



**cell outlines**

# WITHNESS WITH OTHERS

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# INTRODUCTION

## Creation story. Relationship. With God, with one another, with the Earth.

Right at the beginning of the Bible we find our mandate for WITHNESS – for connection. And for the remainder of this year we will take that blueprint for God’s created order and dig into what it means for our everyday lives. Lives in which we thrive because we take time to invest in understanding our created purpose.

Essential to every relationship is the connection that comes from being ‘with’. At the moment, those connections look different, but they’re just as important as they’ve always been. This past year and the months ahead have been defined by disruption, and in that disruption the thing we need more than ever is WITHNESS – an unfamiliar but beautiful and helpful word that helps us think about what this essential connection looks like. Although how we do ministry will shift and change shape as the impact of COVID-19 lessens, our need for good and quality connection, for WITHNESS, will not.

This month, we will be exploring WITHNESS with others. Using the Bible passage Galatians 5:22–23 we will use some of the fruit of the Spirit to help us understand how these shape our relationship with others.

In Session One we look at **Love and Kindness**. How we love ourselves is fundamental in how love our neighbour. How does our view of ourselves shape our relationship with others? How do we allow the fruit of the Spirit to shape us and change what we think about ourselves?

Session Two looks at **Patience and Self-Control**. Demonstrating patience and self-control can sometimes be really difficult in relationships. What practical steps can we do to help cultivate these fruits in our lives?

Session Three explores **Gentleness and Joy**. How do we live a gentle life? How can our gentleness impact the world? How do we bring joy into our relationship with others – how can we be a joy-bringer?

The final session looks at **Faithfulness and Peace**. How can we be faithful in our relationships with others? How does trusting in God’s faithfulness shape our relationships?

If you decide to run a physical (socially distanced) meeting, you will need to complete a [risk assessment](#) form. We also recommend you read the [guidance document](#) provided by Safe Mission. Please consult your corps officer or DHQ for further info.

# GALATIANS 5:22-23; MATTHEW 22:37-40 – LOVE AND KINDNESS

Today we will be considering the words of Jesus from Matthew 22:37–40 where Jesus commands us to love our neighbour as we love ourselves.

## WELCOME

Give the group one minute to write down as many fruits as they can think of (the more unusual the better). This game can be played individually or in teams.

Just in case you need to settle any fruit-based arguments, here's the link to the Britannica page listing all the fruits in the world.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/list-of-culinary-fruits-2151495>

In these sessions we will be discovering more about the fruit of the Spirit.

Read Galatians 5:22-23 and watch the 'What's in the Bible?' clip (1 min 52 secs) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZrIDT3k84U>

## Additional activity

This song is aimed at a younger age group, but is just a bit of fun to start the session.

Fruit of the Spirit Children's Song (2 mins 44 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rezg4jYFoj0&t=72s>

## WORD

*The teaching behind today's session is based on two sermons by Matt Chandler. It is not essential for you to watch these clips, but they are provided for additional background if required.*

📺 *Love and Knowledge of Self – Matt Chandler (37mins 58secs)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s02obSPJG28>

📺 *Love of Neighbour – Matt Chandler (50mins 01secs)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UBhQv4M0To>

Pray with the group. Then read Matthew 22:37-40 together.

In Matthew 22:36 Jesus was asked, 'Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?' His answer forms the basis of our session today.

**<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."<sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: "Love your neighbour as yourself."<sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.'**

— Matthew 22:37-40

Discuss the following questions:

- 💬 What do you think Jesus means when he says 'Love your neighbour as yourself'?
- 💬 What do you think loving ourselves looks like?

Watch the following clip, then discuss the questions below.

SESSION ONE

▶ Mirror Mirror (2 mins 33 secs)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHDq1ehz\\_cg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHDq1ehz_cg)

- 💬 How do you think the Queen would have reacted if the mirror had named someone else as ‘the fairest of them all’?
- 💬 The Queen almost looks afraid as she waits to hear the mirror’s verdict. Why do you think that is?

