

LESSON 1

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

LESSON AT A GLANCE

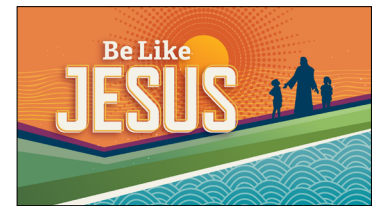
WONDER TRUTH: God Helps Us Be Like Jesus

SCRIPTURE: Galatians 5

GOD'S BIG STORY: Paul writes about the qualities, or spiritual fruit, that develop in us as we follow Jesus and are filled with the Holy Spirit. As the fruit of the Spirit grow in us, we become more like Jesus!

WORD OF WONDER: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. —Galatians 5:22–23a (ISV)

- Arrival Activity -Play Stations:
 - Stickers on Fruit
 - Stamping
 - Fruit of the Spirit Coloring Sheet
- Curiosity Activity: My Favorite Fruit
- Word of Wonder: Galatians 5:22–23a
- Craft: Fruit Stamping
 - Read the story!
- Circle Time: Fruit Cards
 - older group dismiss to LG if necessary
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: Be a Light, Your Love for Me
- God's Big Story: Fruit of the Spirit
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Prayer and Blessing
- Responding in Worship: Be Like Jesus Stations





LESSON 1 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Helps Us Be Like Jesus

SCRIPTURE: Galatians 5

WORD OF WONDER: Galatians 5:22–23a

I recently watched a documentary about a religious cult that told people they had to earn their way to heaven through perfect obedience. The burden and fear of falling short was overwhelming for those under these teachings. Have you ever felt pressure to earn God's approval?

If you take a moment to read Galatians 5:16–25, you get a beautiful challenge and a relieving truth. Yes, God wants us to be like Jesus, to live in a way that honors Him, and to do our best to show others who He is. And yet, God doesn't expect us to do it on our own—to work painfully and fearfully to achieve perfection. Instead, God invites us to live by the Holy Spirit, walking with Him as He teaches us and grows His fruit in us. As we're filled with the Spirit, we're set free from slavery to sin, and we're welcomed into love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. We become like Jesus as He shapes us through the power of His Holy Spirit.

In which area of your life do you need to see the fruit of the Spirit's work?

As you prepare to guide kids through this lesson, pray that the Holy Spirit will be working in you and in them, reminding you that He is the One who helps us to be like Jesus through His grace in our lives.

—Denise Morris Snyder

Spiritual Formation Pastor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians. Before Paul gave his life to Jesus, he believed that Jews—and anyone who wanted to be part of God’s family—had to obey all the Old Testament laws, including rules about food, holy days, and the Sabbath.

WHAT?

In Galatians 5, Paul argues that the Holy Spirit, not the Old Testament law, helps us become more like Jesus. By following the Holy Spirit’s guidance and living by the Spirit’s power, we will live in ways that fulfill the laws regardless.

WHERE?

Paul wrote Galatians to churches in the Roman province of Galatia, which is in modern-day Turkey.

WHEN?

Paul probably wrote the letter to the Galatians around AD 48, a relatively short time after he planted churches there.

CONNECTING TO GOD’S BIG STORY:

During the Old Testament, God gave His people laws, or guidelines, to love Him and live well. But no one could follow the law perfectly on their own. When Jesus came, He fulfilled the law! Now we can follow the Holy Spirit, who helps us grow to be more like Jesus.



LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Helps Us Be Like Jesus
SCRIPTURE: Galatians 5
WORD OF WONDER: Galatians 5:22–23a

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: various fruit (either real or toys), emotion-focused stickers, rubber stamps, ink pads, paper, wet wipes, coloring utensils

RESOURCES: [Fruit of the Spirit Coloring Sheet \(1 per kid\)](#)

Greet the kids warmly and briefly explain the play stations to them. Invite them to play at any of the stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help you get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas about what we'll be learning today?

Play Station: Stickers on Fruit

Set up: Set out various fruits (either real or toys) and stickers, such as emotion-focused stickers with hearts and smiley faces.

Play: Invite kids to put stickers on the fruit to decorate it. If you have heart or smiley face stickers, encourage the kids to talk about what the stickers mean as they put them on the fruit.

Play Station: Stamping

Set up: Set out ink pads, paper, rubber stamps, and wet wipes.

