

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT



Living a Life of
Christian Faith

CONTENTS

Using This Small Group Resource	4
Session 1: Love	6
Session 2: Joy	12
Session 3: Peace	18
Session 4: Patience and Goodness	24
Session 5: Kindness and Gentleness	30
Session 6: Faithfulness	36
Session 7: Self-Control	42



SESSION SNAPSHOT

Weekly Verses: Galatians 5:22-23; 1 John 3:11-18

Session Objective: To help students understand what it means to live out, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the fruit of love.

OPENER

Challenge your students to imagine meeting someone who has no concept or understanding of the word *love*. How would you describe it to them?

After students have finished responding, read the following statements and ask the group if they would consider these acts of love. You can also ask students to explain why they think each is or isn't an act of love.

- Parents give their children everything they ask for.
- A student buys a gift for a friend.
- A boy spends all of his extra time with his new girlfriend.
- An employer fires an employee.
- A parent grounds her child for lying.
- A young person feels sad when his classmate is having a difficult time.

Next, ask your students the following question:

- What is another example of love that comes to your mind?

Understanding Galatians 5:22-23

When an apple tree is healthy and growing, the natural byproduct will eventually be some shiny red, green, or yellow apples hanging from the branches. When it comes to people, the “fruit” mentioned in Galatians 5 is the byproduct of the Holy Spirit’s presence and power at work in us. The first fruit Paul mentions is love, which is the foundation for all the others. Here, Paul uses the word *agape*, which is a selfless, sacrificial, and unconditional love. We experience this love from God. We live out this love as we set our hearts and minds on Jesus.

Understanding 1 John 3:11-18

John describes believers as those who love one another. He contrasts the love we are to have for one another with Cain’s actions, who murdered his brother. Our central example of love is Jesus, who willingly laid down his life for us. Because of God’s love for us, we are able to love others. This is a love we show not only with the words we speak, but with actions that are founded in God’s truth.

OPENING THE WORD

Ask a student to read Galatians 5:22-23. Then, list the items below one by one. Ask your students to raise their hand if they love that particular item.

- Chocolate
- Sports
- Video games
- Cake
- Family
- Movies/TV
- Friends

Move on to the following questions:

- Do we love video games or cake in the same way we love our family and friends? If not, what is the difference?
- Is there a difference between really enjoying something and loving something? What is it?

Ask a student to read 1 John 3:11-18.

- Why do you think the author of this passage thinks love is so important?
- How might hating someone get in the way of following Jesus?

Read verse 13.

- Why do you think some people in the world might hate believers?

Read verse 15.

- Why would the author compare someone who hates their brother or sister to a murderer? Do you agree with this comparison? Why or why not?

Read verses 16-18.

- Besides laying down his life, can you name some other ways that Jesus demonstrated love?
- How does this passage challenge you or encourage you?

UNDERSTANDING LOVE

Loving one another like Jesus is best expressed through our actions. Anyone can say they love someone else, but the true way we show our love is by what we do. Time and time again throughout the Gospels, Jesus showed us—not only with his words but with his actions—what it looks like for us to love our neighbor. We are invited to do the same.

REFLECTION

You may ask the following questions aloud in a group setting, or you may give students some time to respond to them individually in their student handouts.

- When do you find it most difficult to love someone? Do you think it is possible to love everyone?
- What are some common barriers that can keep us from loving others?
- Do you see the fruit of love in anyone in your life? How does this person challenge you?
- How might God be challenging you regarding what we have talked about today?

If your students are using their handouts, instruct them to use any of the remaining space to articulate a prayer to God in response to what you have talked about in this lesson.

TAKEAWAY THOUGHT

Loving like Jesus is much easier said than done. We can all think of times and situations in our lives when we find it most difficult to embody the fruit of love. Commit to praying about this area of your life this week. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you and give you strength.

- What action can you take?
- What intentional steps and decisions can you make to help you love better?

CLOSE IN PRAYER.

STUDENT HANDOUT

SESSION 1: LOVE



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

1 John 3:11-18

For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

REFLECTION

- When do you find it most difficult to love someone? Do you think it is possible to love everyone?

- What are some common barriers that can keep us from loving others?

- Do you see the fruit of love in anyone in your life? How does this person challenge you?

- How might God be challenging you regarding what we have talked about today?

Use the space below to articulate your prayer to God.