When we look in a mirror it doesn’t generally talk back to us, but there are many ways that voices let us know whether we are the fairest, smartest, funniest, kindest or friendliest.

\* What kind of things act as a mirror in our lives, giving us feedback on who we are (either positive or negative)?

Many of us struggle with the idea of loving ourselves, and according to pastor Matt Chandler we tend to respond in the following ways.

AVOID – I don’t really like who I am.

ADAPT – I don’t like who I am so I’ll pretend to be someone else.

ACCEPT – This is just who I am!

- 💬 Can you give some examples of things people do to avoid, adapt or accept themselves?

*Matt Chandler suggests that none of these approaches is beneficial for loving ourselves the way God wants us to. When we look at ourselves in the different mirrors we mentioned earlier, we get confused about who we are, and loving ourselves can be difficult. However, James reminds us that if we keep our focus on God, then we can see ourselves as we are. Rather than just accepting ourselves, we can be secure in God’s love and continue to increase our love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*

Read James 1:23-25 together.

**23 If you hear the message and don’t obey it, you are like people who stare at themselves in a mirror 24 and forget what they look like as soon as they leave. 25 But you must never stop looking at the perfect law that sets you free. God will bless you in everything you do, if you listen and obey, and don’t just hear and forget.**

— (James 1:23-25 CEV)

We don’t have to avoid looking at ourselves.

We don’t have to adapt who we are so that others will love us.

We don’t have to accept that this is who we will be for ever.

Instead we can keep our eyes focused on the way God sees us and live in the grace he offers us.

- 💬 What do you think of the following quote?

“ **Our love for ourselves is not formed by gazing at our awesomeness; our love for self is formed by the affections of God, of Christ meeting us in our weaknesses over and over again.**”

**Matt Chandler**

Now that we have thought carefully about what loving ourselves means from God’s perspective, watch the next clip and think about what it means to show that love to others.

▶ ‘What does it mean to love your neighbour as yourself?’ – The Church of England (2 mins 02 secs)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ofxF-PKTiSs>

- \* What does it mean to love your neighbour as yourself?

### Additional activity

Loving your neighbour doesn’t mean that you have to be a doormat letting people treat you however they want.

What message do you think Carl Sandburg is trying to get across in the following quote?

“ ‘Love your neighbour as yourself but don’t take down your fence.’

Carl Sandburg

## WORSHIP

Listen to ‘He Knows my Name’ by Francesca Battistelli. Spend time in prayer asking God to help you love yourself the way he loves you and focus on these lyrics:

He calls me chosen, free, forgiven,  
 wanted, child of a King,  
 His forever, held in treasure,  
 I am loved.

*Mia Fieldes / Seth Mosley / Francesca Battistelli*

‘He Knows my Name’ - Francesca Battistelli (3 mins 30 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Um1e4Vor8IQ>

## ACTION

### Be Kind

In recent years there has been an online campaign for people to ‘be kind’. Unfortunately at times this has seemed more like a ‘be kind to those who agree with us’ campaign. God calls us to be kind to everyone as we don’t always know what struggles they are facing.

Read through the lyrics of ‘He Knows my Name’ by Francesca Battistelli. You’ve already listened to the song from your perspective, but now it’s time to focus on one of your friends or neighbours. It might be a college friend struggling with their appearance, or a friend who lashes out in anger when they are hurting, or a friend who belittles others to make themselves feel more important. Keep your neighbour at the centre of your mind as you read through the lyrics. Ask God to guide you to pray for your neighbour and jot down any practical ways you can show love and kindness to them over the coming weeks.

#### He Knows my Name – Francesca Battistelli

Spent today in a conversation  
 In the mirror face to face with  
 Somebody less than perfect.  
 I wouldn’t choose me first if  
 I was looking for a champion.  
 In fact I’d understand if  
 You picked everyone before me.  
 But that’s just not my story.  
 True to who you are,  
 You saw my heart  
 And made  
 Something out of nothing.