Play: Let kids stamp on the paper. Help them notice how the picture on the paper looks just like the design on the rubber part of the stamp. The ink helps the image show up on the page. Without the ink, the stamp wouldn't make the picture. Have kids wipe ink off their hands with wet wipes.

Play Station: Fruit of the Spirit Coloring Sheet

Set up: Ahead of time, print one copy per kid of the coloring sheet and set out coloring utensils in the room. The kid chosen to be It will call out his favorite fruit, and any other kids who also have that fruit

Opening Curiosity Activity: My Favorite Fruit

Today we're talking about fruit, but it's a little different from the fruit you eat! Do you like fruit? Allow the kids to respond. **Think of your favorite fruit. We're going to play a game that has to do with our favorite fruit.**

Have kids line up on one side of the room and choose one person to be "It" to stand in the middle of the room. The kid chosen to be It will call out his favorite fruit, and any other kids who also have that fruit as their favorite will try to run across the room without being tagged. The first person who is tagged will go to the center of the room and call out a favorite fruit. She will try to tag a new person as the kids who also like that fruit run across the room.

You all have some excellent "taste" in fruit! Some people enjoy eating fruit because it's sweet and tastes good. We're going to learn about a different kind of fruit—fruit we don't eat, but it's still sweet. This kind of fruit is from the Holy Spirit and happens in our lives when we follow Jesus. We'll learn in today's God's big story how the Holy Spirit grows fruit, or good things, in our lives to make us more like Jesus.

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bible, toy or real sturdy fruit (such as orange), scissors (prep only), ball or beanbag (optional)

RESOURCES: [Fruit Verse Cards \(2 sets/ SG\)](#)

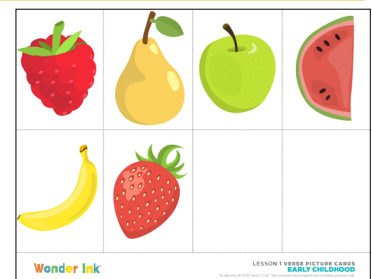
WORD OF WONDER

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. —Galatians 5:22–23a (ISV)

Ahead of time, print and cut the Fruit Verse Cards. **Our Word of Wonder for the Be Like Jesus series is Galatians 5:22–23a. Let's practice saying the Word of Wonder together.** Practice the verse with the kids.

Our Word of Wonder is in the same part of the Bible as our God's big story for today. It's in the book of Galatians. Open your Bible to show the kids where it's found. Encourage kids to say it with you several times. Lay the cards on the ground a few feet away from the kids. Some of the cards will be blank and some will have fruit on them. Spread them out and mix them up.

That's a lot of fruit! To help us remember this verse and help us remember how the Holy Spirit grows this fruit in us, let's toss (or roll) a fruit gently onto some cards. If it lands on a blank card, pass the fruit to someone else. If it lands on a fruit card, stop and say the verse. If you need help, we can all say it together. Give one kid a sturdy fruit or toy fruit (or you can simply pretend that a ball or beanbag is a fruit, if you don't have fruit available), and invite the kid to toss or roll the fruit toward



the cards. If it lands on a blank card, let another kid have a turn. If it lands on a fruit card, encourage the child to say the verse.

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

- **THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS**—Draw a large “S” into the air.
- **LOVE**,—Pat your hands on your heart.
- **JOY**,—Put your arms up as if celebrating.
- **PEACE**,—Place palms together by cheek and ear to indicate “sleep.”
- **PATIENCE**,—Point to a pretend watch on your wrist.
- **KINDNESS**,—Pretend to give someone a hug.
- **GOODNESS**,—Make a thumbs-up.
- **FAITHFULNESS**,—Make two fists and start with the right fist on top, hitting the left fist, then switch and pound the left fist on top of the right.
- **GENTLENESS**,—Pretend to gently rock a baby.
- **AND SELF-CONTROL**.—Point to yourself with your thumbs.
- **GALATIANS 5:22–23a**—Hold your hands together as if opening a book.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **What is the fruit of the Spirit?** (the good qualities the Holy Spirit grows in us when we trust in Jesus)
- **How does the Holy Spirit come to live in us?** (When we trust in Jesus and follow Him, the Holy Spirit comes to live in us and changes us.)

Craft: Fruit Stamping // Read the Story

SUPPLIES: sturdy fruit such as apples, oranges, pears, grapefruit, lemons; paring knife (prep only); small spoon or scoop; paper plates; washable paints (various colors); paper or cardstock (1 sheet per kid)

Allergy Caution: This activity includes possible food allergens!

