
Forward

This book contains lessons about the Fruit of the Spirit as listed in Galatians 5:22-23. Your students will learn that the fruit of the Spirit is a gift God gives Christians to help them live lives that please Him and show His love to those who don't know God. When we accept Jesus to become Lord of our lives, God plants seeds in our hearts that begin to grow—seeds of love, joy, peace, and so forth. These attributes of a true believer are not just feelings that come and go. They are permanent characteristics deep in our heart that come from having a relationship with the living God.

I have designed these lessons to enable you to teach the Bible expositionally. The idea is to have the kids read the passages in their own Bibles and the teacher explain the scriptures and give good practical applications that are age-appropriate. My goal is to ensure that children learn that God's Word is exciting and meaningful and that teachers teach sound doctrine!

Even though I've scripted the lessons, I don't expect teachers to read my lesson materials verbatim to the children as they teach. My lessons are meant to provide the details you need to get background information and some suggestions for child-oriented personal application. Once you know and understand the Bible lessons for yourself, you'll be ready to teach your class.

The two-column layout of this book is designed so that you can copy and cut the pages in half to fit into your Bible. When the children observe that you are teaching right out of the Bible, rather than from a curriculum book, it validates God's Word and gives your teaching more authority.

You will discover that there is not always a Craft or Game idea suggested in each lesson. When I've had a good idea that really seems to support the lesson objectives, I've included it. But I have another handbook called *Tips and Tricks — Making Children's Bible Lessons Come to Life* that gives lots of suggestions for activities that

will help reinforce your lesson and teach the memory verse. (This is available from my website:

<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com/>)

Use the Teaching Schedule to help you organize your teaching rotation.

I pray that you will use these lessons for God's glory by teaching the Bible as an entire plan by a systematic and connected study of the Word.

Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. (Mark 10:14)

Sheila Scroggins

Sheila has had over 35 years' experience in teaching children and has several other lesson series available. You may contact her by eMail at: ccuv-ChildrensMinistry@usa.net for more information.

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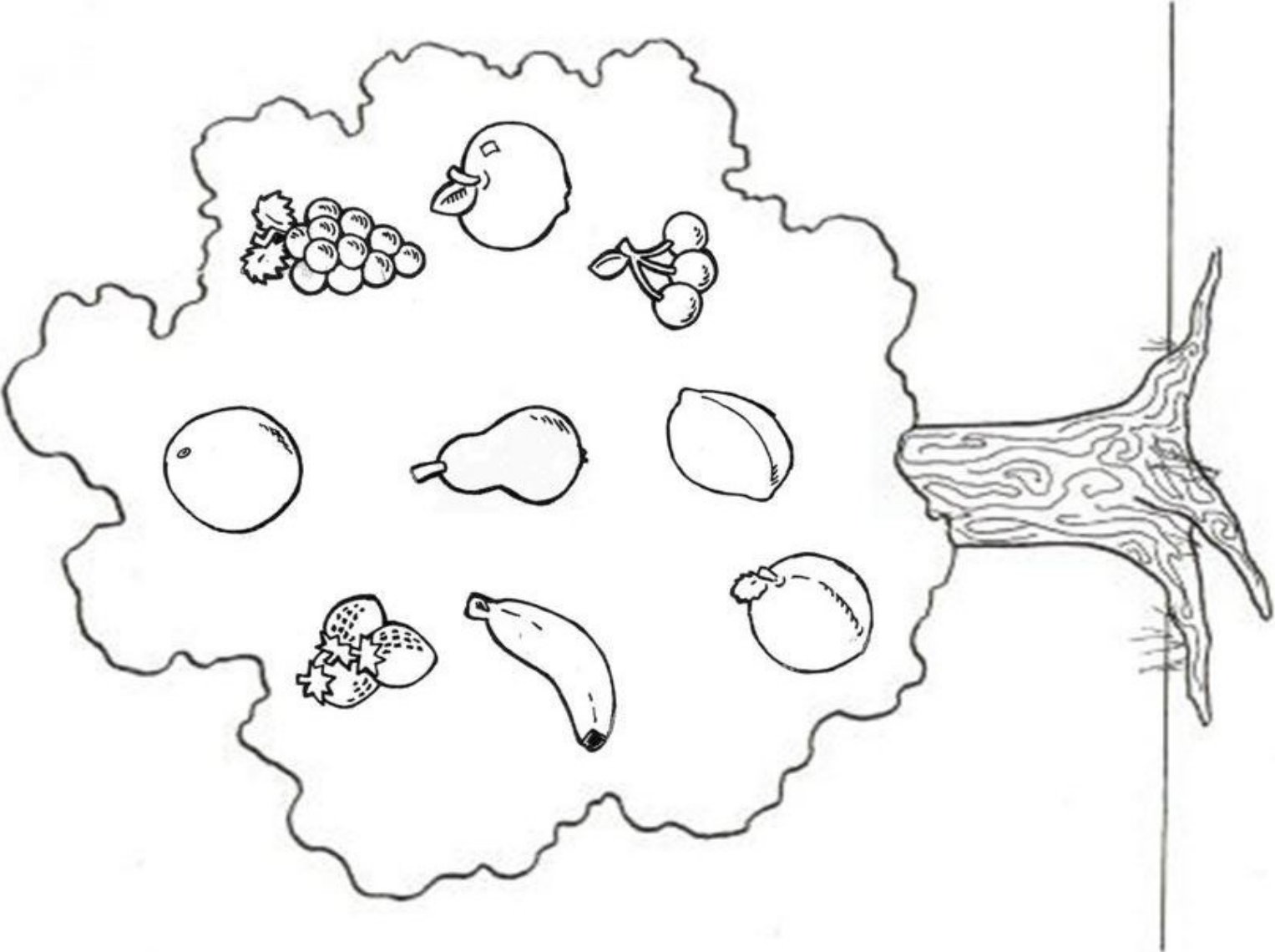
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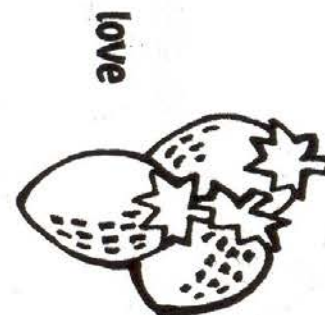
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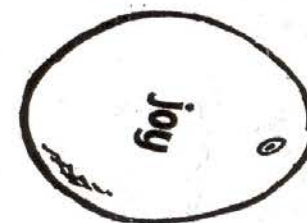
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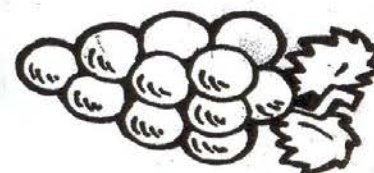
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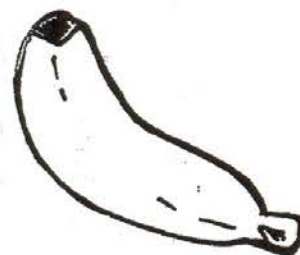
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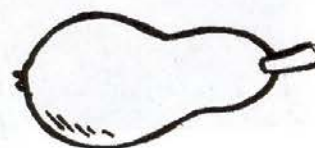
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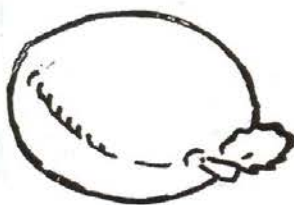
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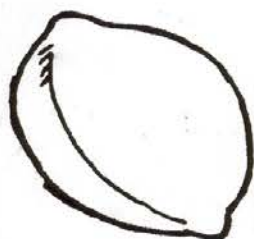
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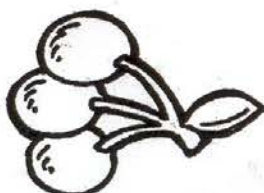
goodness



faithfulness



gentleness



self-control

Teaching Schedule

Date	Teacher	Lesson	Memory Verse
		The Fruit of the Spirit -- Introduction	<i>But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things. (Galatians 5:22-23 NLT)</i>
		The Fruit of the Spirit -- Love	<i>Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God. For God is love. (1 John 4:7-8 NLT)</i>
		The Fruit of the Spirit -- Joy	<i>Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! (Philippians 4:4 NTL)</i>
		The Fruit of the Spirit – Peace	<i>Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7 NLT)</i>
		The Fruit of the Spirit – Patience	<i>Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. (Colossians 3:12 NLT)</i>
		The Fruit of the Spirit – Kindness	<i>A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people. (2 Timothy 2:24 NLT)</i>
		The Fruit of the Spirit – Goodness	<i>...run from all these evil things. Pursue righteousness and a godly life, along with faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. Fight the good fight for the true faith. Hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you... (1 Timothy 6:11-12 NLT)</i>
		The Fruit of the Spirit – Faithfulness	<i>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)</i>
		The Fruit of the Spirit – Gentleness	<i>But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds... (James 3:17 NLT)</i>
		The Fruit of the Spirit – Self Control	<i>Think clearly and exercise self-control. (1 Peter 1:13a NLT)</i>
		Fruit Review	<i>Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed their natural evil desires to his cross and crucified them there. (Galatians 5:24 TLB)</i>
		Living By the Spirit	<i>Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. (Galatians 5:25 NLT)</i>

The Fruit of the Spirit

(Galatians 5:22-23)

Introduction

What do you know about fruit? [Teacher, let the children discuss the properties of Fruit: juicy, sweet, good to eat, grows on trees, etc.]

It's good for us and it's tasty, too. Fruit is a gift from God!

God gives us another kind of fruit, too. We call it the fruit of the Spirit. Let's read our verse together out loud.

The fruit of the Spirit is a gift God gives Christians to help them live lives that please Him and show His love to those who don't know God.

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You for giving us the fruit of the Spirit. Over the weeks to come, as we learn more about the fruit of the Spirit, we ask You to make each of these attributes grow in our lives. Help us to show **love** and **joy**. Help us to have **peace** and to show **patience** and **goodness**. Help us demonstrate **faithfulness** and **gentleness**, and finally help us to have **self-control**. Please teach us Your ways. Help us use the fruit of the Spirit to show others what Your loves looks like. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Memory Verse

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things. (Galatians 5:22-23 NLT)

Lesson

[Teacher, before class, enlarge nine different fruit shapes, copy them onto colorful paper and cut them out. Choose one child to come forward.] We're going to spend some time learning about these gifts that come from God called the "fruit of the Spirit."

When you accept Jesus to become Lord of your life, God plants seeds in your heart that begin to grow. They are seeds of love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. [Teacher, as you name each piece of fruit, tape it to the child standing in front of the class.] These are God-given gifts that grow inside of us to show others what Jesus is like.

Jesus came to show us what our fruit should look like when it's fully grown. He came to show us what it looks like to really love others, to have joy in the middle of a trial, to be patient, and so on.

Let's think of ways that we show those gifts right now in our lives. [Teacher, as you remove a piece of fruit from the child, have the children discuss ways they show these qualities to others. For example, "Joy" is being happy for someone that gets a new bike. Place the fruit on a tree shape on the bulletin board.]

One way the fruit of the Spirit grows in our lives is when we see it growing in the lives of others—then we know what it's supposed to look like and how we should behave. And when other people see those gifts growing in your life, you're showing them how God wants them to behave. God gives us the fruit of the Spirit to help us show others what His love looks like.

We can learn about the fruit of the Spirit by looking at Jesus! He came to earth to teach us how to live and to show us how to please God. So, the more we learn to love Him and try to be like Him, the more the fruit of the Spirit will grow in us.

The fruit of the Spirit is contrasted to the works of the flesh.

Please turn with me to Galatians 5:19-21.

This describes a person who has not accepted Jesus as Lord of his life. Without the Holy Spirit living in your heart, you are going to be led by your own human nature. But even after we accept Jesus as our Lord, we can fall into these various sins if we are not purposely walking in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit lives in each believer and will give you the desire to live your life in a way that is pleasing to God. The Holy Spirit will give you the power to say, "No!" to sin and, "Yes!" to God's way.

John 15:4-5

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. (5) Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.

[Teacher, discuss this verse:]

- What do you think Jesus means when he says to “*remain in me*”? (Hang out with Jesus. Pray to Him, read His word, and do what He wants you to do. As you stay plugged into Him, He will make the fruit in your life grow.)
- What kind of fruit do you think Jesus is talking about? (The fruit of the Spirit.)
- Have you seen those kinds of fruit in your life? When?
- Why can't we grow the fruit by ourselves? (God is the life source. We are only to “bear” the fruit, that is, show it to others so others will know God better. God is the one that makes it grow.)
- Why do we want the fruit Jesus talks about? (We want to live our lives in a way that pleases God and shows other people How wonderful He is.)

Our purpose here on earth is to love God and to show God's love to others. God gives us the fruit of the Spirit to help us show others what his love looks like. Just as fruit is produced on the branches of a healthy tree or vine, so spiritual fruit grows in our lives as we live in close fellowship with Jesus in daily Bible reading, prayer and friendships with other believers.

In the weeks to come, we will be learning more about each of these God-given gifts.

Closing Prayer

Father, we love You and thank You for the gifts of the fruit of the Spirit. Thank You for giving us what we need to show others Your love. We know that Jesus is the vine and we are the branches and that without Jesus, we can't show anyone Your love. We thank You for Jesus, may Your fruit grow within us so that it shines to all those around us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Recipe for Success

Make a fruit salad to prepare with the children and eat as a snack:

- | | | | |
|----------------|----------|------------|--------------|
| • Strawberries | Love | • Pear | Kindness |
| • Oranges | Joy | • Apple | Goodness |
| • Grapes | Peace | • Peach | Faithfulness |
| • Banana | Patience | • Cherries | Self-Control |

[Teacher, as you prepare the fruit salad talk about why each of these kinds of fruit reminds you of the attribute of God, as follows:]

- **Strawberries**—Strawberries remind me of **love** because they are red like a heart or a big fat kiss!
- **Oranges**—Oranges remind me of **Joy** because joy is all about smiles. [Place an orange slice in your mouth to look like a smile]
- **Grapes**—Have you heard of “world peace”? I chose grapes to represent **peace** because the grape is round like the world. God's

peace helps us stop fighting with our brothers and sisters. And, He gives us peace in our hearts when we are afraid.

- **Bananas**—Bananas remind me of **patience**. Many times the only bananas you can buy in the store are green. How many of you have tried to eat a green banana? Green bananas are not very tasty. You have to wait patiently for them to ripen, don't you? God gives us patience to help us know that He always has what is best planned for us—it just might take a little bit of time before we get it. God is patient with us, isn't He? Even when we goof up and disobey God, He waits for us to make the right choices and follow Him again. He loves us even when we're not showing love to Him.
- **Pear**—The pear reminds me of God's **kindness**. Without fail every year, the pear tree gives many delicious pears, just like God, Who gives and helps and always wants the very best for me every single day.
- **Apple**—I chose the apple to represent **goodness** because an apple is just so good! And that is what God wants our lives to be filled with goodness.
- **Peach**—The peach is fuzzy on the outside, just like a faithful puppy. That's why I chose the peach to remind us of God's **faithfulness**.
- **Lemon**—I chose the lemon to represent **gentleness** because a little bit goes a long way, doesn't it? A few drops of lemon juice keeps the other fruit fresh; it keeps it from turning brown. But, you have to be gentle with the lemon. You don't want to get too carried away with squirting the juice or it will make the salad too sour. You just want a few drops, so squeeze it nice and gently.
- **Cherries**—And finally, we saved the best for last! **Self-control!** We must have self-control with this last fruit, don't we? God wants us to have self-control so that we behave as Jesus and make good choices about our words and actions that are pleasing to Him. What would happen if we did not have self-control? What

would our world look like? Wow! How crazy that would be to have people running around everywhere, only worrying about themselves instead of others.

[Dish up the fruit salad, squirt with whipping cream and place a red cherry on top.]

Remember to have self-control as you enjoy the fruit of the Spirit salad.

Game Center

Use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. Name 3 fruits of the Spirit. (Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.)
2. Why does God give Christians the fruit of the Spirit? (To help us live lives that please Him and to show His love to those who don't know Him. God gives us the fruit of the Spirit to help us show others what His love looks like.)
3. Why do you think that we call these God-given gifts, the "*fruit of the Spirit*"? How are they like fruit? (They are sweet and good.)
4. Why did Jesus come to earth? What did he want to show us? (Jesus came to earth to show us what it looks like to show love, to have joy, to be patient, and so on. Jesus came to show us what our fruit should look like when it's fully grown.)
5. What's a way you can show **love** to your mother (or father)? (You can surprise her by doing something to help her.)
6. What's a way you can show **kindness** to an older neighbor? (Rake leaves, shovel snow, weed flower garden.)
7. How do you get the fruit of the Spirit to grow in your life? (By hanging out with Jesus! He came to teach us how to live and to

show us how to please God. The more we learn to love Him and try to be like Him, the more the fruit of the Spirit will grow in us.)

