

Love

Fruit of the Spirit

Lesson 1 of 9



Written by Kara Jenkins

This lesson begins a new series based on the Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5. Each installment will focus on a specific character quality that God creates in us through His Spirit.

Target age group: 1st - 3rd Grade

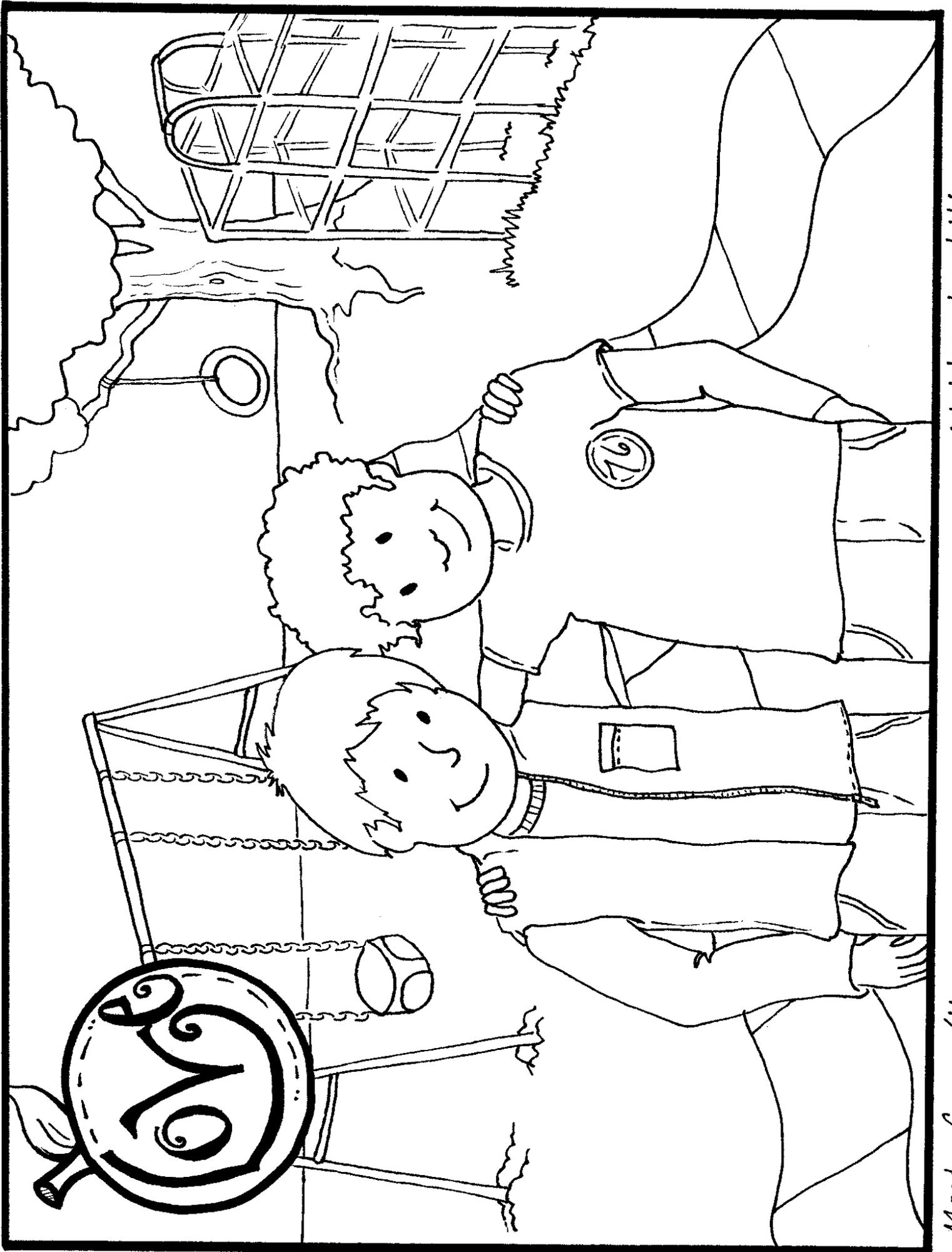
Relevant Scriptures Pertaining to Love: Galatians 5:22-26; Matthew 22:37-39; 1 Corinthians 13; Colossians 3:12-14; 1 John 3:16-18, 4:7-21 (All of these will not be read during the lesson, but study the passages beforehand and be ready to explain some aspects of love more fully and to answer questions.)

