

A Montessori Approach to Teaching the Fruits of the Spirit

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Abstract

The goal of this creative project is to provide child care organizations and churches with an easy-to-teach curriculum unit for ages six to twelve based on the Montessori method.

The curriculum will be based on the character traits taught in Galatians 5, known as the Fruits of the Spirit. This curriculum will be easily adaptable for any size group. Each lesson will provide an hour of instruction, and will include at least one game, one activity, and a time set aside for reflection and peer learning.

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Introduction

Churches, daycares, and after-school programs are often met with the challenge of providing engaging instruction to children of multiple age groups (Children's Ministry Magazine, 2011; Henney, 1998). It is extremely difficult to find a curriculum that suits the needs of a group with a large age gap. Because of this difficulty, this creative project investigates different pedagogical approaches that inform the creation of Sunday school curriculum for a multi-age group, specifically kindergarten through sixth grade.

The final outcome of this creative project is a curriculum based on the Fruits of the Spirit, which are discussed in the Bible in Galatians. The Fruits of the Spirit are "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control," (Galatians 5:22-23).

While this curriculum is written from a Biblical point-of-view, it can be adapted for use in non-church settings. The Fruits of the Spirit are taught from a young age in Christian churches, but are also character traits that are instilled in children of all belief systems. For example, the Muslim faith also teaches the importance of peace. The Holy Quran says in 2:224, "And do not make [your oath by] Allah an excuse against being righteous and fearing Allah and making peace among people. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing," (Quran 2:224).

The public education system in the United States also sees character development as being of great importance. The U.S. Department of Education says on its website, "Character education is a learning process that enables students and adults in a school

community to understand, care about and act on core ethical values such as respect, justice, civic virtue and citizenship, and responsibility for self and others,” (“Character Education,” 2005). These principles could be translated into the curriculum, specifically self responsibility.

Many elementary schools across the country are also incorporating character development into their curriculum. School systems in Missouri, Florida, and other states have character traits of the month (Fox C-6 School District; Nixa Public Schools). Among these traits are peace, self-control, and kindness, which are listed in Galatians 5 as Fruits of the Spirit.

The importance of being a good, well-rounded person are as important as learning multiplication tables, and many school systems hold this same belief. While the Fruits of the Spirit are a religious concept, being a good person with solid character traits goes beyond any religion. Every child should know how to love, be joyful, be peaceful, be patient, show kindness, have goodness, be faithful, be gentle, and practice self control. The accompanying curriculum attempts to make it easier for facilitators to instill these values in a wide age range of students.

This thesis is comprised of four chapters and one appendix. The first chapter, the introduction, discusses the need for this curriculum, possibilities for use, and the importance of character education. The second chapter, titled “Literature Review,” details the learning pedagogies used to develop the curriculum.

Because of the creative component of this project, chapter four addresses and defines the design principles used, as well as the basic explanation of how the designs

were created in the Adobe programs. The fifth chapter is a reflection of the project. This chapter discusses the ups and downs of the process and the changes made to the design after the advisor's review. It also discusses challenges faced when creating the content for the curriculum, such as space, resources, and time.

The appendix of this thesis is the curriculum. The first lesson is an introduction to the Fruits of the Spirit. It is a basic overview of each Fruit of the Spirit and provides a base for the following lessons.

Lesson two is on love. This lesson discusses the different kinds of love a person can feel and how to express those feelings to others.

Lesson three focuses on joy. The lesson discusses having joy in trials and hardships.

Lesson four is about peace, and how to have peace in difficult situations. This lesson also discusses peace with others.

Lesson five is on patience and children are challenged to have patience in different situations presented to them in the classroom.

Lesson six focuses on kindness and the importance of showing kindness to all people, even when it is difficult or no one else is kind.

Lesson seven is about goodness. Students will learn that goodness and "being good" are not the same thing. Goodness will be presented as a lifestyle, rather than a once-in-a-while attitude.

The eighth lesson is about faithfulness. Faithfulness to God is a focus of the lesson, but faithfulness is also discussed in the context of faithfulness in giving,

faithfulness to the church, and faithfulness to living out the other Fruits of the Spirit.

Lesson nine focuses on gentleness. In this context, children will learn about having a gentle attitude; not a boastful or proud attitude. They will learn about being polite and thankful, rather than angry or selfish.

The final Fruit of the Spirit is self-control and is presented in lesson ten. Children will learn about having self-control in situations that could cause them to compromise their beliefs. Younger children will learn about self-control in the context of speaking in turn and other more basic concepts.

The final lesson is titled “Conclusion” and allows one more opportunity for the children to process and question each Fruit of the Spirit. This lesson specifically uses reflection models discussed later in this thesis.

This thesis provides churches and other childcare providers with a well-rounded multi-age group curriculum for kindergarten-sixth grade based on the Fruits of the Spirit. It can also be used in classes with large age gaps. The curriculum uses learning pedagogies explored via literature review to create a worthwhile experience for children learning character development.

Literature Review

Introduction

Originally, Montessori was the only pedagogy that was going to be applied to the curriculum. However, upon further research, many other models of learning were found. Each pedagogy applied in the creation of the curriculum is discussed in this chapter.

Montessori

The Montessori method makes this curriculum unique. The Montessori approach to education was founded by Dr. Maria Montessori in the early 1900s. Montessori education encourages learning through a prepared environment, combining age groups to form communities, and hands-on activities. A prepared environment is one in which nothing is an accident. Each puzzle, game, picture, activity, and song is carefully selected to enhance the learning environment (“Some Specific Details”). This not only creates a fun and interactive learning experience, it also appeals to different types of learners, including visual, active, auditory, and musical.

Dr. Montessori believed that including children of a wide age range in one class was beneficial. The older children, without realizing it, often teach the younger children, either by example or word. This also helps the older children practice accountability and leadership skills, and often reinforces the ideas for the older children. This idea of peer learning that is so prevalent in the Montessori education often results in the older child gaining more than the younger child they originally helped (Rohrbeck, 2003). Montessori education typically divides children into three or six year age groups. For this project, the

target age group is six to twelve-year-old children, or kindergarten to sixth grade.

Montessori education also welcomes the inclusion of children with learning disabilities because of its inclusive teaching approaches. Many churches and childcare providers do not have the staffing necessary to accommodate the unique needs of special needs children. This curriculum is written with these situations in mind, because of the application of multiple pedagogies. There are ways to include everyone in the class, regardless of need, age, or ability without having to make a drastic change to the planned lesson.

The Montessori method is one that has been seen as a superior option to education for many years (Lillard, 2017). Psychological research shows that “the Montessori system is much more suited to how children learn and develop than is the conventional system,” (Lillard, p. 3). This can go beyond the public or private school setting and transition into churches or after-school care.

The curriculum that accompanies this thesis applies the Montessori method because it is written to accommodate a six-year age span. Older children are paired or teamed with younger children to allow an open conversation, guided by discussion questions, about that lesson’s Fruit of the Spirit.

Scaffolding

While Montessori education is the backbone of this curriculum, other learning theories are also explored and applied. This includes scaffolding. Scaffolding originated from Vygotsky’s concept of the zone of proximal development. Scaffolding is shown to

enhance peer learning and improve social skills in children (Morcom, 2016). Scaffolding has also been shown to enable children to work independently (Mermelshtine, 2017).

This concept originates from scaffolding being used to support a structure that is being built. Once the structure can hold its own weight, the scaffolding is removed. The scaffolding is only a temporary support (Hammond, 2001).

When using the scaffolding pedagogy in the classroom, teachers provide temporary assistance as they are learning new concepts. As the students gain deeper understanding of a concept, the teacher can remove the assistance (Hammond).

Scaffolding involves a teacher taking a concept and continually building upon a support base until the student has mastered the concept. The IRIS Center (2005), housed in Vanderbilt's Peabody College gives this example of an instruction with scaffolding:

When I taught my daughter to ride her bike, I sat on the bike to demonstrate how to ride. I started her out with training wheels. Then I gradually raised the training wheels. Once she was ready to remove the training wheels, I steadied her with my hand and walked beside her, and only then did I let her take off on her own.

This instruction would look quite different without scaffolding, as the IRIS Center also shows, "When I taught my daughter to ride her bike, I explained to her how to do it. Then I put her on the bike and gave her a shove," (The Iris Center).

