
Fruit of the Spirit for Children's Curriculum, Grades 1-3+

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This is designed for church based or camp, children's ministry for grades 1 through 3. This can be adapted for grades 4-8 by incorporating the teachers study into the talking points. At the end of this curriculum is more for older youth, family devotions and sermon tie-ins.

The Fruit of the Spirit is God's love for you that is flowing into and then out of you!

Key Passages you can use: Habakkuk 2:4; John 14, 15; Romans 5:1-5; 12:1-21; 1 Corinthians 12:1-14:40; Galatians 5:16-26; Ephesians 4:1-6:20; Philippians 2:13; 2 Peter 1:3-9

What does a Christian look like? What should a Christian look like? In this series, we will explore the essential power God gives us to know Him, build our faith, have great temperament, build a wonderful church and even be a good witness.

Lesson One, Introduction, Got Fruit?

Principle passages: Habakkuk 2:4; John 14, 15; Galatians 5:16-26;

Teachers Study: The Fruit of the Spirit is God's love and active work in us, the love of Christ flowing in and then through us by His Holy Spirit. So we have God's love and power in and out of us! All because we have a personal relationship with Christ, we have God's living presence in us, living in us. And that power is His Fruit! The most powerful tool to know God and make Him known to others!

The result is we have the ability to reflect His Fruit and character. In addition, this is a moral obligation on our part to live out our New Life in Christ effectively. This then becomes our visible evidence of our relationship and growth in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior that is contagious and affects others. It is your job of a teacher to those most precious little ones or big one, which your relationship with Christ is marked by Fruit, and theirs can be too.

We 'display' Christ by our manner, demeanor, and temperament.

Thus, the Fruit we make becomes the influence and the display case of His transforming power. We do not do this alone; He gives us the Holy Spirit, God's active love and work within and through us so we bear and convey His attributes of Fruit and character.

This means we "cultivate," *add to* as in *supplement* His Fruit, God's empowering love for us, which we are given and then we are to continue to build up by our faith development so we are able to pass this on to others (Isa. 27:6; Hos. 10:1; 14:8; Matt. 3:8; Rom. 6:22; Eph. 5:9; Phil. 1:11).

This Fruit cultivation and production by our walk with Christ creates and sets the tone for our behaviors and conduct with one another. This shows off our Lord; as we know Him, we make Him known just by our attitude. This is a cooperative endeavor that happens with our growing and close, intimate relationship with Christ. As we grow in faith, which is our devotion, trust, obedience and conviction in Him, we make more and better Fruit. All this by what we add to, and what He then multiplies. Like rolling a snowball on fresh fallen snow. Just like adding yeast to the dough makes it grow, but in our case it is not meager air, it is The Holy Spirit at work in us.

This synergy of our faith in Christ is to facilitate our active pursuit of Love as a spiritual Fruit that is built from our wondrous and incredible collaboration that we have with God to produce real, godly commitment, conviction, and the demonstration of our obedience. This is what helps form our character and mature, effectual Christian life. It gives us the fiber of our moral center that stretches throughout our being, embracing and holding our relationships and opportunities together when it is sealed as a choice and commitment, and not just a feeling.

The Fruit of the Spirit will synergistically combine with the other godly characteristics of our Lord to promote our ability to relate and grow in our personal faith. In so doing, we grow in our relationships, to be better to and for Him as well as others and ourselves.

This is the essential essence, which builds healthy families, marriages, and relationships in general, as well as healthy churches—all because we are modeling Christ! In so doing, we become His display case (John 1:1, 14; 14:23; Gal. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 John 4:8; 14-15).

Your kids can learn about this most powerful and useful resource we have as Christian. The essential means to build up a great personality, key relationship skills, life skills and the best evangelistic tool too!

Bible memory passage: *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.* Galatians 5:22-23

Object Lesson: Prior, get two nice fruit bowls. One, place nice ripe yummy fruit in. In the other bowl, place rotten yucky fruit in. You can also use fake or wax fruit. Show both bowls, ask "which one would you like to get into?" Why? Field answers. Say, "How we are with the fruit God gives us is how we look to the people who are around us. Like, your friends, siblings, teachers, neighbors and so forth? Do you look like a rotten

banana? Or a nice ripe apple? If we were fruit, which fruit would you like to hang around with? So, if you were a fruit which are you? Which one should you be?

Talking Points: The fruit of the spirit is God's love for you, a love that is flowing into and then out of you!

How and why? All because we have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. When we have Jesus living in our hearts, he should also be living in our mind and behavior, right?

Well, that is why Jesus gives us this fruit and He wants us to grow it so we can work it. If we do not grow it, well you can see in the second bowl what that looks like. And we all know people who can be like that, which is why we need this so much. The friends you like to hang with are like which bowl? Which bowl do people see in you?

Ask: Who knows what the Fruits of the Spirit are? These are the fruits: *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*

Did you know that when we have *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*, we have Jesus's living presence in us, living in us?

What will this look like? Like that nice bowl. What you are doing is reflected, like a mirror, Jesus' Fruit and character. Then we become the picture of our relationship and growth in Jesus Christ, because He is our Lord and Savior. Then, here is the best part, we become contagious for the faith! Do you know what contagious means? Yes like being sick and people will catch our cold. But in this case your friends and others may catch what is living in you and that is.... Jesus! This is another reason why the Fruit of the Spirit is so important! It is the main tool we have to tell other people, even without using words, why Jesus.

The Fruit of the Spirit is Jesus's empowering love for us, which He gives and then we are to build it up. It is like building a sand castle at the beach, you have the sand, you have an ocean of water, if you bring a pail and a shovel, and have some time, you can build a great big sand castle. So it is like how we grow our faith, so we are able to pass what Jesus is like on to others.

The Fruit of the Spirit will help Lord to grow our faith in Jesus. Do you remember what else it will do?

Grow in our relationships with friends and family and others, to be better to others and ourselves. This is the essential sand that builds the castle of healthy families, churches-all because we are modeling Jesus! And we will become His display case!

(Isa. 27:6; Hos. 10:1; 14:8; Matt. 3:8; John 1:1,14; 14:23; Gal. 5:16; Rom. 6:22; Eph. 5:9; Phil. 1:11; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 John 4:8; 14-15).

Optional Questions: What does a Christian look like?

What should a Christian look like?

What is the essential power God gives us to know Him and build our faith?

How can you be more likable even be a good witness?

Craft Idea: Have kids draw a nice ripe fruit and a rotten fruit, and next to each, draw a person reacting to each fruit.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, help us learn what comes from our mouths and behaviors can help or hurt others. Help us be available to know your Holy Spirit, so He fills us, and uses us to be people who can love, be kind and be joyful for you.

Lesson Two, God's Fruit of LOVE:

Principle passages: John 13:1; 15:13; 1 Corinthians 13:3-8; Galatians 5:22-23; 1 John 4:16

Teachers Study: The Fruit of the Spirit is described as a fruit because it is made up of more than one substance. Just like any fruit from a tree, such as an apple or an orange, it has juice, pulp, peel, core, segments, and seeds, all held together by a skin or rind, and attached to the tree by a stem where its nutrients flow in so it can be formed, grow and mature. So it is with our relationship with Christ.

If you just eat of the pulp or juice and throw out the rest, how can you grow more without the seeds? If you take the fruit off the vine and do not use it, no nutrients will flow in and thus it will wither and rot. If the vine or tree is not properly cared for, the tree will get sick, not grow right and even die. So it is with the Fruit of the Spirit, and so it is with our relationship with Christ as well as our relationships with others for the faith. God makes it and it requires the efforts of our fostering this spiritual development from our growth of faith that necessitates our tending. It is more than just one substance; all of its substance combined are greater than the sum of its parts creating "synergy" of faith.

Thus, the Fruit of the Spirit is the physical, empowering essence from our healthy, growing relationship with the Holy Spirit that gives us the active application of a transformed life that showcases who Christ is as well as inspires and affects others. In order to become more mature believers and build healthier churches, we must learn and understand these essential attributes (Hab. 2:4; John 15; Rom. 12; Phil. 2:13).

This first fruit is **Love**. Real Love is not just a feeling or a poem, it is an action, to choose to love. Love will help us be unselfish and loyal. This will enable us to appreciate our brothers and sisters in the Lord and, of course, our family and others around us. Love is taking the initiative to build up and meet the needs of others, without expecting anything in return.

We must allow *love* to be the foundation of our relationships-the love of our Lord that He gives us. Love manifests patience and kindness and it is not greedy or jealous; it is not prideful nor brags of one's accomplishments. It is not rude or self-seeking, and it allows one not to be easily angered. By this, we do not keep record of others wrongs or enjoy it when bad things happen to others; rather, we rejoice with others to build them up. Love always looks after others, shows trust, hope, and always carries on. Love encapsulates the purpose and role of Fruit, and thus, our furthestmost goal, as followers of Christ, is to do all things in love.

Bible memory passage: *Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.* Proverbs 3:3

Object Lesson: Prior, get two #10 cans of fruit salad (the big cans). Then, empty one out and use it for the snack. Rinse out the can and fill it with yucky junk. Like garbage or broken things. Open the second can and be ready to serve it to the kids in small cups and a plastic spoon. Say, we have two cans of fruit, which can do you want? They look the same do they not? (Have an assistant serve the kids) Now, let's think about the heart of a person who is caring and kind. What are they like? Now, think about a person who is nasty and mean. What are they like? What is the main thing missing from the nasty person that the kind person has (Jesus and or love)? Both of these cans look the same right? What is the difference? How is this like our hearts? As a Christian what should be in our hearts? (Jesus and love) Now, what we are learning about is the Fruit of the Spirit, which is made in our hearts because of our relationship with Jesus. The heart that is kind, has love in it. If you have Jesus living in you then you will have love flowing out of you. The heart that tends to be nasty has what? Garbage.... A heart that has love is like what?

Talking Points: What we are learning is the Fruit of the Spirit. Do you remember what it is? Yes, it is when God's love is living in us and flow out of us so we make fruit, like *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*, we have Jesus's living presence in us, living in us? Well, today we are going to check out the first fruit, do you know what that is? Yes, it is LOVE!