Before kids do this activity, cut a few different fruits in half so the kids can see seeds and shapes inside. If stamping with citrus, scoop out the thick fruit pieces inside the rind to keep paint from getting too watery.

Today's story comes from the Bible and teaches us how the Holy Spirit helps us live. The Bible says to follow the Holy Spirit and not just do whatever we want. When we follow the Holy Spirit, our lives begin to change.

Hold up a fruit. **The Bible says the Holy Spirit grows something in us called fruit. Not fruit we eat, but ways we live and act. What do you notice about this fruit?** You may want to point out unique things like the seeds in the apples. **How is the inside of fruit different than the outside? What helps fruit grow? How can you "grow" and change to be more like Jesus?** Allow the kids to respond.

Begin fruit stamping. **When the Holy Spirit is working in us, we grow love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.**

Say this with me: The Holy Spirit helps me be like Jesus. The Holy Spirit helps me be like Jesus

Dip fruit and stamp onto paper. **Just like fruit grows on a tree, these good things grow in us when we trust Jesus.**

Point to the fruit stamps. **We do not grow these on our own. The Holy Spirit helps us grow and change every day.**

Say this with me: God helps me be like Jesus. God helps me be like Jesus

Continue stamping.

As you make your fruit picture, remember that the Holy Spirit is working in you, helping you love others, be kind, and have joy.

Say this with me: God gives me joy. God gives me joy

Take your picture home to remember that God helps you be like Jesus!

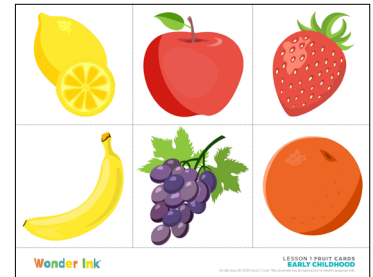


Circle Time: Fruit Cards

SUPPLIES: scissors (prep only), beanbag

RESOURCES: **Fruit Cards (1 set/SG)**

Ahead of time, print and cut the Fruit Cards. Lay them face down on the floor and gather the kids around them.



God helps us choose His way and be like Jesus. God gives the Holy Spirit to everyone who trusts in Jesus. The Holy Spirit lives in us and helps and guides us. When the Holy Spirit lives in us, the Holy Spirit can make us more and more like Jesus in what we want and how we act. The Holy Spirit can help us say “no” to sin and “yes” to living God’s way. Because the Spirit is in us, God helps us be like Jesus. We’ll play a game where we take turns tossing a beanbag onto a card. You can turn over the card your beanbag lands on, and I’ll ask you a question that goes with the fruit on that card.

Let the kids take turns tossing the beanbag onto the cards and answering the corresponding question. It’s OK if the questions are asked more than once.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Lemon**—Can you name one of the fruits of the Spirit? (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control)
- **Apple**—What does the Holy Spirit do for us and in us? (The Holy Spirit lives in us and helps and guides us; changes us and makes us new; makes us like Jesus; helps us obey God and not choose sin.)
- **Strawberry**—Do you think it’s hard to do all of these things (the fruits of the Spirit) on our own, without God’s help? Should we just try hard to do all of them? Why?
- **Banana**—Share an example of a way you could show love and kindness.
- **Grapes**—Share an example of a way you could show patience or self-control.
- **Orange**—Share an example of a way you could show goodness or faithfulness.

We don’t have to just try harder to be all these things! That’s good news! God gives us the Holy Spirit to help us. It’s what the Holy Spirit does in us when we trust in Him! Let’s pray and thank God for giving us His Holy Spirit and for changing us to be more like Jesus.

Ask if any kids have prayer requests or praises to share and lead them in a prayer time.

Declaring God's Wonder

Show the Early Childhood Declaration Slide and encourage the kids to say the statements and do the motions with you.

Thank You, God, that You made me! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Make prayer hands, then point up to God and to yourself.

And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands on your hips.

Jesus loves me so much; (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

His love for me is big. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

The Holy Spirit leads me, (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Bring your arms down from above and make a path in front of you.

And I can follow You. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

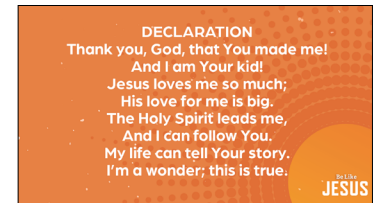
March in place like you're following the leader.