Scaffolding is used in the reflection portion of each lesson. If a child can answer a simple question, such as, "What is love?" then move to a more advanced reflection of "What does love mean to me?" and finally, to "How can I show love to those around me?" it shows a superior understanding to the concept of love. As peer learning and

collaboration are vital to Montessori education, Montessori and Scaffolding can work together to create a stimulating and hands-on learning environment.

Service Learning

Service learning can also be applied to the Montessori approach (Hubbell, 2006). Service learning is defined as combining “learning goals and community service in ways that can enhance both student growth and the common good,” (Bandy, n.d.). Service learning is also “defined as a teaching/learning method that connects meaningful community service with academic learning, personal growth, and civic responsibility,” (Lake and Jones, 2008, p. 2146).

Service learning has been encouraged by the federal government via the United States Environmental Protection Agency. It “helps foster civic responsibility,” and “provides structured time for students or participants to reflect on the service experience,” (United States, 2011).

Service learning is used in the accompanying curriculum via children being asked actively to demonstrate a Fruit of the Spirit with each lesson. For example, in the lesson on kindness, students are asked to become pen pals with an elderly person, whether in the church or in the community. Not only does this teach the student kindness and apply it to a real life situation, it also reaches out to the community and provides service to someone else.

This pedagogy has been shown to promote emotional intelligence (Akujobi and Simmons, 1997). Emotional intelligence is defined as “the capacity to process emotional

information accurately and effectively, including the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, discriminate among them and use this information to guide one's thinking and actions," (Pan et al., 2014). Emotional intelligence is an important factor to being able to grasp the Fruits of the Spirit and other character development methods.

Peer Assisted Learning

Peer assisted learning is defined as "a two-way, reciprocal learning activity," (Boud, Cohen, & Sampson, 2014, p. 3). Peer assisted learning has also been described as "the acquisition of knowledge and skill through active helping and supporting among status equals or matched companions. It involves people from similar social groupings who are not professional teachers helping each other to learn and learning themselves by so doing," (Topping, 2005). Many studies have shown learning is increased through teaching (Luca & Clarkson, 2002).

Because of the multi-age facet of the Montessori method, peer assisted learning can be used extensively. As previously mentioned, Montessori is built on the idea that students can learn from each other, especially when they are of different ages. This curriculum is built on that idea, as well as the idea of peer assisted learning.

For example, in each lesson in the accompanying curriculum, students are grouped together based on age groups. Rather than only grouping like ages together, each group must have at least one younger child, from kindergarten to third grade, and one older child, from fourth to sixth grade. This allows children who are learning the same principles the opportunity to discuss their opinions with each other, thus learning more.

Reflective Model

Reflective models were also used in the creation of the curriculum. One such reflective model is Terry Borton's reflective model originally published in his 1970 book *Reach, Touch, and Teach*. Borton's reflective model asks three questions: What? So what? Now what? (Borton, 1970).

There are many benefits associated with reflection. Reflection has been found to improve self-awareness and self-confidence (Smith and Jack, 2005; Glaze, 2002). Reflection allows students to recall an experience and add meaning to the experience (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999). Reflection also increases critical thinking (Ash & Clayton, 2004). Studies have also shown that reflection aids students' capability of being attentive to others' needs (Jones & Hill, 2003).

Borton's reflective model is used in review questions in the accompanying curriculum. For example, the third lesson on joy invites students to reflect on the trial a guest speaker discussed. This is the "what?" section of the reflective model. Next, they are asked how the guest found joy in the situation. This is the "so what?" section of the reflective model. Finally, they are asked what they would do in said situation. This is the "now what?" section of the reflection model.

Design Methods

After the lessons were written and planned, the copy was placed into a design to complete the creative project. InDesign by Adobe was the main program used. InDesign is a computer page layout program.

The typefaces used were Avenir for headings, lesson titles, and the cover page, and Palatino for the body copy. Avenir was also used in the sidebars of the curriculum. A color palette of aqua, coral, pale yellow, pale blue, and charcoal was chosen for the curriculum. It is a fun color combination for a children's curriculum, but also does not overwhelm the eye.

In designing this curriculum, four main design principles were used: contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity (Williams, 2015). Contrast is taking two items that are not the same and making them different. This draws the reader's eye to the page, because our eyes enjoy contrast and seeing two very different things. The second principle, repetition, "unifies and strengthens a piece by tying together otherwise separate parts," (Williams, p. 68).

Alignment says that nothing should be placed on a design without a reason. "Every element should have a visual connection with another element on the page," (Williams, p. 13). Proximity simply means to group like things together (Williams).

The design of the curriculum is simple, because the text is the most important part. Having a large amount of images or bright colors would distract from the purpose of the project.

Contrast is used throughout the design of the curriculum because of font size and color choice. The first page of each lesson has a heading in thirty-six-point font, while the body copy is in a much smaller twelve to fourteen-point font. The cover page has white text set in a block of color, with white space above the text block.

In an effort to achieve repetition, the cover of the curriculum is simple, just like the body of the curriculum. The main color for the curriculum design and the typeface used for the headings are introduced on the cover. This gives the reader a look at the remainder of the curriculum. If the cover of the curriculum and the body of the curriculum did not match, it would overwhelm the reader and distract from the purpose of the curriculum.

Alignment is vital in curriculum design. If there is not a strong alignment, it is hard for the eye to know where to begin. It is also confusing if there is an image or a large block of decorative text in the middle of a body of text. Thus, each lesson has a clear boundary that shows where the body copy of the lesson plan begins and ends. There is also a sidebar on each page with other information. The sidebar is blocked off via a colored line, indicating that the content in the sidebar is different from that of the body copy.

Proximity is also essential to a well-done design. To achieve proximity, the sidebars of the curriculum correspond to the activity in the body of the curriculum. For example, if the body of the curriculum is explaining how to play a game, the sidebar will list the supplies and preparation needed for that game. This keeps everything organized for the reader and increases the simplicity of teaching from the curriculum.

Thanks in part to prior knowledge of the Adobe Creative Suite programs and the classes taken at MTSU, the design process was relatively simple. Knowledge of the rules of design such as contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity informed design decisions that improved the curriculum visually. Combining the knowledge of the technology and knowledge of the principles made a pleasing curriculum design.

Reflection

The Process of Writing the Literature Review

One aspect of this project that made me nervous was learning about different teaching and learning pedagogies. As a public relations student, I was not familiar with any teaching strategies. I had no prior experience in this field. However, thanks to my advisor, I now feel well-versed in each pedagogy discussed.

The majority of my research was done via peer-reviewed journals or books from the MTSU library. One of the most frustrating parts of this process was trying to find reputable sources that I could comprehend. I learned a lot about education while writing this thesis. I can now apply this to teaching classes at church.

The Montessori method of teaching is the main pedagogy applied, because of the multi-age groupings. However, adding multiple pedagogies made the curriculum writing process easier. It offered more opportunities for a well-rounded lesson plan.

The Process of Writing and Designing the Curriculum

I chose this topic because I was disappointed that no major publishing companies were producing curriculum for a wide range of age groups. My church has had no choice but to combine kindergarten through sixth grade, and for many years, we did not have a curriculum that fit us well.

I had previously written curriculum that I have taught, but I had not based it on learning pedagogies. It was simply a bulleted list. I had confidence that I could produce great content for the curriculum, but I was nervous about applying academic terms. I

realized as I was writing, however, that I had already applied many of the learning models. I just did not know the technical terms. Now, I think about curriculum writing in terms of learning pedagogies. Each discussion question I wrote was based on a reflective model or scaffolding.

Another challenge of writing this curriculum was looking beyond limitations of space, budget, or number of children. In my experience, space has always been an issue. At another church, however, the issue might be that there are only a few children in the kindergarten through sixth grade group. It was difficult for me to get away from only thinking about my personal experiences when writing this curriculum.

While I had experience designing newsletters and brochures in InDesign, I had not yet designed a large publication. It was a challenge to think of the design as a whole, rather than page-by-page.

Evaluation

Part of the process of writing this curriculum included evaluation of the curriculum. This evaluation was done by Dr. Rust, a church staff member and other Sunday school teachers.

Dr. Rust offered many suggestions to enhance the curriculum's use of educational pedagogies addressed previously in this thesis. Dr. Rust also clarified the activities and presented options for incorporating reflection models.