I don’t need my name in lights  
 I’m famous in my Father’s eyes.  
 Make no mistake  
 He knows my name.  
 I’m not living for applause  
 I’m already so adored –

It’s all his stage.  
 He knows my name, oh, oh,  
 He knows my name, oh, oh.  
 I’m not meant to just stay quiet,  
 I’m meant to be a lion.  
 I’ll roar beyond a song  
 With every moment that I’ve got.  
 True to who you are  
 You saw my heart  
 And made  
 Something out of nothing.

#### Chorus

He calls me chosen, free, forgiven,  
 wanted, child of the King  
 His forever, held in treasure  
 I am loved.

SESSION ONE

**Additional activity**

Give each member of the group a '30 Days of Love' handout. The first 15 days focus on God's love for us and the rest focus on our love for others. Using the handout the group can reflect on God's love over the coming month. They can spend time considering how we love ourselves and our neighbour in the same way God loves us. If the group has a shared social media page, then a group member could take responsibility for posting them each day.

- Day One: Isaiah 54:10
- Day Two: Psalm 86:15
- Day Three: Zephaniah 3:17
- Day Four: 1 John 3:1
- Day Five: Deuteronomy 7:9
- Day Six: Ephesians 3:18-19
- Day Seven: Psalm 5:11-12
- Day Eight: Ephesians 1:5-6
- Day Nine: 1 Chronicles 16:34
- Day Ten: Psalm 107:8-9
- Day Eleven: 1 John 4:7-8
- Day Twelve: Romans 8:31-32
- Day Thirteen: Psalm 36:7
- Day Fourteen: Galatians 2:20
- Day Fifteen: John 3:16
- Day Sixteen: Ecclesiastes 4:12
- Day Seventeen: Romans 13:8
- Day Eighteen: 1 Corinthians 13:4-5
- Day Nineteen: 1 John 4:12
- Day Twenty: Ephesians 4:2-3
- Day Twenty-one: 1 Corinthians 16:14
- Day Twenty-two: Proverbs 3:3-4
- Day Twenty-three: 1 Peter 4:8
- Day Twenty-four: John 15:12
- Day Twenty-five: Romans 12:10
- Day Twenty-six: Colossians 3:14
- Day Twenty-seven: Ephesians 4:32
- Day Twenty-eight: Proverbs 17:17
- Day Twenty-nine: Zechariah 7:9
- Day Thirty: 1 Corinthians 13:13

# GALATIANS 5:22-23; COLOSSIANS 3:12 – PATIENCE AND SELF-CONTROL

Today we will be considering patience and self-control and focusing on Colossians 3:12.

**12 Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.**

— (Colossians 3:12 *NLT*)

## WELCOME

### Record-Breaking Fruit

Ask the group the following questions. They can play either individually or in teams. The closest answer gets five points, second closest three points and third closest one point.

1. Antoine Secco from France held the record for largest fruit sticker collection between 1993 and 2004. How many stickers were in the collection? **(345,000)**
2. Luis Carrasco from Chile grafted different fruits on to a tree so that they all grew together. How many different fruits did he manage to produce on the same tree? **(Five: apricot, cherry, nectarine, plum and peach)**
3. Four people from India were able to display the highest number of origami citrus fruits in 2019. How many fruits were on display? **(6,132)**
4. Andre Ortolof of Augsburg, Germany, holds the record for the fastest time to identify ten fruits while blindfolded. What is his record-breaking time? **(7.87 secs)**
5. Tafzi Ahmed from Germany holds the record for smashing the most watermelons in one minute using just his head. How many watermelons do you think he smashed? **(43)**
6. Koji Nakao holds the record for growing the world's heaviest strawberry in 2015. How much did it weigh? As a clue, the average medium-sized strawberry weighs 12 grams. **(250 grams)**

Go through the answers and tot up the scores. The winner receives a fruit-based prize!

### Additional

- \* Can anyone in the group beat Andre Ortolof's fruit recognition world record?

