


LESSON 1: FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT: LOVE

 Galatians 5:22; Luke 15:11-32

10/04/2020

WORSHIP Videos

- “Living by the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25) [\(watch here\)](#)
- “The Love of God” [\(watch here\)](#)
- “You Forgive Me” [\(watch here\)](#)



OPENING

[5 min]

Welcome

Introduce the Lesson

- Say: **Over the next few weeks, we’ll be learning about something called the fruit of the Spirit.** Invite kids to tell where fruit grows.
- Say: **This week we’ll learn that love is a fruit of the Spirit.**
- Say: **Today we’ll find out about God’s great big love for us and how he helps us love others.**
- Say: **When I say love is a fruit of the Spirit, that means when we’re friends with God, he helps us show love to others.**

Share

- Say: **As we learn about love today, we’ll hear a story in the Bible about a son who traveled far away from home. He was away for a while, so when he came back, he was very happy to see his family. Let’s talk about times we were happy to come home.** Share about a time *you* were happy to come home. It might be after a long day at work, after a vacation, or when you were sick and you were looking forward to getting in bed.
- Have kids share about times *they* were happy to come home. They might tell about returning home after staying at Grandma’s house for a night. They might also share about being happy to come home after their first day at school or when they missed their parents.

Summarize

Open a Bible, and say: **Most of us are happy to come home every day. The son we'll read about in the Bible today was away from home for a long time, and when he came home, he learned how much his dad loved him. The dad showed his son so much love! Today we'll learn more about how love is a fruit of the Spirit and how being friends with God helps us show love.**

Pray, thanking God that love is a fruit of the Spirit that God gives us to share with others.

Dig In to the Bible

- Read: Galatians 5:22

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

- In This Passage: Love is a fruit of the Spirit, and we can see God's loving heart in a story Jesus tells about a father whose son leaves to live wildly. When the son returns home, the father welcomes him with open arms. In the same way, God loves us so much, and his love flows out of us to others!
- Read Luke 15:11-32 (summary below)

The Bible tells about a man who had two sons. One son asked for his share of the inheritance, which was money he was supposed to get when his dad died.

The son gathered all he owned, went to a new country, spent all he had and had a lot of big parties! Soon he ran out of money and was starving. The son remembered that his dad's servants ate better than he was eating now. So he thought he'd go home, tell his dad he was sorry, and ask if he could work for him.

You know what happened? When the dad saw his son who was still a long way off, he was filled with love for him. The dad ran to his son! Then the dad said, "I love you son. Welcome home! Let's celebrate!"

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



Supplies

- “The Lost Grape” teaching video

Say: **We’re learning that love is a fruit of the Spirit. We saw how the father in the story Jesus told showed love when his son ran away and then came home.**

Ask: • **Tell about a time you knew your parents *really* loved you. Share your own story first.**

Say: **Let’s see what happens when one of our fruit-basket friends heads off on his own.**

Watch “The Lost Grape.” [watch here](#)

Ask: • **Why did the adventures the grape went after seem exciting at first?**

• **Why weren’t the adventures as exciting as he expected?**

• **Why is being safe in God’s love better than doing our own thing?**

Say: **For the grape, the best place to be was in the fruit basket with his loving fruit family. For the son in Jesus’ story, the best place was home. Sometimes it can seem like following our own way will be more exciting, but the best thing in life is accepting God’s love! Then God will help us pass his love on, because love is a fruit of the Spirit.**



Supplies (PREPPED BEFORE CLASS)

- hanger with notches (1 for every adult or teen Teacher)
- 8-ounce paper cups (2 for every adult or teen Teacher)
- hole punch
- yarn (two 2-foot pieces per adult or teen Teacher)
- large plastic coins (4 per child)
- masking tape
- paper
- markers (1 for every adult or teen Teacher)

Easy Prep

- Punch 2 holes in each paper cup, about 1 inch from the lip of the cup and directly across from one another. Draw a smiley face on half the cups and a frowning face on the other half. Thread a piece of yarn through both holes in each cup and tie the ends together in a loop. Hook each loop on a hanger notch so every hanger has 2 cups hanging from it, 1 smiley and 1 frowning. Draw an arrow on a small piece of paper, and tape it to the hanger above the frowning cup.

Add Coins to the Happy Cup

Form groups so each adult and teen helper has about the same number of children. Give each helper four coins per child and a scale you made ahead of time.

Say: **In Jesus' story, the dad had a great big love for his son.** Have adult or teen helpers draw a large heart at the top of a piece of paper.

Say: **But the son asked for all the money his dad was going to give him when he died.** Have leaders hand each child four coins.