Learning Objectives: After this lesson, the children will demonstrate:

1. An understanding that love is a fruit of the Spirit and a command from God.
2. An understanding that they have the ability to love as God loves, when His Spirit lives within them and as they abide in Him.
3. An understanding of God's great love for them in dying for their sins.
4. Ways they can show love to particular people throughout the week (and hopefully do it!).

Bible Verse to Memorize: Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." (ESV)

Items Needed:



- Bible (plus extras for children who forget to bring one)
- Fruit, such as an apple, to share for snack (check for allergies); napkins/wipes for sticky fingers
- Paper for each child with 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a, 13 written or printed on it (if you have pre-readers, you will not need these, but have a chalkboard/dry erase board handy); pencil for each child
- Notecard for each child
- Piece of paper for each parent with Galatians 5:22-23 printed on it; at the bottom, print the Scripture references found at the beginning of the lesson pertaining to love

Optional Activity: For the fruit of the Spirit lessons, make a tree for the wall labeled “Believer” or “Christian.” (On a poster board or large piece of paper, draw a tree or use construction paper.) Make paper “fruits,” each labeled with an attribute of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Each week add the particular attribute you are teaching about. This week, you would add “love,” allowing a child to place it on the branch of the tree. Use only one type of fruit, for though there are several virtues produced by the Spirit, they are all one type of fruit: the fruit of the Spirit.

Bible Lesson

Kindle Curiosity (5 minutes)

- Pass around slices of apple to each child. Tell them to go ahead and eat their slice. (Check for allergies and adapt the fruit as necessary.)

Ask the children, what if I told you this apple came from an orange tree? What would you say? (Allow time for their responses.) It would be impossible for an orange tree to produce an apple! Only apple trees can produce apples and only orange trees can produce oranges. God made different kinds of plants and trees to produce certain fruits and only those fruits.

In the Bible, God teaches us that people produce fruit as well. Before we know God, what kind of fruit do you think we produce? We are only able to produce bad fruit. We constantly produce fruit like anger, hatred, jealousy, and greediness. After we become followers of God, He gives us His Spirit. Because we have His Spirit living inside of us, we are able to produce good fruit, fruit that comes directly from Him. Sometimes we will still continue to produce bad fruit because it is impossible for us not to sin, but just as sunshine, rain, and good soil cause an apple tree to produce apples, as we seek to know God, learn from Him, and listen to Him, the fruit of the Spirit is produced in us.

God Revealed (15 minutes)

First, I want us to look at Galatians chapter five, verses 22-26. Would two of you like to read this for us? (Give them each a couple of verses to read. This depends on the age range and reading abilities of your particular group of children. Adjust the lesson accordingly. Take time to explain this verse a little so they are able to understand exactly what it means.)

After we believe and trust in Jesus Christ, He gives us the Holy Spirit, who lives within us. It is the Spirit who produces this fruit in us as we abide in Him – and apart from Him, these things would be impossible for us to have in their purest form. This does not mean it is always easy to be patient and kind and all these other things, but it does mean we are now able to respond in love or self-control or patience in difficult situations because we have the Spirit within us.

Today we are going to learn about love. Let's see what God can show us through His Word! We want to discover together what love looks like for those who have God's Spirit within them.

Turn to Matthew chapter 22 verses 37-39. (Help each child find the passage.) Jesus says, "...[L]ove the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (ESV) Jesus calls these two commands the greatest commandments! So love is not just a fruit of the Spirit, it is a command from God!

How do we know what love looks like? (Allow time for responses.) We know what love is by looking to God. First John 4:7-11 says this, “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” (NIV) Chapter 3 verses 16 and 18 state, “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.... let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” (NIV)

So we know that love comes from God, God is love, and God showed His love to all of us by sending Jesus Christ to die for us so that we may know Him. We also know from 1 John that love is not just something we say, it is what we do. Jesus showed His great love for us by dying for us. We can show love to one another by putting others first and thinking of them more than ourselves, loving them like Christ loves us.