Ask for a volunteer in the group to attempt Andre's world record challenge. You can complete the challenge the same way as Andre, with a blindfold and a tray of fruit, or you could put ten fruits into a drawstring bag where they can be felt but not seen.

## WORD

Pray together.

In 2017, Taylor Swift released a song called 'Look what you made me do', where she suggested that due to the behaviour of someone else she had no choice about her response.

- 🗣️ Do you agree that someone else can make you do something?
- 🗣️ Can someone 'make you' retaliate by saying something nasty, or freezing others out?
- 🗣️ How much control do you have over your own actions and decisions?

Our verse for today is taken from Colossians 3:12:

**<sup>12</sup> You are the people of God; he loved you and chose you for his own. So then, you must clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.**

— (Colossians 3:12 GNT)

As followers of Jesus we are invited to clothe ourselves in these characteristics, not in our own strength but through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Show the group a picture of **Pig-Pen** from the Peanuts cartoon. Wherever Pig-Pen goes he carries a swirl of dirt and dust. On the rare occasions where he is completely clean he is almost unrecognisable, and as soon as he steps outside he is immediately covered in dirt and dust again. He takes that dirt and dust into every situation he faces and it impacts the reaction of those around him.

Remember this character as we watch a clip from *Present Over Perfect*, where the author Shauna Niequest shares her thoughts about Pig-Pen.

▶ Watch the clip from Present Over Perfect – watch between 3:12 to 9:23 min.

<https://youtu.be/ewNMGoxVKpA?t=191>

Shauna took a moment to stop and consider the swirling dirt and dust around her life.

- 💬 What kind of things make us feel like we're out of control?
- 💬 Can you relate to the Pig-Pen illustration? If so, how?
- 💬 In what ways is it hard to acknowledge how our lack of self-control contributes to the situations around us?

Shauna noticed that the swirl of chaos followed her everywhere she went and she realised that her lack of self-control created a life that made her miserable.

- 💬 How do you think Shauna's busy, full life impacted those around her?
- 💬 Why is it sometimes difficult to admit where we lack self-control?

Whatever your swirl of dirt and dust, God wants to help you grow and develop so that it becomes less of an issue for you. Just as we discovered last week, we don't need to avoid, adjust or accept these parts of ourselves. We can acknowledge who we are with all our strengths and weaknesses, and accept God's grace as he helps us to develop the fruit of the Spirit.

Last week we discovered that we are called to love God, and love our neighbour as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-40).

- 💬 How does self-control play a part in our ability to follow these commandments?

It's often a lot easier to identify the Pig-Pens of others rather than focusing on ourselves, but that's what self-control is all about. We cannot manage someone else's Pig-Pen for them, but God wants to help us become more compassionate, kind, humble, gentle and patient.

**<sup>12</sup> So, as God's own chosen people, who are holy [set apart, sanctified for His purpose] and well-beloved [by God Himself], put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience [which has the power to endure whatever injustice or unpleasantness comes, with good temper].**

— Colossians 3:12 (AMP)

The *Amplified* translation of Colossians 3:12 describes patience as having 'the power to endure whatever injustice or unpleasantness comes, with good temper'.

- 💬 Do you find it difficult to be patient with others? If so, why?
- 💬 Do you find it difficult to be patient with yourself? If so, why?

God wants us to be patient with each other, and the verse straight after Colossians 3:12 shows how our heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience should help us to love others as we love ourselves.



<sup>12</sup> Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. <sup>13</sup> Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

— (Colossians 3:12-13 NLT)

Self-control and patience are fruits of the Spirit and we are not expected to try hard on our own to achieve them. God wants us to call on his strength so that each day we can demonstrate a little more self-control with ourselves and with those around us.

### Additional activity

▶ Watch the Bible Project clip 'Slow to Anger' (5 mins 20 secs)  
[https://youtu.be/TeQ1nq\\_YJD0](https://youtu.be/TeQ1nq_YJD0)

💬 What did you discover about God's patience and compassion in this clip?