A church staff member and two Sunday school teachers were presented with the following evaluation questions: Does this curriculum apply Biblical principles at an age-appropriate level? Does this curriculum seem easily adaptable to your schedule and class? Would you use this curriculum? Is this curriculum easy to follow and understand? Would your class enjoy the activities?

After asking these questions, the curriculum was changed based on their responses. Their responses to the above questions will remain unpublished.

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The Fruits of the Spirit

A kindergarten through sixth grade
character development curriculum
based on Galatians 5:22-23

Morgan M. Murphy



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Key Verse

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things." Galatians 5:22-23

Lesson 1: Introduction

Preparation

Find nine different fruits.

Here are some ideas:

Bananas

Oranges

Mangos

Apples

Grapefruit

Lemons

Limes

Pears

Papaya

Write one Fruit of the Spirit on each fruit.

For the Get Moving activity, write the letters of each Fruit of the Spirit on individual pieces of paper. The kids will work together to unscramble the words.

Prepare a snack of assorted fruit to be used in the Closing Activity.

What does the Bible say about the Fruits of the Spirit?

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things."

Galatians 5:22-23 (CSB)

Introduction

Place nine different fruits around the room. Each fruit represents one Fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22-23. Write one of the following Fruits of the Spirit on each fruit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. You might want to make a few of each Fruit of the Spirit depending on the size of your group. Make sure the fruit is small enough for your kids to pick up on their own.

As children arrive, invite them to search the room for some hidden

objects. After they have found one object, ask them to place it in a focal area of your classroom. Prompt the children to begin thinking about how fruit and the Bible are related.

Make it Real

Show the class your favorite fruit. Show one healthy fruit and one rotten fruit. Would they rather have the rotten fruit or the healthy fruit for their snack today?

What is the difference between the two fruits? One fruit is healthy, colorful and ready to eat, while the other is dark, dry and should be thrown out.

Discuss the following with your class:

Did you know we produce fruit? We don't produce bananas, apples or oranges, but we do produce fruit. As Christians, we produce fruit from the Holy Spirit. Only the Holy Spirit can help us learn to produce these fruits. If we are rooted in Scripture, in Christ and in the Holy Spirit, we can produce these good fruits. If we are rooted in anything else, we will not have long lasting, good fruit.

Get Moving

On individual pieces of paper, write one letter of each Fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control). Put students in pairs. There should be one older student (fourth through sixth grade) and one younger student (kindergarten through third grade) in each pair, if possible. Give each pair one set of letters at a time. If you give them more than one word, make sure they are short. This activity can be confusing if all letters are given at one time.

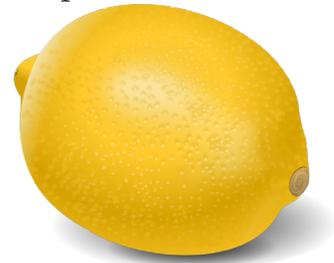
Guide students to do their best to unscramble the letters to reveal the Fruits of the Spirit. Remind the kids that they have seen the Fruits of the Spirit once already (on the fruit at the beginning of class).

When they are done, bring everyone back together.

Explain that the focus of today will be to learn the Fruits of the Spirit. Guide the kids to look up Galatians 5:22-23. Ask them to tell you the Fruits of the Spirit.

The Fruits of the Spirit are:

Love	Joy
Peace	Patience
Kindness	Goodness
Faithfulness	Gentleness
Self-control	



Talk to your class about the importance of learning the Fruits of the Spirit. For us to know God well and have a relationship with Him, it is important that we know what He expects of us.

As people of God, we are to always treat each other with love and kindness. This improves our relationships with each other and helps us reflect Jesus Christ. When we learn to apply the Fruits of the Spirit, it helps us be better to each other.

Small Groups

Explain to your class that a lot of time will be spent in small groups over the next few weeks. These groups will change every week.

Group the students into teams of three or four. Each team should have at least one kindergarten through third grade student and at least one fourth through sixth grade student. Recruit one of the older students to be the spokesperson of the group. Give students the option to talk about, draw or write their answers to the following questions during this time.

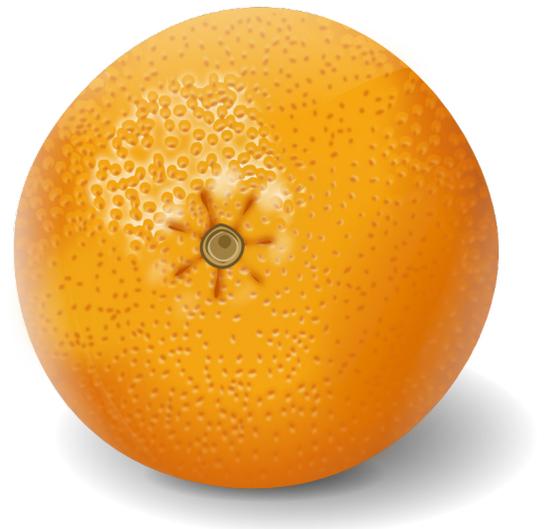
- Which Fruit of the Spirit are you most excited to learn about?
- Have you heard of any of the Fruits of the Spirit before?
- Which Fruit of the Spirit do you think will be the most challenging to practice?

Talk to your class about the Fruit of the Spirit you most struggle with. Maybe you are not patient with others when they mess up, or you have a hard time loving people who are not exactly like you. Be honest. This will help the kids open up, too.

Closing Activity

Provide a snack of fruit for the kids. As you are passing out the snack, ask the kids to tell you the Fruits of the Spirit they remember. Remind them to work on memorizing the Fruits of the Spirit over the next week.

As the children enjoy their snack, invite them to join you next week to learn about the first Fruit of the Spirit (love). Ask them to begin praying that God would help them learn to practice the Fruits of the Spirit in their lives every day.



Lesson 2: Love

Preparation

Have paper and drawing utensils ready for kids when they arrive for class.

Index cards and writing utensils will be needed in Make it Real.

"Love is Deep" by Jami Smith should be played during Make it Real.

What does the Bible say about love?

Luke 6:35

"But love your enemies, do what is good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High. For he is gracious to the ungrateful and evil." (CSB)

Romans 12:9

"Let love be without hypocrisy. Detest evil; cling to what is good." (CSB)

Romans 13:10

"Love does no wrong to a neighbor. Love, therefore, is the fulfillment of the law." (CSB)

1 Corinthians 13:13

"Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love—but the greatest of these is love." (CSB)

Introduction

As children arrive for class, guide them to draw a picture of or write a story about something or someone they love. Provide an example. This could be your dog, your family, etc. Allow time for students to show their work to the class.

Remind your students of the focus of the next few weeks (the Fruits of the Spirit). Ask the following questions as a reminder for students who were in class last time, and a catch-up for new students.

- Who can tell me the Fruits of the Spirit?
- Can you tell me where to find the Fruits of the Spirit in the Bible?
- Why are they called fruits?
- Which fruit are we learning about today?

Explain today's topic is love. We will look at how God loves us and how we love others.

Small Groups

Group the students into teams of three or four. Each team should have at least one kindergarten through third grade student and at least one fourth through sixth grade student. Recruit one of the older students to be the spokesperson of the group. Give students the option to talk about, draw or write their answers during this time.

- What is love?
- What is something you love?
- Who is someone you love?

Sometimes, it is hard for us to love people who are different from us. Let's read about a man in the Bible who loved someone who was very different and helped that person in a time of need.

Read Luke 10:26-37. This is the story of the Good Samaritan.

Ask the following questions to review the story:

- Why was it so amazing that the Samaritan stopped to help the Jewish man? Explain that people who were Jewish and people who were Samaritans did not get along in Biblical times. Even though Samaritans did not traditionally like Jews, this Samaritan made a choice to show love. Love is not always something we feel. It is a choice. Explain this in the context of a popular rivalry, such as the Red Sox and Yankees or Batman and the Joker.
- What would you do in this situation?
- Why is it difficult for us to love people who are different from us?

Although it is difficult for us to love everyone, God loves everyone equally. He showed that love in a big way.

Read John 3:16.

- Who does it say God loves?
- What did He give us?

Read 1 John 4:19.

- Why should we love?
- Who should we love?