Personal Pursuit (10 minutes)

Before we can truly love others, we must know and love God. How do we keep the greatest commandment, to love God with all of our heart, soul, and mind? (Discuss.) One big way to love God is to come to know Him more and more through His Word and through prayer. You know through His Word that God died for you and for me! This should cause us to overflow with love towards Him! As we come to know Him, learn from Him, and listen to His voice, we are abiding in Him. As we abide in Him and He in us, the fruit of love is produced in our lives.

After we learn that love is from God, His love for us and our love for Him can overflow into the people around us.

- Pass out 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a, 13. Tell the children to get into groups of two or three and circle each description of what love is. (If your class is mainly pre-

readers, read this passage aloud and have them raise their hands every time they hear a description of what love is. Write each one down as you come to it on a chalkboard or dry erase board.)

- After each group has finished, give a scenario where a choice has to be made by the children. (For example, a boy at school has no friends, but he is mean to everyone. He even pushed you one day at school and told you to get out of his way!) Then continue to the next section.

I want each group to think of one way an unbeliever would respond to this situation. Remember an unbeliever (non-Christian) does not have God's Spirit within them. Then I want you to think of how a believer (Christian) would respond. Each group will act out both responses and the rest of the class will guess if it is the believer or the non-believer.

- As they are doing this activity, be sure to ask questions about why the response/actions they demonstrated are or are not those of a believer and how they are or are not displaying love.

Daily Knowing (7-10 minutes)

Great job everyone! There are many ways we can show love to people all around us. Love is a command from God, a choice we make daily, and a fruit produced by the Holy Spirit as we seek to know and abide in Him.

I want you to take time now to write down how you can show love this week to the people in your life, whether it is your parents, your brothers and sisters, a friend, or kids at school you do not even know but who may need a friend. (Pass out a notecard and pencil to each child.) I want you to place this somewhere at home or school where you will see it every day, and I want you to do these things! Remember, 1 John told us to not just love in words, but with our actions!

Closing Activities (5-10 minutes)

- Spend time in prayer together, asking God to help each of you produce the fruit of love each day, particularly this week in the ways that each child has written down.

- Work with them on memorizing Galatians 5:22-23.
- Remind parents how important it is for them to help their children review their verses all throughout the week. Provide each parent with a paper that has Galatians 5:22-23 and the list of scriptures printed on it.

Love

* Galatians 5:22-23 (NASB)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is _____, joy, _____, patience, _____, goodness, _____, gentleness, _____; against such things there is no law."

* Matthew 22:37-39 (NASB)

"And He said to him, 'You shall _____ the _____ your _____ with all your _____, and with all your _____, and with all your _____.' This is the _____ commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall _____ your _____ as yourself.'"

* Colossians 3:14 (NASB)

"Beyond _____ these things put on _____, which is the perfect bond of _____."

* 1 John 3:18 (NASB)

"Little children, let us not _____ with word or with tongue, but in _____ and _____."

* John 3:16-17 (NASB)

"For _____ so _____ the _____, that He gave His only begotten _____, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have _____ life. For God did not send the _____ into the world to _____ the world, but that the _____ might be saved through _____."

*** Homework ***

- * Read 1 Corinthians 13 and write down a few thoughts from reading it. What does it have to do with love? If you replaced the word "love" with your name, would you be telling the truth? Are there some things that could use some work?
- * We talked about how we can show love to those around us. This is something we all need to keep in our minds as we go through our day. Do at least 10 things this week that shows love to others. Write down those 10 things and bring them to class next week.

Love (Teacher's Guide)

* Galatians 5:22-23 (NASB)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love____, joy, peace____, patience, kindness____, goodness, faithfulness____, gentleness, self-control____; against such things there is no law."

* Matthew 22:37-39 (NASB)

"And He said to him, 'You shall love____ the Lord____ your God____ with all your heart____, and with all your soul____, and with all your mind____.' This is the greatest____ commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love____ your neighbor____ as yourself.'"

* Colossians 3:14 (NASB)

"Beyond all these things put on love____, which is the perfect bond of unity____."

* 1 John 3:18 (NASB)

"Little children, let us not love____ with word or with tongue, but in deed____ and truth____."

* John 3:16-17 (NASB)

"For God____ so loved____ the world____, that He gave His only begotten Son____, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal____ life. For God did not send the Son____ into the world to condemn____ the world, but that the world____ might be saved through Him____."

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