### WORSHIP

Sometimes we wish God would swoop in and take away the areas of our lives where self-control is challenging. Often, in the waiting, God is helping us to develop the characteristics that we long for.

💬 What prayers are you waiting for God to answer?

You don't need to share with the whole group. Spend some time in prayer asking God for patience as you wait for his answer.

Read Morgan Harper Nichols's poem to bring this time of reflection to a close.

One day,  
 you will see  
 God had a purpose  
 for all the waiting,  
 and not only of the future,  
 but also for the present,  
 where you would gather  
 all the strength and courage you needed  
 to prepare for the days to come.

*Morgan Harper Nichols*

### Additional activity

Reflect on the words of the song 'Do it again', as you pray for a relationship that needs to improve, a repeated loss of self-control that you can't seem to stop or a prayer request that God hasn't answered. All these circumstances require the patience that only the Holy Spirit can give.

▶ 'Do it again' – Elevation Worship  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0B\\_InQITxU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0B_InQITxU)

### ACTION

Give each member of the group a copy of the Self-control and Patience handout (Appendix 1). Talk through each aspect of the handout and either give the group time to fill it in during the session or take it away with them to review over the coming week.

## Self-Control and Patience

Heavenly Father,  
I need your help to remain patient in  
the following areas:

Scriptures to guide me

Prayer

Dear Jesus,  
Help me to follow your example  
showing self-control even when  
it's difficult.  
Guide me in the following areas:

Music for reflection or quotes to think about

Holy Spirit , fill me with your power over the coming  
week as I face the following circumstances

# GALATIANS 5:22-23; MATTHEW 5:5 – GENTLENESS AND JOY

Today we will be considering gentleness and joy, focusing on Matthew 5:5.

**Blessed are the meek,  
for they will inherit the earth.**

— (Matthew 5:5 NRSV)

## WELCOME

### Match the fruit

Show the following images of fruit (Appendix 1) and invite the group to match the fruit names to the pictures. Discuss if they have tried any of these fruits.

- |                |                           |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| * Durian       | * Kiwano (Horned Melon)   |
| * Jackfruit    | * Passion fruit           |
| * Dragon Fruit | * Tamarillo (Tree Tomato) |
| * Cherimoya    | * Mulberries              |

### Additional activity

This song is aimed at a younger age group, but is just a bit of fun to start the session.

- ▶ 'The Fruit' – Seed Family Worship (3 mins 01 secs)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTR7i\\_mbdaw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTR7i_mbdaw)

## WORD

Pray together as group.

This year Mr Men and Little Miss celebrated their 50th birthday. To mark the occasion, the creators came up with an idea for five new characters: Little Miss Kind, Mr Calm, Little Miss Energy, Mr Brilliant and Little Miss Brave. A vote was held to decide which new Mr Men and Little Miss book would be published.

- 💬 Which character would you choose as the winner? Why?

When the votes were in and counted, Matt Lucas announced that Little Miss Brave and Mr Calm were the winners.

Today we are going to explore the theme of gentleness and create our own Mr Men or Little Miss character. Rather than living in lovely, colourful Mr Men / Little Miss Land, our character will live in the same world as us, have a social media account, attend school, college or go to work, and generally live a similar life to us. Your character is a Christian Mr Men / Little Miss, trying to live a life of gentleness just as Jesus did.

As with any Mr Men / Little Miss character, we need to explore their main characteristic.

- 💬 How would you define gentleness?

A dictionary definition of gentleness is:

1. the quality of being kind, tender, or mild-mannered.
2. softness of action or effect; lightness.

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus shared all the attitudes blessed by God. In verse 5, the meek (or gentle) get a mention.

SESSION THREE

**Blessed [inwardly peaceful, spiritually secure, worthy of respect] are the gentle [the kind-hearted, the sweet-spirited, the self-controlled], for they will inherit the earth.**

— (Matthew 5:5 AMP)

In our society gentleness, or meekness, is often seen as weakness. The original Greek word for meek is 'praus', which means 'strength under control'.