Make it Real

Provide each child with an index card. Ask them to write the name of someone who is hard to love. They should keep this card private. Play “Love is Deep” by Jami Smith during this time.

Ask the kids to spend time alone with God praying for this person. Help them ask God to help them make a choice to love this person who is hard to love.

After they are done, on the same card, each child should write one positive thing about that person. They should also write one way they can choose to love that person this week.

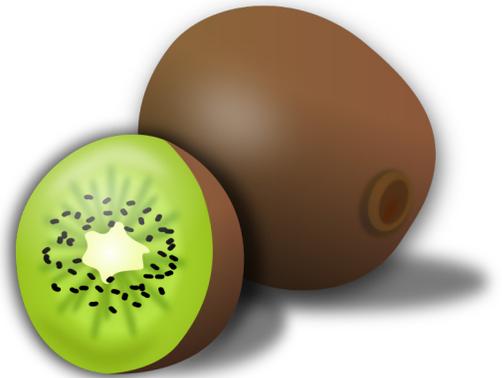
Get Moving

Divide kids into groups of four to five. Each group should have at least one older child (fourth-sixth grade) and one younger child (kindergarten-third grade).

Each group should come up with a skit about showing love to someone even when it is difficult. Allow kids to show their skits to the rest of the class.

If kids need help, here are some skit ideas:

- Someone in your class at school made fun of you last week, but today, they dropped everything out of their backpack in the hallway. They start to cry. What will you do?
- A girl in your class has been really mean to everyone recently. You find out her mom was recently diagnosed with cancer. What will you do?



Closing Activity

Explain to the children that the Fruits of the Spirit are found in Galatians 5:22-23. Throughout this study of the Fruits of the Spirit, kids will work to memorize those verses.

Invite kids to sit in a circle. Display Galatians 5:22-23 where it can easily be seen by everyone in the circle. Kids will go word-by-word to say the verse. Here's an example of how it should go:

- Child 1: "But"
- Child 2: "But the"
- Child 3: "But the fruit"

Continue until the verse is said in its entirety.

Lesson 3: Joy

Preparation

Ask a member of your church or community to talk about having joy through a painful or trying time in their life.

You will also need a beach ball, paper and several objects for the "Keep Moving" games.

What does the Bible say about joy?

James 1:2-3

"Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance." (CSB)

Romans 15:13

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (CSB)

Proverbs 15:13

"A joyful heart makes a face cheerful, but a sad heart produces a broken spirit." (CSB)

Psalms 32:11

"Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous ones; shout for joy, all you upright in heart." (CSB)

Introduction

As kids are coming in, choose some songs about joy to play. "The Joy of the Lord" by Rend Collective and "Joy" by Jonny Diaz are two great choices to get kids up and moving.

After playing the songs and letting the kids dance or play for a little while, ask them which Fruit of the Spirit they are learning about today. If they don't have a guess, have them think about the songs they just listened to. Explain that today's topic is joy.

Small Groups

Group the students into teams of three or four. Each team should have at least one kindergarten through third grade student and at least one fourth through sixth grade student. Recruit one of the older students to be the spokesperson of the group. Give students the option to talk about, draw or write their answers during this time.

When the groups are set, ask the following questions one at a time:

- What do you think joy is?
- What is something that brings you joy?
- How can someone have joy?

After these discussion questions have been answered, bring the group back together. How did the groups define joy? Ask the spokesperson to answer for their team. Talk about their answers to the three previous questions.

Psalm 92:4

“For you have made me rejoice, Lord, by what you have done; I will shout for joy because of the works of your hands. For you have made me rejoice, Lord, by what you have done; I will shout for joy because of the works of your hands.” (CSB)

Galatians 5:22-23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things.” (CSB)

Make it Real

As a practical way of showing how to have joy in hard times, ask someone from your congregation who has recently gone through a hard time, maybe a cancer diagnosis or the loss of a loved one, to share with your students how the Lord gave them joy and helped them get through the trial.

It is important for students to realize that joy and happiness have often been used as interchangeable terms, even in the Bible. The Lord wants us to be happy, but He wants us to be happy in Him, not in things of the world. We are to find our joy and happiness in God and what He has done for us, not in our new video game or a new outfit.

Discuss Psalm 92:4. Talk to your students about where you find your joy. Joy comes from the Lord, and He wants us to always have joy, even in hard times.

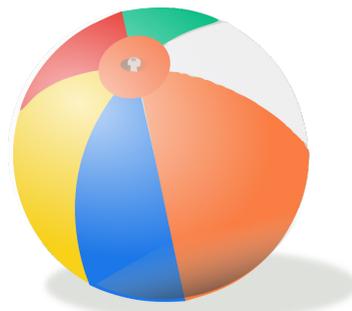
Get Moving

To get your students up and moving, play a game to help them memorize the verse. Based on the majority age of your group, here are some options:

Option 1:

On a beach ball, write one of the prompts on each section:

- Stomp like an elephant
- Hop like a kangaroo
- Swing your arms like a monkey
- Waddle like a penguin
- Dig like a dog
- Gallop like a horse



Have the children stand in a circle. Explain that you will start by tossing the beach ball to a student. Their right hand will land on an action, and the entire group will have to complete that action while saying Galatians 5:22-23. Continue until everyone in the group has had a turn.

Option 2:

Cut several pieces of paper. On each piece of paper, write one word from the key verse (Galatians 5:22-23). Tape the pieces of paper to any object you have at your disposal. This could be cups, balls, cones, etc. You just need something that the kids can put in order.

Make enough sets so that no more than four or five students are working on a verse.

Challenge the teams to race to put the verse in correct order. Here's the catch: They must choose one word at a time from the middle spot of the room. Only one person can retrieve one word at a time. If they grab two words or if two people go to the middle at once, they will have to restart.

Debrief

Before you begin the final activity, pray with your group and ask that God will give you joy, even when it's hard to be happy. Pray for those going through hard times and ask God to be with them.

This would be a good time to get back into the groups that were made at the beginning of the lesson. Allow a few minutes for the students to discuss the testimony given by the church member. Ask some guiding questions based on the testimony and the earlier discussion questions.

Here are some examples:

- What bad situation did our guest speaker face?
- How did they find joy in that situation?
- How would you feel if you were in the same situation as our guest speaker?
- Where would you find your joy?
- Do you think it would be easy to find joy in something bad?
- Would you always have joy in that bad situation?
- What will you do if you find yourself in a sad situation to find or increase your joy?

Closing Activity

As parents come to pick up the children, play the "joy" songs you played at the beginning of your class. Invite kids to celebrate the joy that the Lord gives His people. Ask them to think about what brings them joy as the songs play. Have a dance party, sing together and celebrate joy!

Lesson 4: Peace

Preparation

Provide paper, crayons and other drawing supplies for the Introduction activity.

Set up an obstacle course in part of the room. Set out hula hoops to pick up and hula with, cones to walk around, chairs to sit in, etc. You will also need blindfolds. This will be used in the Get Moving section of the lesson.

Write each word of Galatians 5:22-23 on individual index cards for the Closing Activity. Make one set for every 3-4 kids.

Paper and writing utensils are needed for Make it Real.

What does the Bible say about peace?

Job 22:21

"Come to terms with God and be at peace; in this way good will come to you." (CSB)

Psalms 34:14

"Turn away from evil and do what is good; seek peace and pursue it." (CSB)

Romans 16:20

"The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you." (CSB)

Introduction

As children come to class, invite them to draw a picture of something that worries them. Provide an example for the children to see. This place could be a big test they have, a sick relative, etc. Save the drawings for later in the lesson.

Spend some time reviewing the previous lessons. Ask your class if they remember the Fruits of the Spirit previously covered (love and joy). Guide children to think about the memory verse (Galatians 5:22-23) they have worked on to help them remember the Fruits of the Spirit. Ask the class which Fruit of the Spirit we are learning about today. If they need help, encourage them to look up the passage (Galatians 5:22-23) in the Bible and find the third Fruit of the Spirit.

Get Moving

Divide the class into two teams. There should be a mix of younger children (kindergarten through third grade) and older children (fourth through sixth grade). Select one older child from each team to be the team captain.

Blindfold both team captains. Explain that the teams should spread out across the obstacle course. The goal is for the team to verbally guide their captains through the obstacle course and across the finish line. The team cannot touch the captain. The team who gets their captain across the finish line the fastest wins.