Say: **This probably really hurt his dad's feelings. So when the son decided to come back home, he thought he'd done too many bad things for his dad to still love him. Maybe he hoped the dad would love him a *little*.** Have adult or teen helpers draw a small heart at the bottom of the same page on which they drew the big heart.

Say: **Sometimes we feel the same way about God. We feel like we've done so many wrong things that God may not love us very much. Let's look at something to help us think about that.**

Have each adult or teen helper hook the hanger over a finger and hold the scale out in front of the kids. Helpers can hold the papers with the hearts in their other hands, beside the scales, so that the arrow will be pointing between the two hearts before any coins are added.



Say: **When we do good things, God is happy.**

Share about something good *you've* done to please God. It may be that you helped a friend, told the truth, or took care of someone who was sick. Invite one child in each group to add a coin to the cup with the smile.

Ask: • **What's something good *you've* done?** Kids may say obey Mom, share with a friend, or be kind to a neighbor. Have each child add a coin to the cup with the smile as he or she shares.

Say: **Look—the scales are pointing to the big hearts. That means God loves us a lot.** Have adult and teen helpers show kids that the arrow is pointing to the large heart.

Add Coins to the Sad Cup

Say: **But what if we have a day when we're crabby? What if we yell at Mom and hit our sister?**

Share about something unkind *you've* done. Maybe you yelled at your kids, told a lie, or said something unkind. Have a child in each group add a coin to the cup with the frown.

Ask: • **What's a wrong thing *you've* done?** Kids may share about fighting with a sibling, not sharing toys, or disobeying Mom. Have them each add the rest of their coins to their group's frowning cup.

Say: **Look! The arrow is now pointing to the smaller heart. When we do bad things, we may think, like the son in the story, that God loves us less.** Have adult or teen helpers show kids that the arrow is now pointing to the small heart.

Say: **But remember, the dad's great big love for his son never changed, even after the son did a lot of bad things.** Have each adult or teen helper draw a second large heart on another sheet of paper and tape it over the arrow on his or her scale.

Say: **The dad's love was always big, and God's love never changes either. God has a great big love for you on your very best days and on your very worst days.** Have adult or teen helpers show kids that the big heart is always there, whether or not the cup with the frown is full.

Say: **God is happy to see us make good choices, but it doesn't make him love us more. And God doesn't want us to make wrong choices, but he still loves when we do. God's love is bigger than anything we can ever imagine. And when we're friends with God, he helps us love others no matter what, too. Love is a fruit of the Spirit. That means God's with us, showing us how to love others!**



Supplies

- Bible
- heart stickers (1 per child)
- “Fake Money” handout (1 for every 12 kids)
- pens
- tissues
- box, roughly the size of a copier paper box
- 6 disposable cups
- pitcher of water
- tray or baking pan

Easy Prep

- Cut apart the bills on the “Fake Money” handout.
- Crumple the tissue paper. Repeat until you have a box full of crumpled tissues.
- Arrange 5 of the cups in a circle on a tray or baking pan. Set the additional cup and the pitcher of water nearby.

Get a Heart

Say: **Today we’re learning that love is a fruit of the Spirit.**

Read Galatians 5:22.

Say: **When we think of love, we often think of hearts. So you’ll each get a heart to remind you of God’s love for you.**

Distribute heart stickers, and have kids stick them on their shirts.

Act Out a Parable

Say: **Jesus told a story to explain how much God loves us. At that time, the religious leaders were mad that Jesus hung out with people who did wrong things. But Jesus doesn’t love only easy-to-love people. Jesus loves everyone! He told a story to show people that. Let’s act out the story together.**

Read Luke 15:11-12. Have kids act like they’re the son, and you’ll be the father. As the kids come to you and ask for money, give them each a bill from the “Fake Money” handout and a pen.

Read Luke 15:13. Have kids cross the room to get away from you and then write how they’d spend their money on the backs of their bills. Then have kids tear up their

money to show they've wasted it. Ask kids to hold their paper scraps in their cupped hands.

Ask: • **Sin and a lot of wrong choices pulled the son away from his father. Think of a wrong choice you made that you felt pulled you away from God. You won't say it out loud.** Pause for kids to reflect, but don't have anyone share aloud.

• **Think of the feelings you had when you pulled away from God.** Pause for kids to reflect, and then have kids share some emotions aloud.

Have kids toss their money scraps on the ground. Say: **When the son ran out of money, he needed a job.**

Read Luke 15:14-16.

Say: **Feeding pigs was a gross, smelly, dirty job. Let's see what it's like to do a job like that.**

Scatter the tissues you prepared all over the floor. Say: **Your job is to clean up all these used tissues, plus the paper scraps from your money, and throw them all away.**

Ask: • **What did you like or not like about cleaning up the used tissues?**

• **Explain whether you'd like a low-paying job feeding real pigs.**

Say: **The son in our story had an idea.**

Read Luke 15:17-19. Have kids take baby steps to approach you, saying "I'm sorry" with each step.