💬 Does the definition 'strength under control' change your understanding of gentleness/meekness? If so, how?

For the next section you can either work as a whole group or divide into smaller groups and feed back at the end. You will need the Mr Men / Little Miss handout (Appendix 2).

Let's discover more about how the Bible describes gentleness. Read each Bible verse and suggest a possible scenario Mr Gentle or Little Miss Gentle may face linked to that Scripture, and jot down how they might respond.

Give the group time to complete the activity and then ask them to share their Mr Gentle or Little Miss Gentle ideas with the group as you review each Scripture. They could even have a go at drawing their character if they have time.

Once the activity is completed discuss the following questions:

- 💬 What have you discovered about gentleness as you have created your character?
- 💬 What, for you, is the most challenging part of living a life of gentleness?

### Additional activity

📺 Watch the clip 'Joy' by Kay Warren (3 mins 34 secs)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBQc4w2g\\_X0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBQc4w2g_X0)

“ Joy is the settled assurance that God is in control of all the details of my life, the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be all right, and the determined choice to praise God in all things.”

Kay Warren

💬 How does Kay Warren's definition change your understanding of joy?

### WORSHIP

As we discovered from our Mr Men / Little Miss character today, living a life of gentleness and joy is not always easy and it's impossible to do it in our own strength. Jesus models for us how to live out the fruit of the Spirit. God, through the Holy Spirit, enables us to live a life of gentleness and joy.

**Come to me, all of you who are tired and have heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Accept my teachings and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit, and you will find rest for your lives.**

— (Matthew 11:28-29 NCV)

💬 What do you find most challenging when it comes to the fruit of the Spirit of gentleness and joy?

Spend some time surrendering your frustrations to God and ask for his strength to deal with the situations where gentleness and joy are a challenge for you.

### Additional activity

📺 Listen to 'Let Your Word Sink Deep' – Phil Laeger (3 mins 25 secs)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=De2WdDZUYqs>

## ACTION

We spent time today creating a Mr Men / Little Miss Gentle character and explored the different scenarios they faced throughout the week. Now it's time to make it more personal. Using the Gentleness handout (Appendix 3) reflect on the same Bible verses. Over the coming week, either fill in the sheet sharing situations where you demonstrated the spiritual fruit of gentleness, or jot down opportunities that were missed and how you could have responded differently. Gentleness is not a natural human trait, and so, with the Holy Spirit's guidance, we need to practise.

### **Additional**

It's so easy for us to remain focused on our own state of mind and how joyful we feel.

- ▶ Watch 'The Joy of Giving' clip (2 min 18 sec).  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xozNnytRE6E>
- 💬 In what ways could you bring joy to others over the next week?













Character Name:		
Bible Verse	Scenario	Response
<p>A gentle answer will calm a person's anger, but an unkind answer will cause more anger. (Proverbs 15:1 NCV)</p>		
<p>When they tell evil lies about us, we speak nice words about them. Even today, we are treated as though we were the garbage of the world – the filth of the earth. (1 Corinthians 4:13 NCV)</p>		
<p>With patience you can convince a ruler, and a gentle word can get through to the hard-headed. (Proverbs 25:15 NCV)</p>		
<p>The wise are known for their understanding. Their pleasant words make them better teachers. (Proverbs 16:21 NCV)</p>		
<p>No, your beauty should come from within you – the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit that will never be destroyed and is very precious to God. (1 Peter 3:4 NCV)</p>		
<p>But respect Christ as the holy Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to answer everyone who asks you to explain about the hope you have, but answer in a gentle way and with respect. Keep a clear conscience so that those who speak evil of your good life in Christ will be made ashamed. (1 Peter 3:15-16 NCV)</p>		
<p>Come to me, all of you who are tired and have heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Accept my teachings and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit, and you will find rest for your lives. (Matthew 11:28-29 NCV)</p>		