8. What gives you the power to say “No!” to sin and “Yes!” to God’s way? (The Holy Spirit.)
9. Why is it important to remain plugged into Jesus? (As you stay plugged into Him, He will make the fruit of the Spirit grow in your life.)
10. How do you stay plugged into Jesus? (By reading the Word, praying, and hanging out with other Christians.)
11. Why can’t we grow the fruit by ourselves? (God is the life source. We are only to “bear” the fruit, that is, show it to others so others will know God better. God is the one that makes it grow.)
12. Why do you want the fruit Jesus talks about? (To love God and to show God’s love to others.)

[For more lessons for children, visit
<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>]

Fruit of the Spirit Acrostic

Fit the Fruit of the Spirit into the acrostic. If you need help, read Galatians 5:22-23 and Colossians 3:12. Some are used twice as shown in the list below. (You'll notice that two additional goodly characteristics are in the list.)

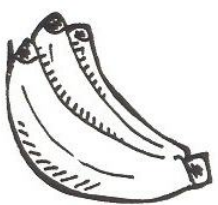
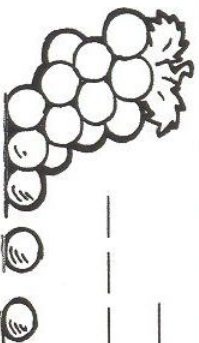
Gentleness (2) Self-control (2) Faithfulness (2) Patience (2)
 Humility (2) Compassion Goodness Love Joy Peace Kindness

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Activity Coupons

To teach the Fruit of the Spirit, have children practice what they learn by using these coupons. Next week ask each child to report on which coupons he used and how.

LOVE

Surprise your mother by doing something to help her.

INDUENESS

Rake leaves (shovel snow or weed flowers) for an older neighbor.

JOY

Write a funny, happy poem about your family.

PEACE

Don't argue with anyone for a week!

GOODNESS

Tell someone about God's love.

FAITHFULNESS

Feed the family pets without being asked.

COMPASSION

Visit a rest home and talk with an older person (and listen a lot!).

GENTLENESS

Rub your mom or dad's back for ten minutes.

PATIENCE

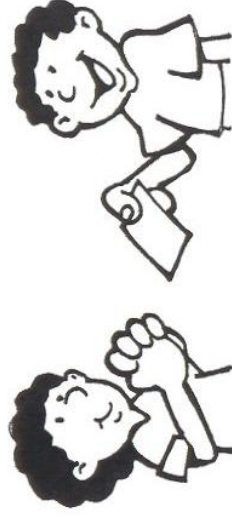
Read to a little sister or brother or neighbor.

SELF-CONTROL

Don't call anybody names (not even your brother or sister) for a week.

HUMILITY

Give up your turn or your place in line to someone else.



The Fruit of the Spirit is Love

(Galatians 5:22-23)

Introduction

Today we are going to learn more about the fruit of the Spirit called, “Love.” What do you think of when you hear the word “love”? A lot of times, we think of love as a feeling—like we *love* ice cream, or we just *love* it when our birthday comes. Although those feelings are good, it’s important to understand that love is not just a feeling. Today we’re going to learn that love is an action word. It’s something we make a choice to do.

Opening Prayer

Father, we love You so much. You put love in us, so other people can see what You’re like. Please help us be more like Jesus so that we can show others the kind of love You showed us. Help us show Your love to others—even to those who don’t show love to us. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Memory Verse

*Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. (8) But anyone who does not love does not know God. For **God is love**. (1 John 4:7-8 NLT)*

Lesson

Love is not just feeling good or happy about something or somebody. Love is choosing to do the loving thing for someone else, no matter what; it’s a choice. Love is choosing to do the godly thing even when that other person doesn’t deserve my love! Love is choosing to do the godly thing even though it’s inconvenient; maybe you wanted to go out to play or watch a favorite TV program, but you choose to help Mom.

How do you show love to others? [Teacher, let the children respond.]

Let’s look at our verse today closely. Compare it to 1 John 4:16.

1 John 4:16 [Teacher, let the children examine this verse on their own.]

*...**God is love**, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. (NLT)*

What does the Bible say God is? *God is love*. Everyone, say that with me again out loud. *God is love!* Love is the very nature of God. It’s who He is. Love rules everything that He does.

So, if God IS love, then for love to grow in our hearts and rule our lives, we need to get to know God so well that we’d know without thinking what He would do or what He would say in every situation that comes up. That way we can be more like Jesus; we can copy or imitate Him.

We’re going to do a little activity I call **Mirror, Mirror**. Get a partner.

Mirror, Mirror

[This activity helps kids discover that the love we show others is a reflection of God’s love in us.]

Choose one person to be the “leader” and the other person the “follower”. I’m going to give you a situation. The leader is to act out how to show God’s love. The follower is to do exactly what the leader does—so you look like mirror image of the leader. After the first situation, then you can change roles.

Situations:

1. You are trying to leave the house to get to your soccer tournament. You put all your equipment on and are ready to go—but your little brother is making you late because he can’t yet tie his shoes. Act out how you could show love by being patient and helpful.
2. You sit at a table eating lunch with all your friends at school. Your friends start pointing to the end of the table where a new kid sits alone. Your friends start laughing. Act out how you could show love by being kind to the new kid.

3. Your dad has just returned from work and says that he's had a really bad day. He looks as if he needs to just relax, but he has to take out the trash first. Act out how you could show love to your dad.
4. You've saved your money for a long time to buy the new scooter you've always wanted. You've just bought the scooter, but your little brother really wants to try it out. You know that he's too little to play on the scooter and he might wreck it or hurt himself. Act out how you could show love to your little brother.

This activity showed us that to choose to do the loving thing, we need to be imitators of Jesus. We need to follow His example and do what He does. Before you do something, you need to ask yourself, "*What would Jesus do in this situation.*"

[Have the children discuss the following questions:

- Why is doing the loving thing sometimes hard?
- Why is it always best to do the loving thing?
- What was it like to try to mirror or follow the leader? (It was hard but if you kept your eyes on the leader it was easier.)
- How can we mirror or follow God's example of loving others?

Sometimes it's hard to love others. We need to remember that God loves us all the time—even when we don't deserve it. We need to mirror God's example and love as He does.

Love is a choice we make to show others what God's all about.

1 John 4:7-8

*Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. (8) But anyone who does not love does not know God. For **God is love.** [NLT]*

What is this verse telling us? If we choose *not* to love, we're telling the world that we don't know God. So, if you love God, then you'll show God's love to others.

That's why God gives us the fruit of the Spirit. He wants us to use it to show others what He is like. Sometimes it's hard to love others, isn't it? It's important to ask God to help you love others. Without the Spirit of God living in us to give us the power, we can't get very far.

Let me demonstrate with a balloon. We're like these balloons. [Hold up an un-inflated balloon.] We can't really do much on our own. But God fills us with the Holy Spirit that gives us power. [Blow up a balloon and then let it go.] With God's love in me, I can do all kinds of things for Him! But without that Holy Spirit power, we just go flat.

John 14:15

If you love me, obey my commandments.

John 15:17

This is my command; love each other.

This may sound like a pretty easy command when you think of people you really like—your mom, dad, grandma, grandpa, your best friend. But God wants us to love everyone—the kid that picks on you at school, the kid that nobody talks to because he's "different," everyone! That's a difficult thing to do sometimes! But Jesus didn't hang out with the "cool" kids. He hung out with people who nobody liked. Jesus showed love to *everyone*, and He helps us love everyone, too. He's given us the fruit of the Spirit as our secret weapon!

Last week we learned that when you accepted Jesus to become Lord of your life, God planted seeds in your heart that began to grow—seeds of love, joy, peace, and so forth. The first of those seeds is *Love*. God wants us to show others love, so that we can show them what God is like. That seed of love in our hearts grows as we hang out with Jesus. How do we "hang out" with Jesus? Pray to Him, read His word, and do what He wants you to do. As you stay plugged into Him, He will make the fruit in your life grow.

God showed us what true love looks like when He came to earth as a man, Jesus, and died on the cross for our sins.

1 John 4:15-16

All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. (16) We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. [NLT]

How do you know that God loves you? What did He do to show His love for you? He died on the cross. Could He have done more to show His love for you?

God wants us to love others in the same way He showed His love for us. What do you think that looks like? Can you die for someone?

Well, in a sense we can. When we did our activity at the beginning of class we acted out how to show God's love in certain situations.

- In the first situation you were in a hurry to get to your soccer game, but you had to “die to yourself” that is you had to put aside your own desire to get going, so that you could help your little brother tie his shoes. In that sense, you gave up your time to show love to your little brother.
- In the second scenario, your friends at school were making fun of a new kid. But, while they were laughing at the kid, you went over and sat next to him and made friends with him. You “died to yourself” in that you risked being made fun of by the kids at school, too. You put aside your own reputation so you could show love to that new kid.

Why should we bother showing love to others? Because God showed love to us.

1 John 4:19

We love each other because he loved us first. [NLT]

We love others because before we were even believers in Jesus, He came and died a cruel, harsh death on the cross so that we could be forgiven for all the naughty things that we do. Did we deserve that kind of love? No! Absolutely not! But, He loved us *that* much because He wants us to come and spend eternity up in Heaven with Him some day. He wants to hang out with us!

When we think about what He has done for us, the least we could do is show God's love to others. And we do that by choosing to love people, even when they don't deserve it, just like He did for us.

That's why He gave us love as the first piece of the fruit of the Spirit.

The Bible says that God is love and when God is in our lives, love is in our lives. We need to show people we love them by our actions. Praying for others is a sign of God's love. So, let's end our time together with praying for others.

Closing Prayer

Father, we love You and thank You for the fruit of the Spirit you give us in love. Thank You for loving us first to show us what true love looks like. We thank You for the gift of Jesus and for helping us learn that we can always count on Your love that grows inside us. We thank You for teaching us how to love because You are love. We want to share Your love with others. We praise You and love You because You are God and You are love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Learning Activities

Snack

Strawberries and whipping cream.

Craft Corner**Fruit Stuffs**

1. Enlarge a strawberry shape to represent "love" (see next page) on red construction paper, enough so that each child gets two, one for the front and one for the back.
2. Let students add decorations to them. Provide real or silk leaves or green construction paper to add to their shapes.
3. Staple around the edges of the shapes, leaving a few inches open.
4. Stuff with crumpled newspaper or shredded paper. Then staple the opening closed.
5. As students work, ask them to describe ways they could show love at home, at school, with friends, etc.
6. Hang them from ceiling with yarn or string.

Game Center

Use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. What is love? (God is love.)
2. Is love a feeling? (No! It's a choice that we make to show others what God's all about.)
3. Who loved the world so much that He sent His only Son to die for us? (God)
4. What are some reasons to love God? (God loves us. God made us. He came to earth as a man, Jesus, and died on the cross for our sins.)
5. Why is doing the loving thing sometimes hard?

6. How can we know what the loving thing to do is? (Ask yourself, "What would Jesus do?")
7. When have you seen someone showing God's love to others?
8. How can you show love to someone this week?
9. Why is it always best to do the loving thing?
10. What do we need to be filled with in order to love people with God's love? (The power of the Holy Spirit.)
11. Why does God want us to show love to others? (So that we can show them what God is like.)
12. How can you die for someone, like Jesus died for you? (By putting aside our own desires, your own reputation, to show love to someone else.)
13. Why should we bother showing love to others? (Because God showed His love for us, by dying on the cross.)

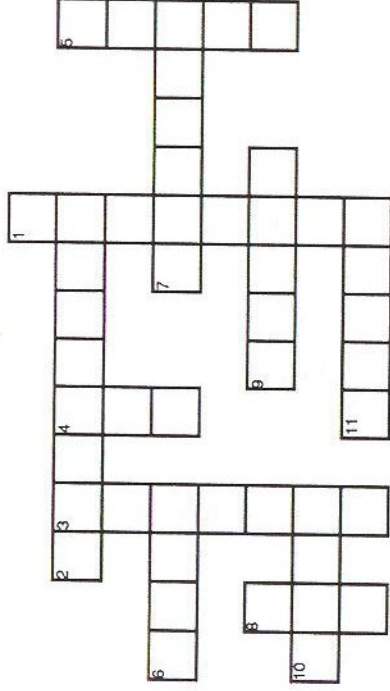
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LOVE

The answers to the crossword puzzle are all taken from verses about love.

1. Faith, hope and love. But the _____ of these is love.
1 Cor. 13:13
2. Love thy _____. Mark 12:31
3. Love your _____, do good to them which hate you.
Luke 6:27
4. Love is of _____. 1 John 4:7
5. Love not the _____. 1 John 2:15
6. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his
_____ for his friends. John 15:13
7. His _____ over me was love. Song 2:4
8. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten
_____, that whosoever believeth in him should not
perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16
9. The love of _____ is the root of all evil. 1 Tim. 6:10
10. We _____ him because he first loved us. 1 John 4:19
11. Love the Lord thy God with all thy _____. Mark 12:30



Love Can Be Difficult

It's easy to love people who are nice to you and love you, but what about people who are unkind to you? Follow the clues to discover what Matthew 5:44 teaches us.

1 2 3 4 5 6

7 8 9 10

11 12 13 14 15 16

17 18 19 20 21

22 23 24 25 26 spite

27 28 29 30 31 perse

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1) The first three letters of <i>butter</i> | 12) Rhymes with <i>purse</i> | 23) Sounds like <i>four</i> |
| 2) 4th letter of the alphabet | 13) Same as #5 | 24) Same as #10 |
| 3) Rhymes with <i>way</i> | 14) Sounds like <i>dew</i> | 25) Same as #11 |
| 4) Sounds like <i>two</i> | 15) Opposite of <i>bad</i> | 26) Opposite of <i>empty</i> |
| 5) Opposite of <i>me</i> | 16) Same as #4 | 27) Rhymes with <i>fuse</i> |
| 6) Opposite of <i>hate</i> | 17) Same as #10 | 28) Same as #5 |
| 7) Rhymes with <i>four</i> | 18) Same as #11 | 29) Same as #21 |
| 8) Opposite of <i>friends</i> | 19) Opposite of <i>love</i> | 30) Rhymes with <i>boot</i> |
| 9) Rhymes with <i>guess</i> | 20) Same as #5 | 31) Same as #13 |
| 10) Rhymes with <i>nose</i> | 21) Rhymes with <i>sand</i> | |
| 11) Rhymes with <i>new</i> | 22) Rhymes with <i>gray</i> | |



The Fruit of the Spirit is Joy

(Galatians 5:22-23)

Introduction

Today we are going to learn more about the fruit of the Spirit called, “Joy.” What do you think of when you hear the word “joy”? A lot of times, we think of joy as the happy feeling you get when something nice happens to you—like when someone gives you ice cream for dessert or a new toy from the store or when Grandma comes to visit.

Although things can make us happy, what do you feel like when the ice cream is all eaten up or after the toy breaks or once Grandma goes back home? It’s important to understand that joy is not just a feeling. Today we’re going to learn that true joy comes from something much more permanent. You can be happy sometimes, but you can be joyful all the time.

Opening Prayer

Father, teach us what true Joy is. Fill our hearts to overflowing with the knowledge of Your love for us and fill our hearts with joy from the inside out. We want that joy to spill out of our lives all over everyone else’s life so that they can know You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Memory Verse

Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! (Philippians 4:4 NTL)

Lesson

Last week we learned that Love is not just a feeling, it’s an action word. We don’t just feel love towards others, but we show others our love for them by doing loving things. It’s a choice we make. 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. It’s not always easy to love people. Sometimes to love others the way God loves us, we have to “die to ourselves”, just

like Jesus died on the cross for us. We have to choose to give up our own selfish desires to be loving towards others. But we have the Holy Spirit to give us the power to do that.

This week we’re going to learn what true Joy is. Open you Bibles to Psalm 126:1-3 and read with me...

Psalm 126:1-3

When the Lord brought back his exiles to Jerusalem, it was like a dream! (2) We were filled with laughter, and we sang for joy. And the other nations said, “What amazing things the Lord has done for them.” (3) Yes, the Lord has done amazing things for us! What joy!

What gave these people joy? Remembering the amazing things the Lord had done for them! Sometimes we think that the word *joy* means the same thing as the word *happy*. Lots of things make us happy. But if something changes, as when our favorite toy breaks, then we may not be happy any longer. We can be really happy when Grandma comes to visit us, but it makes us sad for her to leave.

