

## Session 4 Fruit of the Spirit

**Necessary background Info for Leader:** You do not need to read this to your candidate, please use it as support and background for your conversation during this lesson.

### Explanations of the Twelve Fruits of the Spirit

**Charity** True, biblical charity is a choice, not a feeling. It deliberately expresses itself in loving ways and always seeks the welfare of others. Biblical charity is dependent on the giver's character, not emotion. For instance, a mature believer demonstrating charity will not exercise his or her freedom if that action might harm another Christian in some way. Rather than risking the possibility of causing the immature Christian to question and stumble, the mature believer will not exercise his freedom out of charity for his brother ([Romans 14:1-15](#)). Charity chooses to set aside one's own preferences, desires, and sometimes even needs to put the other person first ([Philippians 2:1-3](#)).

**Joy** Sometimes we Christians tend to downplay the meaning of joy. But, the Greek word translated as "joy" in [Galatians 5](#) means "gladness and delight" – basically the same thing the world means when it talks about joy. It is a feeling of gladness based on our circumstances. Sadly, the world's joy cannot last because it is based on fleeting, physical circumstances. But the joy of the Lord is established in our spiritual, eternal circumstances. As we cling tight to Jesus, abiding daily in our saving relationship with Him, we will experience the fullness of joy He promised ([John 15:4-11](#)).

**Peace** The world doesn't offer much peace. Just look around. The world cannot give it because the world doesn't know the One who is peace. But for those who have the Spirit of peace within us, the peace of Christ is possible, no matter our circumstances ([John 14:27](#)). We can reject the chaos of the world and embrace God's peace. The book of Philippians tells us how ([Philippians 4:4-9](#)). First, choose to rejoice in God and who He is. Second, bring all your worries, fears, and concerns to God in [prayer](#). Third, fill your mind with God's truth. And fourth, choose to think about the things of God.

**Patience** We don't see much patience in the world today, not even in the church. Maybe part of the reason is our fast-paced, want-it-now [culture](#). But Christians have everything we need to be patient because we have the Holy Spirit living in us longing to display His character to those around us. Patient people put up with circumstances and other people, even when severely tried. Patient people display endurance, longsuffering, and perseverance. The New Testament also specifically connects patience with sharing the Gospel. God is patient as He

waits for the lost to come to Him (2 Peter 3:9) and He calls His people to be patient as we extend the offer of salvation in Christ to others (2 Timothy 4:20).

**Kindness and Goodness** The characteristics of “kindness” and “goodness” are closely related. Together they present the picture of one who not only possesses moral goodness and integrity, but also generously expresses it in the way they act toward others. This “goodness in action” reflects God’s kindness and goodness toward us. God demonstrated His kindness and goodness to us in our salvation (Titus 3:4) and will continue to “show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us” for all eternity (Ephesians 2:7)!

**Faithfulness** To be “faithful” is to be reliable or trustworthy. For the Christian, this is faithfulness specifically to the Savior who redeemed us. Christian faithfulness therefore, is continued and consistent submission and obedience to the same Spirit who provides the ability for us to be faithful. This attitude is in direct contrast to our previous “faithfulness” to our own sinful desires and ways. The word also describes someone willing to suffer persecution and even death for Christ’s sake. **“Therefore, among God’s churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.”** (2 Thessalonians 1:4)

**Gentleness** Closely linked to humility, gentleness is grace of the soul. It is not weakness, but instead it is strength under control. For instance, in Paul’s second letter to Timothy, he wrote that the **“Lord’s servant”** will **“correct his opponents with gentleness”** (2 Timothy 2:25). And in Paul’s letter to the church in Galatia, he wrote that those who have been caught in sin should be restored in a **“spirit of gentleness”** (Galatians 6:1). Gentleness, being the opposite of self-assertiveness and self-interest, is also a key ingredient in unity and peace within the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:2).