After finishing the obstacle course, ask your students to help you clean up the obstacle courses. This will help the class settle down before the next activity.

Philippians 4:6-7

"Let your graciousness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."
(CSB)

Small Groups

Group the students into teams of three or four. Each team should have at least one kindergarten through third grade student and at least one fourth through sixth grade student. Recruit one of the older students to be the spokesperson of the group. Give students the option to talk about, draw or write their answers to the following questions during this time.

- What did you think about that game?
- Why was it hard for you to guide your captain?
- Team captains, why was it hard for you to not be able to see what was going on?

We often want to be in charge of situations we have no control over. We feel like we have a blindfold on and everyone is telling us a different way to control the situation. We often forget who really has control. God has a great plan for us, and there's no reason for us to feel like we are walking with a blindfold on. When we look to Him, we can find peace in all circumstances, even very stressful situations.

Guide the students to look up Philippians 4:6-7.

- What does this passage say about peace?
- What does this passage say we do to make our stressful situations better?
- What can you do to improve moments when you are stressed or worried?



Pass the students' drawings from the beginning of class back. Ask the kids to spend a few minutes discussing their drawings in their small groups. When they are finished with their discussion, ask one of the older children in each group to pray for the situations the children drew.

Make it Real

Finally, ask the class to flip their drawings over. Provide each person with a marker or crayon. Ask the kids the following questions:

How does Philippians 4:6-7 say to deal with worries?

Remind your students that Philippians 4:6-7 says to deal with our worries with prayer and thanksgiving. This will give us peace.

Ask the kids to write down one thing they can be thankful for in their stressful situation. If they are worried about a family member who is sick, they can be thankful for doctors who are trained to care for the sick. If they are worried about a test, they can be thankful for helpful teachers.

Closing Activity

Divide the class into groups of three to four kids. Place one set of Galatians 5:22-23 verse cards for each group in the middle of the room. The copies should be shuffled so the sets are not together.

Teams should send one person to the middle at a time. Each person may only grab one card. Encourage teams to race to see who can put the verse in order the fastest.

As students are leaving, remind them to remember one thing they can be thankful for during stressful or worrisome times.

If you know that a student is worried about something happening in the immediate future, consider sending a letter of encouragement this week. Include Philippians 4:6-7 in your letter to remind them of today's lesson.

Lesson 5: Patience

Preparation

Small, plastic cones are needed for the Get Moving game.

Create bingo cards containing words from Galatians 5:22-23. Each child should have one card.

What does the Bible say about patience?

Romans 8:25

"Now if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with patience." (CSB)

1 Timothy 1:16

"But I received mercy for this reason, so that in me, the worst of them, Christ Jesus might demonstrate his extraordinary patience as an example to those who would believe in him for eternal life." (CSB)

2 Timothy 4:2

"Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience and teaching." (CSB)

Introduction

Invite kids to have a seat immediately when they walk into the classroom. Do not give the kids any other instructions or activities.

When it is time to begin class, give the kids another minute or two of sitting at the table. If the class starts to get restless, remind the kids that they only need to sit until they are given more instructions.

Ask the children to tell you the Fruits of the Spirits they have learned about so far. Ask for one or two stories about how they applied a Fruit of the Spirit to their lives in the past week. Share your own story of applying a Fruit of the Spirit in your life.

Get Moving

In an open area, scatter several dozen small, plastic cones. Some cones should be upright, while others should be turned over.

Divide the class into two teams. Both teams should have mixed ages. It is the goal of one team to stand all of the cones upright. The other team's goal is knock all of the cones over.

Give the kids a short amount of time to accomplish their goals. Play a few times, switching goals each time.

When the game is over, ask the kids to help clean up. Gather everyone together and discuss the following questions.

- What did you think about that game?
- How did you obtain your goal?

Psalm 27:14

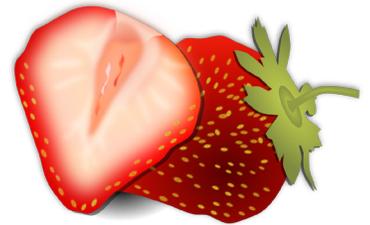
“Wait for the Lord;
be strong, and let your
heart be courageous.
Wait for the Lord.”
(CSB)

In order to beat out the other team, it took patience for you to wait for the opportunity to either turn the cone over or set the cone up. Sometimes, you had to stand over a cone and wait for the other person to leave. The Fruit of the Spirit we are focusing on today is patience.

Small Groups

Group the students into teams of three or four. Each team should have at least one kindergarten through third grade student and at least one fourth through sixth grade student.

Recruit one of the older students to be the spokesperson of the group. Give students the option to talk about, draw or write their answers during this time.



- Where is the most exciting place you have ever been on a trip?
- When did you find out you were going?
- How long did you have to wait before going on the trip?
- Is it hard to wait for exciting things to happen?

When we really want something, it’s hard for us to wait, even if we know it’s going to happen soon. This even happened in the Bible. Let’s read about what happened.

Read Genesis 17:1-8.

- What promise did God make to Abram?
- How long do you think Abram had to wait?

Abram had to wait many, many years for God to fulfill his promise. It was one year before his son, Isaac, was born, and many more before he had a large number of descendants.

- How would you feel about waiting that long?
- Why is it hard for us to be patient?
- What can you do to increase your patience in one situation this week (with siblings, parents, etc.)?
- Can we use our time wisely while we wait?

Ask each group to spend a few minutes praying together. Guide the kids to pray for patience in good and bad circumstances.

Make it Real

Ask the children to think of a time they had to use patience. Provide your own example, too. Patience is one of the hardest Fruits of the Spirit for us to practice. It is hard for us to wait on the Lord and His timing.

Read Psalm 27:14.

Remind the class that we should wait patiently for the Lord. The Lord will provide for us. He will do what He says He will do in His Word.

Ask each child to make a list of the things the Lord has provided for them. If the Lord has previously provided, He will do it again. We only need to wait patiently for His timing.

Closing Activity

Option 1:

Invite kids to get back into their teams from the game at the beginning of class.

Now that they know

a little more about patience, ask the kids to play again. This time, they should practice patience to beat the other team. Play as time allows.

Option 2:

Provide each child with a Galatians 5:22-23 bingo card. One child can be the caller. They should call one word from the passage at a time. The first person with five words in a row wins. Play until everyone has filled their card.

Lesson 6: Kindness

Preparation

Provide kids with tools to build a tower. Some options are marshmallows and toothpicks, blocks, straws and duct tape, or apples and other fruit.

Prepare index cards with the following references:

Luke 6:31

Ephesians 4:32

John 13:34-35

On a set of plastic blocks, write Galatians 5:22-23 in dry erase marker. There should be 1-2 words on each block.

Supplies for cards are needed for the closing activity.

What does the Bible say about kindness?

Proverbs 14:21

"The one who despises his neighbor sins, but whoever shows kindness to the poor will be happy." (CSB)

Proverbs 19:17

"Kindness to the poor is a loan to the Lord, and he will give a reward to the lender." (CSB)

Introduction

As children enter the classroom, invite them to build a tower out of the supplies provided. They can work together in teams or alone. The tower should be able to stand on its own.

After everyone has had the opportunity to build a tower, invite everyone to have a seat. Ask the following questions:

- What did you use to build your tower?
- What was your strategy in building your tower?

Just like you built your tower, it is important for us to build each other. What does that mean? Let's see what the Bible says.

Make it Real

Distribute the prepared verse cards to older students. Ask the students to read their verses out loud.

What do these verses have in common? What theme do you notice?

The Bible tells us to always be kind to each other. It is important that we always build each other up with kind words, not words of anger or hate. Just like you worked hard to build your tower, we should work hard to build each other with kindness.

Share a time when someone was kind to you. Explain to the class how that made you feel, act, etc. Next, share a time when someone was not kind to you. Explain to the class how that situation made you feel.

Small Groups

Group the students into teams of three or four. Each team should have at least one kindergarten through third grade student and at least one fourth through sixth grade student. Recruit one of the older students to be the spokesperson of the group. Give students the option to talk about, draw or write their answers during this time.

Ask the following questions:

- Has someone been kind to you?
- How did that make you feel?
- How did you react?
- Has someone not been kind to you?
- How did that make you feel?
- How did you react?
- Who is one person that you can say something kind to this week?

