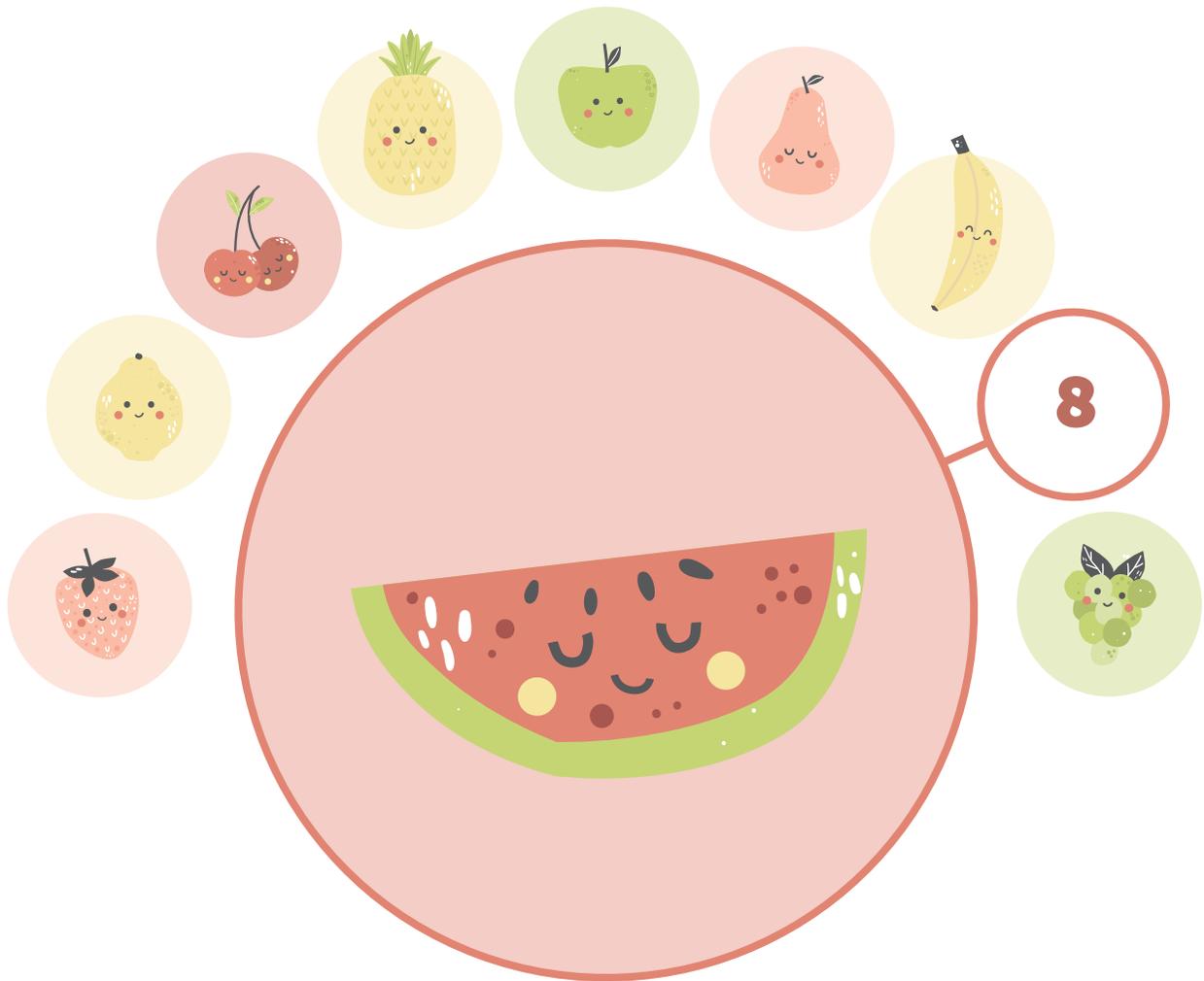


LESSON EIGHT



GENTLENESS

**BIBLE READING(S):***Matthew 28:53**Matthew 11:28-30***ELEMENTARY LESSON**

The Fruit of the Holy Spirit is also gentleness. The dictionary defines gentleness as being kind and tender. But looking at Jesus, we see that gentleness has an even bigger definition. To Jesus, gentleness is showing kindness and tenderness while holding back power and control. Remember that while Jesus is patient and gentle, He is also God, and has all of God's power. When He allows Himself to be arrested by the Roman soldiers in the Garden of Gethsemane, He asks His disciples not to stop the guards from arresting Him, saying in Matthew 28, "Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?" A legion is an army of 6,000 soldiers, and angels are even more powerful than human soldiers. Jesus is saying that even though He could call upon 72,000 powerful angels to help Him, He is choosing not to. In this case, Jesus is showing us what gentleness looks like. He is stopping Himself from using His power so that He can be arrested and ultimately die in our place.