**Generosity** We are to extend ourselves to all of mankind, especially the most needy. To do so, we are emulating Jesus who went after the one lost sheep. To love is to give. God loves us and He gives us everything He wants us to have. When we give, as our Lord encourages, we truly deny ourselves. It is very easy to be generous to our relatives or friends generosity must extend to the poor and the needy. It is a quest for justice as we have the work of God to provide for those who don't have. Generosity offers not charity but justice, it sees and addresses the whole person not just the need of the person.

**Self-Control** Those of us with the indwelling Holy Spirit have the strength to control our sinful desires, whether they are to gossip, overeat, overindulge on the internet, to say “no” to our flesh. Self-control gives us the power to say “yes” to the Spirit and foster a beautiful, bountiful harvest of spiritual fruit!

**Chastity** Chastity means giving ourselves to Christ completely whether as a priest, religious or layman. All vocations are called to have chaste in their way of living. Chastity also means indulging our physical desires within the right context such as being sexually pure before marriage and by remaining faithful to one's spouse. As a member of the Catholic Faith we are expected to manifest these twelve fruits in our day to day actions. It can be a struggle to remain steadfast and live a Christian way of life especially with all the mixed messages and negative influences that we receive from our culture. However this should only challenge us even more to cultivate our character

**Modesty** Being modest means being humble. It is believing that any of our successes, blessings and talents are gifts from God. It also means being content with what we have and not harbor any selfish ambitions.

## Opening Prayer

Remember, the Holy Spirit is sent by God so we can feel God's presence with us. God does not push himself upon us. We need to invite the Holy Spirit in. This prayer invites the Holy Spirit's presence into our lives and opens us to being led towards God.

Pray the Holy Spirit Prayer together. [Click here for prayer.](#)

## Activity 1 Fruit of the Spirit- Discussion

When teaching about the Fruit of the Spirit, start by asking the candidate about fruit. Ask them to think of words that describe fruit in general, rather than specific kinds of fruit. Typically, they respond with adjectives such as: Healthy ... Sweet ... Ripe ... Fresh ... Yummy ... Juicy

Remind the candidate that fruit has been called "nature's candy." So ask them, why did St. Paul use the term "fruit" to describe these desirable characteristics in his writings? **Why not "Vegetables of the Spirit"?** Even if you love the green stuff, that phrase just doesn't have the same appeal! Why do you think the word fruit was chosen by St. Paul? ( there are no right answer- only opinions)

## Seeds of Faith

Fruit does have seeds. And if I gave you a seed to plant, whether it germinated,grew, and produced fruit -would depend on how it was treated. A seed watered and given sufficient

sunlight would blossom; a seed neglected, un-watered, or left in the dark would remain dormant.

The Fruit of the Spirit are like seeds planted by God in our hearts. We can nurture them, surrounding ourselves by the people and situations who will cause the seeds to flourish; or we can stunt their growth, leaving them dormant. But these traits – joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are always there – waiting to be nurtured. (You can see a visual of the Fruit of the Spirit by [clicking here](#)).

Now, sticking with the fruit theme.... Show these pictures to the candidate.



Ask:

- Can you tell me what type of trees these are? (There's a banana tree, apple tree, and orange tree)
- How can you tell what type of tree it is? (We can tell the type of tree by looking at the fruit that it produces.)

Say: The fruit of a tree is a quick and easy way for us to tell that the tree is healthy because it's putting out fruit like it's supposed to. And it helps us to identify the type of tree by just looking at what fruit is growing.

We can see the Holy Spirit working in us and changing us by the fruit that we produce. We're not going to start sprouting apples and oranges out our armpits, but we will produce certain words, thoughts, and actions. We want those to be more like Christ, and the Holy Spirit works in us to produce that kind of Fruit.

It's a battle because we still want to do sinful things because we are sinful people. But the Spirit in us overpowers the flesh, and He helps us to become more like Jesus.

So often when we talk about the Fruit of the Spirit people think the core of the message is... Be more loving, kind, forgiving, etc. just be nicer. The problem is that we're not designed to live that way in our own power. It's only when we stay connected to Jesus that those characteristics flow out of our lives.