Joy means more than just being happy. The Bible tells us that the fruit of the Spirit is joy. Joy is an attitude. Our hearts should fill with joy knowing that Jesus has made it possible for us to live forever with Him in heaven. If you truly believe that what Jesus did for you on the cross, paid the penalty for your sins, then nothing in the world should ever get you down.

How does it make you feel to know that you will live with Jesus in Heaven forever? Knowing Jesus gives us true joy. You may still be sad at times, but that can’t take away the joy you have in knowing Jesus.

We can have joy during good times and during the sad times, or when things are difficult, or even scary. We can be joyful because God has done so many wonderful things for us, just like the exiles were filled with joy in just remembering the amazing things the Lord had done!

What good things has God done for you? [Let the children respond.] God does so many wonderful, great things for us! If we start to remember all our blessings, and count them one-by-one, our hearts fill to overflowing with joy.

True joy comes from having Jesus in your life and knowing that you will live forever with Him in heaven.

Romans 15:13

*I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in Him. Then you will **overflow** with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13 NLT)*

What would happen if you left the water running in the bathtub and the plug was in? It would overflow, wouldn't it? This verse tells us that when you trust in what Jesus did for you on the cross, that by the power of the Holy Spirit, God fills your heart completely full with joy and peace. Let me show you an example:

[Teacher, as an active learning experience, setup a dishpan of water, a 2-cup measuring cup and some spoons. Have the children gather around and start filling the measuring cup until it overflows.]

What happened to the water when the measuring cup could no longer hold any more? It overflowed! If our hearts are full of joy and Jesus keeps blessing us with more joy, what do you think will happen? Can you tell me how you would feel if your heart were overflowing with joy? What would that look like? What do you do when you are filled with joy? I think there are at least three ways we show others that we are full of joy: laughter, singing, and dancing!

Let's all laugh together right now! [Teacher, allow the children to cut it up for a minute!] It's fun to laugh, isn't it? The Bible says that a cheerful heart is good medicine (Proverbs 17:22).

Now let's sing a song together that comes from Philippians 4:4

Sing: Rejoice in the Lord Always

Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, "Rejoice!" (repeat)

Rejoice! Rejoice! And, again I say, "Rejoice!" (repeat)

God blesses us with so many wonderful things, and he fills our hearts with joy. Even when our hearts are full of joy, He just keeps on giving us good things. When you are happy and full of joy, how do you think that makes the people around you feel? Our joy spills out all over other people around us and makes them joyful, too. Joy is contagious!

The last two weeks we learned that when you accepted Jesus to become Lord of your life, God planted seeds in your heart that began to grow—of love, joy, peace, and so forth. The first of those seeds is *Love*. The second seed is **Joy**. Why does God give us these gifts? He wants us to show others what He is like.

When our hearts overflow with the joy Jesus gives us, other people will want to know what's going on. And, we'll be able to share with them the joy of knowing Jesus, the creator of the Universe.

When you accepted Jesus to become Lord of your life, He gave you the right to live forever with him in heaven. Doesn't that give you joy deep in your heart? That joy can be ours no matter what happens. Even when times are hard and you go through a trial or even if you're scared, the Holy Spirit can give you that joy that's deep in your soul.

Sing: I've Got Joy In My Heart

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart, (where?)

Down in my heart, (where?), down in my heart!

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart, (where?)

Down in my heart to stay.

I'm so happy, so very happy

I've got the love of Jesus in my heart.

I'm so happy, so very happy

I've got the love of Jesus in my heart.

There's another way that we show others that we are joyful. God's gift of joy helps us do something very important in *all* situations.

Ephesians 5:20

Give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What does this verse tell us to be thankful for? *Everything!* —Even the bad stuff that comes along into our lives. God gives us Joy so that we can have a thankful heart no matter what happens—in bad situations as well as the good ones. Being grateful to God grows that seed of joy in our lives!

When are there times it might be hard to be thankful? (When someone makes fun of you or when you feel scared.)

What are some things you could do to help yourself be thankful? (Pray to God. Remember all the good things God has given and done.)

God's gift of Joy causes our hearts to overflow with thankfulness to Him for all He has done for us! He wants us to be filled with so much joy, we can't help showing it to others!

God has given us wonderful gifts, hasn't He? Let's review the gifts of the fruit of the Spirit: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Let's close by reading this verse:

Psalms 111:1-4

Praise the LORD! I will thank the LORD with all my heart as I meet with his godly people. (2) How amazing are the deeds of the LORD! All who delight in him should ponder them. (3) Everything he does reveals his glory and majesty. His righteousness never fails. (4) He causes us to remember his wonderful works. How gracious and merciful is our LORD!

Closing Prayer

Father, remembering all the amazing things You have done for us gives us that joy down in our hearts. It's good to know that we belong to You. Help us to share that joy with everyone we meet so that they will come to know You as their Lord, too. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Learning Activities

Snack

Oranges. Bring in a juicer and let the kids make orange juice.

1 Thessalonians 5:16 says, "*Always be joyful.*" Can you say that with me? "*Always be joyful!*" Let's give thanks to the Lord for this yummy snack.

Craft Corner

Game Center

Praise Phrases

Materials: Index cards, markers, cardboard box, pencils

Procedure:

1. Brainstorm words to use in sentences giving praise to God, such as "I," "we," "give," "thanks," "for," "God," "love," "gifts," "help," "sing," "joy," "your," "Son," "Food," etc. [Teacher, have some of these cards already made.] As you brainstorm, write the suggestions on the white board.
2. Students print words on separate index cards, making a large number of cards.
3. Make a string or yarn circle about 4 feet around the cardboard

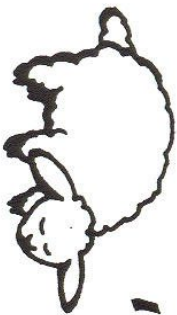
box. (You can split the kids into teams and have more than one box.)

4. Have students stand around the circle and throw cards into the box(es) for 30 seconds, re-throwing any cards that land outside the circle.
5. When 30 seconds have passed, call time.
6. Have students use the words that landed in the box in praise sentences.

Or, use the following questions in a discussion or game of your choice:

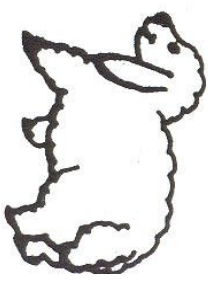
1. When are there times it might be hard to be thankful? (When someone makes fun of you or when you feel scared.)
2. What are some things you could do to help yourself be thankful? (Pray to God. Remember all the good things God has given and done.)
3. What gave the Israelites the joy of the Lord? (Remembering the amazing things the Lord had done for them!)
4. What should make our hearts fill with joy? (Knowing that Jesus has made it possible for us to live forever with Him in heaven.)
5. What are three ways you show others that you are joyful? (Laughter, singing, and dancing.)

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"Joy" Word Search

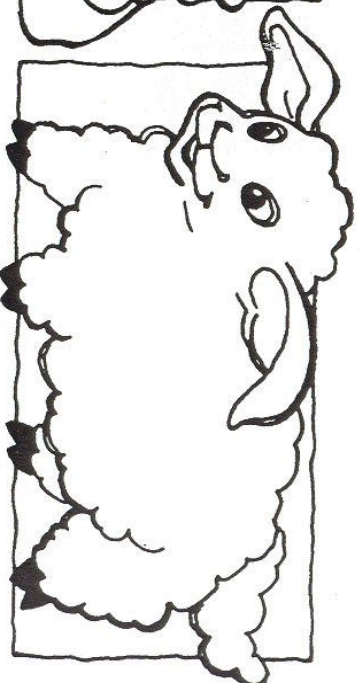
by Joan Marie Arbogast



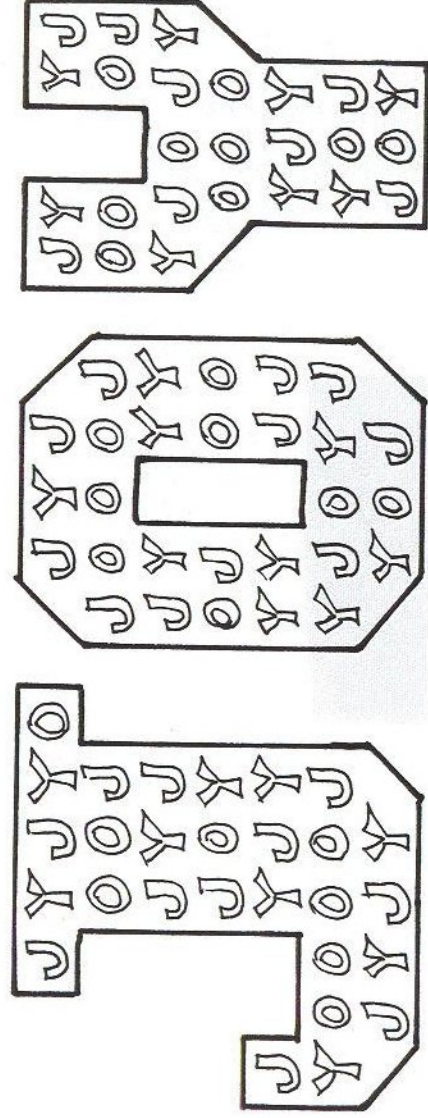
Jesus told the Pharisees a story about a man who lost one of his sheep. When the man found it, he was filled with joy. Jesus also said that when a sinner turns from sin and repents, there is even greater joy in heaven. Find and circle the following "joy" words in the word search.

CONTENTMENT	DELIGHT	ENJOYABLE	HAPPINESS
HAPPY	JOY	JOYFUL	JOYOUS
OVERJOYED	PLEASURE	PRAISE	SMILE

A	G	N	I	S	D	E	Y	O	J	R	E	V	O	A	F	R
J	B	O	C	O	N	T	E	N	T	M	E	N	T	S	O	W
W	D	N	C	L	O	R	D	T	N	A	H	L	R			
I	N	G	I	S	U	O	Y	O	J	Y	G	M				
H	T	M	A	I		A	T	O	P	I	F					
A	S	V	L	N		M	J	Y	L	L	U					
P	E	U	Y	G		E	G	A	E	E	L					
P	F	N	E	W		N	B	A	D	L						
G	L	O	R	Y	A	R	J	E	S	U	S	O	L	S	E	E
B	C	O	M	F	O	R	P	R	A	I	S	E	U	F	S	
J	A	S	S	E	N	I	P	P	A	H		R	I	T		
K	G	R	E	A	T							E	L	F		

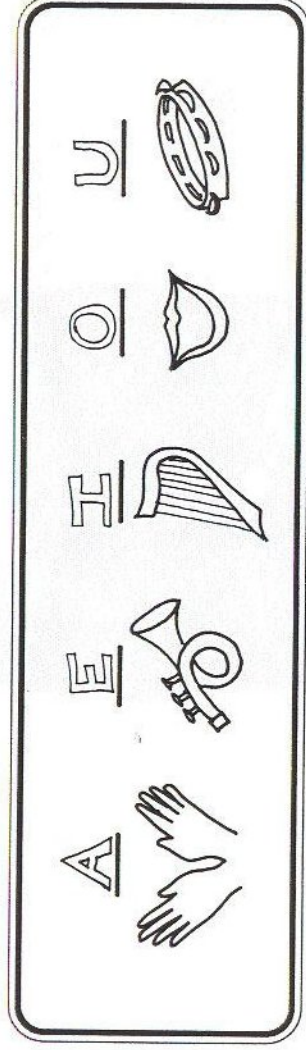
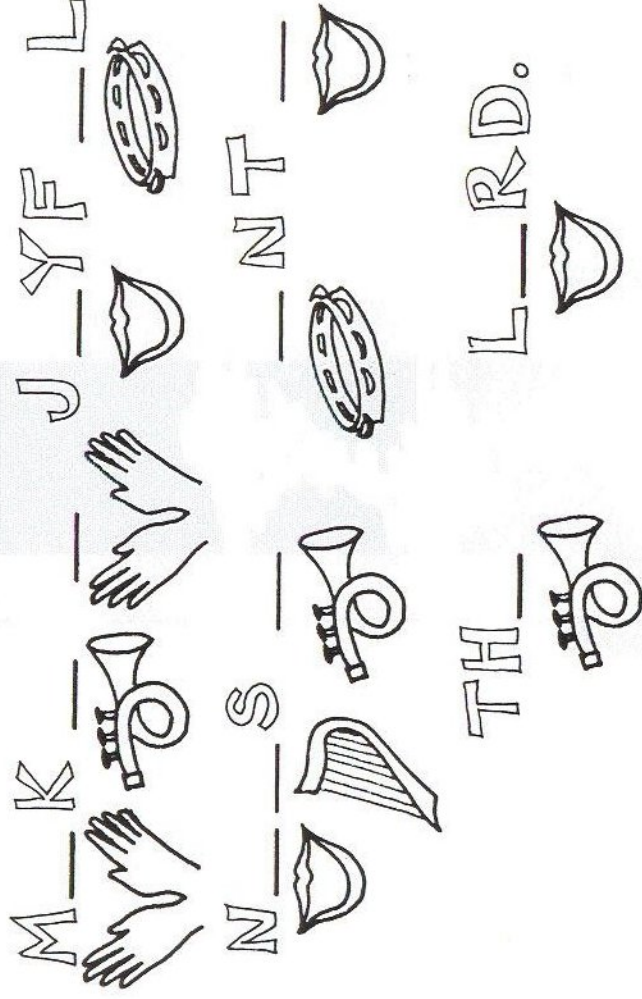


Up, down, across or diagonally—how many times can you find the word “JOY”?



“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” Galatians 5:22

Use the noisemaker code at the bottom to finish the verse about “JOY.”



The Fruit of the Spirit is Peace

(Galatians 5:22-23)

Introduction

Have you ever faced a problem that you thought was too much for you? Maybe you've had to take a test at school. Or, perhaps you've been chased by a big mean dog. How did you feel?

[Teacher, place a tape line in the middle of the floor. Organize kids into two teams for an *unfair* game of Tug of War. Place all the bigger and stronger kids on one side of the line and the younger children on the other side.] We're going to play Tug of War. The team that drags any member of the opposite team across the tape line wins. Who do you think will win? Why? [Then join the younger, weaker team, and make sure they win!]

Did the game turn out the way you expected? Why not?

Sometimes we get worried when a problem seems too big for us or is beyond our control to change. We may panic if we forget that God is on our side.

This week we're going to learn about the third fruit of the Spirit, peace. True peace comes when we remember that God is on our team.

Opening Prayer

Father, teach us how to grow that seed of peace that You placed in our hearts the day we asked You to be Lord of our lives. We want to do all we can to live in peace with everyone so that they will come to know You and want to follow You all the days of their lives, too. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Memory Verse

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. (7) Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand.

*His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:6-7 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**. What do you think it means to have peace?

Peace is the quietness that Jesus gives you deep in your heart even when you're in the middle of a trial. Peace is being calm, relaxed or unruffled no matter what happens. When you put your trust in God to help you with a problem, you will have peace in your heart.

God's gift of peace is not a feeling any more than love or joy is simply a feeling.

Peace with God

First of all, you can only have true peace in your heart if you know you have peace with God.

Romans 5:1

Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.

Because of what Jesus did on the cross, we are no longer at war with God. He took our punishment, so now we're on God's side. We are no longer His enemies. In fact, now He calls us His children!

Peace with Others

Now, because we are at peace with God, we should be at peace with everyone around us.

Romans 12:18

Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

This verse tells us that it is our responsibility to live in peace with everyone. But life isn't always peaceful, is it?

When might a kid your age need help to live in peace with others? (When someone says something mean. When someone cheats in a game.)

In life there *are* conflicts, aren't there? What can you do to live at peace with others? (Stop an argument instead of continuing it. Pray, asking God for courage to be a peacemaker.)

When we have a disagreement with someone, it is our natural human nature to want to come out on top, to be right, rather than to come to a peaceful settlement, isn't it? Often, we are quick to stir up an argument rather than to help make peace, right? But peace is a fruit of God's Holy Spirit living in us. As we remember that God has made peace *with* us because of what Jesus did on the cross, His Spirit brings peace *within* us. Having that true inner peace with God is essential to having peace with others.

Jesus, when He preached the Sermon on the Mount, told the people that God blesses those who are peacemakers. Let's read it in our Bibles together.

Matthew 5:9

God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God. (NLT)

It can be hard or even scary to try to make peace and stop a quarrel. But God will help us know what to do. One way to be a peacemaker is

to give other people first choice. When we put others first, we treat them in ways we would like to be treated. It's a great way to grow the fruit of God's Spirit.

Every day we have opportunities to help others live in peace. Peacemakers do what they can to put the needs and interests of others first. When we have peace ruling our hearts we can be peacemakers with others.

Fear and Worry

What robs you of peace? When are times you need peace?

