

LESSON 1

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

LESSON AT A GLANCE

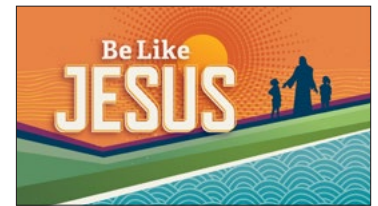
WONDER TRUTH: God Helps Us Be Like Jesus

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 the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself. —Galatians 5:22–23a

- Welcome Question: What is a fruit that grows on a tree or vine?
- Curiosity Questions
- Elementary Object Lesson: To Float or Not to Float ...
- Preteen STEM Activity: Sink or Float?
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation and Worship
- God's Big Story: Hear It, Watch It, Experience It!
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- In Awe of God's Wonder
- Word of Wonder Activity
- Discussion Questions for Elementary Kids and Preteens
- Small Group Prayer Time
- Elementary Responding in Worship: Growing God's Fruit
- Preteen Responding in Worship: Fruit of the Vine
- Blessing Your Kids



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 ELEMENTARY & PRETEEN

Small Group

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

Pre-Service Connection (15–20 min)

RESOURCES: whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils, board games or games

[Games & Activities Guide](#)

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have activities ready to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them! Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

As kids arrive ...

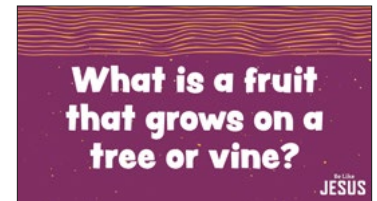
Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

Use the Welcome Question and the following "I'm Curious"

questions to engage kids. Say "I'm curious.." before each question and give kids an chance to think before answering each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

Consider having a whiteboard or poster for kids to write or draw answers to any of the questions:

- **What is your favorite fruit? What is a fruit you don't like?**
- **What are some things about Jesus that you admire? What are some ways that you want to be more like Jesus?**



Small Group Begins

After the Opening Activity or game, Large Group Leader will begin small group time by reading the Welcome Question aloud and inviting everyone to open their Bibles and begin.

Word of Wonder Activity

WORD OF WONDER

But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself.

—Galatians 5:22–23a (NirV)

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

Our Word of Wonder for the Be Like Jesus series comes from today’s part of God’s big story. It lists the good fruit the Holy Spirit grows in the lives of Jesus-followers! Let’s say the verse together. Open your Bible to Galatians 5:22–23a. Introduce kids to Galatians 5:22–23a by reading it several times together.

Invite kids to pretend they’re rappers and singers in a band! Give them five minutes to prepare the Word of Wonder as a rap. They can come up with their own rhythm, but the lyrics will be Galatians 5:22–23a. Encourage them to clap, snap, beatbox, or drum with their hands on the floor to produce a rhythm. Alternatively, play the Beat Box Sound Effect as kids rap.

After five minutes, invite each small group to perform their Word of Wonder rap for everyone.

Leader Tip: For Younger Kids. Lead the kids in saying the Word of Wonder as a rap. Clap a slow rhythm and rap the verse slowly. If kids struggle to rap the whole verse, try rapping just the first line or sentence.

God’s Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

Let them know today’s portion of God’s big story comes from the book of Galatians, which is in the second half of the Bible near the back. Help kids find Galatians 5.

In Galatians 5, Paul is teaching believers what it looks like to live by the Spirit instead of following sinful desires. He explains that when we follow the Holy Spirit, our lives begin to show different attitudes and actions, which he calls the fruit of the Spirit. These are qualities like love, joy, peace, and self-control that reflect the character of Jesus. This is not something we produce on our own, but something the Holy Spirit grows in us over time. As you read, think about how living by the Spirit changes the way a person thinks, acts, and treats others.

Read Galatians 5:16–18, 22–23, 25. Let them know you’ll be skipping several verses, but encourage them to do their best to follow along. Ask volunteers to help younger kids follow along with the verses.

Elementary Questions

- **How many of the fruit of the Spirit can you name? Give it a try!** (Note that some Bible translations use slightly different names for some fruit. Here is a general list: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.)
- **Are the fruit of the Spirit the kind of fruit you can eat? If not, what are they?** (Possible answer: No, the fruit of the Spirit are good character traits or qualities that are like Jesus.)
- **If we try really hard, can we cause the fruit of the Spirit to grow in our lives on our own? Why or why not? Who can produce this fruit in our lives?** (No, we can't make the fruit of the Spirit grow on our own, no matter how hard we try. The Holy Spirit produces this fruit in our lives.)
- **In God's big story, Paul writes about our flesh. He doesn't mean the skin on our bodies. What does he mean?** (The flesh is the part of us that doesn't want to do things God's way.)
- **What are some fruits of the Spirit you see in the lives of the people in our group?** (Note: Point out one fruit that you see in each kid's life, then give them a chance to point out fruit they notice in you and one another.)
- **What is one fruit of the Spirit you would like God's help growing more of in your life?**

It's amazing to see how God is working in each one of you to develop the fruit of the Spirit and make you more like Jesus! Let's take some time to ask God to continue growing His fruit in our lives.