Real Love is not just a feeling or a rhyme, it is choosing an action to love. Love desires to seek and apply what God has to say. So, when we have love flowing in and out of our hearts we will be like?

Do you know the opposite of love is? It is hate. And the imitation is envy, which is desiring something that is not good for us.

Jesus will be empowering our healthy, growing relationship with the Holy Spirit that will give us a transformed life. Do you know what transformed means? We will show who Christ is as well as encourage and touch others with God's love.

Why do you think this is so important to making friends? Or inviting someone to church? Or having a better home life?

In order to become more 'ripe' believers and build our healthy church, we must learn and understand and pass on God's love. Love will help us be unselfish and loyal (Hab. 2:4; John 15; Rom. 12; Phil. 2:13).

Thus, the Fruit of the Spirit of LOVE is our model for life. It must flow into us from Christ, and in then flow out from us to those around us. Like filling a picture full of punch, then using that pitcher to fill up the glasses for a party. God is like the juice, the Holy Spirit is like the pitcher and when He is at work in us, we are filling the cups of peoples' lives. How cool is that, being used by God?

When we have that can of junk in our hearts we will be disliking people who are different or deliberately hating what Jesus loves! Not having real love will leave us empty and alone.

God's love is the ultimate power for us Christians. We are to be 'supper powered' by love in all situations. So we are more concerned with others and our neighbors. Because, real love takes us from being just selfish and helps us help others and be kind to them. We will be interested in their interest not just ours. If not, as the passage of 1 Corinthians 13:3 would say, we become just an annoying noise.

You see, out of true love, God the Father gave us His Son, and the Son gave His life in replacement for ours. The Son sent the Holy Spirit to save us, and we should be overwhelmed with extreme joy and gratitude for what God has done for us.

Optional Questions: Is Love working in you?

Here is how you can find out. Take a careful look the fruit of Love from God's most precious Word then ask yourself:

How do I show Love in my life?

What can I do to develop a better attitude of Love?

What blocks Love in my life?

How can I make Love function better, stronger and faster, even in times of fear and stress?

Optional Idea: Tell the Bible Story from one or more of these passages:

Positive examples from Scripture (1 Sam. 20:17; Matt. 13:35; 1 John 4).

Here are negative examples from Scripture (Matt. 6:5; 23:6; 1 John 4:19; Rev. 2:4)

Craft Idea: Get red and white and other colored construction paper and make heart shaped cards (or younger kids precut them out) and have them write a word(s) about

who and how we can love them. Draw a group poster of this Fruit of the Spirit and if you do each of the Fruits, you can then display them in your church lobby.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, help us feel your love, help us know your love, help us receive more of your love and help us flow that love to our family and friends and others you bring into our lives.

Lesson Three, The Fruit of the Spirit is JOY!

Principle passages: Psalm 32:7-9; Proverbs 15:13; John 15:11; 17:13; 2 Cor. 12:9; James 1:1-4; 1 Peter 4:12-19; Heb. 10:34

Teachers Study: Joy is a character that most people get wrong. It is not about being happy; rather it is enjoying our relationship with Christ, His creation, others, and our circumstances. And then, with an expression of delight and real, authentic happiness from and with harmony with God and others. This is why we are called to *Count it joy*, this refers to declaring our situation as happy and fulfilling. It is to change our mindset and focus.

Thus, Joy realizes the sovereignty of God and that He is in control, even when life seems to be turned upside down and inside out!

When we do not have the joy of the Lord as our strength, we will get into distress, sorrow, despair and regret, the opposites of God's call and plan! Despair limits us like a ball and chain of growth and the enjoyment of life because we become consumed with our circumstances. Regret is when we have lost control of our attitude and response. Distress cuts us off from relationships, learning, experiences and God. Not adding joy in our life leads to depression that cuts us off from seeing hope and purpose and what life and eternity are all about!

Joy will help us see that life and purpose is all about who God is, and not who I am (Psalm 15; 101; 2 Thess. 1:12; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:1).

Joy is indispensable for sharing love, it is being confident in our faith. It is not just what you know; it is Who you know. He is Christ. Your love of Jesus is the picture other people need to see so they can better see Him (Joshua 1:8-9; 2 Cor. 1:24)!

When we know we have the Good News, we will know Jesus, not just as a Savior, but as LORD (Luke 6:46)!

Jesus is to be all things to us. Is He Lord of your life, too? Joy helps us understand God's perspective and gives us the confidence and patience to endure anything! This realization impacts and fuels us to endure the toughness of life and to proclaim Jesus to others. Because we are confident in His power and impact, we will

live in Him and show Christ to others. I know that in my life, my effectiveness is directly correlated to my walk and my prayer life. How much I trust and obey becomes the power that helps me get through life when it seems dark and foreboding, and Joy will help you too.

We need to realize that we have no control over what happens to us at times, whether it be trials, suffering, setbacks, injury, sickness, or death of a loved one. We only have control of our attitude and response. We are called to choose to declare our situation joy! We cannot change our circumstances; however, we can accept them by learning and growing from them (Isa. 26:3). It does no good to complain, to fret, or to be angry or bitter, as these things do neither others nor us any good. All that complaining, just escalates the situation and blinds us to our ability to be better and not bitter! Real, authentic, Christian maturity will grow as a result of our problems. They will strengthen us and make us better, stronger, and able to get over things faster and get on with our lives. Then, we will be able to be of better use to God and to others.

The key is for us to look to Christ, not to our situation, and declare our circumstances as joy.

We are to be content and satisfied, to face them, and then learn and grow from them. This does not mean giving up and do nothing; it means to refocus our energies into productivity and faith-not questions and bitterness. It is to have our convictions and fulfillment in Christ, not circumstances. So, when something very difficult comes upon us, we will have the great comfort that God is in control and will not allow us to carry more than we can tolerate. Our joy and purpose in life is Christ, and our relationship with Him! Will you allow yourself to become less, and Him to become more (John 3:30)? If not, what is in the way?

Young people need to know about Joy, because the world is teaching them happiness comes from things and circumstances, and as Christians real effectual Joy comes from Jesus!

Bible memory passage: *"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."* John 15:11

Object Lesson: Get some, big candy bars and starburst candy and display them. Ask, what makes you happy? Candy? Ice cream? Bugs? Grandma gives you presents? A new toy? Or? How do you feel after the candy is gone and grandma has gone home? Well, joy is not necessarily happiness, but being content in Who Jesus is so He is always present and our relationship with Him gives us a permanent Joy! Pass out a starburst candy section to each kid.

Talking Points: What we are learning is the Fruit of the Spirit. Do you remember what they are? How fast can you say them? Remember, it is when God's love is living in us and flow out of us so we make fruit, like *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*, we have Jesus's living presence in us, living in

us? Well, today we are going to check out the second fruit, do you know what that is? Yes, it is JOY!

Joy is not just being happy; it is enjoying our relationship with Jesus, His creation, others, with delight. Because our happiness comes from relationship with God and others. Did you know that we are called in James 1 to *Count it joy*, this means to say that our situation is happy and fulfilling even when it is difficult. So, we are to change our mindset and focus when we can't change our circumstances.

Do you know the opposite of Joy is? Distress and the imitation are fake happiness or misplaced passion.

Thus, we can be happy and not grouchy. Joy realizes God is in charge and in control, even when life seems to be turned upside down and inside out (Psalm 32:7-9; Proverbs 15:13; John 15:11; 17:13; 2 Cor. 12:9; James 1:1-4; 1 Peter 4:12-19; Heb. 10:34)!

The key to have Joy is for us to look to Christ, not to our situation. We are to be satisfied in Jesus not stuff like toys and food, and then learn and grow. This is so we are not mean or bitter.

What can you do to place Joy in your life. If you are having problems take a serious look at despair and where it will get you, because there can be no delight without joy! You can have no true happiness without joy. What we go through, what we give up is in no comparison to what we gain in Christ!

Joy is not happiness, because we may not be happy and pleased with it; rather, joy is hope; it is our hope in Christ. We will face problems; they are unavoidable, and unpredictable! How we deal with them is important for our life and faith. There is no escape living in a sinful world (Gal. 3:26; Col. 3:1-4)!!

Our joy and purpose in life is Christ, and our relationship with Jesus! So, when something very difficult comes upon us, we will have the great comfort that God is in control and will not allow us to carry more than we can tolerate.

Optional Questions: Is Joy working in you?

Here is how you can find out. Take a careful look the fruit of Joy from God's most precious Word then ask yourself:

How do I show Joy in my life?

What can I do to develop a better attitude of Joy?

What blocks Joy in my life?

How can I make Joy function better, stronger and faster, even in times of fear and stress?

Optional Idea: Tell the Bible Story from one or more of these passages:

Here are positive examples from Scripture (Ex.14: 1-21; 1 Sam. 1:19; 2:10; Luke 10:17-21; 15:22-32; Acts 16:19-34)

Here is are negative examples from Scripture (Ruth 1:19-21; Job 3:1-19; John 11:17-44)

Craft Idea: Get 3*5 cards, markers and yarn. Have kids draw pictures and or write words, what makes them joyful. Then make a mobile out of them. As they do that, ask them, how does Christ make you joyful. Draw a group poster of this Fruit of the Spirit.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, teach us what true Joy is. Help fill our hearts with your overflowing love for us and fill our hearts with the Joy that flows from the inside and out to others.

Lesson Four, The Fruit of the Spirit is PEACE!

Principle passages: Isa. 26:3; Matthew 5:9; Luke 19:42; John 14:27; 16:33; Rom. 5:1; 12:18; Colossians 3:15; Philippians 4:7

Teachers Study: **Peace** is surrendering and yielding ourselves to the Lord to be in His control, for He is our ultimate peace! Allowing tranquility to be our tone and control our composure. This will be fueled from our harmonious relationship with God to hand over control of our heart, will and mind over to Him. Once we make real peace with God, we will be able to make and maintain peace with others.

Chaos and turmoil are the opposites. This can range from seeking destruction and chaos to being a distrustful and impatient person, which will bring you despair. You will be unable to build positive relationships or handle difficult situations. You will have an "I must have control" orientated personality and be unable or unwilling to give yourself to God and others.