Fear and worry are the biggest peace robbers of all. Storms may scare us. Hearing our parents argue concerns us. Knowing that your parents don't have enough money to pay for medical expenses, food, or the rent, can make us worry. Worry robs of us our peace.

How does worry keep us from having peace? What do we tend to focus on when we're worried? When we're worried we're thinking about ourselves and the problem we're having. To stop worrying, we need to get our eyes off ourselves and to remember that God has everything under control. Having true inner peace with God helps us remember that He is bigger than our problems. He can handle every situation. Knowing God and believing and trusting in His love and care for you, will give you peace on the inside.

Sometimes it's hard to remember that God is near and that He wants to help us, isn't it? What do you think we can do to remember that God is here to help us?

Isaiah 26:3

You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!

Prayer and praise are the best ways to get peace because that puts our thoughts back on God and off of our worrisome situation.

Sing: Peace like a River

This song reminds us that true peace runs deep within our souls from knowing that we have peace with God. We are not His enemies anymore. We're children of God.

You must be careful not to allow circumstances or problems that come into your life rob your peace. Jesus wants you to have peace ruling your heart.

Colossians 3:15a

Let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts.

When you are worried or afraid, instead of thinking about your problems, keep your mind on God—His love, His power, and the fact that He is always with you. If you do, you will have God's peace in your heart. The more we get to know and love Jesus, the more peace we will have in our lives and the better peacemakers we will be.

Praying for each other is a good way to live in peace. Let's close and ask God to help us to do all that we can to live in peace with everyone.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You that we can be peacemakers. Thank You for what You did for us on the cross so that we can have peace with You. Now encourage us to do all we can to live in peace with everyone. Help us to put others first. And, when worrisome times come into our lives, help us to always remember that You are on our team! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Learning Activities**Snack**

Grapes

Craft Corner**Game Center**

Putting others first can help us be peacemakers. Let's practice putting others first by playing a game where we must help others.

Red Carpet Crossing

Materials: Two sheets of red construction paper for every pair of kids.

Procedures:

Red carpets are often laid down for important people to walk on as they enter buildings. When we treat someone as a Very Important Person (a VIP), we say we are giving them, the "*red-carpet treatment*." In this game we'll practice putting each other first by giving each other the red-carpet treatment with these pieces of red construction paper.

1. Have students form two teams and then pair up with another child within that team. Have them decide which student in each pair will be the "helper" and which will be the "VIP."
2. Have them line up on one side of the classroom.
3. Give each pair two sheets of red construction paper.
4. At your signal, the "helper" lays down a sheet of paper for the "VIP" to step on. Helper places the next paper one step away and VIP moves to that sheet. Helper picks up first sheet and places it in front of the VIP. Pairs move in this manner to the opposite side of the room and then race back to their team and tag the next pair.
5. The team that finishes first is the winning team.

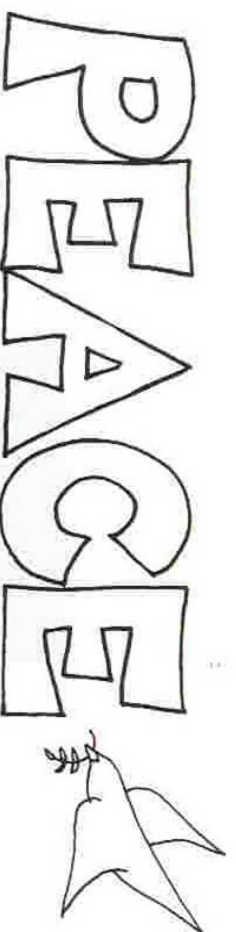
Discussion:

God helps us to be peacemakers by showing us how we can put others first.

1. How did you put others first in this game? (Moved the paper for them so they could get across the floor and finish the game.)
2. What are ways to put others first at home? At school? (Stop and help your mom when she asks. Let your sister have the last cookie. Let your classmate have the first turn at the computer.)
3. How does putting others first help us make peace? (Keeps fights from starting. We show we care for the other person.)
4. Who are some peacemakers you know? (Police officers. People who break up fights. People who walk away from arguments.)
5. What are some ways to give others first choice? (Let a friend have the first turn when playing a game. Let a brother or sister decide what to watch on TV.)

[For more lessons for children, visit
<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>]

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." Galatians 5:22-23



Use the code to find out more about peace.

20	18	25	20	15	12	9	22	5	9	14	16	5	1	3	5
23	9	20	8	5	22	5	18	25	15	14	5	23	15	18	11
8	1	18	4	1	20	9	20	Psalm 34:14b (LB)							

20	8	5	13	1	14	15	6	16	5	1	3	5	8	5	
8	1	19	1	23	15	14	4	5	18	6	21	12			
6	21	20	21	18	5	1	8	5	1	4	15	6	8	9	13

Psalm 37:37 (LB)

Code:																									
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

The Fruit of the Spirit is Patience

(Galatians 5:22-23)

Introduction

[Teacher, hold up a picture of a rabbit.] If you could put a jackrabbit on a leash and take it for a walk, what would it be like? How tired would you be after the walk?

[Hold up a picture of a turtle.] What would it be like to take a turtle for a walk? How would you feel after walking the turtle? Turtles are famous for being slow. If you had to wait for a turtle to walk anywhere, you would need a lot of patience, wouldn't you?

We've been learning about the fruit of the Spirit, and today we'll learn about patience.

Opening Prayer

Father, sometimes we get impatient with other people. We get mad when people don't do things our way or if they're not fast enough. Sometimes we even get impatient with ourselves. Please help us learn how to be patient. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Memory Verse

*Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and **patience**. (Colossians 3:12 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.

Now we're going to learn about **patience**. Let's look at our verse:

Colossians 3:12

*Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and **patience**. (NLT)*

What's the first thing you do in the morning after you get up to get ready for the day? I don't know about you, but I put on my clothes! Our verse for today tells us that God wants us to "clothe" ourselves with something else besides clothes.

What do you think it means to "*clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience*"? God wants us to cover ourselves from head to toe with the fruit of the Spirit so that other people can get to know Him. But we've been learning that love, joy, and peace are not just feelings. They are action words. We have to purposely "put them on."

Ephesians 4:24

Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

We all get impatient sometimes, don't we? Can you think of some real-life examples of situations in which you need lots of patience? It's hard to wait on people for things to happen. Sometimes people do things that bother us. Have you ever had someone do the same rotten thing to you again and again? How did you feel about that person?

What do you do when someone "bugs" you? Some people pout or get haughty. They generally let you know about it either by grumbling and griping or blowing up. It's easy to get grouchy with other people when we feel impatient. But God wants us to treat other people well, even when they do things that bug us. That's why we need this fruit of the Spirit.

Going Bananas

(Activity to demonstrate need for patience.)

[Divide the children into two teams, boys against girls. Have each team stand in a row and pass a banana up and down the line without using their hands.] Let's see how fast we can pass a banana up and back down the line using only your chin to hold the banana. If someone drops the banana, you must start over.

[Allow children to express frustration, but redirect unkind words. If children have an especially difficult time, modify the rules so kids can restart the game with the same partner who dropped the banana. When kids have finished, gather them around you in a circle and discuss the activity.]

Was this game easy or difficult for you? How did you feel when someone dropped the banana? If you dropped the banana, how did you feel when you heard the group's reaction?

It's easy to feel impatient when things don't go your way. Sometimes people do things that make it hard for you to get what you want. When we get impatient, we're tempted to say things that aren't nice. We can make others feel bad. But the Bible tells us that God wants us to be patient with everyone. (1 Thessalonians 5:14)

Let's read God's description of what true love is:

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud (5) or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. (6) It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. (7) Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

Notice that the very first way God describes true love is that it is patient!

Turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew 18. We're going to learn that it's important for us to be patient with others in the same way God is patient with us.

Many times Jesus told parables to teach lessons to His disciples. A parable is a life-like story, using examples from every day experiences. This one is the *Parable of the Unforgiving Debtor*. A debtor is someone that owes money.

It all started when Peter asked Jesus how many times he needed to show patience and forgiveness to someone who kept sinning against him. Let's read the passage all the way through, then I'll explain it.

Read Matthew 18:21-35.

Jesus was using this story to teach His disciples a lesson. The story goes like this:

One day the king was looking at his money books. He realized that one of his servants had borrowed millions of dollars from him and had never paid it back. [Teacher, show the kids \$2 worth of pennies.] Let's pretend that each of these pennies is worth \$10,000. These pennies represent two million dollars. If you had borrowed millions of dollars from someone, how long do you think you would have to work to earn that much money to pay the person back? It probably couldn't happen in your life time!

So, since the servant couldn't pay his debt to the king, he ordered that the servant and his whole family be sold into slavery to pay off the debt. The king also ordered that everything the servant owned be sold.

How do you think the servant felt? What would you do if you were the servant?

The servant begged the king to have mercy on him.

Matthew 18:26

But the man fell down before his master and begged him, 'Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.'

Then, it says in the next verse, the king was filled with pity for him, had mercy on him and forgave his debt. He was freed!

How do you think the servant felt to be forgiven? What would you have done if you had been forgiven such a lot of debt?

But, what did this servant do? It says, he went out and found someone that owed *him* some money—only a few thousand dollars. [Teacher, pick up one penny.] If one penny is worth \$10,000 then this man owed him less than ½ of cent. Now remember, he had just been forgiven for a debt that he could have never been able to repay in his whole lifetime. What did he say to the guy that owed him this relatively small amount of money?

Matthew 18:28

But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment."

The second servant begged the first servant to be patient with him and to just give him a little more time. This was a debt the second servant should have been able to repay if he just had a few months to work. But the first servant refused to have patience. He grabbed the servant and threw him in jail.

What is surprising about the way the first servant treated the second servant?

Then what did the king do when he found out about this?

Matthew 18:32-33

Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil servant!' I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with

me. (33) Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?'"

Then what did the king do?

Matthew 18:34

Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt.

Do you think that the king's reaction was fair? How is the king like God? How is the king different from God?

Matthew 18:35

"That's what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart."

Why do you think that Jesus added verse 35 to this story? This Bible story is teaching us that when we do something wrong to someone, it's like owing that person money. If someone is mean to you, he at least owes you an apology, right? Who do we owe more to than anyone else? (God!)

Do you think God has to be patient with you? He is patient with us when we sin. He is patient with us when we are slow to do the things we know would make Him happy. All of these things add up every day, making us like that first servant. We owe God more that we could ever repay.

Why do you think the Lord is patient with us?

2 Peter 3:15a

The Lord's patience gives people time to be saved.

The Lord is patient with us because He wants us to patient with others.

If God struck out at people every time they did something wrong, just as we are so prone to do, no one would be alive today.

God expects us to imitate His patience by forgiving others when they bug us, or sin against us, or make us wait. We should be patient with others in the same way God is patient with us.

Sometimes it's easy to be patient. But, if someone is mean to us, it's hard to be forgiving, isn't it?

If you're in a hurry to get somewhere and someone is slowing you down, it's hard to be understanding.

Why is it so hard to be patient? Sometimes we forget how much God has forgiven us. Then we're like the Unforgiving Debtor in Jesus' story and we stop being patient with others.

How can we remind ourselves to be patient when we don't feel like it? Stop, calm down, and remember that to pay the penalty for our sins, it cost Jesus His life. The least we can do is be patient with others. We need to be quick to be understanding and forgiving of others, just as God is with us.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for being so patient with us. We owe you more than we could ever repay. Help us to remember how much it cost you to save us from our sins so that we remain patient with others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Snack

Bananas

Let the children create their own snack mix from these ingredients:

- Peanuts
- Banana chips
- M & M's
- Cashews
- Raisins
- Almonds

Give each child something to add to the bowl. Then mix it up. Give each child a zip lock bag. Then let each child put a scoopful in to each of the other kid's bags as well as his own until it is all dished out. They have to have patience while the process takes place.

Game Center

Patience Pantomimes

[Teacher, have children form pairs or small groups to perform the following scenes. Allow kids time to plan how they will perform and then to practice.]

We need patience so many times every day! We're going to act out how to be patient with others in the same way God is patient with us.

Pick a "Patience Pantomime" card, and first act out how you would react in this situation if you did not have the fruit of the Spirit. Then show us how you would react if you were "clothed" in patience.

It's time for your softball game. You need to be there in fifteen minutes. Your mother is on the phone and doesn't seem to be in a big hurry to get you there on time. The team needs you.	Your baby brother wandered into your room and ripped up your favorite book.
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Your best friend told an embarrassing story about you again. She had promised she would never do it again. Now she says she's really sorry and will never do it again.	Bobby is on your soccer team. He isn't very good. He keeps messing up. You keep losing games because of him. You hate losing.
You have to walk your little sister to school. She is such a slowpoke. You want to get to school early so you have time to talk to your friends.	Your dad promised he would take you fishing after he fixed the car. That was hours ago. Dad is still in the garage, and if you wait too much longer, the fish will not be biting anymore.
You agreed to tutor a younger child at school. You're trying to explain to Bobby how to do a simple math problem. But Bobby doesn't get it. It doesn't seem like he's even trying. You're getting frustrated.	You're trying to learn a difficult song on the piano. You keep messing up. You've been practicing and practicing. You just can't seem to get it.

4. Have you ever had someone do the same rotten thing to you again and again? How did you feel about that person? Is it easy or hard to be patient with someone who repeatedly does things to hurt you? Why? What would showing patience to that person look like?

[For more lessons for children, visit
<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>]

Or, discuss the following questions:

1. Why do you think patience is so important?
2. Why is it sometimes hard to have patience?
3. Why is it important to be patient?

PATIENCE

Use the International Morse Code to decipher a Bible verse about patience.

a	·—	b	····	c	·—·	d	··—	e	·	f	··—
g	—·	h	····	i	··	j	··—	k	—·	l	··—
m	—	n	·	o	—	p	·—	q	—·	r	·—
s	···	t	—	u	··—	v	····	w	·—	x	··—
y	··—	z	··—								

