they ran just as fast as they could—straight to King Darius.

Daniel 6:12

So they went straight to the king and reminded him about this law. "Did you not sign a law that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions?"

Everybody knew that once the king had made a law it could not be changed.

Daniel 6:13-14

Then they told the king, "That man Daniel, one of the captives from Judah, is ignoring you and your law. He still prays to his God three times a day." (14) Hearing this, the king was deeply troubled, and he tried to think of a way to save Daniel. He spent the rest of the day looking for a way to get Daniel out of this predicament.

The king agreed to the law because those who wanted him to make it appealed to his pride. Pride is a treacherous thing. Now, King Darius realized he had been tricked. He realized that the leaders had urged him to make this law so that Daniel would be killed! What a foolish law he had made! But not even he, the king, could change the law!

Daniel 6:15-16

In the evening the men went together to the king and said, "Your Majesty, you know that according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, no law that the king signs can be changed." (16) So at last the king gave orders for Daniel to be arrested and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to him, "May your God, whom you serve so faithfully, rescue you."

King Darius was very sad; he tried to find a way to change the law and rescue his friend, Daniel. But even the king had to obey his own law. With a heavy heart, he gave the order. And then he watched as Daniel was thrown into the den full of lions and a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den.

Darius could not help Daniel, but God could. God had helped Daniel be faithful; now God would help him face the fearful things others were doing in anger.

If you know the Lord Jesus as your Savior, God will help you stand firm and remain faithful to Him, no matter what others are doing or saying.

As you pray at lunchtime, some may make fun of you, but others may notice and begin to think about God's goodness to them. When you share your belief in God with others, some may argue with you, but someone may listen to what you say and change the way they think about God. As you faithfully go to church each Sunday, some in your family might think you are silly for going, but one day someone in your family might choose to go with you and begin to learn about God, too. Even if no one ever responds kindly toward you, God will help you to stand firm and remain faithful to Him. Daniel remained faithful to God even in his desperate situation.

God honored Daniel's faithfulness, and protected him from the lions.

Daniel 6:19-20

Very early the next morning, the king got up and hurried out to the lions' den. (20) When he got there, he called out in anguish, "Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?"

Very early the next morning he hurried to the lion's den and called out for Daniel.

Daniel 6:21-22

Daniel answered, "Long live the king! (22) My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty."

The king was beside himself with joy. God had protected Daniel!

Daniel 6:23

The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den. Not a scratch was found on him, for he had trusted in his God.

Once Daniel was safely out of the den, the king remembered the leaders who had tricked him into writing the law and commanded that those who had plotted to kill Daniel be thrown into the lions' den.

Daniel 6:24

Then the king gave orders to arrest the men who had maliciously accused Daniel. He had them thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. The lions leaped on them and tore them apart before they even hit the floor of the den...

Then the king made a decree to all the people in the kingdom to respect and worship Daniel's God.

Daniel's life of faithfulness to God should be an example for us to follow. Let me encourage you to become someone who people can count on, someone who is trustworthy and who always does what you say you will do.

We need to make it a habit to stand firm and remain faithful to God, no matter what others are doing or saying. When faithfulness to God is a habit, it is easier to do what is right when trouble comes. We form habits when we practice doing something again and again until we can do it without even thinking about it.

We've been learning that the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, and so forth) are not things that we are born with. We have to develop them. God wants us to practice these things so that they become habits to us.

God will help us to stand firm and remain faithful to Him, no matter what others are doing or saying.

Closing Prayer

Father, we praise You that we can read the Bible and see examples of faithfulness in people who are just like us. Faithful people can be counted on. We ask You to help us become more faithful in our actions. We want others to see our acts of faithfulness so that they will want to know You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Snack

Peaches.

Game Center

Buddy Trust

[Teacher, before class set up an obstacle course with chairs and tables, etc. This game teaches kids to trust one another. They will see that to be counted on, a person must be trustworthy. Have kids choose a partner and decide who is going to be the blindfolded "buddy".]

When we decide to be someone who people can count on, we need to be trustworthy and do what we say we'll do. Today, you're going to lead your buddy through an obstacle course without letting that person hit any objects in the course. Buddies, you are going to trust your partners who have given you their word that they will do as they say. You can't touch each other; Buddies must obey their partner's word.

[Have the first pair line up at the beginning of the course. When the first pair is about halfway through the course, send the second pair through, and so on until all the pairs have negotiated the course. Then

have partners switch roles and again go through the course. When everyone has played both roles in the game, gather the children around you and ask:]

- What was the hardest part about being blindfolded? Why?
- How did it feel to lead your buddy through the course?
- Was it better to be led blindfolded or to lead your blindfolded buddy? Why?
- Why is it sometimes so hard for us to trust?
- How does it make you feel when you are trusted?

Being faithful is another quality of the fruit of the Spirit. Our game provided an opportunity to see what faithfulness looks like. A faithful person is someone who can be trusted. Faithful people will do what they say they'll do. You can count on them to be people of their word.

A Walk of Faith

Using pieces of construction paper lay out a human-sized game board on the floor making a path of the squares from "Start" to "Finish." Let the children take turns advancing through the course with the following game cards:

<p>Your friend at church helps you learn a Bible verse.</p> <p>Move ahead 2 spaces.</p>	<p>You go to a birthday party, and you ignore your friend.</p> <p>Move back 2 spaces.</p>
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<p>Your friend takes time to help you study for a spelling test.</p> <p>Move ahead 2 spaces.</p>	<p>You promised to return a book to the library, but you didn't.</p> <p>Move back 4 spaces.</p>
<p>You told your friends you'd bring the football for the game, but you didn't.</p> <p>Move back 3 spaces.</p>	<p>Your friend tells you about Jesus</p> <p>Move ahead 5 spaces.</p>
<p>Your friend ignores you at recess and then apologizes.</p> <p>Stay on your square.</p>	<p>You collect money for a fundraiser, but you pocket some of it.</p> <p>Trade places with the person who is the last.</p>

<p>You promise your mom that you'll do your homework, and instead you watch TV.</p> <p>Move back 2 spaces.</p>	<p>A bully at school makes fun of your friend, and you walk away.</p> <p>Move back 3 spaces.</p>
<p>You read your Bible every night.</p> <p>Move ahead 5 spaces.</p>	<p>You ask the new kid at school to come to church with you.</p> <p>Move ahead 6 spaces.</p>
<p>You give your Sunday school teacher chocolates for his or her birthday—you've just won the game (Just kidding!)</p> <p>Move ahead 1 space.</p>	<p>You see a friend doing something dangerous, and you tell an adult.</p> <p>Move ahead 4 spaces.</p>

<p>You share the story about Christ dying on the cross with someone.</p> <p>Move ahead 6 spaces.</p>	<p>You join the others at school in making fun of a new kid so you won't be embarrassed around your friends.</p> <p>Move back 4 spaces.</p>
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Faithfulness

Faithfulness means being firm in what you believe or being loyal.

Finish the verse that tells about something Paul firmly believed in. Write in the letter that comes before each letter in the box.

“This is a faithful saying . . . that

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d	b	n	f	j	o	u	p	u	i	f
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x	p	s	m	e	u	p	t	w	f
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t	j	o	o	f	s	t
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; of whom I am

chief.” 1 Tim. 1:15

What is something that you firmly believe in?