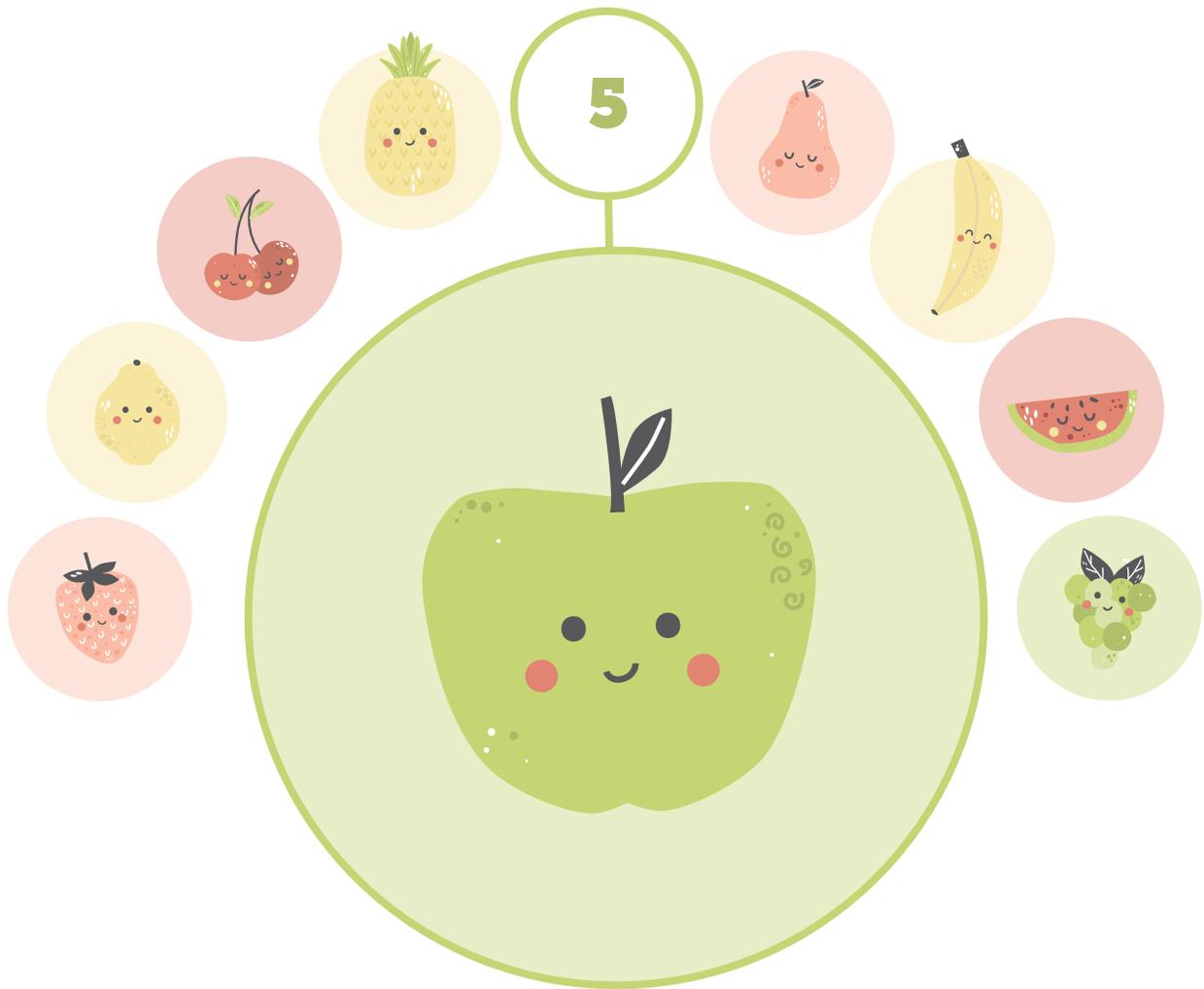


LESSON FIVE



KINDESS

**BIBLE READING(S):***John 15:6-15**Proverbs 27:17**Proverbs 17:17**Exodus 33:11***ELEMENTARY LESSON**

The Fruit of the Holy Spirit is also kindness. The Bible was originally written in Greek, and the Greek word for kindness has a lot of meanings. It can mean “pleasing, honest, and compassionate (loving).” We can say that all these things point to something Jesus cares a lot about: friendship. For our purposes today, kindness is friendship. The day before Jesus died, He spoke to his friends, the disciples, and said this:

— Read John 15:6-15

Jesus seems to be talking about plants in this passage, but He’s actually talking a lot about friendship. By saying that He is the vine and we are the branches, He is saying that we share life. We are bound together. CS Lewis, who wrote *The Chronicles of Narnia*, says that the beginning of friendship is like saying to someone else, “What? You too? I thought I was the only one.” He means that being a friend means having a common interest. It can be books, sports, or hobbies. Lots of things can make us friends with someone else.