John tells us that He must increase and we must decrease (John 3:29-30). If we refuse this vital call, God just may allow those hardships to come our way, breaking us down so we will yield and grow as His child.

Colossians makes the definition clear: "*compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience*", then say they were put together with, forgiveness and love, and that they operate in the parameters of peace and wisdom. Because wisdom and peace, promote virtue and love and forgiveness demonstrates this virtue we all need to have (Col. 3:12-17). So, Peace is a fruit that comes from the tree of love that is fruited with wisdom, pruned with virtue, watered with forgiveness producing the sweet fruits of "*compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience*".

Do you have peace in your church? If not, remember those who seed strife and make divisions in the Church are not doing Christ's work, but are attempting to gratify their own selves. They cause people to follow a person and not the Person of Christ! Contentious, divisive people will cause others to stumble, so they must be avoided, and disciplined, which means removing them from fellowship if they persist (Rom. 16: 17-24; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; 2 Thess. 3:6; 2 Tim. 3:5; Titus 3:10)!

Your kids need to know about real peace, because their world is filled with more problems and stress than ever before.

Bible memory passage: *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."* John 14:27

Object Lesson: Talk to your kids about the peace the world offers. Like, a quiet vacation, the beach, a spa... Or hold up pictures from a magazine that depicts peace. Then read one of the Bible passages. Then say the world offers us "peace" that will not last and will not solve real problems. So, what is the peace we really need? Only Jesus brings us real peace.

Talking Points: What we are learning is the Fruit of the Spirit. Do you remember what it is? Yes, it is when God's love is living in us and flowing out of us so we make fruit, like *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*, we have Jesus's living presence in us, living in us? Well, today we are going to check out the third fruit, do you know what that is? Yes, it is PEACE!

Read; Acts 27:21-25, In Acts 27 the Apostle Paul had a very hard time trying to get to Rome. He had the opportunity to go before the supreme ruler of the western world, Caesar, speak to many officials about Who is Jesus and help encourage the church in Rome. But, he had a hard time getting there. Remember, two thousand years ago, there were no planes, trains, cars or powered boats. Everyone was at the mercy of the elements of weather, bad roads, robbers, wild animals and in Paul's case, a great storm that would last many days.

Paul was a prisoner and in the company of Romans soldiers, where he was escorted on a passenger ship with sails. And soon they get caught in a great storm. Paul tells the captain keep going it will be OK. But, they panicked and changed course right into the bigger part of the storm and for 14 days, they were tossed about by the waves with no food and then the ship crashed on the rocks off an island. Paul keeps his peace, calms the men down, offers ways they can get through this, keeps encouraging them and stops them from killing him and the rest of the prisoners.

So, in this time Paul was in a hurricane for 14 days and then is shipwrecked. Do you think Paul was sacred? How would you be? In all this chaos for many days, his life

in constant jeopardy, Paul seemed calm and at peace. Why do you think he could be peaceful? How can you be peaceful when tough times come?

Paul realized he could do nothing, but trust in Jesus and hang on for the ride. Just as we can do. No matter what comes our way, we can pray, we can do our best, and we can Trust in Jesus.

Do you know what Peace is? It means that as a Christian, we can trust in Christ and not worry, even in tough times. Then, we can yield ourselves to the Lord to be in His control.

Why? Because Jesus is our ultimate peace! When we do this, we can allow peace be our main setting, and we can control our reactions. How do we do this? This will be coming from our growing relationship with God when we hand over control of our heart, will and mind over to Him. Once we make real peace with God, we will be able to make and maintain peace with others.

Peace can be maintained for a time like a dog walking on two feet. They can do it, but not very good and not for very long. So, when the realities of life come upon us, like bad stuff, peace can be impossible unless we let Jesus's peace reign in us!

When we do not let go we will get mad at God and lose our emotions and get angry and lash out and hurt others. Peace is learning to let go of our will and plans. So we can have calmness from the understanding that God is in charge and we can relax because He is in control. Peace is the recognition that our biggest problem has been solved! It is the stillness we have when our trust is upon Christ as Lord (Psalm 46:10).

When we are on the verge of giving up, or losing our hope, peace can be the anchor to keep us on His path, to see His hope, to let it give you the confidence to keep moving on His path.

Remember the Fruits of the Spirit are all to work together, neither one can work by itself as they are designed to work all together to build us up for His service.

Optional Questions: Is Peace working in you?

Here is how you can find out. Take a careful look the fruit of Love from God's most precious Word then ask yourself:

How do I show Peace in my life?

What can I do to develop a better attitude of Peace?

What blocks Peace in my life?

How can I make Peace function better, stronger and faster, even in times of fear and stress?

Optional Idea: Tell the Bible Story from one or more of these passages:

Here are positive examples from Scripture (Psalm 27:1-6; Luke 1:26-38; 2:25-32; John 14:25-31; Acts 27:21-25)

Here is are negative examples from Scripture (II Sam. 15:1-13; Matt. 2:13-18; 26:69-75; 27:1-7; Luke 8:22-25)

Craft Idea: Have kids draw a picture of peace, allow their creativity, or build a 'peace machine' from leftover craft supplies. Discuss what they drew or make. Draw a group poster of this Fruit of the Spirit.

Prayer: Dear Lord help us trust in you more so we can hand over the control of our hearts and minds so you are more and we are also more at peace.

Lesson Five, The Fruit of the Spirit is PATIENCE!

Principle passages: Hos. 2:19-23; Psalm 33:20; Matthew 27:14; Romans 5:3; 12:12; Gal. 5:1; Col. 1:11; James 1:3-4,12; 5:10-11

Object Lesson: Tell a story how you used patience in a tough situation as you slowly peel an apple. Or, make lemon aid. Write on several of the lemons, school, stress, fear, and ask kids what to write on some of them. Then cut and squeeze them in pitchers of premade lemon aid. When life gives you lemons of sourness, you can squeeze them by God's power into lemon aide, then serve.

Teachers Study: Patience, is showing tolerance and fortitude toward others, even accepting difficult situations from them, and God, without making demands or conditions. Patience allows us to endure a less than desirable situation to make us better and more useful and even optimistic and prudent. Hence, its other name is long-suffering. It allows us to put up with others who get on our nerves, without losing other characteristics of grace.

Impatience, annoyance, intolerance, worry, fear, and distrust are the opposites of Patience. These prevent us from seeing, as our Lord wants us to see, that all things will work for His good in the end (Rom. 8:28). We should hang on, place our trust in Him, and not let the temporary things of life bother or distract us from our purpose and call.

Patience is an essential aspect toward maturity and growth as a Christian, yet it is not a fun thing to obtain. We, as fallen humanity, do not like to wait, especially in our fast paced, and fast food society. We may cry out to God and ask that He give us Patience, NOW! Yet, if He did, would we have it? It is not likely, as it needs to grow through difficulties so it can build and improve. It is not something we get off the shelf of a bookstore.

Patience will allow us to receive and participate in God's love as it builds loyalty and faithfulness, as in the life of Hosea.

It will take us beyond our comfort zone into an area we do not want to go. Yet, when we do, we are better and more able to be used by God and to be available for others. Without Patience, we cannot be used effectively in the lives of others, as they will seem repugnant to us, and we will be callous and unsympathetic towards them. Patience will allow us to manage anger and problems, and to wait on God's timing. Patience will allow us to forgive (Rom. 5:8), as Christ forgave us and has Patience with us.

Patience will allow us to endure and go on, even when we do not feel like it. It will see the hope that is ahead, when the clouds of our lives and experiences block its view from our site. Patience will allow us to cling to Christ no matter what happens. Patience is hanging on to what is good. When we are impatient, we will miss a lot in life, especially in our relationships, because we will give up too easily. Allow the Potter to put you on His wheel and form you in His time!

To understand patience is to understand our God who is sovereign and in control! God's mighty hand was in the environment and in humanity before the beginning of time, and continues today and on to eternity. He will judge the quick (alive) and the dead (Acts 10:42; 1 Peter 4:5; The Apostolic Creed). He made the universe; He made you for a plan and a purpose. You are no mistake or back-up idea; therefore, you are wanted and have a destiny. Thus, we are called to realize the importance of seeing Christ and applying His Lordship to our lives.

We have no knowledge of God's timing! It seems that God is slow to us, but He is in absolute control and we can have patience and trust in Him and His timing.

We are impatient with our thinking and expectations, whereas God is patient, allowing His grace and plan to work out. We are called to be obedient and workout and at times wait actively in His Word and truth. When our perseverance and patience is working we can endure and not give up (Luke 8:15; 21:19). We who are in Christ are blessed by God's grace by our covenant relationship with Christ who comes to us and saves us. This is significant as it echoes what Christ has and will do for us. God is good, and the only ones who are good are those who are in right standing with God. Christ gives us this, which we do not deserve. Our patience comes from our Trust in the LORD. As it denotes, to place our faith in God so we have conviction and commitment to know Him and rely on Him (Ex. 14:32; Psalm 37:3; Prov. 3:5; Jer. 39:18; Nahum 1:7; Acts 14:23).

Your kids need to know that the Fruits of the Spirit are not options, it is who we are to be as Christians!

Bible memory passage: *"We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield."* Psalm 33:20 Remember, the Fruits of the Spirit are not options!

Talking Points: What we are learning is the Fruit of the Spirit. Do you remember what it is? Yes, it is when God's love is living in us and flow out of us so we make fruit, like *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*, we have Jesus's living presence in us, living in us? Well, today we are going to check out the fourth fruit, do you know what that is? Yes, it is PATIENCE!

Did you know that our God has steadfast love for us, do you know what that means? Jesus is here, even when others make it difficult for us? When we feel fearful and confused, and wonder if God is there—even when we do not feel or see Him, we have hope. His Love is persistent, and this prime Character, Who He is, means 'long-suffering' God and He empowers us to be so too.