1. $\frac{1}{2}$ 2. $\frac{1}{3}$ 3. $\frac{1}{4}$ 4. $\frac{1}{5}$ 5. $\frac{1}{6}$ 6. $\frac{1}{7}$ 7. $\frac{1}{8}$ 8. $\frac{1}{9}$ 9. $\frac{1}{10}$ 10. $\frac{1}{11}$ 11. $\frac{1}{12}$ 12. $\frac{1}{13}$ 13. $\frac{1}{14}$ 14. $\frac{1}{15}$ 15. $\frac{1}{16}$ 16. $\frac{1}{17}$ 17. $\frac{1}{18}$ 18. $\frac{1}{19}$ 19. $\frac{1}{20}$ 20. $\frac{1}{21}$ 21. $\frac{1}{22}$ 22. $\frac{1}{23}$ 23. $\frac{1}{24}$ 24. $\frac{1}{25}$ 25. $\frac{1}{26}$ 26. $\frac{1}{27}$ 27. $\frac{1}{28}$ 28. $\frac{1}{29}$ 29. $\frac{1}{30}$ 30. $\frac{1}{31}$ 31. $\frac{1}{32}$ 32. $\frac{1}{33}$ 33. $\frac{1}{34}$ 34. $\frac{1}{35}$ 35. $\frac{1}{36}$ 36. $\frac{1}{37}$ 37. $\frac{1}{38}$ 38. $\frac{1}{39}$ 39. $\frac{1}{40}$ 40. $\frac{1}{41}$ 41. $\frac{1}{42}$ 42. $\frac{1}{43}$ 43. $\frac{1}{44}$ 44. $\frac{1}{45}$ 45. $\frac{1}{46}$ 46. $\frac{1}{47}$ 47. $\frac{1}{48}$ 48. $\frac{1}{49}$ 49. $\frac{1}{50}$ 50. $\frac{1}{51}$ 51. $\frac{1}{52}$ 52. $\frac{1}{53}$ 53. $\frac{1}{54}$ 54. $\frac{1}{55}$ 55. $\frac{1}{56}$ 56. $\frac{1}{57}$ 57. $\frac{1}{58}$ 58. $\frac{1}{59}$ 59. $\frac{1}{60}$ 60. $\frac{1}{61}$ 61. $\frac{1}{62}$ 62. $\frac{1}{63}$ 63. $\frac{1}{64}$ 64. $\frac{1}{65}$ 65. $\frac{1}{66}$ 66. $\frac{1}{67}$ 67. $\frac{1}{68}$ 68. $\frac{1}{69}$ 69. $\frac{1}{70}$ 70. $\frac{1}{71}$ 71. $\frac{1}{72}$ 72. $\frac{1}{73}$ 73. $\frac{1}{74}$ 74. $\frac{1}{75}$ 75. $\frac{1}{76}$ 76. $\frac{1}{77}$ 77. $\frac{1}{78}$ 78. $\frac{1}{79}$ 79. $\frac{1}{80}$ 80. $\frac{1}{81}$ 81. $\frac{1}{82}$ 82. $\frac{1}{83}$ 83. $\frac{1}{84}$ 84. $\frac{1}{85}$ 85. $\frac{1}{86}$ 86. $\frac{1}{87}$ 87. $\frac{1}{88}$ 88. $\frac{1}{89}$ 89. $\frac{1}{90}$ 90. $\frac{1}{91}$ 91. $\frac{1}{92}$ 92. $\frac{1}{93}$ 93. $\frac{1}{94}$ 94. $\frac{1}{95}$ 95. $\frac{1}{96}$ 96. $\frac{1}{97}$ 97. $\frac{1}{98}$ 98. $\frac{1}{99}$ 99. $\frac{1}{100}$ 100. $\frac{1}{101}$ 101. $\frac{1}{102}$ 102. $\frac{1}{103}$ 103. $\frac{1}{104}$ 104. $\frac{1}{105}$ 105. $\frac{1}{106}$ 106. $\frac{1}{107}$ 107. $\frac{1}{108}$ 108. $\frac{1}{109}$ 109. $\frac{1}{110}$ 110. $\frac{1}{111}$ 111. $\frac{1}{112}$ 112. $\frac{1}{113}$ 113. $\frac{1}{114}$ 114. $\frac{1}{115}$ 115. $\frac{1}{116}$ 116. $\frac{1}{117}$ 117. $\frac{1}{118}$ 118. $\frac{1}{119}$ 119. $\frac{1}{120}$ 120. $\frac{1}{121}$ 121. $\frac{1}{122}$ 122. $\frac{1}{123}$ 123. $\frac{1}{124}$ 124. $\frac{1}{125}$ 125. $\frac{1}{126}$ 126. $\frac{1}{127}$ 127. $\frac{1}{128}$ 128. $\frac{1}{129}$ 129. $\frac{1}{130}$ 130. $\frac{1}{131}$ 131. $\frac{1}{132}$ 132. $\frac{1}{133}$ 133. $\frac{1}{134}$ 134. $\frac{1}{135}$ 135. $\frac{1}{136}$ 136. $\frac{1}{137}$ 137. $\frac{1}{138}$ 138. $\frac{1}{139}$ 139. $\frac{1}{140}$ 140. $\frac{1}{141}$ 141. $\frac{1}{142}$ 142. $\frac{1}{143}$ 143. $\frac{1}{144}$ 144. $\frac{1}{145}$ 145. $\frac{1}{146}$ 146. $\frac{1}{147}$ 147. $\frac{1}{148}$ 148. $\frac{1}{149}$ 149. $\frac{1}{150}$ 150. $\frac{1}{151}$ 151. $\frac{1}{152}$ 152. $\frac{1}{153}$ 153. $\frac{1}{154}$ 154. $\frac{1}{155}$ 155. $\frac{1}{156}$ 156. $\frac{1}{157}$ 157. $\frac{1}{158}$ 158. $\frac{1}{159}$ 159. $\frac{1}{160}$ 160. $\frac{1}{161}$ 161. $\frac{1}{162}$ 162. $\frac{1}{163}$ 163. $\frac{1}{164}$ 164. $\frac{1}{165}$ 165. $\frac{1}{166}$ 166. $\frac{1}{167}$ 167. $\frac{1}{168}$ 168. $\frac{1}{169}$ 169. $\frac{1}{170}$ 170. $\frac{1}{171}$ 171. $\frac{1}{172}$ 172. $\frac{1}{173}$ 173. $\frac{1}{174}$ 174. $\frac{1}{175}$ 175. $\frac{1}{176}$ 176. $\frac{1}{177}$ 177. $\frac{1}{178}$ 178. $\frac{1}{179}$ 179. $\frac{1}{180}$ 180. $\frac{1}{181}$ 181. $\frac{1}{182}$ 182. $\frac{1}{183}$ 183. $\frac{1}{184}$ 184. $\frac{1}{185}$ 185. $\frac{1}{186}$ 186. $\frac{1}{187}$ 187. $\frac{1}{188}$ 188. $\frac{1}{189}$ 189. $\frac{1}{190}$ 190. $\frac{1}{191}$ 191. $\frac{1}{192}$ 192. $\frac{1}{193}$ 193. $\frac{1}{194}$ 194. $\frac{1}{195}$ 195. $\frac{1}{196}$ 196. $\frac{1}{197}$ 197. $\frac{1}{198}$ 198. $\frac{1}{199}$ 199. $\frac{1}{200}$ 200. $\frac{1}{201}$ 201. $\frac{1}{202}$ 202. $\frac{1}{203}$ 203. $\frac{1}{204}$ 204. $\frac{1}{205}$ 205. $\frac{1}{206}$ 206. $\frac{1}{207}$ 207. $\frac{1}{208}$ 208. $\frac{1}{209}$ 209. $\frac{1}{210}$ 210. $\frac{1}{211}$ 211. $\frac{1}{212}$ 212. $\frac{1}{213}$ 213. $\frac{1}{214}$ 214. $\frac{1}{215}$ 215. $\frac{1}{216}$ 216. $\frac{1}{217}$ 217. $\frac{1}{218}$ 218. $\frac{1}{219}$ 219. $\frac{1}{220}$ 220. $\frac{1}{221}$ 221. $\frac{1}{222}$ 222. $\frac{1}{223}$ 223. $\frac{1}{224}$ 224. $\frac{1}{225}$ 225. $\frac{1}{226}$ 226. $\frac{1}{227}$ 227. $\frac{1}{228}$ 228. $\frac{1}{229}$ 229. $\frac{1}{230}$ 230. $\frac{1}{231}$ 231. $\frac{1}{232}$ 232. $\frac{1}{233}$ 233. $\frac{1}{234}$ 234. $\frac{1}{235}$ 235. $\frac{1}{236}$ 236. $\frac{1}{237}$ 237. $\frac{1}{238}$ 238. $\frac{1}{239}$ 239. $\frac{1}{240}$ 240

1. *What is the main purpose of this study?*

2. *What are the research objectives?*

3. *What is the significance of the study?*

4. *What is the scope of the study?*

5. *What are the limitations of the study?*

6. *What is the methodology used in the study?*

7. *What are the results of the study?*

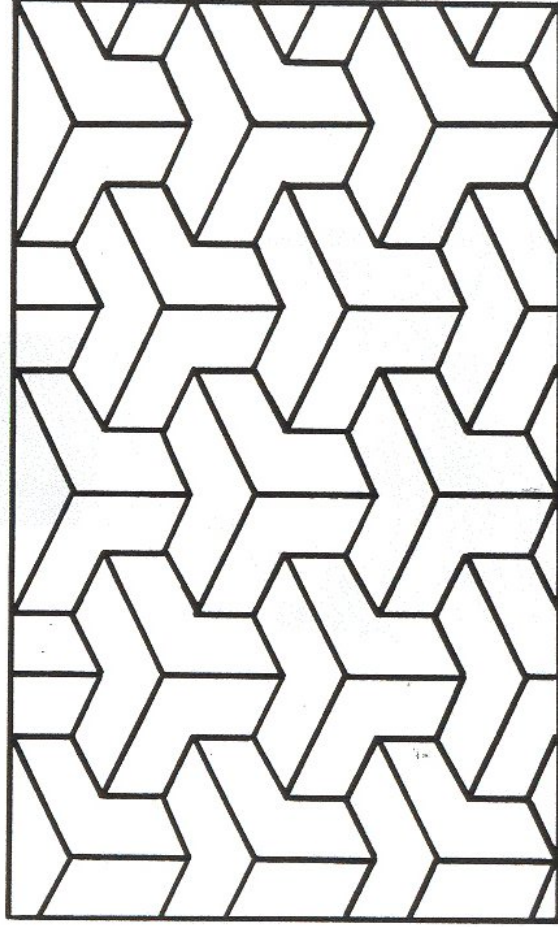
8. *What are the conclusions of the study?*

9. *What are the implications of the study?*

10. *What are the future research directions?*

1 Thess. 5:14

Can you make this design look like a stack of boxes? Color all the  shapes blue, all the  shapes red and all the  shapes yellow. It will take a long time. Be patient!



The Fruit of the Spirit is Kindness

(Galatians 5:22-23)

Introduction

How many *kind* thoughts have you had today? Have you had any *mean* thoughts? My mother used to tell me that if you didn't have anything good to say about someone, not to say anything at all.

What would it be like if you never had a *mean* thought and you only thought good things about people and the situations you go through every day? What kind of a world would we live in?

That's the kind of world God wants this to be. And, it could be if we always walked in the power of the Holy Spirit. Someday, when we are in heaven it will be like that, too.

Opening Prayer

Father, it will be a glorious day when we are all living in heaven with You. There will be no more sorrow or tears, no anger or meanness. I pray that You will fill us with the power of the Holy Spirit so that we might learn how to live like that now. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Memory Verse

A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people. (2 Timothy 2:24 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.

Today, we'll learn about **kindness**. When has someone been kind to you? What did that person do? Why do you think that person chose to be kind?

When have you been kind to another person? What happened as a result of your kindness?

We often meet people who are thoughtless and unkind, don't we? Sometimes, if we're honest, we are unkind to others. But God wants us to be kind to others, even if they are grouchy or unkind.

Many time people are kind to others because they want something in return. It's a way to get your way with them. That's manipulation; that isn't kindness. For example, someone may be especially kind to someone else in hopes that they will like them and be their friend. But that is definitely NOT God's kind of *kindness*.

We often think that kindness is just being polite. We think we're pretty good people because we:

- don't cut in front of others in line
- put our trash in cans rather than just throwing it on the street
- say "*Thank you*" and "*Please*"

But those are just ways of being polite. Being polite doesn't scratch the surface of what kindness is really all about.

God calls us to be compassionate towards those in need, even toward those we may not particularly like. "Compassion" means to care about another person's needs and to want to help that person even when it costs us time or money.

Jesus told a story about the Good Samaritan to teach His disciples what real kindness is. We call the stories that Jesus used as lessons, *parables*. A parable is a life-like story, using examples from every day experiences.

Luke 10:30-31

Jesus replied with a story: "A Jewish man was traveling on a trip from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road. (31) By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by.

Surely a priest, who served God and lead others in the worship of God would care about this poor injured man. But he didn't. He glanced at him and passed by, choosing not to dirty himself.

Luke 10:32

A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.

The Levites helped the priests in the work at the temple. They spent their lives teaching people about God's law. Surely this Temple assistant would have known God and wanted to please Him. But he, too, refused to help this injured man. He stopped and looked at him and then passed by.

Luke 10:33-34

Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. (34) Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the

man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him.

The Jews and the Samaritans had been bitter enemies for years. The Jews hated Samaritans. And the feeling was mutual. A Samaritan would normally never stop to help a Jew. Yet it was a Samaritan, who showed true kindness to the wounded Jew!

Luke 10:35

The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, 'Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.'

The Samaritan paid all costs, left money, and promised more! He never expected anyone to thank him or even to pay him back. He just did it because he had compassion for the injured man and it was the right thing to do.

When we are kind to someone without expecting anything in return, we are showing compassion. God's kind of *kindness* is when you do something kind for someone else when you don't have to and when you don't expect to get anything in return.

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 share with them, even if it means giving all you have.

What are some ways you can show kindness to people in need?

- Sharing what you have with others shows your love for God and brings kindness to other people. Even though we may not always feel like sharing, it's not only a way to show kindness, but it is also a way to show our love for God.
- Speaking kind words to others can change a person's heart and make that person also want to be kind.

We can show kindness with our words, our thoughts, and our actions. This may not always be an easy job. We may be in a grouchy mood and really have to work at being kind. Or we may meet someone else who is grouchy, and it's often hard to be kind to someone who is especially rude or mean.

When is it easy to show kindness to others? (When others have been kind to us.) When might it be hard? (When we're angry.)

What can we do when we don't feel like being kind? (Ask God's help. Remember God's kindness to us.)

It's easy to be kind to people that are kind to you. It's a lot harder to be kind to someone who is mean to you. But that's exactly what God wants us to do.

1 Thessalonians 5:15

See that no one pays back evil for evil, but always try to do good to each other and to all people.

God wants us to be kind to everyone all the time. By knowing Jesus and keeping him in our hearts, we can show kindness all the time.

How do you feel when people are unkind to you? How do you think people feel when you're unkind to them?

Sometimes it isn't easy to be kind without expecting anything back.

What are some ways to show kindness to others without expecting anything in return? (Help a younger brother or sister. Donate items to a homeless shelter. Help someone who's hurt. Give someone more than is asked for. Do extra chores.)

Kindness is the spiritual fruit that helps others in practical, thoughtful, caring ways with no thought of getting something in return.

When we have Jesus in our lives, we want to show kindness all the time. That's how we grow the fruit of God's Holy Spirit.

Closing Prayer

Father, please help us to show love to You by showing kindness to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Let the children make bookmarks with the fruit of the Spirit on them.

Snack

Pears

Game Center

Let's do some skits to act out situations in a kind manner and in a mean manner to decide which way is more Christ-like.

One child is playing a hand-held video game. His brother (or sister) walks in and says, "Hey, that's my game!"	Two children are playing at the park. Another child sits alone with no one to play with.
Two children from the same family decided to eat a snack. Both children want a pear to eat; but only one pear is left.	Two children are watching a favorite television show. Mom asks the children to clean their rooms because one of her friends is on her way over for a visit.

Dad is busy collecting trash for the garbage pickup. Three children are playing Frisbee in the yard when Dad comes by with an armload of trash bags.	A poor family lives down the street from you. They don't have enough money to give their little 5-year-old daughter a Birthday Party.
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Can you tell me about a time something like this may have happened to you?

[For more lessons for children, visit
<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>]

The Fruit of the Spirit is Goodness

(Galatians 5:22-23)

Introduction

[Teacher, hold up some pictures of fruit.] What kind of a tree did this [orange] grow on? (Orange tree.) What kind of a tree did the [banana] grow on? (Banana tree). You can tell what kind of a tree it is by the kind of fruit that grows on it, can't you? Well, it's the same way with people. You can tell what kind of a person you are by the "fruit" of your life. [Teacher, before class, let some fruit turn rotten. Then, show it to the children.] Does your life produce rotten fruit or good fruit?

Have you ever thought about what kind of fruit your life is producing? Jesus often used trees as an example of people's lives.

Matthew 7:17-20

A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. (18) A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. (19) So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. (20) Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.

People can tell what kind of a person you are when they see the fruit of your life. Some people's lives produce rotten fruit like selfishness and meanness. Other people's lives produce good fruit full of love, peace, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. When people see someone with good fruit like that, they'll know that person has a close walk with God.

We don't want our lives to produce rotten fruit, do we? Let's pray and ask God to help our lives produce good fruit.

Opening Prayer

Father, we love You and want to please You in everything that we do in life. Please teach us this morning how important it is for us to make good choices in our lives. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

...run from all these evil things. Pursue righteousness and a godly life, along with faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. (12) Fight the good fight for the true faith. Hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you... (1 Timothy 6:11-12 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 next fruit is **goodness**.

How many of you have been told by your mom or dad, "*Be a good boy!*" or "*Be a good girl!*"? What does that mean exactly? Most of us would say that to be good, you shouldn't do anything that's bad. 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.

That's what Daniel and his friends did when they were taken off to Babylon. Let's turn in our Bibles to the book of Daniel, Chapter 1.

Many years after King David ruled Israel, four boys who were probably about 14 years old, lived in Israel. But, because the Israelites did not remain faithful to God, God allowed them to be captured by the Babylonians.

The armies of Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and took the people captive, including these four boys. They were forced to march all the way to Babylon, 900 miles away, and put into slavery.

Upon arriving in Babylon, King Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, gave orders to his chief official to choose the best young men from the captives.

Daniel 1:4

"Select only strong, healthy, and good looking young men," he said. "Make sure they are well versed in every branch of learning, are gifted with knowledge and good judgment, and are suited to serve in the royal palace. Train these young men in the languages and literature of Babylon."

Nebuchadnezzar knew he needed clever men to help him rule the Hebrew people. They were to be taught the language and knowledge of Babylon. They would be trained in philosophy, literature, and astronomy. At the end of three years, they would be ready to enter the King's service as advisors.

Among those chosen were Daniel and his three friends. Now, these boys may have been excited to be chosen; that meant they would not be treated like slaves like all the rest of the people taken to Babylon from Israel. But along with this privilege came problems – they were to be fed from the king's table.

Daniel 1:5

The king assigned them a daily ration of food and wine from his own kitchens. They were to be trained for three years, and then they would enter the royal service.