My life can tell Your story. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

I'm a wonder; this is true. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shake your fingers, and celebrate ("praise hands").



Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, thank You for being with us and for giving us Your Holy Spirit to lead us and teach us. Help us focus on You and learn more about You. We praise You and thank You for loving us. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Today we'll learn about the fruit of the Spirit that's in the Bible. This kind of fruit is all the good things that we show others after we choose to follow God. That's because the Holy Spirit helps us become like Jesus. Let's sing about the fruit to thank God for how He works in us!

Play songs Be a Light, Your Love for Me and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

I open my Bible, and what do I see? (*Hands together then opening palms up, like opening a book.*)

God's big story, waiting for me! (*Point to yourself.*)

Let's hear part of God's big story, which comes from Galatians in the New Testament of the Bible.

GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: Bible, blank paper (9 sheets), envelopes (9), pen or marker

Ahead of time, place nine blank sheets of paper into separate envelopes.

Jesus went to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to His followers. The Holy Spirit is God's powerful, wise, and loving presence. The Holy Spirit helped His followers share the love and good news of Jesus with others. Many more people began to follow Jesus!

A man named Paul did not like followers of Jesus. Paul even hurt Jesus' followers. But one day, after Jesus went to heaven, Jesus spoke to Paul! Paul chose to trust and follow Jesus! God changed Paul's life. So Paul traveled and told others about Jesus!

Paul started churches in many places he visited. Paul wrote letters to those churches to help them. His letters told them how to grow closer to God and become more like Jesus. Hold up the envelopes. Pull out a sheet of paper and pretend to write a letter on it. Then put it back in the envelope.

One letter Paul wrote was to the church in Galatia. In this letter, Paul told the people that they can't become like Jesus just by following rules. Paul said that everyone sins. Sins are the wrong things we say, think, and do.

Sometimes, this can feel like a tug-of-war inside us. One part wants to do the wrong thing. The other part wants to do things God's way. These two parts fight like opposites! But God helps us choose His way and be like Jesus. God gives the Holy Spirit to everyone who trusts in Jesus. The Spirit is God. The Holy Spirit lives in us and helps us. The Holy Spirit guides us in how to live and act.

When we don't listen to the Holy Spirit, we might do things we should not do. When we sin, it makes God sad, and it can hurt others too. As you name each fruit of the Spirit, invite a kid to come up and open an envelope. Open the paper and use a pen or marker to write the name of each fruit of the Spirit. **But when we let the Holy Spirit lead us, we have more love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These are the "fruit of the Spirit."**

The Holy Spirit helps us grow these fruits. The Holy Spirit in us is like a gardener who plants and waters seeds that grow into beautiful fruit trees.

Leader Tip: For older kids, you can give each kid a paper and marker (or whiteboard and dry-erase marker) to allow them to draw each picture as you talk about each of the fruits of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit helps us love God and others. Hold up the paper that says, “love.” Even kids who can’t read can still look at the paper and the word. You can also draw a heart on it. **The Holy Spirit helps us have joy, which is deep happiness, instead of wanting things only for ourselves.** Hold up the paper that says, “joy.” You can draw a smiley face on the paper. **The Holy Spirit helps us have peace in our hearts and peace with others, so we aren’t worried and don’t fight.** Hold up the paper that says, “peace.” You can draw two stick figures next to each other, showing “peace” with one another. **The Holy Spirit helps us be patient and kind to others, rather than being angry when things don’t go our way.** Hold up the “patience” and “kindness” papers. You can draw a clock to represent patience and a flower that we might give to someone to show kindness.

The Holy Spirit helps us do good things and be faithful. Hold up the “goodness” and “faithfulness” papers. You can draw a “thumbs-up” to represent goodness and praying hands or a Bible to represent faithfulness. **The Holy Spirit helps us be gentle in how we talk to and treat others.** Hold up the “gentleness” paper. You can draw a baby or baby item (such as pacifier) to represent gentleness, like we show when we hold a baby. **The Holy Spirit helps us have self-control.** Hold up the “self-control” paper. You can draw a hand (or trace your own hand) to represent self-control. **Self-control is when we stop ourselves from doing something we should not do. So we do the right thing instead. This is how God wants us to live!**

When the Holy Spirit lives in us, the Holy Spirit can make us more and more like Jesus. The Holy Spirit can help us say, “no” to sin and “yes” to living God’s way. Because the Spirit is in us, God helps us be like Jesus.