God shows us His love, grace, and mercy for His purpose. We can take comfort in that He is a God of grace and mercy and is patient with us when we do not deserve it. He just seeks our love and trust. Therefore, we have no need to be impatient or be confused or allow the teasing or meanness of others to keep us from His purpose and plan (John 6:39).

Patience will allow us to receive and participate in God's love as it builds loyalty and faithfulness. It will take us beyond our comfort zone into an area we do not want to go. Yet, when we do, we are better and more able to be used by God and to be available for others.

Without Patience, we cannot be used much in the lives of our friends or others, as they will seem scary or too weird to us, and we may be mean and uncaring towards them.

Patience will allow us to control our anger and problems, and to wait on God's timing. Patience will allow us to forgive (Rom. 5:8), as Christ forgave us and has Patience with us.

Patience will allow us to endure and go on, even when we do not feel like it. It will see the hope that is ahead, when the clouds of our lives and experiences block its view from our site. Patience will allow us to cling to Christ no matter what happens. Patience is hanging on to what is good. When we are impatient, we will miss a lot in life, especially in our relationships, because we will give up too easily.

Optional Questions: Is Patience working in you?

Here is how you can find out. Take a careful look the fruit of Patience from God's most precious Word then ask yourself:

How do I show Patience in my life?

What can I do to develop a better attitude of Patience?

What blocks Patience in my life?

How can I make Patience function better, stronger and faster, even in times of fear and stress?

Optional Idea: Tell the Bible Story from one or more of these passages:

Here are positive examples from Scripture (Gen. 39:19-23; Job 1:13-22; Matt. 27:11-14; James 5:7-11)

Here are negative examples from Scripture (Num. 20:1-12; 1 Sam. 13:8-14; 2 Kings 6:33; Luke 10:38-42)

Craft Idea: Make fruit loop neckless, need string and fruit loops. Optionally, make medal medallions and have kids write Patience on them. Draw a group poster of this Fruit of the Spirit.

Prayer: Dear Lord help us learn and know what patience is and create in us more about you so we act and react more like you.

Lesson Six, The Fruit of the Spirit is KINDNESS!

Principle passages: Romans 2:1-4; 12:9-21; Ephesians 4:32; Col. 3:12-14; 1 John 3:16-23

Teachers Study: Kindness is the medium through which Christ's love becomes tangible through us.

It is practicing benevolence and a loving attitude towards others. Kindness is the essence that shows the world that we are a Christian, like the fragrance coming from a flower. It is being convicted by God's Word, and then modeling it to others. Kindness is the subject to the object of who we are in Christ!

Cruelty, spitefulness, being mean, and holding grudges are the opposites. This can include seeking to harm someone, being cruel and rude, or just ignoring people you do not like. God created us for relationships, and when we ignore this, we fail in the most important aspect in life besides our relationship with Him!

We live in a world that accepts cruelty as being cool. Just look at TV and the movies. However, the Christian is called to be higher, while at the same time, lower. This means to be higher in our character and lower by acceptance of others (as long as it does not bring us down to their level!). Kindness is beyond just being accepting, liberal, or open minded. It is a thoughtful consideration to one another, putting ourselves in their shoes. We are called to be kind to enemies (Luke 6:34-35), to strangers (Lev. 19:34), to family (Duet. 22:1) and to the outcasts (Life of Jesus).

Kindness is not something we confront. It is something we proclaim! We must change our behaviors to reflect Christ's treatment of us in how we treat others, on the road, in our work, school, and family. As society gets more complicated and crowded, kindness will gradually disappear, which makes it increasingly needed. Let us "step up to the plate" of treating and serving others as Christ would (1 John 3:16-23).

Kindness allows our interests and attitudes to be focused upon Christ's precepts, and pouring them out on others. This will replace all the bitterness, malice, and slander—all that is wrong in relationships and life—if we are willing to receive it from above, and will allow it to be poured out from us. It is being willing to take the risk, and go for it—regardless of the outcome.

When we develop kindness from adversity, it will be the essential component for us to grow in our faith and maturity, and the proof that we have an honest, tangible, growing relationship with Christ as the Lord of our lives!

Character is not just having integrity or honesty, or even doing the right thing at the right time. It is not the only aspect of a personality. What is real character? It is the ensuring of a continual, constant, living, growing relationship with Christ, which produces a synergistic combination of the Fruit of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22-23 and 1 Peter 1:5-11. This is what produces good, Christ-like temperament so we can be kind. It is not just what Christ would do, but what He would have us do.

Bible memory passage: *"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."* Ephesians 4:32

Object Lesson: "Speak a blessing" to someone! Let me show you a neat trick how to be kind. Well, it is not so much a trick. It is called a blessing. Like you see someone you can say, Good job being kind, Nancy. Or I am so glad you are my friend Jason. What blessings can you think of?

Talking Points: What we are learning is the Fruit of the Spirit. Do you remember what it is? Yes, it is when God's love is living in us and flow out of us so we make fruit, like *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*, we have Jesus's living presence in us, living in us? Well, today we are going to check out the fifth fruit, do you know what that is? Yes, it is Kindness!

Real Christian kindness is not just our manners; it is a change of our hearts. Kindness is our compassion that we use because God has so touched us, so we are sensitive and compassionate toward others. Do you know what compassion means? Can you think of some examples?

If our heart is hard on the inside and we are trying to show good on the outside, it is not real kindness, and it will not last. We will be neither tender nor sensitive, and we will not respond as we should. So, real Kindness cannot be faked, it has to come from within us because it is poured out to us from our Lord.

Kindness is built from a consistent life of worship, devotion, and learning about Jesus, being real and impacting, of learning and trying, yet continuing to be kind anyway. The Fruit of kindness is the willingness to allow the love within ourselves to be poured out to others, powered by God's grace and teachings. Character is the main machine that tells others who we are.

Our fruit powers our character. It is the start button from which comes all we do and say in life. It is the measuring ruler to what we do to others. It is the storybook of our lives that tells of our personality, maturity and faith.

Developing solid biblical character, even in tough times, both positive and the negative, the setbacks and the triumphs, then applying them to our lives, will make us better, more of use to God. We will be much better able to deal with our family, friends, and all those we touch in life.

When we have the grasp of God's kindness and love, the response that must ooze from the pores of our heart is kindness.

Read Ephesians 4:31-5:2. This passage gives us not only the picture of this happening, but also the dangers of our pores getting clogged up with our selfishness and anger, resulting in anger and being mean.

We must change our behaviors in how we treat others—in homes at church and schools—to reflect how Christ treats us. As society gets thornier, mean and crowded, kindness will decrease more and more, which makes its need greater and greater. Let us step up to the plate of treating and serving others as Christ would. Then, watch our friendships improve (Eph. 4:31-32; James 1:9-11)

Remember the Fruits of the Spirit are not what we do when we have the time or feel like it, they are what we are to do--period!

Optional Idea: Tell the Bible Story from one or more of these passages:

Here are positive examples from Scripture (Gen. 39:21-23; Josh. 2:4-16; Ruth 2:8- 16; 3:15; Luke 7:2-6; Acts 24:23; 27:3, 43)

Here are negative examples from Scripture (Gen. 21:9-14; 37:12-36; Ex. 5:6-18; Luke 22:64; John 19:3)

Optional Questions: Is Kindness working in you?

Here is how you can find out. Take a careful look the fruit of Kindness from God's most precious Word then ask yourself:

How do I show Kindness in my life?

What can I do to develop a better attitude of Kindness?

What blocks Kindness in my life?

How can I make Kindness function better, stronger and faster, even in times of fear and stress?

Craft Idea: Make stress balls. Take medium size balloons, blow them up and deflate, with a funnel, fill with corn starch or flour and then tie them. Write kindness on them with a permanent marker. Draw a group poster of this Fruit of the Spirit.

Prayer: Lord help my heart be more kind to others and help me realize when others are kind to me.

Lesson Seven, The Fruit of the Spirit is GOODNESS!

Principle passages: Amos 5:15; Prov. 25:22; Matthew 19:16; Romans 12:17; II Cor. 5:20; Eph. 5:8-9; I Pet. 3:11; II Pet. 1:3-8

Teachers Study: Goodness displays integrity, honesty and compassion to others and allows us to do the right thing. It is doing the right thing even when it does not feel like we should, as Joseph was betrayed and sold as a slave, he chose to make his situation better and help and treat others better than he needed to. Goodness is the model for people to repent and accept Christ.

Badness is the opposite, being callousness, mercilessness and unscrupulousness! When we fight against each other, especially in the church, you have to see it as how hurtful and even pathetic it is in God's eyes!

This fruit is how we are to be at church! Yet, how many of us have ever ventured into a church that was filled with callousness, where we were ignored or even mistreated? As a pastor, I have a tough battle to make sure my flock behaves so that Christ would be pleased. I can try my best to set an example and I can teach, but I cannot make them behave!

Real, authentic Christian love only comes from real, authentic Christian formation.

If someone is not growing in the Lord, they are not willing or able to treat others with love and respect. Care, compassion, and love will be moot, and the church will be an annoying club of stubborn pride, devoid of harmony and brotherly love. When we fight against one another in the church, especially in our personal relationships, we are, in fact, acting directly opposite to what God calls us to. No relationship will be healthy, and there will be no contentment or happiness in such an environment. We will end up imparting hurt, strife, dysfunction and misery to all those around us while the misery boomerangs directly back upon us. We will be creating an ever so escalating circle of

dysfunction and chaos, while outside of our circle of strife is Jesus with the call and how we can be better. We ignore Him, and therefore sink deeper into despair and dysfunction. We could have had it better; we just chose not to, rather letting our circumstances rule our life. It is so sad that so many people thrive in such situations, a testament to our fallen, sinful nature.

For us to work effectively within the boundaries of culture the fruits and call from God must be exercised, not our feelings or our pride or our hurt. The bottom line is to be considerate in all that we do to whomever is in our life. This is how we show love as if those in the world and even to our brothers and sisters who are Christians have forgotten what Christ and the Fruit of the Spirit are all about. We must use this passage as a template, a Christian living checkup on how we are to treat others and see if we are healthy in Christ and in showing the work that He did in us (John 17:20-23; Rom. 12:9-21; 2 Cor. 5:20; James 4).

