Lesson 1

The Fruit of the Spirit

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

Bible Story Reference
Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-31; 13—15:30;
Galatians 5:22,23

Teacher’s Devotional
Whether you are
• a full-time children’s director or a once-a-month volunteer,
• a skilled and experienced storyteller or a novice who dreads having to stand in front of a group and keep their interest,
• a creative whirlwind who always has plenty of ideas for learning activities or a self-confessed klutz who abhors glue, scissors and markers,
your example in front of children will teach them more about the fruit of the Spirit than the words you will say.

This God’s Kids Grow course presents the great virtues that God’s Holy Spirit is ready to begin developing in the lives of each child you teach. If you will be with the children throughout the entire year or even for just a few lessons, by far the most important preparation you can do is to renew and nurture your own relationship with Jesus Christ. Your personal growth as God’s child, loving and obeying Him, is more significant than your skill in presenting a lesson.

There really is no shortcut to being an effective teacher of children. Consider the opportunities you have to spend time reading God’s Word. Think about what you can do to make prayer a meaningful, regular part of your daily life. When can you actively seek out opportunities to learn, to serve, to worship? Make a renewed commitment to grow God’s fruit in your life.

As you experience God’s love at work in your life, you will be able to reflect the qualities that the Holy Spirit wants to develop in children’s lives. And that’s when God can use your skills, energy and personality to help children discover God’s love for themselves.

Character Builder
Growing the fruit of the Spirit in our lives begins when we believe Jesus is God’s Son, ask forgiveness for our sin and become part of God’s family.

Bible Verse
Galatians 5:22,23

Bible Story Reference
Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-31; 13—15:30;
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Bible Story Center

Materials
Galatians 5:22,23 poster from Poster Pack; ¼ cup (2 oz.) play dough and pencil for each student.

Tell the Story
Follow along with me to make some faces and a word that tell about today’s story.

1. Roll your dough into a ball. All over Jerusalem, people were talking about Jesus, believing that Jesus was God’s Son and accepting His love for them. God’s family was getting bigger every day. That was GOOD NEWS to many people! But to a man named Saul, it was TERRIBLE news. Saul was an important leader in Jerusalem. He didn’t believe Jesus was God’s Son. And he was ANGRY that so many people DID believe Jesus was sent from God. Because of Saul’s anger, many people were afraid of him.

2. Use a pencil to make an angry face on the dough ball. Saul was so angry, he wanted to ARREST Jesus’ friends! Saul wanted to find people who were telling about Jesus and put them into jail. That’s how he hoped to STOP this talk about Jesus! So Saul went to a city named Damascus (duh-MAS-kuhs).

3. Make a surprised face on the other side of the ball. As Saul and the men traveling with him got close to Damascus, a bright light from heaven suddenly flashed around Saul! WOW! Saul fell to the ground. “Saul, Saul!” a voice said. “Why are you fighting against Me?” Saul wondered, Is this JESUS talking?

   “Who . . . who are You, Lord?” asked Saul.

   “I am JESUS, the One you are trying to hurt,” the voice said. UH-OH! Saul had been so SURE that Jesus was NOT God’s Son. But now, even though no one could see Him, Jesus was SPEAKING to him!
4. Roll dough into four ropes. Jesus told Saul that God had important work for Saul to do. He told Saul to go into the city and wait. When Saul got up, he was BLIND. For three days, Saul didn’t eat or drink; he prayed and waited.

Soon, God sent a man named Ananias to talk to Saul. Even though Ananias was afraid of Saul, he obeyed God. Ananias placed his hands on Saul and said, “Saul, receive your sight!” And at that very moment, God gave Saul his sight again! Now Saul believed that Jesus is God’s Son and that He is alive. Now Saul loved Jesus!

Ananias baptized Saul and brought him to meet Jesus’ friends in Damascus—the very people Saul had gone there to arrest! Jesus’ friends soon saw that Saul had changed COMPLETELY! Instead of being angry toward the people who loved Jesus, now Saul wanted to show God’s love and kindness to everyone. Saul began to tell people all over Damascus the good news about Jesus! When people heard Saul, they were AMAZED. But some people were UPSET that Saul now loved Jesus. They wanted to arrest HIM!

To keep Saul safe, his new friends secretly helped him escape from the city. They let him down the outside of the city wall in a big basket. And THAT was only the BEGINNING of great adventures for Saul (later called Paul)! Paul traveled to many places, telling people the good news about Jesus. For example, Paul visited many towns in an area called Galatia (guh-LAY-shuh). He told people in these towns about Jesus, and new churches began.