Leader Tip: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are the fruit of the Holy Spirit's work in followers of Jesus! If kids are new to church or aren't sure who the Holy Spirit is, explain that the Holy Spirit is God's powerful, wise, and loving presence within every Jesus-follower. The Holy Spirit is God!

Preteen Questions

- **How many of the fruit of the Spirit can you name? Give it a try!** (Note that some Bible translations use slightly different names for some fruit. Here is a general list: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.)
- **Which fruit of the Spirit stood out to you the most? Why?**
- **If we try really hard, can we cause the fruit of the Spirit to grow in our lives on our own? Why or why not? Who can produce this fruit in our lives?** (No, we can't make the fruit of the Spirit grow on our own, no matter how hard we try. The Holy Spirit produces this fruit in our lives.)
- **In God's big story, Paul writes about our flesh. He doesn't mean the skin on our bodies. What does he mean?** (The flesh is the part of us that doesn't want to do things God's way.)
- **Can you describe someone you know who follows Jesus closely? What are some godly traits (fruit of the Spirit) that you see in this person? How do you think this person became a person who is loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled?**
- **What is one fruit of the Spirit you would like God's help growing more of in your life?**

It's amazing to see how God is working in each one of you to develop the fruit of the Spirit and make you more like Jesus! Let's take some time to ask God to continue growing His fruit in our lives.

Small Group Prayer Time

Invite kids to share one fruit of the Spirit that they would like God to grow more of in their lives. For example, they might struggle to be patient with a younger sibling and want God to produce more patience in them. Consider sharing a spiritual fruit you want more of as well. Then take turns praying for each person, inviting God to grow His fruit in each kid as they follow the Holy Spirit. Kids may also want to share more general prayers and praises. Take time to pray for each one.

Elementary Responding in Worship: Growing God's Fruit

SUPPLIES: tables (1 or more), green or brown play dough (several containers), multiple colors of play dough (1 container per 1–2 kids), plastic placemats (optional, 1 per kid)

RESOURCES: [Growing God's Fruit pictures ! set/SG](#), "Because of Your Love" from the [Be Like Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, place a table at the front of the room where you can sit or stand as you make a vine out of play dough and talk to the kids.

Take out the green or brown play dough and begin forming it into a long, thick vine at the table as you talk to the kids: **Today we heard in God's big story about different types of spiritual fruit that the Holy Spirit creates in us. Let's list them together.** Allow kids to shout out the fruit of the Spirit together: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. **Some of these remind me of actual fruit. Let's see if you feel the same way!**

Display the first of the Fruit of the Spirit pictures and point to each fruit as you talk about it: **Do you know what these delicious red strawberries remind me of? Allow kids to answer. Yes, love!**

How many of you think watermelon is absolutely delicious? Pause for kids to respond. Me, too! I feel joy when I eat watermelon!

Have you ever picked blueberries? Pause for kids to respond. Picking blueberries takes a long time—the berries are so small! So, it takes a lot of patience!

Does anyone know what an apple symbolizes in China? Pause for kids to answer. Yes! An apple symbolizes peace. And in other cultures, pineapples are often a sign of kindness.

Display the second of the Fruit of the Spirit pictures and continue pointing to the different fruits as you talk about them: **Let's look at a few more. In the Bible, grapes often symbolize the good ways God provides for His people, and they remind me of goodness!**



Why do you think a pear tree reminds me of faithfulness? Allow kids to guess. **Great ideas! A pear tree reminds me of faithfulness because it takes a very long time to grow, so you can't give up on it. To be faithful means sticking with someone or something no matter what!**

Has anyone ever picked raspberries? Allow kids to share. **Raspberries are very delicate and can be squished easily, so it's important to be gentle with them. That's why they remind me of gentleness! And can you guess why blackberries remind me of self-control?** Pause for kids to share their guesses. **Blackberry bushes have big thorns on them, so you must be careful and use self-control when picking them so that you don't get hurt.**

Display the third of the Fruit of the Spirit pictures and set out play dough for all the kids. Consider having kids work at tables or on plastic placemats. **For the next few minutes, I invite you to take your play dough and create one or more fruits that remind you of the fruit of the Spirit from God's big story. You can create the fruit shown on the screen or a different fruit. If there is a fruit of the Spirit you want God to help produce more of in you, create a fruit that reminds you of it.** Give kids several minutes to create fruit. Consider playing music from the [Be Like Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#) as they work.