We need to be aware of our natural, sinful nature that all of us have and all of us perpetuate. This sin contains these rotten tendencies that Paul describes in Galatians five, verses 16-21, in action. We see lust, adultery, fornication, lewdness, and revelry to name a few. You may think, I do not have those; but, look further and deeper to quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, envy, pride, and such.

The results of these rotten fruits will cause chaos and strife to any relationship, and preclude God's working in us. Extreme division will be wedged into any relationship, preventing your receiving any good or pleasing work, as well as any blessings. It will prevent God from using you to the fullest extent possible, especially in helping others. They are the "anti-goodness and anti-kindnesses," which cause cruelty and destroy what God has for us. Goodness cannot exist in an atmosphere of strife. You will not be a real, functioning Christian with these works.

Kids today need to be willing to counteract these rotten works by committing to the good fruit, keeping your goals and focus upon Christ and His Word, so we all can develop them.

Bible memory passage: *"Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone."* Romans 12:17

Object Lesson: Talk about how the sun shines, heats, and provides life. When the sun shines bright on a nice day we feel good, can go out and play. So it is how we are with others. When we have the Fruit of the Spirit like Goodness we shine God's love into the lives of others. Read 2 Corinthians 5:20. What is an ambassador? How are we one for Jesus? Ask, how do you shine God's love onto others? What other ways can we do this?

Talking Points: What we are learning is the Fruit of the Spirit. Do you remember what it is? Yes, it is when God's love is living in us and flow out of us so we make fruit, like *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-*

control, we have Jesus's living presence in us, living in us? Well, today we are going to check out the sixth fruit, do you know what that is? Yes, it is Goodness!

Do you know what a display cabinet is? Did you know that we are Jesus's display cabinet? Goodness is the fruit with which shows others who God is. Because other people may not read the Bible, but they will read us. Thus, Goodness and the rest of the Fruit of the Spirit combine to make our display to others. It is our appeal that makes us likeable, even lovable to others. It is what is attractive and charming, what catches the attention and respect of others.

Goodness is Christianity in action; it is being a role model and putting into practice excellence in all that we do, both to God and others.

Look like it this way, it is like going to the fair and seeing an exhibit, the show of 'righteousness,' how we are to be. Goodness enables us to be liked and appreciated, even if an enemy comes against us. It is the taste of what is to come, the flavor of how we are to be. It is our expression of worship and gratitude to Christ played out in our lives, so we can enjoy Him, He can enjoy us, and so that life can be more enjoyable for all.

Goodness is the energy to help us develop and form good, quality relationships that are committed and impacting. Just think through how much better your friendships would be with good Morales and being friendly is flowing through you (Psalm 34:8; 119:103; Prov. 25:22)!

Goodness is working together with kindness, producing what God calls 'righteousness' throughout Scripture. This is what and how God has called us to be to one another. It comes when we are His, we trust Jesus as our Lord and Savior, so we are in a right relationship with God, which, in turn, only comes by accepting what Christ has done for us and applying it to our life by faith.

This goodness will be the atmosphere of happiness, contentment, cooperation, and the closest we can get to living in real unity. It has the best potential of being a heaven on earth while we await the new kingdom. Perhaps it seems to be just pipe dreams and potential theory; nevertheless, it is real, and in our grasp if only really live by what Christ has called us to.

So, this fruit of goodness is the cabinet that holds righteousness in plain view. It is the display case that shows the rest of the godly characters and Fruit of the Spirit. It helps make them real, seen, and used. Like a trophy case. Goodness displays honesty, trustworthiness, and compassion to others and allows us to do the right thing even when we do not feel like doing so.

To see how Goodness is used, just take a look at the life of Joseph (Genesis 37-50). Goodness is the representation for people to see how life can be, and how it should be. It lifts up our Lord and points to our depravity. It is a template for seeing our need for

redemption and satisfaction, our need for salvation and growth in our Lord. It can help motivate a person to repent and accept Christ. Goodness transmutes itself into relationships, showing us how we are to treat one another, especially the one we love, our spouse! It does not augment or replace the Holy Spirit, but works with Him and His mission!

Optional Questions: Is Goodness working in you?

Here is how you can find out. Take a careful look the fruit of the Goodness of God's most precious Word then ask yourself:

How do I show Goodness in my life?

What can I do to develop a better attitude of Goodness?

What blocks Goodness in my life?

How can I make Goodness function better, stronger and faster, even in times of fear and stress?

Optional Idea: Tell the Bible Story from one or more of these passages:

Here are positive examples from Scripture (Gen. 39; Luke 10:30-37; Acts 7:60; 9:36; Luke 23:34; Gal. 6:10; II Thess. 1:11)

Here is are negative examples from Scripture (Gen. 4:8; Duet. 25:17-19; Joshua 7; Luke 9:54)

Craft Idea: Draw pitches of the Sun shining on a good day or a group poster. Draw a picture of yourself shining goodness on others. Or as in small groups create a poster to advertise Goodness. Draw a group poster of this Fruit of the Spirit for display.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, sometimes I do more wrong than right. Please send Your Holy Spirit to show me how to make better choices that please You. Amen

Lesson Eight, The Fruit of the Spirit is FAITHFULNESS!

Principle passages: Psalm 119: 89-90; Matthew 17:19; 25:21; Rom. 1:17; 5:1-2; 1 Cor. 12:9; Hebrews 11:1; 1 Thess. 5:24

Teachers Study: **Faithfulness** is the “gluing” fruit that will preserve our faith and the other characters of the Spirit and identify God's will so we can be dependable and trusting to God and others.

Faithfulness is the one fruit that we give to God, whereas the others are from the Spirit working in us! Faithfulness is authenticity, the power and motivation for Christian living. Because God is trustworthy with us, we can be faith-worthy in Him!

Doubt and distrust are the opposite, losing our trust and hope that God is in control! When we do this we will lose or miss out on God coming through with His promises.

Faithfulness is very difficult to have or hold on too, especially applying it to our work and relationships. We tend to lose our patience with God thinking He is just a blessing machine and when we do not get what we want we leave Him because of our uncertainty. Yet, Faithfulness is the fruit that we give to God so He can change us inside and out! It is the ability to take what Christ has done in us and be a blessing to others with loyalty and trust.

Faithfulness goes against modern psychology and societies thinking, as it requires us to move beyond ourselves, whereas psychology tells us to be self-centered putting the “me” first, rearranging the world to our needs, which creates self-destruction and broken relationships. We have to keep the goal of faithfulness in our minds always, as it will allow God to work deeper and us to respond to His call! God has bigger things at stake that He wants you to, much more than the petty complaints we give or things we ask of Him!

When we learn and apply the fruit and attitude of Faithfulness, then Christ is glorified; moreover, quality relationships are built and are kept!

This happens best when we realize that Christ paid our debt in full! Therefore, we can as Colossians 1:9-14 tells us, live a life worthy or as other translations state, walk worthy of the Lord. This means live in the manner of what we know and believe— and do it consistently. We do this when we are pursuing God and His righteousness, and believing His precepts, so He is more and we are less in our will. This is our “walk with God,” meaning to live out the daily Christian life thinking as He has called, behaving as we believe, and thus doing in response to His Work in and for us. It is also being empowered by the Holy Spirit. It is never the walk in our own will and strength; such a thing is pride and disobedience to our loving Lord. So we behave as the One we represent, as the name Christian means to be like Christ in His character. Refers to being an “appropriate” or acceptable offering so we “deserve” our reward—but we do not earn it (Lev. 26:3; Ezek. 36:27; Mark 10:29-31; John 3:30; Gal. 2:20-21; 5:16; Eph. 4:1; 5:1; Phil. 3:10-14).

Then we can be Fully Pleasing Him, to be a friend of God with gratitude; seeking Him first is to glorify Him. (Deut. 10:17-19; 2 Chron. 20:7; Psalm 69:30-31; Matt. 5:16; 6:33; Mark 12:29-30; 1 Thess. 2:4).

Remember; God does not want our complaints, thus He will not give us an answer for them, rather He wants our obedience, so He can use us more and better!

Bible memory passage: “*Your word, LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures.*” Psalm 119:89-90

Object Lesson: Either demonstrate with help from the kids various kinds of glue or do this as a group craft. Hot glue, Elmer’s, super glue, a big industrial adhesive from a home store and just glue left over craft stuff. Ask, what am I doing? What is glue? What does glue do? Have you ever thought that when we have the Fruit of the Spirit of Faithfulness we are God’s glue to have a faith that sticks and holds?

Talking Points: What we are learning is the Fruit of the Spirit. Do you remember what it is? Yes, it is when God’s love is living in us and flow out of us so we make fruit, like *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*, we have Jesus’s living presence in us, living in us? Well, today we are going to check out the seventh fruit, do you know what that is? Yes, it is Faithfulness!

Let’s take a look into the Bible, at the Book of Ruth. It is set in the time of the Judges. (1 Samuel; Ruth 4:7) around 1050 BC. Ruth is the great grandma of King David, who shows us the character of our God as the Redeemer.

The story follows the adventures of three main characters, Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz. Ruth has just lost her husband and children and is in a state of loss and confusion. She felt helpless and hopeless, but turned away from her false gods to pursue the One True God. Even though she was not a Jew, she remained faithful to God.

Naomi was Ruth’s mother-in-law, a Jewess, who remembers to go back to her homeland, and exercising a faith that is like glue, too. Naomi trusted God even though she sinned against God by leaving her homeland in the first place and marrying a Gentile. God looked beyond her sin and worked it out for good as He does with us. God protected her and Ruth, who is an alien, through many harsh trials and tribulations.

God blessed Ruth’s faithfulness and brought to her a new and better husband, Boaz. God, even allowed her to be in the genealogy of Jesus. All because she had a faith that was like glue!

Naomi, at first, was bitter and did not want to take Ruth back with her, but learned about faith and received blessings for her faithfulness, too. Boaz was a relative of Naomi, and culturally, held the position to ‘redeem’ her, which meant to take care of her, which he did. In the process, both he and Ruth remained faithful to God, and took their time to get to know one another before falling in love.