5. Use each rope to make a letter of the word “Love.” Later, Paul wrote a letter to the people in these new churches in Galatia. Paul wrote that God gives His Holy Spirit to help each member of God’s family talk and act in good ways. Paul compared the way God’s Spirit helps us to grow good qualities in our lives to the way fruit grows. He wrote about nine wonderful qualities, or fruit, that God wants us all to grow. The first fruit is love—showing love toward God and others. God’s Spirit can still help members of God’s family grow that very same fruit!

Focus on the Fruit

Why was Paul angry at Jesus’ friends? (He wanted them to stop telling people that Jesus is God’s Son.) What made Paul change? (He believed that Jesus really is God’s Son.) What did Paul tell the Galatians? (God gives the Holy Spirit to help members of God’s family act in good ways, like growing good fruit.)

Show Galatians 5:22,23 poster and read verses aloud. These are the characteristics, or fruit of the Spirit, Paul wrote about. When we love Jesus, believe He is God’s Son and ask forgiveness for our sin, we can join God’s family. Then God gives the Holy Spirit to help us grow God’s good fruit!
Lesson 1

Fruitful Lives Object Talk

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

Materials
Bible with bookmark at Galatians 5:22,23; suitcase packed with clothes and several Bibles; optional—hide Bibles in classroom.

Lead the Activity
1. A man called Brother Andrew didn’t grow up loving God. In fact, when he was a young man, he loved doing dangerous things and didn’t care if other people got hurt because of his actions.

   But one day Brother Andrew began to read the Bible and realized that God loved him and forgave him for his wrong actions. His love for God and others began to grow. As he learned more about loving God, Brother Andrew worked hard to show love to other people and find ways to tell them about Jesus.

2. Show suitcase. What do you think is in this suitcase? Invite a volunteer to look through suitcase to find Bibles. (Optional: Students find Bibles hidden in classroom.) Brother Andrew heard of some countries where the government did not allow Bibles. So he hid Bibles in his suitcases and car and took them to Christians in these countries. If the hidden Bibles had been discovered, Brother Andrew could have been put in jail. God helped Brother Andrew, and he was able to safely deliver many, many Bibles. The actions of Brother Andrew showed how much he loved God and how much he wanted others to love God.

Conclude
Read Galatians 5:22,23 aloud. These verses tell us the good ways in which God’s Holy Spirit helps each member of His family live. Which of these characteristics have you seen someone show? How? Pray, asking God to help students show love for God in their actions and words. Talk with interested students about becoming members of God’s family (see “Leading a Child to Christ” on p. 36).

Additional Information for Older Students
The name Brother Andrew was like a nickname. Because some countries didn’t want Brother Andrew to bring Bibles to their people, he didn’t want everyone to know his real name. Another nickname Brother Andrew had was “God’s Smuggler.” The name God’s Smuggler was also the name of a book Brother Andrew wrote about the exciting ways God helped him show love to others.
Lesson 1

Active Game Center: Add-a-Fruit Relay

Materials
Bibles, white paper, marker, photocopier, colored paper, butcher paper, rolls of tape, scissors, pencils.

Prepare the Game
Draw a fruit shape (apple, banana, orange, pear, lemon, etc.) on white paper. Shape should be large enough for students to write on. Photocopy onto colored paper. On a sheet of butcher paper, draw the outline of a large leafy tree. Attach the paper to the wall or place it on the floor on one side of the playing area.

Lead the Game
1. Divide group into equal teams. Each student cuts out a fruit shape. Read Galatians 5:22,23 aloud. Assign each student the name of one of the fruit of the Spirit to write on his or her shape, referring to verses in Bibles. Students then attach loops of rolled tape to the backs of their shapes.
2. Teams line up in single-file lines across the room from the tree. At your signal, students on each team take turns running to the tree, attaching shape to it, returning to team and tagging the next student in line. Play continues until each student has attached a fruit shape. Have teams sit down as they finish.
3. Ask a volunteer from the first team that finished to answer one of the Discussion Questions below or to recite Galatians 5:22,23. Repeat relay and continue discussion as time allows.

Options
1. Make tree trunk and branches by twisting brown butcher paper and attaching twists to the wall. Students stick fruit shapes onto branches.
2. To simplify preparation, each student draws a fruit on a Post-it Note and writes name of a fruit of the Spirit on the note. Students use Post-it Notes instead of fruit shapes in relay.