Our words have a great impact on others. Just like every move you made in building your tower impacted the result of the tower, all of our words have an effect on people, whether our words are kind or mean. It is important that we use kind words, because the Bible says we should treat others in the way we want to be treated (Luke 6:31).

Get Moving

Set out the Galatians 5:22-23 blocks. Invite kids to figure out how to build the tower so that the verse is in order.

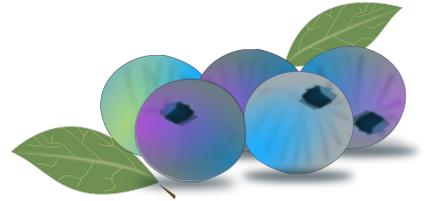
Separate the kids into teams. There should be at least one younger child (kindergarten through third grade) and at least one older child (fourth through sixth grade) on each team.

Encourage the teams to race to see who can build the tower correctly the fastest. Repeat as necessary.

Closing Activity

Option 1:

Distribute supplies for cards. Explain to your class that they will make cards for members of the church's congregation. The cards they make will go to people who are sick, live in assisted living homes or simply need kind words. Provide the kids with names to personalize the card if available. Kids could also make a card for someone in their neighborhood or at school.



Encourage kids to use uplifting Bible verses on their cards. Here are some examples:

- Jeremiah 29:11
- Psalm 34:8
- Isaiah 40:28-31
- Romans 8:28
- Romans 15:13

Reinforce to kids that these cards are going to people who need to be shown kindness. As kids leave, collect their cards and remind them to be kind this week, even when people are not kind in return.

After distributing the cards, update kids in the following class on the impact their cards had. It is important to follow-through with the kids. They need to know that they made someone feel better with one act of kindness.

Option 2:

Invite your class to make a kindness poster to hang on the wall outside of the classroom. This will remind the church congregation of the need to be kind. They should include a verse or two about kindness. Here are some examples:

- Luke 6:31
- Ephesians 4:32
- Colossians 3:12

Allow kids to draw or write examples of acts of kindness on the poster.

Lesson 7: Goodness

Preparation

Write one letter of each word of Galatians 5:22-23 on individual pieces of paper.

What does the Bible say about goodness?

Psalm 68:10

"Your people settled in it; God, you provided for the poor by your goodness." (CSB)

Psalm 145:7

"They will give a testimony of your great goodness and will joyfully sing of your righteousness." (CSB)

Psalm 23:6

"Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord as long as I live." (CSB)

Introduction

As kids come to class, give each child a set of letters.

The letters should spell out

one word from Galatians

5:22-23. Ask them to keep

their word a secret until

all of the words have been

unscrambled. When they figured out the word, they

should write the word on an index card. After all

words have been unscrambled, guide the kids to

stand in a line to form

Galatians 5:22-23.



After they have unscrambled the verse, ask the kids if they can guess the Fruit of the Spirit that they will learn about today.

Today's Fruit of the Spirit is goodness.

Get Moving

Choose one child to be Simon for Simon Says. Explain that if an order is given without "Simon says" before the order, students should not copy that order. If Simon does say "Simon says," students should copy that order. Continue playing until a few children have had the opportunity to be Simon.

At the end of the game, ask kids the following questions:

- What makes Simon Says difficult?
- Why is it important to listen to Simon?
- Where can we find the most important instructions as we go through our lives? Those instructions are found in the Bible.

John 8:31

"Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, 'If you continue in my word, you really are my disciples. You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'" (CSB)

Romans 3:23

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (CSB)

Small Groups

Group the students into teams of three or four. Each team should have at least one kindergarten through third grade student and at least one fourth through sixth grade student. Recruit one of the older students to be the spokesperson of the group. Give students the option to talk about, draw or write their answers during this time.

Read John 8:31.

Ask the following questions for discussion in small groups:

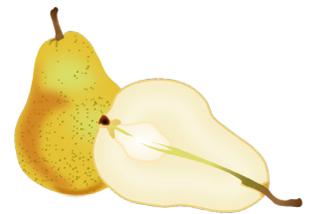
- What is the truth?
- How can we be set free by the truth?
- How can we continue in God's Word?
- How does this relate to goodness?

Read Romans 3:23.

This verse says we have all messed up and are not good enough for God. However, God loves us so much that He sent His only Son to die for our sins so we can be with God in heaven (John 3:16). We could never be good enough for this gift on our own.

Although we could never be good enough, one of God's expectations of us is to do our best to be like His Son, Jesus. Jesus never sinned. We are supposed to think and act like Jesus (Philippians 2:5).

We can do this by living by the instructions of the Bible. The Bible says we are to show goodness in our lives (Galatians 5:22-23). The Bible offers many instructions for being full of goodness. We are given the Ten Commandments to follow, and the Fruits of the Spirit as expectations.



Make it Real

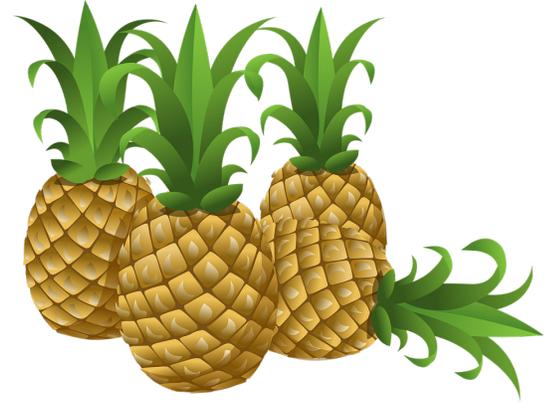
Older kids:

The only way to know what God commands and expects of us is to be in His Word daily. Guide children to make their own Bible reading schedule using the month and day. Here's an example:

On January 1: Read Genesis 1

On February 1: Read Exodus 1

On June 3: Read Joshua 3



Read the book of the Bible that corresponds with the number of the month and the chapter that

corresponds with they day of the month.

Help kids make a list of the passages they will read in the next week.

Younger kids:

Help younger kids (kindergarten-third grade) memorize the Ten Commandments. Guide kids in thinking of ways to apply the Ten Commandments this week.

Closing Activity

Option 1:

Invite kids to play another round of Simon Says to remind them to listen to what God says through the Bible this week. Allow several kids to be Simon.

Option 2:

Group kids into teams of three to four. Include at least one younger kid (kindergarten-third grade) and at least one older kid (fourth-sixth grade) on each team. Ask kids to create a song or rap to help them remember the Fruits of the Spirit. They should include each of the nine Fruits of the Spirit and the Scripture reference in the lyrics. Allow kids to perform their song or rap.

Lesson 8: Faithfulness

Preparation

Manna recipe:
Combine 2 cups of flour and 1 teaspoon of salt. Stir in 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Slowly add 1/2 cup of warm water. Make small pieces of the dough into circles. Bake at 475 degrees for 3-5 minutes.

Recipe courtesy of Lindsey from growingkidsministry.com

Write ways to be faithful to God on index cards and hide them around the room for the Get Moving game. There are examples in the Get Moving section of this lesson.

Write Galatians 5:22-23 on cardstock. Cut the cardstock into a puzzle. Make one puzzle for every 2-3 kids.

Paper and writing utensils are needed for Make it Real.

Psalm 91:4

"He will cover you with his feathers; you will take refuge under his wings. His faithfulness will be a protective shield."
(CSB)

Introduction

Provide each child with a piece of manna. Explain that the focus of today's lesson is faithfulness. In Exodus, manna was a sign of God's faithfulness. As kids arrive, play the wedding march as another example of faithfulness.



As kids are eating their snack, ask them to talk about a time in the last week that they practiced a Fruit of the Spirit. Share your own story, too.

Manna isn't a tasty snack, so your kids might not enjoy it. Encourage kids to try one bite to taste the food the Israelites ate.

Small Groups

Group the students into teams of three or four. Each team should have at least one kindergarten through third grade student and at least one fourth through sixth grade student. Recruit one of the older students to be the spokesperson of the group. Give students the option to talk about, draw or write their answers during this time.

Read Psalm 91:4.

Ask the following questions:

- What does it mean to be faithful?
- How have you heard that word used before?