Gentleness		
Bible Verse	Scenario	Response
<p>A gentle answer will calm a person's anger, but an unkind answer will cause more anger. (Proverbs 15:1 NCV)</p>		
<p>When they tell evil lies about us, we speak nice words about them. Even today, we are treated as though we were the garbage of the world – the filth of the earth. (1 Corinthians 4:13 NCV)</p>		
<p>With patience you can convince a ruler, and a gentle word can get through to the hard-headed. (Proverbs 25:15 NCV)</p>		
<p>The wise are known for their understanding. Their pleasant words make them better teachers. (Proverbs 16:21 NCV)</p>		
<p>No, your beauty should come from within you – the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit that will never be destroyed and is very precious to God. (1 Peter 3:4 NCV)</p>		
<p>But respect Christ as the holy Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to answer everyone who asks you to explain about the hope you have, but answer in a gentle way and with respect. Keep a clear conscience so that those who speak evil of your good life in Christ will be made ashamed. (1 Peter 3:15-16 NCV)</p>		
<p>Come to me, all of you who are tired and have heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Accept my teachings and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit, and you will find rest for your lives. (Matthew 11:28-29 NCV)</p>		

# GALATIANS 5:22-23 – FAITHFULNESS AND PEACE

This week we will be focusing on our final fruits of the Spirit: faithfulness and peace.

## WELCOME

Ask the group to name the fruits of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22-23.

We're going to use Miranda as our inspiration for today's starter.

- ▶ Miranda 'Fruit Friends' (1 min 08 secs)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_yc3iZuLDhA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_yc3iZuLDhA)

Ask the group to create their own fruit friend based on a fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. There are different options for this activity depending on the resources you have available. You may want to use real fruit and give the group craft supplies, or they could simply draw a cartoon version of their fruit. They might create a fruit friend representing love out of a red apple or draw a joyful bunch of grapes!

## Additional activity

This song is aimed at a younger age group, but is just a bit of fun to start the session.

- ▶ 'Fruit of the Spirit' Song for Kids (3 mins 13 secs)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-hrxEjWxkE>

## WORD

Thomas Chisholm was born in Franklin, Kentucky, in 1866. He became a school teacher at the age of 16 (can you imagine if that happened now?) and later an ordained minister. Due to ill health he had to give up his role as a pastor and took a job as an insurance agent. He lived a pretty ordinary life.

Despite the ordinary nature of his day to day life, Thomas Chisholm had a passion for poetry and would express his faith through the written word. In 1923 he sent a collection of poems to his musician friend William Runyan. The end result was a song that speaks of God's faithfulness which today is sung across the globe.

Read through the words of 'Great is thy faithfulness' and discuss:

- 💬 What do you think the song is trying to say about the characteristics of God's faithfulness?

Collect words and phrases describing the faithfulness of God (these could be written on flipchart paper).

### 'Great is thy faithfulness' (No 26 SASB)

1. Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,  
 There is no shadow of turning with thee;  
 Thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not;  
 As thou hast been thou forever wilt be.

*Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!  
 Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
 All I have needed thy hand hath provided;  
 Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

2. Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,  
 Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,  
 Join with all nature in manifold witness  
 To thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

3. Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
 Thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
 Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,  
 Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Thomas Chisholm's song was based on Scripture.

- <sup>22</sup> How enduring is God's loyal love;  
the Eternal has inexhaustible compassion.**  
**<sup>23</sup> Here they are, every morning, new!  
Your faithfulness, God, is as broad as the day.**

— **Lamentation 3:22-23 (VOICE)**

God remains faithful no matter what, but we sometimes find it difficult to reflect his faithfulness in our own relationships. We're going to read through some Scripture verses and consider what it would look like if we tried to live out God's example of faithfulness.

Allocate the following Bible verses to members of the group, giving them the reference only to find and read out. Consider each verse as a group and summarise the characteristic of faithfulness it describes. Add each one to the flip chart.

Examples for discussion are listed underneath each Bible verse.