Instead, when we learn about the Fruit of the Spirit the message that should be learned is **...Stay connected to Jesus and good stuff comes out of your life.**

When we nurture our relationship with God, we become more loving, kind, forgiving etc. It's what naturally happens as a result of what God is doing in and through us.

As we grow, all the characteristics of Christ will be manifested in our lives. Yet, like physical fruit, Fruit of the Spirit needs time to grow, the Fruit of the Spirit will not ripen in our lives overnight. Like a successful gardener must battle against weeds to enjoy the sweet fruit they desire, we must constantly work to rid our lives of the "weeds" of our old sin natures that want to choke out the work of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit gives us the power we need to reject those old sinful desires. We can say "no" to sin and accept the "way out" God faithfully provides (1 Corinthians 10:13) by following the Holy Spirit's leading.

As we give the Spirit more control of our lives, He begins to do in and through us what only He can do - to shape us and grow us to look like Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:17-18).

Since God's goal for all His children is for us to be like Jesus (Romans 8:29), the Holy Spirit constantly works to rid our lives of the "**acts of the sinful nature**" (Gal 5:19) and display **His** fruit instead. Therefore, the presence of the "fruit of the Spirit" is evidence that our character is becoming more like Christ's.

## **Activity 2 Combating Real World Issues**

For this teaching section, go to the [Fruits of the Spirit Activity Cards](#). You can look at these on the computer or you can print them out, cut them up and literally lay the Fruit of the Spirit over the real world issues it combats. (FYI- small picture of Fruits of Spirit Activity Cards below)

*Fruit of the Spirit*

<i>Modesty</i>	<i>Charity</i>	<i>Chastity</i>
<i>Generosity</i>	<i>Gentleness</i>	<i>Faithfulness</i>
<i>Kindness</i>	<i>Self-Control</i>	<i>Patience</i>
<i>Peace</i>	<i>Joy</i>	<i>Goodness</i>

*Real World Issues*

IMPATIENT, COMPULSIVE, INTOLERANT	Meanness, Lack of empathy, Self-centeredness	<b>WORRY, SORROW, SADNESS</b>
<i>Bitterness,</i> <i>Rage</i> <i>Cruelty</i>	IMPATIENT, COMPULSIVE, INTOLERANT	<b>Neglect,</b> <b>Isolation,</b> <b>Despair</b>
Lust, <u>Evil-desire,</u> Impurity	Jealousy, Gossip, Hate	<b>AGGRESSION, FORCE,</b> <b>SHORT-TEMPERS</b>
Low self-esteem, disrespect for the body, shame	<b>Disloyalty,</b> <b>Broken Trust,</b> <b>Impurity</b>	<b>Anger,</b> <b>Fighting,</b> <b>Unhappy</b>

Ask your candidate to look at the Fruit of the Spirit listed in the chart at the top. Then look over the Real World Issues listed in the bottom chart. Hold a discussion about what fruits can combat- overcome- address- prevent the Real World Issues we face. ( The purpose of this activity is for the candidate to see a direct connection between the earthly and the spiritual- how relying on God, letting Holy Spirit work in you, can actually bring about happiness here on earth.)

1. Jealousy, Gossip, Hate – Charity (Love of God and others)
2. Worry, Sorrow, Sadness – Joy
3. Anger, Fighting, Unhappy – Peace
4. Impatient, Compulsive, Intolerant – Patience
5. Gluttony, abuse, addiction- Self-control
6. Bitterness, rage, cruelty- Kindness
7. Meanness, lack of empathy, self-centeredness- Goodness
8. Neglect, isolation, despair- Generosity
9. Aggression, force, short-tempers- Gentleness
10. Disloyalty, broken trust, unfaithfulness- faithfulness
11. Lust, evil desire, impurity- Chastity
12. Low self esteem, disrespect for the body, shame- modesty

**Activity 3 Closing Prayer** (feel free to use you own prayer or the one provided)

O King of glory, send us the Promise of the Father, the Spirit of Truth.

May the Counselor who proceeds from You enlighten us and infuse all truth in us, as You have promised.