When Daniel and his three friends came into the dining room for their first meal they realized that the food being served was strictly against God's laws. Certain meat, such as pork, is forbidden by the Jewish law. And, there are many special instructions in the Old Testament regarding how to fix food the proper way. The food offered to them had not been prepared according to those laws and therefore would not be right for them to eat.

Also, before eating, the king usually offered his food to the false gods as part of worshiping the idols of the Babylonian people. Eating *that* food would be just like worshiping the idols—not honoring God.

Daniel might have been thinking, "*If we obey the king and eat the food, we will disobey God. But if we don't eat the food, we will disobey*

the king and he may have us killed." This was a tough decision for Daniel to make. It would have been easy for Daniel and his friends just to go ahead and eat the king's food. They might have thought, *"No one will ever know. Our parents are not here and besides, that law is so old-fashioned, and everybody else is doing it... what would they think if we didn't go along with the crowd?"*

Daniel and his friends decided that no matter what happened they would obey God. They knew they must do what is right. God gave Daniel and his friends courage to obey God's rules. That is true *goodness*.

Daniel 1:8

But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods.

The word "*defile*" means to make dirty or impure. Daniel chose not to eat that which he knew would displease God; he chose to do the *good* thing—the right thing.

God wants you to make good choices in your life. You are to purposely keep your life pure and clean so that God can use you for His plans and purposes. You must make a promise to yourself and to God that you will always do what is right and not to give into pressures around you.

It must have been hard for Daniel to keep this promise with the others eating all that fine-looking food. But to eat it would be wrong.

It's easier to resist temptation if you have thought through your beliefs well before the temptation arrives. Daniel and his friends made their decision to be faithful to the laws of God long before they were faced with the king's delicacies, so they did not hesitate to stick with their beliefs.

We get into trouble if we have not previously decided where to draw the line. Before such situations arise, decide on your commitments, then when temptation comes, you will be ready to say, "*No!*"

Daniel 1:9

Now God had given the chief of staff both respect and affection for Daniel.

God blesses those who honor Him. And, He will bless you, too, if you make a commitment to always do what is pleasing to God, no matter what others may think or say about you.

Daniel was determined to obey God. And God gave him an idea. Daniel asked if it would be all right if they had just vegetables to eat and good plain water to drink. He suggested they be put on a 10-day test to see if they stayed strong and healthy.

Daniel 1:12-14

"Please test us for ten days on a diet of vegetables and water," Daniel said. (13) "At the end of the ten days, see how we look compared to the other young men who are eating the king's food. Then make your decision in light of what you see." (14) The attendant agreed to Daniel's suggestion and tested them for ten days.

The attendant agreed to try the experiment. For ten days, Daniel and the other boys ate nothing but vegetables and drank only water.

Daniel 1:15-16

At the end of the ten days, Daniel and his three friends looked healthier and better nourished than the young men who had been eating the food assigned by the king. (16) So after that, the attendant fed them only vegetables instead of the food and wine provided for the others.

At the end of the 10-day test they looked fit and were allowed to continue their vegetarian diet for the next three years. And, God gave these four young men more wisdom than the king's own advisors.

Daniel and his friends had made the right choice. God gave them the courage they needed to obey Him. God will give you the strength to make the right choices if you make a decision in your heart to please God in all that you *think*, all that you *say*, and all that you *do*. God will help you say "*No*" to sin and He'll help you choose what is right.

It's not always easy to do the right thing. Sometimes it's hard to make a good choice. When might it be hard for you to stand up for what is right? (When everyone else is disobeying God's commands. When you feel tired or angry.)

Sometimes we get tempted to do wrong. We might be afraid that others will make fun of us, or we might not have confidence to do things the other kids aren't going along with. There are times when we don't feel like being kind or loving, but even then – especially then – we are to choose to do the loving thing, and make the right choices.

If we ask, God will help us do what is good and help us obey Him. That's how His fruit of *goodness* grows in our lives.

Daniel and his three friends were only four young men among many Jewish captives. How do you think Daniel and his friends felt during the ten days when all the other boys were eating and drinking at the King's table? Why do you think the other Jewish boys did not stand up for what they knew was right?

How did God honor Daniel and his friends for choosing to do what they knew was good?

Daniel and his friends did the right thing in their school even when no one else around them did. Doing things God's way, instead of the way everyone else does them, is what true *goodness* is.

God is our Father and He is perfectly good. When we choose to do good things, it's a way of telling Him we love Him. And, when you do what is right, it helps others grow in goodness, too.

After all, that's why God plants the seeds of the fruit of the Spirit in us. He wants others to come to know Him by seeing our lives. People will follow your example. So it's important that you do everything you can to grow the fruit of the Spirit in your life.

Closing Prayer

Father, You are good. We know we grow in goodness by spending time with You and thinking about Your goodness. Help us to always choose to do the good and right thing, even when we are the only ones doing what makes You happy. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Snack

Apples.

Game Center

Playing the Hand You're Dealt

We've been taking a lot about goodness. Everything good comes from God, because God is good. God wants us to live holy lives – lives set apart from the world. He wants us to live lives that are filled with goodness. But it's not always easy. Let's practice some ways to show goodness.

[Teacher, have kids sit in a circle. Set the deck of "School Situation" cards on the table. Invite a child to pick up a card, read it, and say how he or she would feel in that situation and what the right choice would be in that situation.]

School Situation Cards

Your best friend asks you to help him cheat on a math test. You want him to keep being your best friend. You could offer to tutor him, but that won't help him on this test. What do you do?	You saved your allowance money and did extra chores for weeks so you could buy that special toy. Your family is going to stop at the toy store right after church. Your Sunday school teacher announces that your class is taking a collection for a family who lost everything in a fire. You feel the wad of money in your pocket. What do you do?
Your teacher is sick. You have a substitute teacher. Everyone is acting badly and trying to get away with everything they can. You want to fit in. What should you do?	Everyone is picking on an unpopular kid in the class. If you are nice to this person, you might be picked on too. How can you show God's goodness to the unpopular kid and to your friends?
You are invited to go to someone's house to watch a video with a lot of violence in it. You really want to see it. However, you know that your parents would be very upset with you if you watched the movie. Why is watching the movie not a good thing to do? Can you think of another thing you and your friend could do together that would be fun for both of you and reflect God's goodness?	You've been busy all day and haven't had a chance to read your Bible or pray. You get a call from your friends. They want to go see a movie and invite you to come along. You know that goodness grows when we spend time with our good God. Think of three different ways you can handle this.

Your parents are tired, and they're taking a nap on the couch. They've asked you to be quiet while they sleep. Name three ways you can demonstrate God's goodness to them while they sleep.	It's time for you and your sister to draw chores from the chore jar for the week. You are really lucky. You drew all the good chores while your sister drew all the nasty chores! Do you have opportunities to demonstrate God's goodness in this situation?
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[Teacher, after each child has had a chance to respond to the situation card, ask:]

Would it be hard for you to live out God's goodness in this situation? Why?

Sometimes it's easy to imitate God's goodness. Other times it's hard, just as it was hard for Daniel and his friends. But God wants us to imitate His goodness all the time. And God helps us, just as He helped Daniel and his friends.

Or use the following questions in another game of your choice:

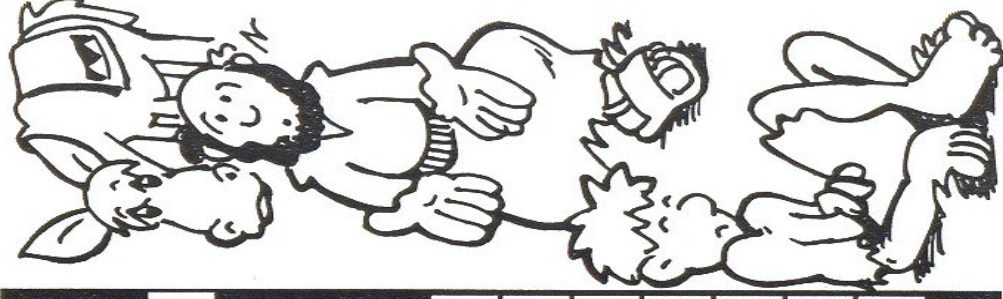
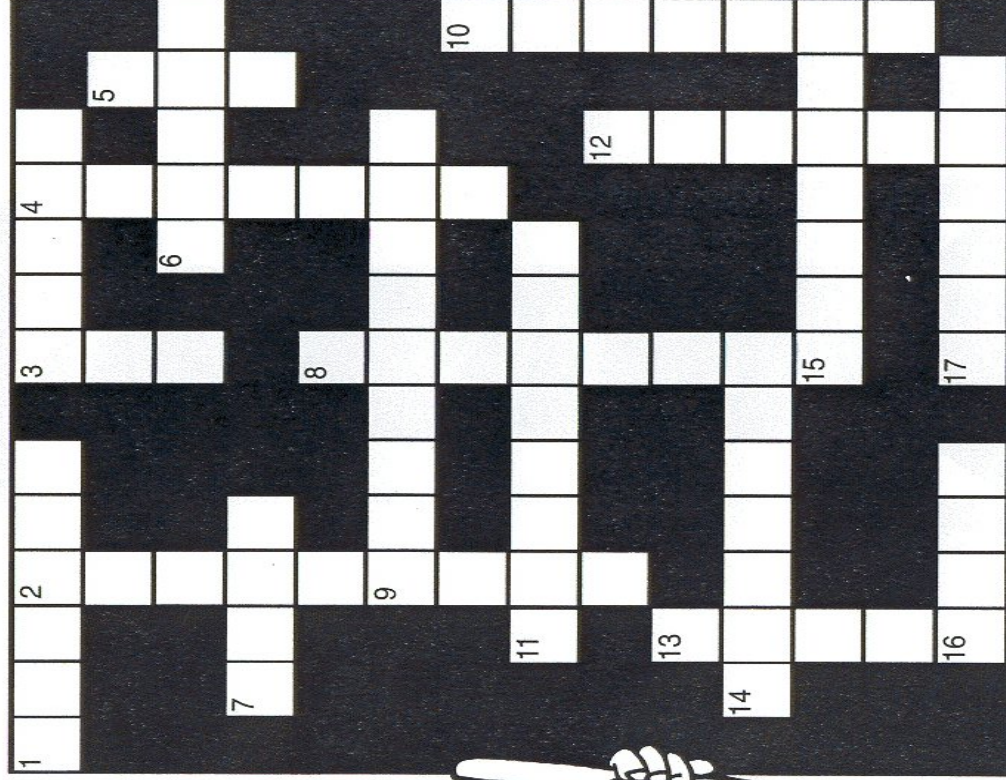
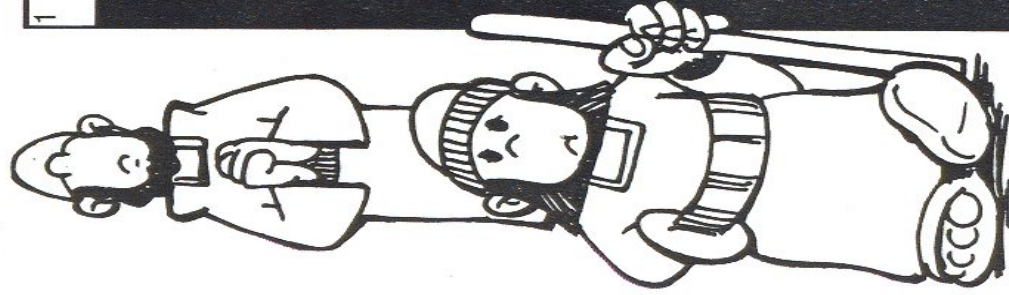
1. What happened to Daniel and his friends in Babylon? (Chosen to serve the king. Given the kings' food to eat.)
2. What did Daniel and his friends choose to do? (To obey God's rules, no matter what.)
3. How did Daniel and his three friends look after ten days of only eating vegetables and water? (Stronger than the others.)
4. What are some of God's commands from the Bible? (Love others, don't lie. Care for people who are different from you.)

5. When might it be hard to obey God's commands? (When everyone else is disobeying God's commands. When we don't feel like being kind or loving.)
6. How do you think Daniel and his friends felt during the ten days when all the other boys were eating and drinking at the King's table?
7. Why do you think the other Jewish boys did not stand up for what they knew was right?
8. How did God honor Daniel and his friends for choosing to do what they knew was good?

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The Good Samaritan

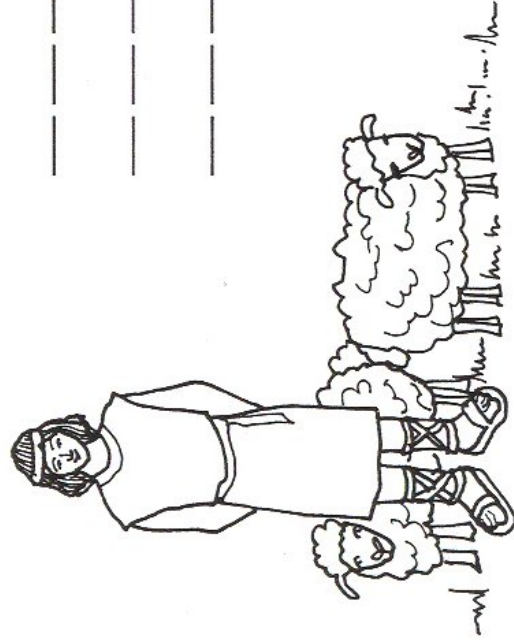
No story shows kindness better than the story of the Good Samaritan. (The amazing part of this story is that Samaritans and Jews were considered enemies!) Read the story in Luke 10:24-37; then complete the sentences by putting the missing words in the crossword puzzle.



"Who is my **8D**?" an expert on the law asked. **13D** said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to **14A** when he fell into the hands of **15A**. They stripped him of his **4D**, beat him and went away, leaving him half **7A**. A **12D** saw the man, but passed by on the other **16A**. A **17A** also saw him, but **1A** by on the other side. Then a **2D** came to where the man was. He took pity on the injured man, **11A** his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the **3D** on his donkey, took him to an **5D** and took care of him. The next day he gave two silver **6A** to the **4A**. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra **10D** you may have had.' "Which one was a neighbor to the man?" Jesus asked. The expert on the law replied, "The one who had **3A** on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

GOODNES

Follow the path through the sheep to find out what the shepherd, David, said about goodness.





Psalms 23:6

The Fruit of the Spirit is Faithfulness

(Galatians 5:22-23)

Introduction

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:

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

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

You share the story about Christ dying on the cross with someone. Move ahead 6 spaces.	You join the others at school in making fun of a new kid so you won't be embarrassed around your friends. Move back 4 spaces.
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[For more lessons for children, visit
<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>]

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

D	i	s	j	t	u

K	f	t	v	t

d	b	n	f

j	o	u	p

u	i	f

x	p	s	m	e

u	p

t		w	f
	a		

t	j	o	o	f	s	t

; of whom I am

chief.” 1 Tim. 1:15

What is something that you firmly believe in?

The Fruit of the Spirit is Gentleness

(Galatians 5:22-23)

Introduction

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 seventh fruit is **faithfulness**. Faithfulness means being true to your word. Always doing what you say you will do.

Today we're going to learn about **gentleness**.

Opening Prayer

Father, sometimes we're not as gentle as you want us to be. Sometimes we speak too quickly or don't take the time to listen to others. Teach us the importance of showing others the power of Your love and strength before we even speak a word to them. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Memory Verse

But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds... (James 3:17 NLT)

Lesson

What images come to mind when you think of the word "*gentleness*"? Often, we think of things that are soft, cuddly, delicate, or dainty. When people tell you to be gentle, what do you normally think they want you to do? (We are told to be gentle when petting an animal or when playing with a baby.) Often, we hear that word when people want us to be careful with something or to be calm with something.

If a person is *meek* or *humble*, we are describing that person's inner attitude. *Gentleness* describes a person's outward action. So, if a person has humble heart, he or she will behave with gentleness.

Sometimes people think that a humble, gentle person is weak or babyish. But **true godly gentleness is just the opposite of weakness—it is God's power put into action with love.**

Jesus is a great example of true godly *gentleness*. Here He was *the* most powerful person to ever walk the face of this planet! He created the whole universe! He was strong and bold in the way that he

showed God's love but He did it with quiet strength. He was gentle with people's hearts. That's what **godly gentleness is—it's quietly putting God's love into action.**

On the last night of His life, Jesus knew what He was about to go through. He was God; He knew all things. He knew that the next day He would go through the most horrible torture and death that anyone could ever experience.

But He knew He was just about to return to God the Father in heaven and leave His beloved disciples here on earth. And before going back to heaven, He wanted to give His disciples some last-minute instructions to get them ready to live without Him. So, He got them all together in the upper room and had the last supper with them.