**2 Timothy 2:13**

- If we are unfaithful,  
he remains faithful,  
for he cannot deny who he is.**

— **2 Timothy 2:13 (NLT)**

*God's faithfulness is not dependent on the actions of others. He is faithful regardless of how many times we let him down.*

**Psalms 33:4**

- For the word of the Lord holds true,  
and we can trust everything he does.**

— **Psalms 33:4 (NLT)**

*God's word can be trusted. He does what he says he's going to do.*

**1 John 1:9**

- But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.**

— **1 John 1:9 (NLT)**

*God forgives our sins when we come to him and are sorry for the actions we have taken.*

**Psalms 91:4**

- He will cover you with his feathers.  
He will shelter you with his wings.  
His faithful promises are your armour and protection.**

— **Psalms 91:4 (NLT)**

*God protects those he loves, sheltering them and keeping them safe.*

**Hebrews 10:23**

- Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise.**

— **Hebrews 10:23 (NLT)**

*God keeps his promises.*

Look at the characteristics of God's faithfulness written on the flip chart.

- 🗨️ How can we reflect those characteristics in our own lives?

### Additional activity

Have another look at the lyrics for 'Great is thy Faithfulness'. Some of the language in this song seems old-fashioned. Choose a verse and rewrite it in today's language – or even better, create your own poem to share what you have discovered about God's faithfulness.

## WORSHIP

The clip for this section is 16:40 min long, so if you do not have sufficient time then complete the additional worship activity instead. It also contains the themes of grief and loss which may be difficult for members of the group.

To discover more about God's faithfulness we looked at the hymn 'Great is thy faithfulness' written by Thomas Chisholm. Our final fruit of the Spirit is peace, and one of the most popular songs linked to this theme is 'It is well'. Just like songwriters today, Horatio Spafford used his own experience to write the following words which have become another classic hymn of the Church.

#### 'It is Well' (No 741 SASB)

**1. When peace like a river attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll,  
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to know  
It is well, it is well with my soul.**

*It is well with my soul,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

Only peace, gifted by the Holy Spirit, could help Horatio and his wife Anna, endure all they faced.

- ▶ 'It is well with my soul' – Hugh Bonneville Christmas Concert Narration (16 mins 40 secs)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ReApjymYSiw>

Horatio and Anna experienced difficulties that many of us can hardly imagine, and yet we all know what it's like to face hard times. As we start to come out of the pandemic there are many who are hurting, grieving and looking for peace.

- 💬 What can we learn from the way that the Spaffords relied on God's peace?

The Spaffords made a conscious decision to trust in God's faithfulness and claim his peace, and their legacy lives on in this beautiful song and the many lives they improved through their influence.

### Additional activity

When we are struggling to find peace, we often search for our own solutions and try to second guess what will happen next. Romans 8:6 suggests a different pathway that leads to peace.

**'For the sense and reason of the flesh is death, but the mind-set controlled by the Spirit finds life and peace.'**

— Romans 8:6 (TPT)

The kind of peace mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23 is discovered when we focus on the power of the Holy Spirit to grow the fruit of peace in our hearts and minds. As you listen to the song 'It is well' consider the following questions:

- 💬 What practical steps can you take to shift from using your own sense and reason to finding peace though a mind-set controlled by the Spirit?
- 💬 How can you help your Christian friends to do the same when they are sharing their concerns with you?
- ▶ 'It is well' – Audrey Assad (4 min 10 secs)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zY5o9mP22V0>

## **ACTION**

Read Galatians 5:22-23.

**<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.**

— Galatians 5:22-23

Ask the group to think back through the four sessions where they have explored the fruits of the Spirit.

- 🗨️ What one thing will you take away from these sessions?
- 🗨️ How has your understanding of the fruits of the Spirit changed?
- 🗨️ Which fruit of the Spirit will you focus on over the coming month?

Jot down the fruit of the Spirit you have chosen and write three practical ways you will ask the Holy Spirit to help you grow in this area.

### **Additional activity**

Find a way to share your new learning about the fruits of the Spirit with the rest of your church. You could record a short video, write a blog or share your learning in another creative way.