We often hear faithfulness used in the context of marriage. A husband promises to be faithful to his wife and a wife promises to be faithful to her husband. This means they are promising to only love each other for the rest of their lives.

What does the Bible say about faithfulness?

Psalm 57:10

"For your faithful love is as high as the heavens; your faithfulness reaches the clouds." (CSB)

Psalm 40:10

"I did not hide your righteousness in my heart; I spoke about your faithfulness and salvation; I did not conceal your constant love and truth from the great assembly." (CSB)

Psalm 36:5

"Lord, your faithful love reaches to heaven, your faithfulness to the clouds." (CSB)

Psalm 91:4 says that God is faithful to us. He loves us and promises to always love us. He will protect us.

God also promised to protect the Israelites in the Old Testament.

Assign each small group one section of verses from Exodus 16:1-35.

Provide each group with paper and writing or drawing supplies.

Each group should read their assigned verses and write or draw a summary of what happened. Guide kids to pay close attention to how their snack (manna) comes into the story.

Ask each group to share their findings with the class. When all groups have had a turn, ask the following questions:

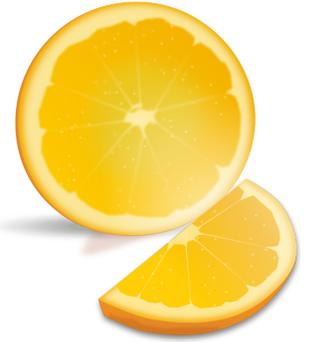
- How was God faithful to the Israelites?
- Who is someone we can be faithful to?

God is faithful to us, but we should be faithful to Him, too.

Get Moving

Explain to the children that a game is hidden around the room. Separate kids into two teams. There should be mixed ages on both teams.

The object of this game is to find as many of the "Faithful to God" cards as possible. When a card is found, the team must act out the way to be faithful to God before moving on to finding the next card.



Here are some examples of actions to write on the cards:

- I can be faithful to God by attending church.
- I can be faithful to God by obeying Him.
- I can be faithful to God by praying to Him.
- I can be faithful to God by reading His Word.
- I can be faithful to God by being kind to others.
- I can be faithful to God by practicing the Fruits of the Spirit.

Make it Real

Give each younger child (kindergarten-third grade) an older partner (fourth-sixth grade). These pairs should work together to think of three ways they can be faithful to God at school this week. Ask the kids to write down their ideas to be shared with the class.

Next, ask kids to write down three ways they can be a faithful friend at school this week. Being a faithful friend means being honest, kind and standing up for your friend.

Guide kids to pray over their faithfulness ideas. Provide a bucket they can place their ideas in before moving to the next activity.

Closing Activity

Create groups of two to three kids. There should be at least one older child and at least one younger child in each group. Provide the previously prepared puzzle pieces for Galatians 5:22-23. Invite groups to race to see who can complete the puzzle and say the verse the fastest.

Ask groups to switch puzzles and continue playing as time allows.

Lesson 9: Gentleness

Preparation

Bring games for the class to play. This could include, board games, card games, etc.

For Get Moving:
Cut pool noodles in half so that each child has one half. Wrap one pool noodle in duct tape so it is different from the others. Cut this pool noodle in half. These will be the pool noodles for the "nurses" in the game.

Titus 3:1-2

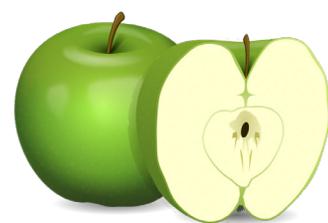
"Remind them to submit to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to slander no one, to avoid fighting, and to be kind, always showing gentleness to all people."
(CSB)

Introduction

Provide games for kids to play as they arrive. The purpose of this activity is to bring out your kids' competitive side. Allow your class to continue playing the games until you feel it is time to move on.

Bring the kids together. Did they enjoy playing the games? How did the kids feel when they won? What about when they lost?

Ask your class if they remember the topic (the Fruits of the Spirit). Ask the kids if they can tell you all of the Fruits of the Spirit. Today's Fruit of the Spirit is gentleness.



Small Groups

Group the students into teams of three or four. Each team should have at least one kindergarten through third grade student and at least one fourth through sixth grade student. Recruit one of the older students to be the spokesperson of the group. Give students the option to talk about, draw or write their answers during this time.

Have you been asked to be gentle? When? Who asked you? Why?

We are asked to be gentle in situations that involve someone who is younger us, or maybe not as strong as us. Maybe you are playing outside with your younger sibling and your mom asks you to "play gentle." We are often told to be gentle.

What do you think it means to be gentle?

Gentleness is defined as being tender or courteous.

What does the Bible say about gentleness?

1 Peter 3:16

"Yet do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that when you are accused, those who disparage your good conduct in Christ will be put to shame."
(CSB)

James 3:13

"Who among you is wise and understanding? By his good conduct he should show that his works are done in the gentleness that comes from wisdom."
(CSB)

Ask the kids who won the games played earlier to raise their hands. How did they react to winning?

Ask the kids who lost to raise their hands. How did they react to losing?

It's important that we are always gentle, not only physically, but also with our actions and words. It is very easy to be caught up in how well you did in a game or on a test, but we need to remember to always be gentle, never boastful or proud.

Who can tell me what it means to be boastful?

It is great to be proud of your accomplishments, but we should always remember others' feelings. In those exciting situations of winning, or sad moments where we are losing is often when our words hurt each other the most.

Get Moving

Divide kids into two teams, making sure that there are mixed ages on both teams. Provide each child with a previously prepared pool noodle. Choose one person on each team to be the nurse. They should have the nurse's pool noodles.

The object of this game is to tag someone on the other team with your "stinger" (pool noodle). Once you are tagged, you are infected and frozen. The only way to continue playing is to be "healed" by the nurse.

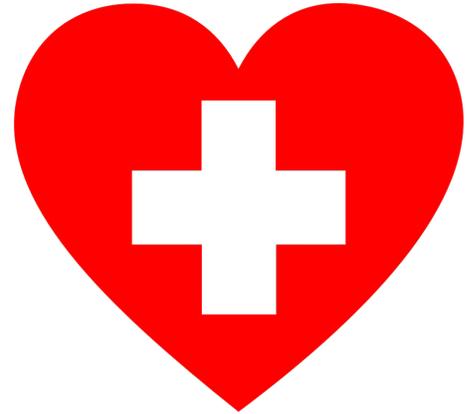
Pool noodles must be kept at the forehead of each player. Only the backs of other players can be tagged.

Allow children to continue playing for as long as time allows.

Make it Real

After bringing the kids in from the game, ask the following questions:

- Did you enjoy that game?
- Which was better: being “frozen” or the nurse “unfreezing” you?

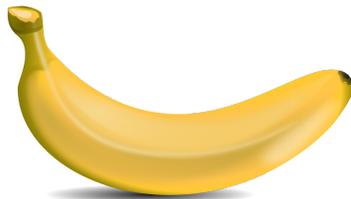


When you were tagged, you were infected, so you couldn't move. When the nurse came and took away the infection, you could move again and continue playing.

Our words are like your pool noodles in the game. We can either make someone feel terrible or help them feel better. That's why it's important to be gentle with our words.

Next time you have the opportunity to use your words to build someone up or tear them down, remember to be gentle.

- Can you make a commitment to be more gentle with your words?
- What is one specific way you can do that this week?



Closing Activity

To practice using gentle words, ask each child to look to the person next to them. They should say three uplifting things about that person. Students could also write a positive letter to a sibling or family member. Continue this activity for as long as necessary. The teacher should participate, as well.

Lesson 10: Self-control

Preparation

Bring treats or fun activities to class and set them around the room in plain view of the kids.

Write one word of Galatians 5:22-23 on individual index cards. Make one set for every 2-3 kids.

What does the Bible say about self-control?

1 Thessalonians 5:6

"So then, let us not sleep, like the rest, but let us stay awake and be self-controlled." (CSB)

1 Corinthians 9:25

"Now everyone who competes exercises self-control in everything. They do it to receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable crown." (CSB)

Introduction

Before children begin arriving, set out some tempting treats or games around the room. This could be a plate of cookies, a bowl of candy or some balls and blocks around the room.



As children arrive, explain that the items are for later in the class. Guide the children to sit and talk to each other while waiting to begin the lesson.