During dinner the devil spoke to Judas' heart and told him that this was the night to carry out his evil plan to betray Jesus.

Then, after dinner Jesus did a very odd thing...

John 13:2-5

It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. (3) Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. (4) So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, (5) and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

Why would Jesus wash the disciple's feet? The people in Jesus' day wore sandals, and streets were dusty. Just like we take our shoes off when going into someone's home so that we don't track dirt into the house, it was customary in Jesus' day to wash guests' feet when they arrived at your home. Foot washing was usually a job for a household servant to carry out.

Can you imagine? Jesus, the Almighty Creator of the universe, washing dirty feet? What do you think Jesus wanted to teach His followers? Even though He was God Himself, He was not too proud to

be a servant. He was serving them with a humble heart. If Jesus is willing to serve, then we must also be servants, willing to serve in any way that glorifies God with a humble heart.

A gentle person is mellow and harmless. He's not concerned about acting important or making others like him. The Lord Jesus was serving His disciples because He loved them. He was putting His love into action without saying a word.

If Jesus is your Savior, God wants you to serve others with a humble heart. The Bible says that *"whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone..."* (Galatians 6:10 NLT). That means, you are to look for every chance you can to do something nice for someone else. Jesus was teaching the disciples a lesson about true greatness—that it comes when you **quietly put God's love into action.**

Do you think it was hard for Jesus to wash Judas' feet, knowing that Judas was going to betray Him? How would you feel if you were Jesus? Jesus loved Judas and wanted to give him one last opportunity to choose NOT to do the evil thing he was planning. Without saying a word to Judas, Jesus was showing His love to him in gentleness.

John 13:12

After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing?"

The Lord wanted to be sure that His disciples understood why He had washed their feet. By His action He was showing His love and He was teaching them a truth. Do you know what Jesus was trying to teach them? If the Master and Lord is willing to humble Himself and be a servant by washing the disciple's feet, then the disciples should be willing to be servants, also.

Why is it sometimes hard to serve others with a humble heart? We want to be served; we want our own rights; we like to do important things so others will see and reward us. Yet Jesus told His disciples,

“Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant...” (Mark 10:43 NLT). That means if you want to truly please God, you will serve others with a humble heart. You may not be noticed or thanked here on earth, but God will reward you someday. If Jesus is your example, you won’t be too proud to do jobs that seem unimportant.

John 13:15

I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.

God has given each one of us a job to do, and that’s to show others what His love looks like. And the way He wants us to show others His kind of love is by quietly putting God’s love into action with a humble heart.

Often, we don’t even have to say a word to others—we speak our love for Jesus’ gift on the cross through the way we live our lives.

Gentleness is a powerful thing. God gives us gentleness to show the power of love without words. We can be gentle by being polite to others and by thinking of others before ourselves. We can help others when they need something, listen instead of talking, and learn from other people. Jesus showed us what gentleness looks like, and it’s our job to follow His example.

What are some ways you can quietly put God’s love in action? [Teacher, lead the children in a discussion. Help them discover the following:

- Listening to people instead of talking
- Smiling at strangers
- Comforting friends when they are down
- Being polite
- Thinking of others before our selves

- Being willing to learn from others.

We can show God’s love to others through our own gentle actions. Let your actions do the speaking.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for giving us everything we need to quietly show the power of Your love to others. Thank You, for showing us what gentleness looks like by sending Jesus to walk on the earth to die on the cross for our sins. Please help gentleness grow inside our lives, giving us hearts filled with Your love. Help us listen to Your gentle whisper speaking to us about the different ways we can share Your love with others. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Gentleness is the Heart of God

Give each child a pre-cut, eighteen-inch piece of thick wire. Set out a box of Styrofoam packing “peanuts”. Have children string the packing peanuts onto their pieces of wire, making sure to leave about an inch of space at one end of the wire. When children have finished, have them form a heart shape with the wire, twisting the two ends together.

Snack

Lemon aid.

Game Center

Show How You Grow

Have children form pairs. Let each pair draw one of the following

Gentle Action Cards. Give them a few minutes to practice pantomiming the situations. Remind them not to say a word but to work together and let their actions do the speaking. Let the other children guess the situation the team is pantomiming.

- Smiling at or being friendly to someone who seems lonely
- Letting someone else go first to ride your new bike
- Letting someone borrow your pencil when his or hers breaks
- Sharing your lunch with someone who forgot his or hers
- Listening to someone else's problem
- Comforting someone who is hurting
- Learning from someone else's experiences
- Being excited with someone and sharing their joy at getting a good grade
- Being sad with someone who is sad about losing the soccer match
- Letting someone know you don't like what that person is doing without getting angry.

[For more lessons for children, visit
<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>]

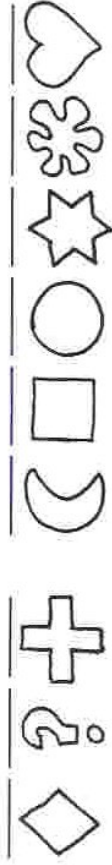
Or, use the following questions in a game or discussion of your choice:

1. What is gentleness?
2. In what simple ways can you try to show gentleness to others?
3. What are some ways you can quietly put God's love in action?
4. When has someone shown gentleness to you?
5. How did it make you feel when someone was gentle in his or her actions towards you?

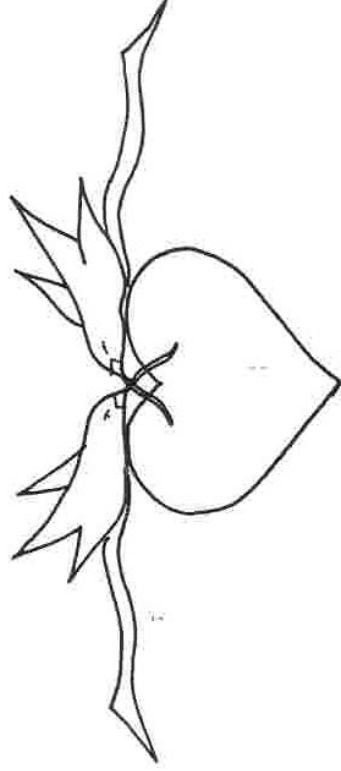
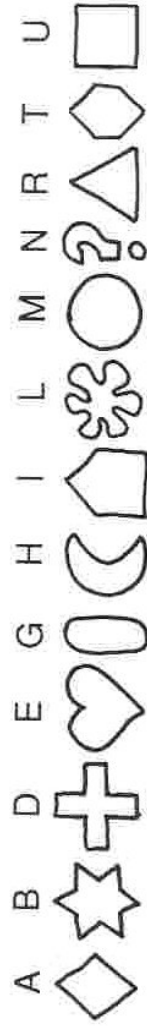
GENTLENESS

Gentleness means meek or soft-mannered.

What did Jesus say about himself?



Matthew 11:29 NIV



The Fruit of the Spirit is Self-Control

(Galatians 5:22-23)

Introduction

[Teacher, before class, attach a bull's eye target to the wall. Give each child a balloon. Tell kids to blow up the balloons and hold them without tying them off. Instruct kids to let go of their balloons when you say "Go" to see if they can hit the bull's eye.]

These balloons were out of control, weren't they? You couldn't get them to hit the target, could you? That's the way we are if we don't have self-control. But God wants us to learn how to handle our thoughts, words, and actions so that we stay on target with God.

Today we're going to learn why God wants us to practice self-control.

Opening Prayer

Father, prepare our hearts, and our minds, and our souls as we study this lesson on self-control. We want to learn how to control every thought we have, every word we speak and every action we make so that our lives are pleasing to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Memory Verse

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. (James 1:19 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 seventh fruit is **faithfulness**. Faithfulness means being true to your word. Always doing what you say you're going to do.

The eighth fruit is **gentleness**, quietly putting God's love into action. God wants us to show others what His love looks like through our own gentle actions.

The next fruit is **self-control**! Being out of control is the opposite of self-control. Can you give me an example in your own life of a time you were out of control? What caused you to lose control?

Often, we lose control when we don't get things our own way. By nature we want what we want and we want it now! And, if we don't get what we want we let everyone know just how unhappy it makes us.

To be self-controlled means to have power over your reactions to people and situations; being able to handle your thoughts, words, and actions, especially when you're angry. We are not born with self-control. We have to learn how to be self-controlled. We are all born self-centered. When babies are hungry they kick and scream and cry, when they want their diapers changed they kick and scream and cry. Moms and Dads have been given the responsibility to teach their children how to control themselves.

We all have to learn how to deal with anger. When you're angry, hitting and kicking is not acceptable; nor is calling someone a name who has hurt your feelings. We have to learn how to put aside our selfish desires and to put other people first. This is not something that you learn once and for all. No, this is something we all need to practice throughout our whole lives.

Learning how to control our anger is only one area we need to develop self-control. We also need to have self-control when we are faced with the temptation to sin. God's Word tells us to be on our guard so that we won't make bad choices in tempting situations (1 Corinthians 16:13-14).

We need to ask God for help so we can make good choices in life.

When might you find it hard to show self-control and need to remember to be on guard? [Teacher, let the children respond.]

Usually for me it comes with my words. What is a way words can hurt someone's feelings? [Teacher, let the children respond.] Being careful in what you say takes a lot of self-control.

Open your Bibles to the book of James. James was one of Jesus' brothers. After Mary gave birth to Jesus, she had more children. The Bible tells us that Jesus had several brothers and sisters. After Jesus went to heaven, his younger brother, James, became one of the first church leaders. The book of James is a letter he wrote to Jews who had become Christians.

James said it was important to control the things we say.

James 1:19

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.

Why do you think it is good to be careful about what we say? When are some times that kids your age need to listen more?

James 3:2

Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way.

James is saying that learning how to control what comes out of our mouths is the key to controlling every part of our life.

[Teacher, for a hands-on demonstration of the unruliness of the tongue, purchase a cow tongue at the butcher shop. Let the children look at it. They are gross and the kids won't soon forget this lesson!]

Next James compares our tongue with three things that people are familiar with. First he compares our tongue with a horse's bit. A bit is the small piece of metal that is put into a horse's mouth and attached to the horse's reins. It's only about as thick as two pencils.

James 3:3

We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth.

What James is saying is that even though a horse is much bigger and more powerful than a person, yet a rider can control a horse with this little metal mouth piece.

Next he compares our tongue to the rudder of a ship. The rudder is attached to the steering wheel of a boat and is what controls the direction in which the boat sails.

James 3:4

And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong.

When the captain turns the wheel, the rudder turns to one side or the other and the boat moves in that direction. A very small rudder can change the direction of a very big boat.

The bit and rudder are very small, but the ways in which they are used is very powerful! In the same way the tongue is just a small part of our bodies, but the things we say with it can make big differences, too. The tongue has so much power that the words we say with it have a huge effect.

Next, James compares the tongue to a small spark that can set an entire forest on fire.

James 3:5b-6a [Teacher read...]

But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. (6)... And the tongue is a flame of fire.

A person can set a whole forest on fire by letting one spark carelessly jump out of a fire pit, or by thoughtlessly flicking a cigarette out the car window. And, just as a little spark can cause a huge, uncontrollable fire, just a few words can cause a lot of trouble!

Words can be used to encourage people to do good things *and* they can be used to encourage others to do bad things. There have been times when people have done some extremely bad things because someone told them it was OK to do it. Words spoken thoughtlessly can lead to anger, hurt feelings, and even murder and war.

Next, James tells us that even though all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures can be tamed and controlled by people, we have a hard time controlling our own tongues!

James 3:7

People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison.

Have you ever been to the circus and seen big grizzly bears riding bikes? Have you been to Sea World and seen killer whales jump through hoops? People can tame all kinds of wild beasts to do things. Why, I even saw on TV that someone had trained a parrot to sing / *Left My Heart In San Francisco*. In fact, they had trained that bird to sing so many songs it cut its own album! People can train wild animals to do some of the most unusual things, but we can't seem to learn how to control our own tongues!

How many of you have said things you regretted saying? Have things come out of your mouth that you wish you could take back? Sometimes we can say kind loving things to people and other times we are thoughtless. James says that we use the same mouth to praise God *and* to say bad things to other people.

James 3:8-10

But no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. (9) Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. (10) And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right!

This should not be! We should use our tongue only to say good things. James wanted us to realize that we need God's power and love to help us control what we say. We can always count on God to help us in controlling our tongues and using our words in good ways.

We have to learn how to listen to others, think before we speak and control our anger when things don't go the way we want them to.

The devil is always on the lookout for people who are out of control. He loves it when we do things that show we have no self-control. When we hit, punch, or kick; when we yell or swear; or when we want everything we see and don't want to wait, God is unhappy.

That's why it's so important for us to remember that God wants each of us to practice self-control.

But we don't have to try to have self-control without help. The Holy Spirit is always available to help us discipline ourselves. He will give you the will power to restrain yourself from thinking, or saying, or doing anything that would not bring honor to God. But, you have to ask Him for that help. Fortunately he is always listening and ready and willing to help us.

Not a day passes without the opportunity to rely on the Holy Spirit to help us exercise self-control. The Holy Spirit's presence in our lives gives us the strength we need to do what is right. God's Spirit strengthens us and that's what develops our self-control.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You that You are a God who will help us be in control of our thoughts, words and actions. We don't want to forget to call upon You for the power to restrain ourselves and control our emotions. We don't want to do anything that displeases You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Snack

Cherries.

Game Center

What to Do? What to Do?

[Teacher, have kids form four groups to act out one of the following situation cards. First they are to act it out as stated, then come up with a self-controlled solution to also act out. Give the groups about five minutes to prepare.]

Justin and Alex were playing ball together at recess when Tyler came up and took the ball from them. Justin and Alex ran after Tyler, grabbed the ball out of his hands, and pushed him to the ground.	Carrie and Emily were in their room listening to music. Carrie wanted to listen to a new CD and put it in the CD player without asking Emily. Emily started screaming and yelling at Carrie.
Jordan and Sarah were at the store with their mom doing the weekly grocery shopping. Every aisle they went down, one or the other asked for something. "Hey, Mom, can we have this?" "Hey, Mom can we have that?"	The Sunday school class was having a party, and everyone was looking forward to the pizza being delivered. When the pizza arrived, three of the kids ran up to the table and filled their plates to overflowing, leaving only three pieces for the other ten kids.

Ball Toss Game

Materials: large container, softball or beanbag.

Preparation: Print the words "self-control" across the top of the white board. Draw a line down the center of the board. Print Team 1 on one side of the line and Team 2 on the other. Place container on the floor on one side of the playing area about five feet from the children.

Play: Divide the class into two teams. Have students take turns attempting to toss the ball or beanbag into the container. Each time the ball lands in the container, the tossing team writes one letter of "S E L F – C O N T R O L" on its side of the line. First team to complete the whole word wins.

Ask a volunteer from the winning team to answer one of the Discussion Questions below. Repeat the game as time allows.

Use the following questions in a discussion:

1. When might it be hard to show self-control when you talk to others? (When you're angry. When you feel like saying something unkind. When you don't like what someone is saying.)
2. What can you do when you need help showing self-control in your speech? (Follow James 1:19 and be quick to listen and slow to speak. Pray and ask God for His help. Count to 10 before you speak when you feel upset. Walk away before you say something you shouldn't say.)
3. How would your (school/home/church) be a better place if kids were careful about what they say?
4. When are sometimes it might be difficult for kids your age to listen? (They're tired, hungry, or someone is taking a long time to speak.)

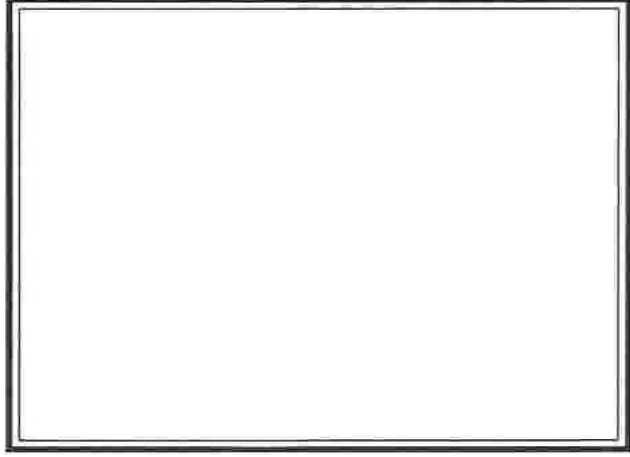
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Self-Control

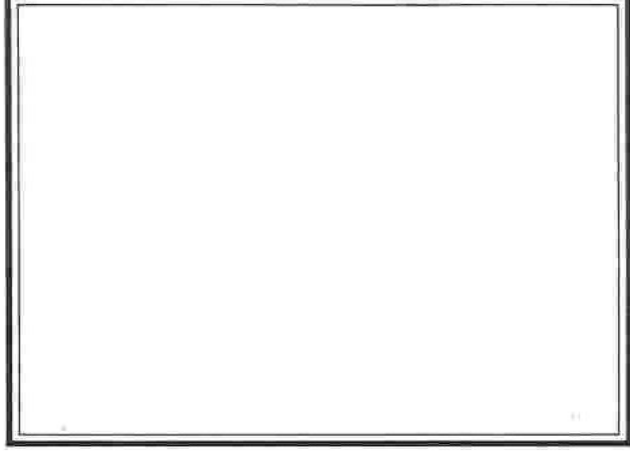
A boy owns a special stamp collection. His little sister pulls off all the stamps and throws them around his room.