After a few minutes, admire the kids' creations as you continue: **Jesus is the perfect example of all the fruit of the Spirit. We can be like Jesus too, but we can't do it on our own. If you have an apple tree growing in your yard and you cut a branch off from it, what happens to the branch?** Pause for kids to answer. **Yes! That branch won't produce any fruit. It must be connected to the vine or the tree to produce fruit.**

In the same way, for us to produce the fruit of the Spirit and to be like Jesus, we must be connected to Jesus. What are some ways you can connect with Jesus? Allow kids time to share honestly. **Every person is unique, and the ways we connect with God can be different! I love hearing how you connect with Jesus! Some of us connect through worship—singing, dancing, and praising God! We can connect by talking with Jesus in prayer and by reading the Bible and hearing God's amazing big story! We can connect with God at church, at home, and when we're around people who love Jesus and are becoming like Him! As we connect with God, He produces the fruit of the Spirit in us. And, little by little, we start to walk, talk, and act like Jesus.**

Point to the play dough vine on the table at the front of the room. **Let's spend some time connecting with Jesus as we attach our play dough fruit to this vine. I'll play some worship music, and when you're ready, you can bring your fruit to the front and connect it to the vine. As you do, you can talk with Jesus in prayer or worship Him through singing or dancing.** Play "Because of Your Love" from the [Be Like Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#) as kids attach their play dough fruit to the vine and worship.

Make It Inclusive: Some children may not enjoy the texture of play dough, including those with sensory sensitivities. Provide alternatives like construction paper, kid-safe scissors, and coloring utensils so kids can create paper fruit if they prefer.

Preteen Responding in Worship: Fruit of the Vine

SUPPLIES: butcher or kraft paper (green or brown, painter’s tape, construction paper (various colors, kid-safe scissors, circular plastic container lids (various sizes, coloring utensils, writing utensils, glue sticks, long artificial vine (optional), clothespins (optional), basket of fruit (optional)

RESOURCES: “Because of Your Love” from the [Be Like Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Allergy Caution: This activity includes possible food allergens!

Ahead of time, create a large vine that kids will attach paper fruit to. You can do this by crumpling up a long, thin sheet of butcher or kraft paper (preferably green or brown) and taping it to an empty wall. During the activity, the kids will tape their paper fruit creations to the vine. Alternatively, hang a long artificial vine from the ceiling and have clothespins on hand that kids can use to attach their paper fruit.

Today we heard in God’s big story about different types of spiritual fruit that the Holy Spirit creates in us. Let’s list them together. Allow kids to shout out the fruit of the Spirit together: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

While the fruits of the Spirit are not actual fruit that we eat, they’re like literal fruit in some ways. If you have a bowl of fruit on hand, hold it up for kids to see. **What are some similarities between actual fruit and the fruit of the Spirit?** This is a pretty high-level question, so give kids time to think before sharing. They may surprise you with their insights! If needed, suggest these ideas: Both kinds of fruit take time to grow; both kinds of fruit are good for us and others; fruit grows when it’s connected to the tree or vine and God grows the fruit of the Spirit in us when we’re connected to Him; both kinds of fruit need to be cared for in order to remain healthy.

Leader Tip: To help kids remember the fruit of the Spirit, display the Word of Wonder Slide or list the fruit on a whiteboard: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

I invite you to think quietly about one fruit of the Spirit that you would like God to produce more of in your life. Pause for a few moments. **Now with that fruit of the Spirit in mind, I invite you to create a fruit out of paper that represents that fruit of the Spirit. It might look like an actual fruit—like an apple or strawberry—or it might be your own unique creation.** Show kids the supplies, including the circular lids they can trace to make their fruit if they choose. **On your fruit, you can write the name of the fruit of the Spirit you want God to grow more of in your life. You can also write or draw your thoughts, reflections, or a prayer on your fruit.** Give kids several minutes to create fruit. Consider playing music from the [Be Like Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#) as they work.

After a few minutes, admire the kids’ creations as you continue: **Jesus is the perfect example of all the fruit of the Spirit. We can be like Jesus too, but we can’t do it on our own. If you have an apple tree growing in your yard and you cut a branch off from it, what happens to the branch?** Pause for kids to answer. **Yes! That branch won’t produce any fruit. It must be connected to the vine or the tree to produce fruit.**

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Point to the large vine on the wall or hanging from the ceiling. **Let’s spend some time connecting with Jesus as we attach our paper fruit to this vine. I’ll play some worship music, and when you’re ready, you can connect your fruit to the vine. As you do, you can talk with Jesus in prayer and ask Him to grow more of that fruit in your life.** Show kids how to attach their fruit using tape or clothespins. Then play “Because of Your Love” from the [Be Like Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#) as kids attach their paper fruit to the vine and worship.

Make It Inclusive: Provide a variety of art supplies to make it easier for all kids to participate, including jumbo crayons/markers, pencil grips, and left-handed kid-safe scissors.