Discussion Questions
1. Which of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22,23 are most needed by kids your age?
2. How has someone you know shown a fruit of the Spirit?
3. When might a kid your age show love? Patience? Joy? Repeat with other fruit of the Spirit as time allows.
Lesson 1

Art Center: Fruit Stuffs

Materials
Bibles, poster board or card stock, scissors, construction paper in a variety of colors, pencils, markers, stapler(s) and staples, newspaper; optional—shredded paper.

Prepare the Activity
Cut several fruit shapes (apple, banana, orange, pear, lemon, etc.) from poster board or card stock to serve as patterns. Shapes should be large enough for students to write on.

Lead the Activity
1. Each student takes a turn to trace around a pattern on construction paper and cut out two of the same fruit shape.

2. Students read Galatians 5:22,23. On their fruit shapes, students print one of the fruit of the Spirit. Students may add decorations around each word.

3. Students staple around the edges of their shapes, leaving a few inches open. Then students tear and crumple newspaper to stuff inside their fruit shapes to create a three-dimensional effect. (Optional: Stuff with shredded paper for smoother stuffing.) When finished stuffing, students staple the opening closed.

4. As students work, ask them to describe ways they could show these fruit, or characteristics, at home, at school, with friends, etc.

Options
1. Provide real or silk leaves for students to add to their fruit shapes and/or the twisted-paper trunk or vine described on page 41 of this lesson.

2. Bring a large fruit basket. Students place their fruit shapes in it as you ask the Discussion Questions below.

3. Display fruit shapes by hanging them from ceiling with yarn or string.

Discussion Questions
1. What are some reasons to love God? (God loves us. God made us. God sent His Son, Jesus, so that we can become members of His family.)

2. How can others know that we are part of God’s family and that we love Him? (We can tell others about our love for God. They can see the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.)

3. When have you seen someone showing God’s love to others? Volunteers respond.
Lesson 1

Worship Center

Bible Verse

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

Materials

Bible; _God’s Kids Grow_ cassette/CD or music video and player; “Fruit of the Spirit” word chart (p. 459 in this book); large sheet of paper on which you have printed Galatians 5:22,23; masking tape.

Sing to God

Play “Fruit of the Spirit,” encouraging students to sing along with the music. _Where does this song say we can learn about the fruit of the Spirit? (In God’s Word.) What is the result of learning about God’s love? (We mirror it, or show it, to others.)_

Hear and Say God’s Word

Display paper on which you have printed Galatians 5:22,23. Have a volunteer read the verses aloud. _Why do you think the verse says “against such things there is no law”? (Being kind and patient are always good ways to act.) What is one way a kid your age could show one of these good actions?_ Volunteers respond. Help students think of hand motions for each of the fruit of the Spirit. Say the verses together a few times, doing the hand motions for words as you say them.

Pray to God

_Because God first loved us, we can love Him, too! And growing the fruit of the Spirit begins with accepting God’s love and becoming a part of His family._ Lead students in silently thanking God for loving us and sending Jesus so that we can become members of His family. Talk with students about becoming members of God’s family, following the guidelines in the “Leading a Child to Christ” article on page 36.

Options

1. Sing “Galatians 5:22,23” and/or “All My Heart” (p. 461 and/or p. 453 in this book) with students.

2. In a prayer journal, record students’ prayer requests and items for which they wish to thank God. Refer to the journal each week during prayer time.

3. Invite an older student to lead the prayer.
Lesson 1

Bible Verse Coloring Center

Materials
Crayons or markers, a copy of page 161 or page 162 from Bible Verse Coloring Pages #2 for each student.

Lead the Activity
Read Galatians 5:22,23 aloud. **What are some good attitudes and actions these verses talk about? How can you show (love, joy, etc.) to your family this week?** Students color picture.

Option
Use a paper cutter to cut construction paper into small squares and triangles. Students use glue sticks to glue paper squares and triangles to fill in the picture instead of coloring.

Service Project Center

Materials
Materials needed for “Be-Wise Bookmarks” (p. 33 from The Big Book of Service Projects).

Lead the Activity
Students complete “Be-Wise Bookmarks” as directed in The Big Book of Service Projects. **When we make these bookmarks today, we can help others remember what God’s Word says. The words of Galatians 5:22,23 will help others know how to show love for God and others.**

Discipleship Activity Center

Materials
Discussion Cards for Galatians 5:22,23 (pp. 147-152 from The Big Book of Christian Growth); materials needed for “Candy Cups” or “Discussion Dots” (p. 10 or p. 61 from The Big Book of Christian Growth).

Lead the Activity
**Today we’re going to play a game to help us talk about ways to grow the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.** Students complete activity as directed in The Big Book of Christian Growth.