Draw two pictures of the boy when he finds out:

Showing Self-Control



Not Showing Self-Control



“Make every effort
to add to your faith . . .
self-control.”

2 Peter 1:5

Fruit Review

(Galatians 5:22-23)

Introduction

People can tell what kind of a person you are when they see the fruit of your life. Some people's lives produce rotten fruit like selfishness and meanness. Other people's lives produce good fruit full of love, joy, peace, patience, and so forth. When people see someone with good fruit like that, they'll know that person has a close walk with God.

What kind of fruit does your life bear? Let's pray and ask God to help our lives produce good fruit.

Opening Prayer

Father, Thank You for loving us and giving us the gift of the Holy Spirit. Help us to use the power Your Holy Spirit gives us as we live every day. Help us respond to our friends and brothers and sisters in a way that pleases You and lets them see You in us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Memory Verse

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed their natural evil desires to his cross and crucified them there. (Galatians 5:24 TLB)

Lesson

When you accepted Jesus to become Lord of your life, God planted seeds in your heart that began to grow – seeds of love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

During our day-to-day lives, we need to learn how to make good choices so that we can show others the fruit of God's Spirit living within us. We show others we belong to Jesus in how we act and react to different situations.

This isn't always easy because we are not perfect. Our first reaction to something may not be the way God would want us to behave. Sometimes we are caught off guard and don't always react to situations the way we should. It's harder in some places than in others. For example, it may be harder for you to show self-control at school or maybe you have a tough time being kind to someone at home. It takes the strength and power of the Holy Spirit to completely change your behavior.

If you belong to Jesus, people should see the fruit of the Spirit in your life. Let's see how this works...

Fruity Situations

As I read to you a situation, tell me what fruit you would need and how you could demonstrate it.

1. **Love:** A new girl is in your class. She is very quiet and always eats lunch by herself. You've seen her looking at you and your friends at recess. What fruit do you need? (Love) How could you show love to her?
2. **Joy:** Your Sunday school class is having a workday at your church. You've been asked to help pull weeds from the large flower beds in front of the church. You very much dislike pulling weeds. What fruit do you need? (joy) How can you show joy as you help out?
3. **Peace:** Your grandma is very ill and you don't know what will happen to her. What fruit do you need? (peace) What can you do to have peace? (pray)
4. **Patience:** Your three-year-old cousin is visiting. You're trying to put together a new puzzle that you've just received as a birthday present. Your cousin really wants to help. What fruit do you need? (patience) How can you show patience as he tries to help?
5. **Kindness:** Suppose you are at a friends' birthday party and one guest is being excluded from most of the activities. What fruit do you need? (kindness) How can you show kindness to this person?

6. **Goodness:** You've just earned ten dollars by helping your neighbors clean out their garage. What fruit do you need as you decide what to do with your money? (goodness) How can you show goodness?
7. **Faithfulness:** An elderly next-door neighbor has asked you to help her by walking her dog every day for the next four weeks while her sprained ankle heals. It was fun in the beginning, but now it's been raining and you don't feel like you have much time. What fruit do you need? (faithfulness) How can you show faithfulness in this situation?
8. **Gentleness:** Your friend's little brother has been bugging you and your friend all day. He sticks his tongue out at you and is just plain obnoxious. Your friend wants to hit him. What fruit do you need? (gentleness) If you want to show gentleness, what should be your reaction?
9. **Self-control:** You are at the mall with your mom. A new video game you've been wanting is on sale. You ask your mom whether she will get it for you, and she says no. What fruit do you need? (self-control) If you wanted to show self-control, what would you NOT do?

Our natural responses to many of these things are quite different from the way the Holy Spirit would have us act. But overtime, as we allow the Holy Spirit to be more and more a part of our lives, showing the fruit of the Spirit to other people becomes a way of life. What do you think it means to allow the Holy Spirit to be more a part of your life? By spending time with God—reading His Word every day, praying, choosing godly friends. Soon the fruit of the Spirit will become a part of your everyday life—a way of life.

Now, it's important to realize that the fruit of the Spirit is not a bunch of different fruits that we can pick and choose from. We can't say, *"I'll take love, joy and peace, but leave patience and self-control behind."* The Bible says the *"fruit of the Spirit is..."* not *"the fruits of the Spirit"*

are..." The fruit of the Spirit is NOT nine different types of fruit. It's one fruit with many parts.

It's like an orange; it has many sections. [Teacher, hand each child an orange and let him peel it. Then have him take a section out.] If you remove one section, how many types of fruit will you have? (One, an orange.) Is your orange whole now? (No, it's missing something.)

Just as our orange is not whole when we take out one of the sections, our lives are not complete if we don't have *all* the fruit of the Spirit.

We need to pray for God to give us the strength to be more like Jesus and for the fruit of the Spirit to fill us.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You so much for loving us and for coming to earth to show us how to live in a way that is pleasing to You. Help us to let the world know that we belong to You by the fruit that they see in our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Snack

Oranges

Game Center

What's My Fruit?

[Teacher, you can either ask these questions yourself, or let the children have turns asking them of the other children:]

1. This fruit makes me thoughtful to someone that doesn't even deserve it. What's my fruit? (Love)
2. This fruit makes me happy from the inside out, even when I'm having a bad day. What's my fruit? (Joy)
3. This fruit gives me the ability to help stop an argument between two people. What's my fruit? (Peace)
4. This fruit helps me forgive others when they do things that bug me. What's my fruit? (Patience)
5. This fruit gives me compassion for others and a willingness to do something for them without expecting to get anything in return. What's my fruit? (Kindness)
6. This fruit helps me actively look for opportunities to do what God says is the right thing to do. What's my fruit? (Goodness)
7. This fruit makes me true to my word. I always do what I say I'm going to do. What's my fruit? (Faithfulness)
8. This fruit helps me quietly put God's love into action. What's my fruit? (Gentleness)
9. This fruit gives me power over my reactions to people and situations. I am able to handle my thoughts, words, and actions, especially when I'm angry. What's my fruit? (Self-Control)

Conclude by asking the following discussion questions:

1. Which fruit of the Spirit is easiest for you to exhibit?
2. Which fruit is hardest for you to exhibit? Why?

[For more lessons for children, visit
<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>]

Living by the Spirit

(Galatians 5:22-23)

Introduction

Every day things around us tempt us. Sometimes in big ways and sometimes in very small ways, we are tempted to lie, cheat, be unkind, or disobey. We've been learning about the fruit of the Spirit and how God wants this fruit to grow in our lives so that other people will know what He is like. Today we're going to learn what it means to live by the Spirit.

Opening Prayer

Father, please help us learn today what it means to keep in step with Your Spirit. Help us know how to follow You. We praise You and love You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Memory Verse

Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. (Galatians 5:25 NLT)

Lesson

We've been learning a lot about the fruit of the Spirit. By now I think we understand pretty well what love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control look like. Those are all behaviors that please God. God gives us the fruit of the Spirit to help us live our lives in a way that is pleasing to Him.

For others to see the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, we need to do things God's way. We need to follow God's directions. It's a lot like following in another person's footsteps. If you follow in someone's steps, you do what they do. If you're following in the Spirit's steps you're keeping in step with Him; you'll be doing what the Spirit would do. The more we learn about Jesus, love him, and follow him, the more fruit we will see grow in our lives!

Walking in Step

[Have the children form pairs. Allow them to practice walking in each other's footsteps, like "*Follow the Leader*."] You can walk in a straight line, in curves, around obstacles, over things, or in whatever way you can think of. The "follower" must try to get his footsteps to land exactly where the "leader's" feet stepped. Experiment with walking closely and then farther behind. [Let the kids switch roles.]

- Was it hard or easy to follow your partner?
- Was it harder or easier when you were closer? Farther away?

When you kept your eyes closely on your partner, it was easier to follow him. When we keep our minds and hearts focused on God, it's easier to follow what He wants for our lives. Living by the Spirit means keeping our eyes on God so we can live to please Him. It means not living by our sinful nature.

What does living by the sinful nature mean? Each of us is born with a *want* to do things our own way. Our old sinful nature tempts us to do things that are against God. This is called our sinful nature.

Galatians 5 speaks a lot about the difference between living according to the Spirit and living according to the sinful nature.

Galatians 5:16-17

So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. (17) The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.

When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear. Look in your Bibles and read Galatians 5:19 – 21 to yourselves. When we follow Jesus, we don't want that sinful part of ourselves anymore. We want to do what Jesus would do in every situation.

It's important for us to understand what it means to live by the Spirit. Each time we're tempted to do something, we must ask ourselves, "*Is this something that would please God?*" If the answer is, "*No*" your sinful nature is in control of you.

Let me read a story to you about Ralph:

One day Ralph went for a walk. As he strolled down the lane, he passed many people. As he passed an old lady, he noticed a twenty-dollar bill drop from her purse onto the street. Suddenly, his head was filled with thoughts.

- What do you think his sinful nature said?
- What do you think the Spirit of God said?
- What would you choose to do?

*Ralph reached for the twenty-dollar bill and handed it to the old lady. She thanked him and he went on his way, feeling filled with **kindness** and **goodness**.*

Then, Ralph decided he'd go see a movie. There were four movies playing at the theater: one was a movie his mother would not let him see. But his mom was not with him now. Again, his head was filled with thoughts.

- What do you think his sinful nature said?
- What do you think the Spirit of God said?
- What would you choose to do?

*Ralph decided to see one of the movies that was OK with his mom. Suddenly he felt **peace** and **self-control**.*

After buying his ticket, Ralph received the wrong change. He had received change for a twenty when he had paid with a ten-dollar bill. He had too much change! His head again filled with thoughts.

- What do you think his sinful nature said?
- What do you think the Spirit of God said?
- What would you choose to do?

*Ralph handed the cashier the extra ten-dollar bill. The cashier nearly cried when she realized the mistake she had made and was relieved by Ralph's honesty and thanked him. Ralph's heart was filled with **faithfulness** and **joy**.*

Ralph walked into the theater and sat down. As he waited for his movie to begin, he realized that each time he had been tempted by his sinful nature, he had been wise enough to choose to live by the Spirit, not by his sinful nature. As a result, the fruit of the Spirit increased in his life.

Have you ever had your head filled with thoughts like these? When? What did you end up doing? Can you think of any ways your life has changed because of your good choices?

God hopes that we'll make choices to keep in step with His Holy Spirit. He knows that it's for our best to live this way. When we choose to live according to the Spirit, we grow closer to God and become more like Him. His personality begins to show more in our lives, and we begin to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit.

Role-Play Reactions

Form pairs and we'll take turns role-playing these different situations:

- You love to go in-line skating. One day after school your mom asks you to give the dog a bath before you go out to skate. Your friends can only skate for the next 45 minutes. Your sinful nature doesn't want to take the time to wash the dog first, maybe Mom won't notice. The Spirit tells you to obey your Mom. Act out what you would do.
- You're hungry when you come home from school and want a cookie really bad. Mom tells you to wait until after dinner. Your sinful nature wants to sneak into the kitchen, eat a cookie quickly, and then lie to your mom about it. The Spirit says to tell the truth, even if you get in trouble for it. Act out what you would do.

- A new kid comes to your school. She looks different from the other kids at your school. Your sinful nature wants to avoid her because she's different. The Spirit wants you to make friends with the new girl. Act out what you would do.
- You're playing on the playground at school. A bully comes by and steals your football. Your sinful nature wants to get even by stealing his lunch from his locker. The Spirit wants you to use your words to work out your problem. Act out what you would do.
- Your neighbor has a new dog, and she has invited you over to play and see the new dog. You really want to go, but Dad has said that you may not because dinner is almost ready. Your sinful nature wants to beg, whine and complain until you get your way. The Spirit wants you to accept your dad's decision and work toward another chance to see the neighbor's dog. Act out what you would do.
- You've been playing in the empty field behind the old grocery store and twist your ankle when you step into a hole. Your sinful nature wants you to lie to your parents about where you were when the accident happened. The Spirit wants you to tell the truth, no matter what kind of trouble you might get into. Act out what you would do.

Every day we make decisions: little decisions and big decisions. Sometimes we allow the Spirit to influence our choices; and other times we let our sinful natures influence us. As we live by the Spirit and keep in step with the Spirit, we begin to see the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. When we use the fruit of the Spirit to help us in difficult situations, we please God.

When we spend time in God's Word, and talk to God regularly, our fruit will start to grow! And it's going to grow and grow and grow, until it's overflowing in our lives. So when we have all this fruit growing in our lives—all this love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—what should we do with it?

God wants us to share it, to use it, and to give it away. The fruit of the Spirit helps others know what God's love looks like.

When we live our lives to please God, we become more and more like Him. As we do that, the fruit of the Spirit becomes more and more evident in our lives and other people will know that we have a close walk with Jesus.

We need to pray for God to help us in our actions, so that we can tell others what it means to be a Christian by simply behaving in ways that please our heavenly Father.

Closing Prayer

Father, please help us not to follow our sinful natures, but to follow your Holy Spirit. We love You so much. We know that we don't always do the things that please you. But Father, we know that you help us do what is right by growing the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Help us, Lord, to walk in Jesus' footsteps and show others love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. In Jesus' name, Amen.

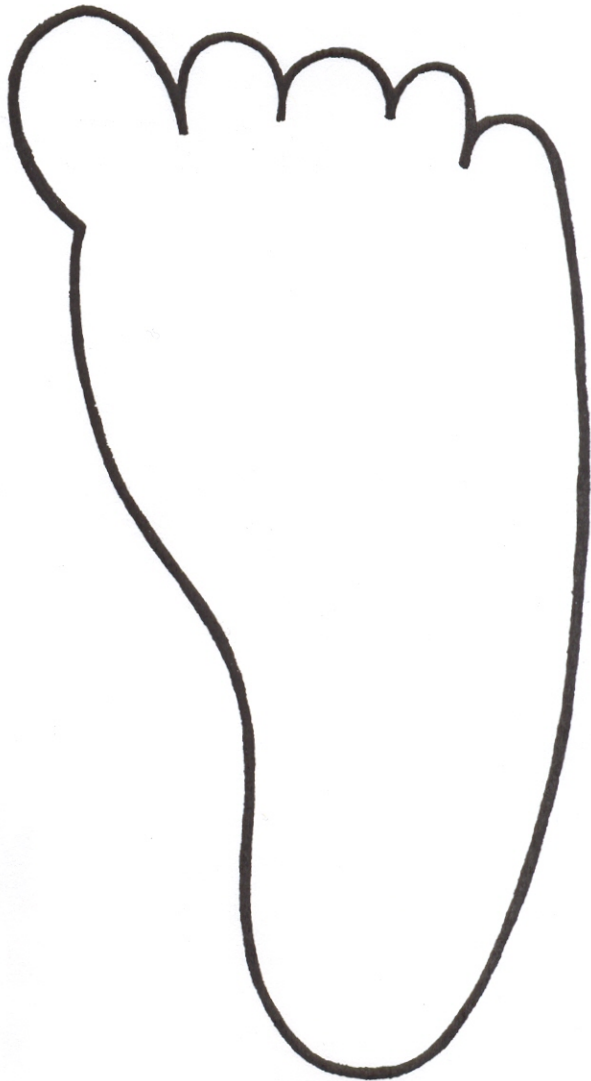
Learning Activities

Snack

Prepackaged fruit chew snacks.

Craft Corner

Make a large foot print pattern for the children to trace and cut out of construction paper. Have them write today's verse on it.



Game Center

Use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. What does it mean to live by the Spirit? (To choose to do things God's way.)
2. What can you do to make it easier to follow God and do what pleases Him? (Read the Word, pray, choose godly friends.)
3. What is the sinful nature? (Each of us is born with a *want to* do things our own way. Our old sinful nature tempts us to do things that are against God.)
4. Can you think of any ways your life has changed because of your good choices?
5. When we have all this fruit growing in our lives—all this love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—what should we do with it? (God wants us to share it, to use it, and to give it away.)
6. How will people know if you have a close walk with Jesus? (They'll see the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.)

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