If any of the kids cannot leave the objects alone or is distracted by the objects, redirect their attention. Here are some examples of statements to say in these situations:

- "Let's build our self-control and wait until it's time to move to that activity."
- "Can you work out your self-control muscles and wait until it's our turn to use those objects?"

Get Moving

Split your class into small teams of two to three kids. Make sure at least one younger child (kindergarten through third grade) and at least one older child (fourth through sixth grade) are on each team.

Give one set of the Galatians 5:22-23 cards to each team. Have the children race to see which team can put the verses in order the fastest.

Continue until they have mastered the verses. Keep the treats set out before class in plain view during this activity. Continue to use positive redirection statements as necessary.

Matthew 4:4

"He answered, 'It is written: Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (CSB)

Hebrews 4:12

"For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." (CSB)

Small Groups

Group the students into teams of three or four. Each team should have at least one kindergarten through third grade student and at least one fourth through sixth grade student. Recruit one of the older students to be the spokesperson of the group. Give students the option to talk about, draw or write their answers to the following questions during this time.

Remind students that this is the last new Fruit of the Spirit they will learn about, but it is a very important fruit.

- What is self-control?
- Give me an example of when you have shown self-control.

Let's look at what the Bible says about self-control.

Look up Matthew

4:1-11. In this chapter, Jesus is in the desert with Satan. Satan is continually tempting Jesus to sin. However, Jesus always fights back against the devil.

Explain temptations. A temptation is something that makes us want to sin. Sin is anything that doesn't please God.

Ask your class the following questions.

- What weapon did Jesus use against the devil?
- Did it work?
- How can we use the Bible as our weapon against sin?

Discuss with the class the importance of knowing Scripture. Remind them that they learned two verses (Galatians 5:22-23) today that list all of the characteristics a Christian should have. Help the children understand that memorizing Scripture is not as hard as they thought. It is a great weapon of self-control.

Ask an older child to read Hebrews 4:12.

This verse says that God's Word is active and sharper than any double-edged sword.

- Knowing the Bible is a weapon, how can you use it to fight your temptations?

In their small groups, have kids act out a tempting situation in which they must show great

self-control. Here are some examples:

- Your parent asks you to clean your room before you play any video games. Your parent then leaves for work. You really want to play your video games. What do you do?
- Your teacher asks you to raise your hand and be called on before you speak, but you have something you really want to share. She keeps calling on other students. What do you do?

Make it Real

Allow the children to play with the toys or eat the snacks set out at the beginning of class. Ask them if it was difficult to leave the objects alone. Guide them in a discussion of how they can practice self-control every day, and help them find Scripture they can remember in those tempting moments.

Examples:

James 1:13-18

Luke 22:40

Ask the following questions:

- What is a situation that makes it hard for you to practice self-control?
- What can you do to make it easier?
- After learning about self-control today, what are you going to do differently next time you don't want to practice self-control?

Closing Activity

Allow kids to continue playing with the objects set out at the beginning of class as a reward for their self-control practices. Offer kids the opportunity to continue working on memorizing Galatians 5:22-23 using the verse cards.

As they are playing, tell the kids you are proud of them for using their self-control muscles. Congratulate the kids on their waiting for your instructions to eat their snack or play the games.

Lesson 11: Conclusion

Preparation

Find nine different fruits.

Here are some ideas:

Bananas

Oranges

Mangos

Apples

Grapefruit

Lemons

Limes

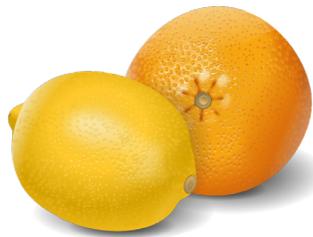
Pears

Papaya

Write one Fruit of the Spirit on each fruit.

Provide a snack of several different fruits.

Poster board and markers will be used in the Small Group section.



Introduction

Place nine different fruits around the room. Each fruit represents one Fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22-23. Write one of the following Fruits of the Spirit on each fruit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. You might want to make a few of each Fruit of the Spirit depending on the size of your group. Make sure the fruit is small enough for your kids to pick up on their own. As kids arrive, ask them to find the fruit hidden around the room, just as they did at the beginning of their lessons on the Fruits of the Spirit.

Now that they have learned about each Fruit of the Spirit, ask the kids to think about how the Bible and fruit are related. How do their answers differ from their answers at the beginning of the series?

Make it Real

Show the class your favorite fruit, just as you did in the introductory lesson. Ask if they remember seeing the fruit.

Discuss the following with your class:

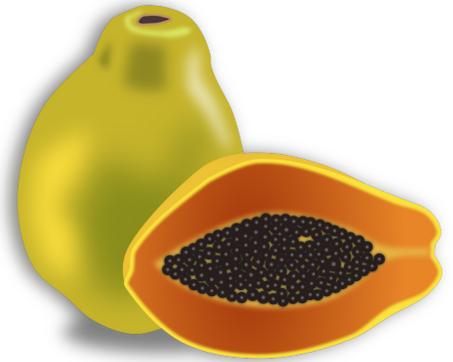
Earlier, we talked about the difference between healthy fruit and rotten fruit. We also discussed the difference between the fruit I'm holding and the Fruits of the Spirit talked about in the Bible. Who would like to tell me what we have learned?

From the introductory lesson:

We don't produce bananas, apples or oranges, but we do produce fruit. As Christians, we produce fruit from the Holy Spirit. Only the Holy Spirit can help us learn to produce these fruits. If we are rooted in Scripture, in Christ and in the Holy Spirit, we can produce these good fruits. If we are rooted in anything else, we will not have long lasting, good fruit.

Get Moving

Place kids in pairs. There should be one older child (fourth-sixth grade) and one younger child (kindergarten-sixth grade) in each pair.



Ask the pairs to come up with one of the following:

Option 1:

Kids should come up with a skit involving each of the Fruits of the Spirit. This skit can be a “how to” or a “how not to” in following and practicing the Fruits of the Spirit.

Option 2:

Kids should come up with motions for each of the nine Fruits of the Spirit. The motions should help them remember the Fruits of the Spirit after the completion of the series.

Ask two groups to show their skit or hand motions to the class.

Small Groups

Group the students into teams of three or four. Each team should have at least one kindergarten through third grade student and at least one fourth through sixth grade student. Recruit one of the older students to be the spokesperson of the group. Give students the option to talk about, draw or write their answers to the following questions during this time.

- Which Fruit of the Spirit did you have the most fun learning about?
- Which Fruit of the Spirit was the most interesting to you?
- Which Fruit of the Spirit has been the most challenging for you to practice every day?

Be open with your experiences during this study. Talk about any challenges you have had with learning the Fruits of the Spirit. Allow the kids to discuss their challenges, too.

Encourage the children to spend time discussing their experiences with their small groups.

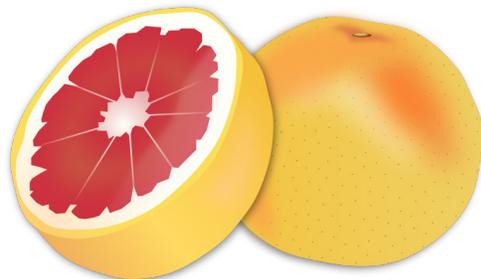
Ask the following questions to guide the discussion:

- How can you practice each of the Fruits of the Spirit this week?
- How can we help each other to practice the Fruits of the Spirit daily?

Assign each small group a Fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, etc.). Ask them to make a poster promoting the value of that Fruit of the Spirit. For example, the poster for peace could have a drawing of someone in the hospital and another person praying with them. A Bible verse about peace could be included. Help the groups find Scripture to go with their posters as needed. Hang the posters outside of the classroom for the congregation to see.

Closing Activity

Ask the class to say Galatians 5:22-23. As a final review game, split the class into groups of four to five students. There should be at least one older child (fourth-sixth grade) and at least one younger child (kindergarten-third grade). Provide the Galatians 5:22-23 verse cards. Encourage the teams to race to see who can put the verse in order the fastest with no help. Each group should say the verse out loud after they finish putting the verse in order.



Just as you did in the introductory lesson, gather the class for a snack of assorted fruits. Ask the kids if they enjoyed their time learning about the Fruits of the Spirit.

Pray over the students. Ask God to continue to teach them more about the Fruits of the Spirit and how to practice them daily.