Have kids pause as you read Luke 15:20. Enthusiastically run to the kids and give them hugs or high-fives.

Read Luke 15:21-24. Have kids jump and shout in celebration. Then gather them and have them sit in a circle.

Say: **There was also an older son in this story. He'd stayed home and obeyed his father, and he was pretty mad that his younger brother got a party after all the wrong things he'd done. After all, shouldn't the father love *him* the best and treat *him* the best since he'd stayed close to his father? But that older son is kind of like the religious leaders Jesus was talking to. He didn't understand what a father's love is truly like.**

Ask: • **Was there ever a point during this story when the heart sticker I gave you wasn't with you? Why?** (Tip: If you did have any kids pull off their stickers, that could be an opportunity to discuss that sometimes we reject God's love, but it's always there for us to accept again.)

• **How does that remind you of God's love?**

Say: **God is full of so much love that nothing we do can leave his love behind. So when we say that love is a fruit of the Spirit, remember that the Spirit is God. When we're friends with God, he changes us so we can love others more!**

God has loved us so much, and we can pass that love on to others. Let me show you what I mean.

Overflow

Gather kids around the tray or baking pan you prepared.

Say: **Imagine this pitcher is full of God's love, and this cup is you.** Hold up the pitcher and the extra cup.

Hold the cup over the circle of cups in the tray, and begin pouring into the cup.

Ask: • **What has God done to show he loves you?** Give a couple of examples such as "given me a healthy body" or "provided a best friend." Then let kids call out their responses. As kids name things, add more and more water until the cup overflows into the other cups below it.

Pause in your pouring and say: **When we experience God's love, it overflows from our lives into others'. Love is a fruit of the Spirit. It's what we do as a result of knowing our loving God!**

Ask: • **What are examples of how we show God's love to others?** As kids name things, begin pouring again, watching the cups below get more and more full.

Say: **If I kept pouring, eventually this pitcher would run out of water. But God's love never runs out. Even when we do bad things like the son in the story, God's love is pouring into our lives. He's ready to welcome us back! Because we have such a loving God, we show love to others. We can't help but overflow his love! Love is a fruit of the Spirit.**



CRAFT

[20 min]

Welcome Home Wreaths

Supplies

- Large Die cut hearts
- tissue paper (in a variety of colors)
- glue sticks
- scissors
- markers

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



Make Wreaths

Show kids the sample craft you made. Set out the supplies to share, and have kids follow these directions to make wreaths.

- Tear small pieces of tissue paper. Ball them up and glue them onto the heart, all the way around the heart. You can choose just one color or make a fun color pattern.
- On the card stock, write "Welcome Home."

Talk About It

Ask: • **What's welcoming or comforting about walking into your own home?**

• **What do you think was the best part of coming home for the son in the story?**

Say: **Jesus told the story of the lost son to show how much God loves us. No matter what we do or how far we run away from him, God is always ready to welcome us back home. When you get home, hang your wreath inside the door**

your family usually enters through so it's the first thing you see. Let it remind you that God's love is always ready to welcome you home, and he wants to help you love others because love is a fruit of the Spirit.

Have kids take their wreaths home and show them to their friends and families as they share about God's welcoming love.



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

[5 min]

Show Me the Love

Supplies

- Heart Sticker

Play a Love Game

Put a heart sticker on each child's hand. Sit with kids in a circle. Say: **Today we learned that love is a fruit of the Spirit and that God helps us show love to others.** Lead kids to touch the hearts on their hands.

Say: **Let's play a game. We'll try to think of people we can show love to—as many as we can. You'll each have a turn to share. On your turn, touch the heart on your hand and name one person. You might say someone in your family, or you might say someone you don't even know, like the cashier at the grocery store, a police officer, or a cook at a restaurant.** Demonstrate to start, then have the child sitting to your left in the circle share. Guide each child to share, one after the other, encouraging them to speak quickly. Continue around the circle more than once and until kids run out of ideas or as time allows.

Pray

Say: **Wow! There are so many people we can show love to—from our families to our neighbors to our church and school. Since God is the one who helps us show love—love is a fruit of the Spirit—let's ask God to help us love these people we named this week.**

Lead children in a brief prayer, asking for God's help and mentioning as many kinds of people as you can remember from what kids shared in the game.

Say: **I love that you were here today to learn about love! I hope you'll show love to everyone you see this week, and remember that God will help you show love because love is a fruit of the Spirit. I hope you'll come back next week to tell me all about it!**