Many times, Jesus showed us what it was like to be gentle when He walked on the earth. In Matthew 11, He talks about His gentleness and what it means for us. Let's read what He says:

— Read Matthew 11:28-30

In this passage, Jesus is asking us to come to Him when we are "weary and burdened." He's asking us to come to Him when we're tired, sad, weak, and feeling guilty. By being a gentle person, He is making it possible for us to seek Him no matter how we feel or what we've done.

Jesus' gentleness is also shown when He rides into Jerusalem on a donkey. It might seem normal to you and me that a person living in Jesus' time would ride a donkey, but remember that Jesus is the King. He is the King over all creation with the power to do



anything He wants. In Jesus' day, kings didn't ride donkeys. They rode war horses--big, powerful animals that made people afraid.

Jesus, in spite of His ability to call 72,000 angel soldiers to fight for Him, rides into Jerusalem on a gentle and humble animal--a donkey. He wants us to know that He is a gentle kind, that we can come to Him and find rest, no matter what.

If our King in all His power can show us what gentleness looks like, the Holy Spirit can certainly help us to be gentle, too. What does it look like for us to be gentle? Just like Jesus restrained Himself from using His angel army to defeat the Roman soldiers, we, too, can make sure we are showing kindness and patience when we want to instead use power and control. Perhaps we can choose to be gentle with a younger brother or sister by playing a simpler game with them instead of excluding them from the more grown-up game we want to play. And just like Jesus says that we can come to Him no matter what, we, too, can show gentleness by being the kind of person who is kind and forgiving, offering a listening ear and a loving hug to our friends and family when they're sad or struggling. When we are gentle, we choose kind, loving words instead of rude, nasty words.

Ultimately, no one is gentler than Jesus. We will never measure up to Him, and that's OK. Praise God that we don't have to be perfectly gentle to earn God's love and affection! The Holy Spirit is good and kind to help us be gentle with others, choosing kindness over power.

OBJECT LESSON

You'll need: a bucket and a few water balloons.

Say, "I have some water balloons here. I don't want to pop them just yet. I'm going to have to be gentle in the way I handle them so I don't pop them." Pick up a water balloon and cup it in your hands, demonstrating what you mean by gently handling them. "You know what though? I could easily pop this water balloon. I have the power to pop it with my hands. But I am restraining myself. I am keeping myself from popping them, even though I have the power to do so. Gentleness is like that. It's when we have the ability to hurt someone, with our body or with our words, and we choose not to. We choose to be gentle with them. Now what would happen if I stopped being gentle with this water balloon and used all my power to squeeze it?" Squash the balloon until it pops. "See what happened? When I wasn't



gentle, I hurt the balloon! I'm going to choose gentleness to keep both my balloons and my relationships intact."

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thank you for your gentleness. Even though you are the King of the Universe, You tell us that You are gentle and that we can come to you and find comfort no matter what. Holy Spirit, help us to be more gentle with those around us. Amen.

GENTLENESS CHALLENGE

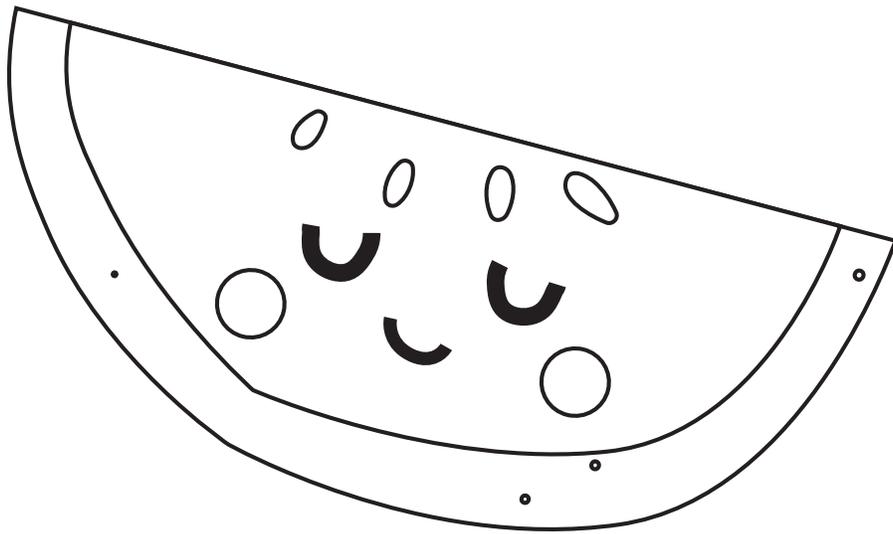
Ask a parent to help you. Grab some raw eggs and head outside. Show what happens when you're gentle with the eggs versus being harsh with them (throwing, tossing, etc.). Do the eggs stay in one piece?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stories from the Bible show us that Jesus is gentle?
- How do you think you can be more gentle with your family?

SONG RECOMMENDATIONS

- "O Come to the Altar" by Elevation Worship
- "Run to the Father" by Cody Carnes
- "Jesus I Come" by Indelible Grace



GENTLENESS