Connecting the Wonder Truth

Ask the following question to help kids connect the Wonder Truth to God’s big story:

Our Wonder Truth today is GOD HELPS US BE LIKE JESUS. Where did you see our Wonder Truth happen in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

During the Old Testament, God gave His people laws, or guidelines, to love Him and be a part of His family. But no one could follow the law perfectly on their own. When Jesus came, He fulfilled the law! Now when we follow Jesus, we’re part of God’s family! And instead of trying hard on our own, we can follow the Holy Spirit, who helps us grow to be more like Jesus.

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them and thank God for changing us to make us be like Him. **Let's talk to God. God, thank You for giving us Your Holy Spirit to help us become more like Jesus. Thank You for the fruit of the Spirit that happens when we follow You. Help us to become more and more like You every day. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: May you become more like Jesus today, tomorrow, and every day as you follow Him, walk with Him, and allow the Holy Spirit to grow the fruit of the Spirit in you!

Responding in Worship: Be Like Jesus Stations

SUPPLIES: paper (1 sheet per kid), markers, small pillows (several), watercolor paints and brushes, construction paper (1 per kid), small cups of water, heart-shaped sticky notes or stickers, balloons (inflated), paper (optional, 1 per kid), crayons (optional)

RESOURCES: [Station Signs](#), (1 set/SG) song from the [Be Like Jesus Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#)

Allergy Caution: Be aware of any latex allergies or sensitivities among your kids and volunteers before doing this activity!

Ahead of time, print the Station Signs and set them up in various places around the room. At the “self-control station,” set out paper and markers. At the “peace station,” set out small pillows. At the “gentleness station,” set out watercolor paints and brushes, as well as paper (or paper and crayons). At the “love and kindness station,” set out heart-shaped sticky notes or stickers. at the “joy station,” set out party supplies.



The more the Holy Spirit works inside us, the more we're changed to become like Jesus. So, what's Jesus like? Today we'll go through stations to remember how Jesus showed some of the fruit of the Spirit and to ask God to help us have these in our lives too. These stations depict six of the fruits we're learning about today. Have the kids sit in the middle of the room or area while you walk from station to station and explain the story about Jesus.

Lead kids to the “self-control station” and give each kid a sheet of paper and a marker. **Our first station talks about self-control. Self-control means keeping yourself from making wrong choices. When we want to yell at someone but choose to speak calmly instead, that is self-control!**

Jesus never sinned. He always did the right thing. We can have self-control. Trace your hand on a paper and pray to ask God to help your hands, your mouth, and your heart only do what He wants you to do. Pause to allow the kids to trace their hands and pray.

Lead kids to the “peace station” and set out small pillows. **Our next station talks about peace. What is peace?** Allow answers. **Good thoughts. Yes, peace is a deep feeling of calm. It's trusting that everything is OK because God is in charge of everything.**

One time, a big storm at sea crashed a boat carrying Jesus and His disciples. Jesus told the wind and waves to be still, and they were (Mark 4:35–41)! Jesus is peace, and He gives us peace. Here you can sit on a pillow and think about the last time you felt peace. Then ask Jesus to give you peace when you need it. Pause to allow the kids to pray.

Lead kids to the “gentleness station” and give kids watercolor paints, brushes, and construction paper (or just use paper and crayons). **The next station talks about gentleness. Jesus was gentle with many people but especially with children. Even when people tried to send kids away, Jesus took them into His arms, and He blessed them (Matthew 19:13–15). At this station, you can use watercolor paints to think about Jesus with the children. You can also paint or draw a picture of yourself being gentle. As you paint, thank Jesus for being gentle and ask Him to help you be gentle with others too.**

Lead kids to the “love and kindness station” and give each kid a heart-shaped sticky note or sticker. **Jesus was loving and kind. He showed kindness when He healed people and helped them. The greatest way He showed love was when He died for us so we can be forgiven. Put your heart sticky note (or sticker) on your hand and pray and thank Jesus for His love.**

Lead the kids to the “joy station” and give the kids party supplies. **We can have joy and celebrate Jesus and give thanks for the Holy Spirit! Balloons remind me of parties and celebrations. Let’s celebrate and bat the balloon up as we pray and praise God with joy!**

Play a worship song from the [Be Like Jesus Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#). You can pass out balloons for kids to bat around with their hands as the music plays.

VIEW THE GOD’S BIG STORY VIDEO

While you wait for parents to arrive, bring out the Play Stations and play the God's Big Story video for review.