This Book of Ruth shows us the importance of faith and commitment.

Boaz was a man of integrity who had the opportunity to take advantage of a young, pretty widow. Instead, he chose righteousness as he protected Ruth, and looked

after her needs. He also had a faith that was like glue and made an extremely difficult situation for her ease and, eventually enjoyed a beautiful marriage. If he had chosen the way of the world, he could never have had a good, enduring relationship with Ruth. Ruth, who remained faithful, would also have missed out on the relationship (Ruth 2:20; 3:10-11).

Boaz was the “Kinsman-Redeemer” for Ruth’s family. This meant he was a close relative whose duty was to come to the aid of a family member in distress. According to Jewish, “Levitical” Law, he could redeem property, family members, animals, and he could care for a widow, or orphans, and such. As this was the law many at that time did not (Leviticus 25:25-34; 27:9-33).

In the New Testament, Christ is our ultimate Kinsman-Redeemer, as He represents all of humanity and our bloodline (Mathew. 1:1-17; Galatians 4:4; Heb. 2:16-17). He represents our need (John 10: 15-18; 1 John 3:16), and He has the resources (1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 Peter 1:18-19). Christ is our Redeemer, and He does not take advantage of us or let us rot, as we deserve. Thus, we can and must be faithful, we should also look to Boaz’s example, who was a righteous man and Ruth as a righteous woman.

And, we can look at Ruth’s example, who was a woman of a gluing faith, the Fruit of the Spirit of Faithfulness and Patience. Ruth and Naomi were attracted to the kindness and integrity of Boaz as he treated them both well. Boaz was attracted to Ruth’s humility and nobility. Thus, we are to be kind, listen, learn, not take advantage, care, share, and take care of one another!

We need to see the importance of Faithfulness goodness and authenticity, as it will pay off much better and greater than the ways of the fast world would.

Optional Questions: Is Faithfulness working in you?

Here is how you can find out. Take a careful look the fruit of Faithfulness from God's most precious Word then ask yourself:

Do I have a faith that is like glue?

What can I do to develop a better attitude of Faithfulness?

What blocks Faithfulness in my life?

How can I make Faithfulness function better, stronger and faster, even in times of fear and stress?

Optional Idea: Tell the Bible Story from one or more of these passages:

Here are positive examples from Scripture (II Kings 5:8-14; Matt. 15:21-28; 21:18-22; Luke 7:1-10; Acts 3:1-10; Heb.11: 1-40)

Here are negative examples from Scripture (Matt. 6:25-34; 14:22-33; 17: 14-20; Mark 6:1-6; James 1:5-8)

Craft Idea: Make friendship bracelets or necklaces with “letter beads” that has one of the Fruit of the Spirit like faithfulness or love. Draw a group poster of this Fruit of the Spirit of Faithfulness, you can then display.

Prayer: Dear God, thank You that Your faithfulness reaches to the entire universe. Help us all have a real faith that is like glue. Amen.

Lesson Nine, The Fruit of the Spirit is GENTLENESS!

Principle passages: Isa. 40:11; 42:2-3; Philp. 4: 5; Matt. 5:5; 11:29; 12:15; Eph. 4:1-2; 2 Timothy 2:24; 1 Thessalonians 2:7

Teachers Study: Gentleness; is the character that will show calmness, personal care and tenderness in meeting the needs of others. Gentleness is to be more than just a personality; it is to be who we are from the work of the Holy Spirit within us.

Roughness and violence are the opposite! When we have the mindset to just see what we can get out of life and make a name for ourselves we miss out on what is best for our benefit. Then it causes us to run over others and we end up being like the men who built the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9). Their downfall was not the building project, but the pride and arrogance. To seek significance outside of glorifying God by their achievements alone, ignoring God’s love, care, plan, and providence for a cheap and temporary substitute.

Gentleness is not being weak, as with meekness, gentleness is our strength under control. It allows us to be tender, just think how big and vast and powerful God is, who is bigger than the universe, who transcends space and time way beyond our comprehension. Yet, He treats us with the utmost of tenderness and care.

Knowing gentleness is trusting that God will take care of justice, thus we need to think correctly about who God is and who we are in Him. This understanding of His sovereignty, doctrine and control will move us from the hurriedness of life and the cruelty that goes with it to take the time with relationships, growth because we are at peace with God.

Gentleness is applying wisdom with humbleness and tenderness so we are under control. It is an active attitude of deliberate acceptance, as humility and wisdom go together as does foolishness and arrogance. Wisdom equals humility and does not boast and brag. Thus, as a wild, untamed horse that is brought under control, so do we. The spirit and strength of the horse is still there, however, its focus and purpose has

changed. The horse is now usable and available; the same is with us when we break from our ways to His Way.

We are called to be broken into the Lord! In so doing, our allegiance, loyalty, and commitment to Christ flourishes, so we see the bigger picture of modeling Christ over how others attitude and treatment are toward us.

Kids, particularly boys can be rough and girls can be mean. They need to know Faithfulness to be better at friendships and life!

Bible memory passage: *“He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.”*
Isaiah 40:11

Object Lesson: Pass out little cups of salt and sugar for kids to taste. What would you rather eat a spoonful of sugar or a spoonful of salt? Why? Have you ever got salt in a cut? How did it feel? How does it feel when you have done something wrong and a teacher or parent corrects you harshly? How do you feel when someone is mean to you? How is this like salt? How do you feel when someone tells you did a good job? How is that like sugar? Which one do we need to be?

Talking Points: What we are learning is the Fruit of the Spirit. Do you remember what it is? Yes, it is when God’s love is living in us and flow out of us so we make fruit, like *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*, we have Jesus’s living presence in us, living in us? Well, today we are going to check out the eighth fruit, do you know what that is? Yes, it is Gentleness!

Do you know what the job of a Shepherd is? In the Bible this job title has great depth and meaning. Sheep and shepherd are often-used words that mean a concerned guide who describes God, the church, and His people (Eza. 34: 1-10; Luke 15:3-7; John 10:1-18; 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 2:25).

A shepherd does not lead by being harsh or the sheep will refuse to go with him and run off, and perhaps will even die. Rather, they leads and guides them in the right direction with gentleness; then the sheep will follow him. The sheep do this out of a need to be protected, to be led to food and water that they cannot find on their own. In likeness, we are to lead others to Jesus by being a shepherd, being gentle.

Keep in mind, Christ’s love is always there, waiting on our faith to hug Him; so, we can feel and know His embrace is already upon us! We may not be able to understand God, but we can have faith and trust to be tender, and praise Him because of His kind love for us.

We have been placed in His grace, made His child, saved by His grace. Yet, somehow we allow our bad thoughts to set in, push others away, and even say we do

not need God. Therefore, we cut off our roots, and in so doing, choke off our true nourishment and ability to function with kindness and Gentleness.

So, we need to know that God is the One who supports us, and we need to see that fact as the truth of our life, encourage ourselves from His presence, and draw from His streams of living water (John 3).

Know this, God knows His sheep; we are to know the Shepherd. Thus, with a right relationship with God, we have no need to fear the world or the future, for we already secure in Him. So we can practice Gentleness even when we are in unfulfilled expectations or frustrated or anxious or in the midst of hurt, we are sheep that need the Shepherd!

Gentleness will help us show care and tenderness in meeting the needs of others.

Optional Questions: Is Gentleness working in you?

Here is how you can find out. Take a careful look the fruit of Gentleness from God's most precious Word then ask yourself:

How do I show Gentleness in my life?

What can I do to develop a better attitude of Gentleness?

What blocks Gentleness in my life?

How can I make Gentleness function better, stronger and faster, even in times of fear and stress?

Optional Idea: Tell the Bible Story from one or more of these passages:

Here are positive examples from Scripture (Isa. 40:11; 42:1-3; Matt. 11:28-29; Luke 7:36-50; 10:38-42; Johan 8: 1-11; I Thess. 2:7-8)

Here is are negative examples from Scripture (Nub. 20:2-13; II Sam. 18:10- 15; 19:1-8; I Kings 21: 5-14; Luke 9:51-56)

Craft Idea: Have kids try to make a house out of 3*5 cards without any tape or glue. Say, how important is it to be gentle to do this? Draw a group poster of this Fruit of the Spirit of Gentleness, you can then display.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help me have a gentle spirit, which is of great worth in Your sight. Please send Your Holy Spirit to shape the feelings of my heart to be kind and tender to others. Amen. (1 Peter 3:4).

Lesson Ten, The Fruit of the Spirit is SELF-CONTROL!

Principle passages: Prov. 16:32; 25:28; Rom 13:12-14; I Cor. 6:12; 9:25-27; 1 Thess. 5: 22; Titus 2:12; Heb. 12:2; II Pet. 1:5-7

Teachers Study: Self-Control is allowing God to be in control of your will and heart and seeking the Holy Spirit to enable us. Then we will know what not to do and guard the areas we are weak in.

Self-Control will allow us to have discipline and restraint with obedience to God and others. It is not letting distractions derail or remove us from His will and plan so we will not be held back with what Christ called us to do. Self-indulgence is the opposite, from eating a pound of chocolate at once or partying your way to oblivion. Too much excess will leave you empty and alone, it will at best cause us to gain a lot of weight and lose your friends and at worst lose your life and miss out on our heavenly reward! Self-indulgence seeks what is fleeting when we as a Christian are made for eternity.

Self-Control is not the subject of the media; you may perhaps never see a movie with this as the premise because it is anti-climactic and perhaps boring. The world wants us to grab all of the gusto that we can, go for that brass ring regardless of the consequences or who we step on to get it or taking the responsibility of our actions. Yet, Christ is calling us by His example and Word to seek what is in eternity that is permanent and lasting not what is fleeting and empty. Christ was our greatest example from the humbleness of the incarnation through Gethsemane to the Cross He was the perfect model of self-control!

Self-control will be the key to inner strength that will help deliver us from fear, depression, harm and the pain of life by being focused on Christ and not our circumstances. Christ's strength in us that we cannot do on our own!