But the Bible also calls us to something deeper when it comes to friendship. We can see in our passage from the book of John that Jesus means for friendship to have three things: vulnerability (openness), loyalty, and humility. Let’s talk about each of these qualities one by one.

Vulnerability means that we are open and honest with our friends. It means that we don’t hide our sadness and joy from them. It means that we tell them our feelings and struggles. Sometimes when we’re vulnerable, we also invite our friends to help us grow by pointing out ways we can improve. This is not always easy, but the Bible says that “iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17). This means that two friends help each



other be better people by giving gentle criticism and encouragement.

Loyalty means sticking by someone's side no matter what. It means staying friends even when times are difficult, either when our friend is being difficult or when they are going through a hard time and need our help and comfort. The Bible says that "a friend loves at all times" (Proverbs 17:17). Just like Jesus stood by His disciples even when they disappointed Him, God asks us to be a true friend by sticking by our friends.

Finally, **humility** means placing the needs of our friends before our own. Jesus says in John 15, "greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." Just like we've discussed in previous lessons, this means considering our friends' wants and needs as more important than our wants and needs.

Vulnerability, loyalty, and humility are really hard to practice. That's why we have the Holy Spirit helping us. And, most beautifully of all, God calls us His friends. In our passage from John, Jesus is referring to His disciples as His friends. We can even see in the Old Testament places where God refers to His people as His friends. In Exodus 33, it says that the Lord "used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend."

The Holy Spirit helps us be a kind friend, and Jesus is our ultimate friend. He is perfectly vulnerable, loyal, and humble. When he says that "greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends," He is talking ultimately about Himself. Just one day after He said that, He literally laid down His life for us, His friends. No friend we have will compare to Jesus, our truest friend.

We talked in the beginning of our lesson about how friendship begins with a common interest, like sports, toys, or animals. However, when we have the common interest of Jesus, when we are both Christians who know God's unstoppable love, we can be friends no matter how different we are. Praise God for this amazing truth!

OBJECT LESSON

You'll need: salt and pepper shakers, a dinner plate, and a blown up balloon.

Say: "Salt and pepper are different, but you always see them together. They taste different and look different, and yet at a restaurant or at your table at home, you always have both



salt and pepper. They work well together. Christian friendship is like that, too. Because we are unified in our mutual friendship with Jesus, we can always be good friends, even if we have different interests.” Shake some salt and pepper onto the plate, one layered on the other so they’re mixed up. Say: “Now let’s pretend this balloon represents Jesus.” Dramatically rub the balloon against your (dry, clean) hair to create static electricity. Hover the side of the balloon just above the salt and pepper. The static electricity will cause the salt and pepper to rise through the air and stick to the balloon. Say: “See? Both the salt and pepper, different as they are, find friendship in their mutual love of Jesus.”

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for being our friend. Thank you for showing us what it looks like to be vulnerable, loyal, and humble as a friend. Holy Spirit, thank you for helping us be true friends, just like Jesus. Amen.

KINDNESS CHALLENGE

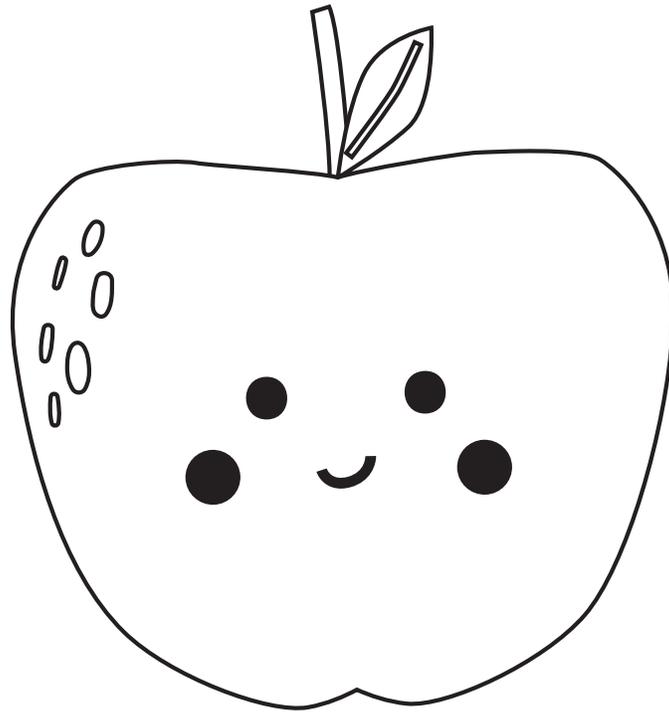
Draw a picture of your best friend, writing down all the things you love doing together on it. Mail it to them with a note telling them how grateful you are for their friendship.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are the three qualities of friendship that we discussed? [*Vulnerability, loyalty, humility*]
- Why is Jesus the best friend we could ever have?

SONG RECOMMENDATIONS

- “What a Friend” by Matt Maher
- “Friend of God” by Israel Houghton
- “Breathe/What a Friend I’ve Found” by Hillsong Worship
- “My Best Friend” by Hillsong Worship



KINDNESS