And the key to receive this strength is our surrender to His Lordship over all aspects of our lives! Remember, God wants us to have fun too, and enjoy life; we are not to be prudes at the same time we are not to seek sin either!

When we have been wronged, we experience feelings of betrayal, and consider retaliation to be justified. God calls us out of retaliation and into reconciliation. This is an aspect of forgiveness, and when we fail to forgive, we are the ones who suffer the most. Anger, resentment, shame, bitterness, contempt, and defensiveness all synergistically build on top of one another, so every segment within us is held hostage with these emotions that stifle us. We become controlled by our hurt and thus unable to reach the destination we desire, what Christ has for us. Do not allow what others may have done or may do control you, it will block the flow of the Holy Spirit and self-controlling love, and the festering of the rotten fruits will continue to the point that Christ is crying out to us in the wilderness, yet we cannot hear Him.

Your kids need to know that by allowing God to be in control of our will and heart and seeking the Holy Spirit we will live out a great Christian life.

Bible memory passage: *“Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.”* Proverbs 16:32

Object Lesson: Pass out a treat that comes in small pieces like small boxes of raisins or Starbursts. Then, explain that if they have Self-Control and do not eat these all at once, they will have some later for when they want some more.

Talking Points: What we are learning is the Fruit of the Spirit. Do you remember what it is? Yes, it is when God’s love is living in us and then flowing out of us so we make fruit, like *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*, we have Jesus’s living presence in us, living in us? Well, today we are going to check out the first fruit, do you know what that is? Yes, it is Self-Control!

When God is in control of your will and heart and the Holy Spirit is enabling us to do life well. This will also allow us to build and control our emotions, and reactions. Do you know what that will help us do? Build great lasting friendships.

Did you know God wants us to build and have great friendships and get along with our family too? God loves us and thus wants what is healthy and best, based on the role of the rest of the Fruit of the Spirit. In this way, we can make every effort to represent Christ and make the most of what we are given for His glory.

Self-Control will help us be good stewards of all that we have, whether small or great. That means to be better at taking care of and using.

The better we use our gifts, the abilities and things we get from God the more generous He is with us with more gifts, abilities, and opportunities. We are called not to waste our opportunities, but to be hardworking and faithful with our talents. Do what God has called you to do and do it with passion, truth, and in love!

The Fruit of the Spirit is all about cultivating what God gives. Do you know what cultivating means? It is like taking a seed and carefully helping it sprout and grow by providing all that it needs, water, soil, fertilizer and such to make it produce. Like fruit from a tree is the byproduct of a healthy, well-watered, and cared for trees. It is the same with a growing Christian: We are farmers of God’s providing and gifts. He gives us the seeds to make the crops.

How are they doing? Budding, drought, bumper crops, do they need water, careful cultivation, fertilizer? Are you being the weed killer to your own fruits (Gen. 1:28; Hos. 10:1; 14:7-8; Matt. 13:3-8, 31-32; Luke 8:11; John 14-15; Rom. 1:13; 15:30; Gal. 5; Phil. 1:11, 22; Col. 1:10)?

When we cultivate and build our faith to produce good Fruit. This is from Christ’s characteristics of the Holy Spirit are flowing in, and through, and then out of us, thus our

fruit is an offshoot of the care we make in paying particularly close attention to His Word so we can grow more righteousness.

Our growth in Christ results from our attitude in our relationships. This is the important item of our faith. We the Church is to bear fruit to promote the Gospel.

Real trust in Jesus from love helps us obey Him and breed closeness with our prayers! Thus, compassion, care, and love pave the way to effective, family relationships and friendships and be a blessing from God.

Pride and our strong-willed attitude set up a wall, making all we do fruitless, destructive, and meaningless. If we want God to be looking to us, we must do our part by being alert to His love, then our faith to make Fruit of the Spirit (1 Pet. 3: 7-12).

Remember, we make the fruits by taking love and the faith he gives us, so it will create the blossom, and when we grow in our faith and practice of being a disciple. You will bear the fruit. It is what we are in Christ, not so much what we do in His name.

Did you know that when we have *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*, we have Jesus's living presence in us, living in us?

Optional Questions: Is Self-Control working in you?

Here is how you can find out. Take a careful look the fruit of Self-Control from God's most precious Word then ask yourself:

How do I show Self-Control in my life?

What can I do to develop a better attitude of Self-Control?

What blocks Self-Control in my life?

How can I make Self-Control function better, stronger and faster, even in times of fear and stress?

Optional Idea: Tell the Bible Story from one or more of these passages:

Here are positive examples from Scripture (Gen. 39:6-18; II Sam. 16:5-13; Dan. 1:8-16)

Here is are negative examples from Scripture (Gen. 3:1-7; Nub. 20:7-12; II Sam. 13:1-19; I Kings 21:1-7)

Craft Idea: Have kids build things that can be knocked down like cardboard blocks from the preschool class. Then see who can last the longest to not knock them over. Draw a group poster of this Fruit of the Spirit of Self-Control and if you do each of the Fruits, you can then display them to parents and or in the church.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank-you for your Holy Spirit and you help us be better people by having your presence living in us. Thank-you that we can have your Fruit of the Spirit and being able to have self-control. Amen.

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Ideas for High School Youth Talks and Sermon tie-ins or family devotions:

How can I grow in The Fruit of the Spirit?

Look over the first part of this series and read the descriptions of the Fruits, *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*, or any of the sixty-plus godly characteristics on the list that He calls us to emulate and put into our relationships. These are essential to growing a healthy and lasting relationship. You can examine the descriptions, look up the Scriptures, read the definitions below, and then ask yourself, family or group these six questions:

1. Is this Fruit working in me?
2. How do I now exhibit this Fruit in my daily life?
3. How can I use this Fruit to develop a better willingness to respond to others- especially to the ones I love-with a sense of awe and fear of God, and respect for people?
4. What blocks this Fruit from working and being exhibited in me?
5. How can I make this Fruit function better, stronger, and faster, even in times of uncertainly and stress?
6. Think through the steps you would take to put this Fruit into action in a specific instance, or, to improve it. Consider the examples of the passages in God's Word.

And do not forget to be in prayer during all of this. Have someone you trust hold you accountable or get in a small group to learn and practice.

The Christian life can be a difficult journey! We live in a fallen world corrupted by sin. Consequently, all that we do is imperfect and a struggle. We make choices that affect the direction in which we proceed in life and in relationships. In so doing, we affect others around us in both positive and negative ways. Yet, when our efforts and motivations are centered upon being righteous, we will be doing as we are called to do, and even be blessed for it.

As Christ's disciples, we must be willing to be led by the truth of His Word and by our faith and trust in Him. Because faith is also in community and mutual, we each partake

in Christ and need one another to grow further in our pilgrimage of Christian living. This is what your church needs to be about! In so doing, we share Christ and therefore proclaim Him, to those who do not know Him. To be a good church, we are called to glorify Christ in all that we do! In this manner, as both a global Church and a local church, we must also demonstrate His love in how we relate to others. And know this: everything that is worthy and excellent requires more work, from painting a house to preaching the Word. This journey of difficulty should not discourage us because it will build us up to be much better, stronger, and of greater use to God as we put into practice what He puts in us (Phil. 2:12-13).

So, enjoy it! See it as an adventure from which to learn and grow. Our character will improve and enable us to overcome all obstacles and help others through them. Thus, we should make it a point to give Him our best for His glory because He first loved us, and we respond to His Grace with our gratitude. At the same time, we can take comfort in the fact that He will not give us anything we cannot handle (Phil 2:10-13; Heb. 2:10)! So, let us live with excellence, to our best for His glory!

Your Christian "fruit salad" is predicated on how you perceive your life as well as how you receive and perceive our Lord. Life is not about our wants, needs, and comfort; it is about Christ works in us both powerful and triumphant. The key is for us to turn on this engine of our spiritual formation by our willingness to pursue, endure, and grow so the Holy Spirit and His Fruit can flow. We have to want our Lord's empowerment to desire His Fruit, and we have to want to give it away to others. Allow the holiness of our Lord, His grace, His patience, understanding, faith, loyalty, goodness, and love to be exhibited in you-not by mere imitation, but with genuine gratitude and submission, kept by His power (1 Cor. 1:30; Col. 1:27; Gal. 5).

God does indeed give us what we need to succeed. We can have the faith to remain in Him regardless of what is going on outside of ourselves or the feelings we experience on the inside. He will give us all we need; He will water, cultivate, and harvest, and also gives us the mercy and tenderness to go on. We must allow our faith to build so it does not bring us down or motivate others negatively. Remember, the great hope is still to come.

But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression, to Israel his sin. Micah 3:8

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Gal. 5:25

Fruit Definitions!

How many Fruit(s) of the Spirit are there?

Is it "Fruit" of the Spirit or is it "Fruits" of the Spirit? There are nine or more fruits, so it must be a plural? Yes and no; in the Greek language, it is referred to as "singular," meaning one Fruit. In classic Reformed and Evangelical theology, it is listed as both (*Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* the definitive work and many other references too), but the singular is the more correct way to refer to it. Then there is the number; is it nine, twelve, or more? Catholics add modesty, continence, and chastity, which they get from the Latin *Vulgate* translation. Then 2 Peter 1 gives a slightly different listing. Basically, most biblical theologians look to the Galatians nine and the others, more than seventy total, are referred to as virtues or "characters." Let us first take a quick look at the main nine Fruit(s) of the Spirit that flow from God's work and love working in us. These all flow from love and cooperate as one in one another (Galatians 5:22-23):

The Galatian Fruits:

- **Love** will enable us to appreciate our brothers and sisters in the Lord and, of course, our family and others around us. Love is taking the initiative to build up and meet the needs of others, without expecting anything in return. We must allow *love* to be the foundation of our relationships-the love of our Lord that He gives us. Love manifests patience and kindness and it is not greedy or jealous; it is not prideful nor brags of one's accomplishments. It is not rude or self-seeking, and it allows one not to be easily angered. By this, we do not keep record of others wrongs or enjoy it when bad things happen to others; rather, we rejoice with others to build them up. Love always looks after others, shows trust, hope, and always carries on. Love encapsulates the purpose and role of Fruit, and thus, our furthestmost goal, as followers of Christ, is to do all things in love (John 13:1; 15:13; 1 Corinthians 13:3-8; Galatians 5:22-23; 1 John 4:16).
- **Joy** is our focus on Christ as Lord; this allows us to enjoy our relationship with Him, His creation, and others, regardless of our circumstances, with an expression of delight and real, authentic happiness that comes from and with harmony with God and others. *Joy* in James refers to declaring our situation as happy and fulfilling, even when it is not. It is to change our mindset and focus. It is realizing the sovereignty of God and that He is in control, even when life seems to be turned upside down and inside out! Joy helps us understand God's perspective and gives us the confidence and patience to endure anything. Joy is not happiness, because we may not be content and pleased with it; rather, joy is hope. It is our real hope. It is not a meager wish; rather, it is the unshakable confidence of our future in Christ. Our pleasure comes from knowing He is in charge and caring for us (Psalm 32:7-9; 34:1-8; Proverbs 15:13; John 15:11; 17:13; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Thess. 5:18; 1 Peter 4:13- 19; Hebrews 10:34; 12:2; James 1:1-4)!
- **Peace** is surrendering and yielding ourselves to the Lord to be in His control, for He is our ultimate peace! In so doing, tranquility will be our tone, control, and our composure. This will be fueled from our harmonious relationship with God-

handing over control of our hearts, will, and minds to Him. We are willing to make peace with others because we have found peace with God. Thus, we can live at peace with our neighbors, proclaiming serenity and rekindling it when it goes down or is lost. Peace is unity, which is more important than just resolving trivial disagreements. Our focus must be on edifying and encouraging-such things, unfortunately, rare in the church today! We will either lift people up or bring them down, something we need to know so as to pursue peace and harmony and not let the childish and petty things of life divide us. Our focus must be on keeping our own accounts straight and not worrying or interfering with others. This helps make us peacemakers. Once we make real peace with God, we will be able to make and maintain peace with others. When we are at peace with God, we need to be at peace with ourselves emotionally, and others relationally (Isaiah. 26:3; Matthew 5:9; Luke 19:42; John 14:27; 16:33; Romans 5:1; 12:18; Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 3:15; Philippians 4:7).

- **Patience**, in some translations is *called long-suffering or forbearance*; this calls for showing tolerance and fortitude toward others, even accepting difficult situations with them-and God-without making demands or conditions. Patience is our "staying power." It is like perseverance and the endurance to not give up; it is about actively overcoming our situation-not just sitting, accepting, and doing nothing! It allows us to endure a less than desirable situation, to make us better, more useful, and even optimistic and prudent. Hence, its other name, *long-suffering*. It allows us to put up with others who "get on our nerves" without losing other characteristics of grace (Hosea 2:19-23; Psalm 33:20; Matthew 27:14; Romans 5:3; 12:12; Galatians 5:1; 5:22-23; Colossians 1:11; James 1:3-4,12; 5:10-11).
- **Kindness** is the medium through which Christ's love becomes real, tangible, and knowable through us. It is the application of sincere love that manifests itself in practicing benevolence and a loving attitude towards others. Kindness is the essence that shows the world we are Christians, like the fragrance coming from a beautiful flower. It is being convicted by God's Word, and then modeling it to others. Being charitable is an aspect of good positive relationships with others, and a "MUST" part of the Christian experience and duty! Kindness is the subject to the object of who we are in Christ. This is something we replicate as we are kind, and also respond in kindness to others, our response to one another fuels the other's response, and so forth. In this way, we will be escalating love and kindness instead of repression and dysfunction (Romans 2:1-4; 12:9-21; 2 Corinthians 6:6-7; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:12-14; 1 John 3:16-23)!
- **Goodness** is the engagement of love that shows the application of Christ, His righteousness, and Truth. This models it to others in the action of love, making Christ and us attractive and inviting. This is God at work in our faith, so we are synergized with His power and then engage it to others. This is the fruit that makes people, liked by and even lovable to others. This displays integrity,

honesty, and compassion to others, and allows us to do the right thing. It is doing the right thing, even when it does not feel like we should, as Joseph did. He was betrayed and sold as a slave, yet, he chose to make his situation into something good, and to help and treat others better than he needed to. Why are we to be good? Because God is good to us (Psalm 86:5; 145:4-13)! Goodness is the model for people to repent and accept Christ (Amos 5:15; Proverbs 25:22; Matthew 19:16; Romans 12:17; Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Corinthians 5:20; Ephesians 5:8-9; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 1 Peter 3:11; 2 Peter 1:3-8).

- **Faithfulness** is the application of our faith in action; because we are saved by Christ, He dwells in our hearts. Thus, we are infused with dependability because as we praise His name, it hits home in our being. It is not faith itself; rather, it is the fruit and character of faith. It is the "gluing" fruit that will preserve our faith and the other characters of the Spirit, and identify God's will, so we can be dependable and trusting to God and others. Faith is the one fruit that we give back to God, whereas faithfulness and the other fruits, virtues, and characters are from the Spirit working in us! Faithfulness is authenticity that is so absent today and so badly needed to show the power and motivation for Christian living. Because God is trustworthy with us, we can be faith-worthy in Him (Psalm 119: 89-90; Isaiah 25:1; Matthew 17:19; 25:21; Romans 1:17; 5:1-2; 1 Corinthians 12:9; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 3:16-17; Hebrews 11:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:24)!
- **Gentleness**, sometimes referred to as *Meekness*, is the fruit that will show calmness, personal care, and tenderness in meeting the needs of others. It is to be more than just a personality; it is to be who we are by the work of the Spirit within us. This is not a weakness or a lack of strength; rather, it is being humble and gentle toward God and others. This also means being nonresistant to God and His work in us. Gentleness produces a desire and effort to please God and to submit our will and aspirations to His will and what is best. By keeping our focus on Christ with humility, we can endure being personally attacked (Psalm 37:11; Isaiah. 40:11; 42:2-3; Galatians 5:22-23; Philippians 4: 5; Matthew 5:5; 11:29; 12:15; Ephesians 4:1-2; 2 Timothy 2:24; 1 Thessalonians 2:7).
- **Self-Control**, sometimes referred to as *Temperance*, is allowing God to be in control of our will and hearts, and to be diligent in seeking the Spirit to enable us. We can know what not to do, and guard the areas in which we are weak. This will allow us to have discipline and restraint, with obedience to God and others. It is not allowing distractions to derail or remove us from His will and plan, so we will not be held back from what Christ has called us to do. This comes down to how we trust in our Lord, we can trust God for the future because we can see what He has done in the past (Proverbs 16:32; 25:28; Romans 13: 12-14; 1 Corinthians 6:12; 9:25-27; Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Thessalonians 5: 22; Titus 2:12; Hebrews 12:2; 2 Peter 1:5-7).

We are called to *Put on* this, a call to take on the character of Jesus and put it on us, while we put off the vices that hinder us. Don't worry that we cannot do this on our own; He imparts to us the power and ability to do so through His work and the Spirit! It is something we do not force to come about; rather it happens naturally as we learn and grow in Christ, then His character envelopes us as we take on the new identity of a person not only saved by grace but empowered and shaped by Him. If we just live our lives with the attitude of how things affect "me" and not "others," then we are living "with" the devil, and not "with" God! It is essential as Christians to demonstrate His love in how we relate to both for God and then to others (Romans 13:11-14; Ephesians 4:1-6, 22-24; Philippians 2:1-6).

How is this done?

Simply put, by Paul, we achieve this by allowing the Word of Christ and His presence to dwell in us, and learn His instruction, so the peace of Christ rules our hearts and minds, translating into actions. It is all about our spiritual growth impacting us so it impacts others positively and in love (Col. 1:15; 2:3; 3:1-11)!

Take a close look at each of the fruits listed. Which ones are you exhibiting well? Which ones do you lack? What are you going to do about the ones in which you are weak? We are called not to be *ineffective* or *unproductive*; this means we are being called to be productive and useful in the Kingdom as well as the community. If not, we are in disobedience and ignoring of His love and gifts for us. Why would a Christian not want to be productive for the Kingdom (Phil. 4:8-9)?

Extras for older kids:

Object Lesson: Do you know the difference between an exclamation point and a question mark? Did you know we can be either? Like if we are a question mark we will be like doubting our relationship with Jesus or feeling bad about ourselves or what can you think of...? Or we can be an exclamation point, confident, faithful that Jesus loves me and has a purpose and a plan for me and that includes to be faithful to Him and others.

I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. John 15:1-4

Fruit of the Spirit, how we would live out our Christian lives. It all comes down to our willingness to either live a life that is led by the Spirit or one that is led by our flesh.

Your Christian "fruit salad" is predicated on how you perceive your life as well as how you receive and perceive our Lord.

We have to get rid of the mess that is messing us up! To make us pure, He needs to prune and refine us, get us to come away from ourselves, move us from our fears and frustrations so we can embark on our victorious Christian life. We have to master what hinders us-the sin and past hurts that infect us-so they can be dealt with and placed under control along with the apathy and complacency we settle into. If we do not master what hinders us, it will master us; however, in Christ, we can master it and add it to our arsenal of learning and growth.

In this way, Fruit can fill us up and spill over to others around us. This is not something we need to fear; it is not drudgery, but an opportunity to be more than we could ever be on our own. Our growth in Him means faith, spiritual maturity, and character development. These things are more precious than any gold, personal success, or financial portfolio. As we go through the tough stuff of life, we will grow and become stronger. We will worship Him more profoundly and purely. We will honor Him more strongly, more relevantly, and touch the lives of others more deeply, too.

For more about the Fruit of the Spirit and for High School and adults see *Into Thy Word*,

<http://www.intothyword.org/pages.asp?pageid=56858>

<http://www.intothyword.org/pages.asp?pageid=121173>

More Ideas:

<http://www.kidsofintegrity.com/>

<http://www.calvarymv.com/childrensresources/childrensministry/topical-teachings/FruitOfSpirit/>

<http://www.mssscrafts.com>

<http://www.biblefunforkids.com/2013/04/fruit-of-spirit.html>



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