

50 Ideas for Teaching Children about the Fruits of the Spirit

Sharon Jaynes

www.sharonjaynes.com

I have often heard the statement, “The fruit doesn’t fall far from the tree,” meaning that a child will be like his parent. But I’ve noticed that this phrase is mostly used sarcastically, in negative situations. In Galatians 5:22, Paul tells us that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Now, if we are a tree with that kind of fruit, then the fruit not falling far from the tree is something to smile about!

What kind of fruit tree do we want to be? What kind of example do we want to set? An example-setting mom cultivates the fruit of the Spirit in her own life and then sets a godly example for her children. Here are a few ideas to help children grow good fruit.

LOVE

- Read 1 Corinthians 13 to your child and have him or her write a paraphrase that fits his or her own life. For example: If I help with the children’s nursery on Sunday, but beat on my sister on Monday, I am just a big bully.
- Make John 3:16 the first verse your child memorizes.
- Make a list of all the things we would not need if people loved one another: locks on doors, police officers, prisons, etc.
- Talk about a time when you really felt loved.
- Have your child tell you a time when he or she really felt loved.

JOY

- Read Philippians aloud and have your child clap every time Paul uses the word joy or rejoice.
- Have your child act out Psalm 146-150.
- Sprinkle some white glitter on a piece of white paper and some on a piece of black paper. Ask your child which shows up best. Explain how joy sometimes shows up better during dark times in our lives.
- Read Hebrews 12:2 and ask your child how Jesus could have joy when He knew He was going to die on the cross.

- Read *The Hiding Place*, by Corrie Ten Boom. Especially note how Corrie thanked God for the fleas in her prison unit because they kept the guard away so she could share the gospel.

PEACE

- Read Genesis 26:24, Exodus 14:13-14, and Joshua 1:5-9 and discuss why God told the men not to be afraid.
- Make a list of the “do not fears” in the Bible
- When you are going through a difficult time, explain to your child how you can have peace in that situation.
- Ask, “If you drew a picture of peace, what would it look like?”
- Read John 14:27. How is God’s peace different from the world’s?

PATIENCE

- Help your child open a savings account, and show him how you have saved.
- Have you child save for a large purchase.
- [Show your teen the figures of the final cost of a car bought with cash and a car bought on credit.]
- Place some oyster shells to keep around the house to remind everyone that jewels are formed with patience.
- Be a patient parent.
- Read James 1:24 and talk about how patience is developed.

KINDNES

- Volunteer as a family at a local soup kitchen or homeless shelter.
- Allow your teen to go on a mission trip to an impoverished part of the country.
- Write notes or send cards to friends that are hurting. Help your child pick out cards to send to his friends who are having a hard time.
- Invite one of your child’s schoolmates who is always left out over to your house.
- If a person is always chosen last to be on a team at school, encourage your child to pick him first.

GOODNESS

- Get the name of a needy family from your church and buy Christmas presents for them.
- Help an elderly person in your neighborhood.
- Sponsor a child for Operation Christmas Child or Project Angel Tree.
- Suggest that a child does chores for a sibling for no reason at all.
- Read the story of the Good Samaritan and discuss what he did to cause him to be called *good*.

- If you make a promise to your child, don't break it.
- If your child commits to being on a team, don't let him or her quit until the season is over.
- Read about Jonathan and David and see how David was faithful to his promises. 1 Samuel 18-20 and 2 Samuel 9.
- If your child starts a project around the house, insist he complete it.
- Praise your child for following through with a task or project that he or she did not necessarily enjoy.

GENTLENESS

- Read *Black Beauty* with your child and talk about how the horses were of more use when they were tamed.
- Visit a stable and watch riders on their horses. Ask, do the horses look weak?
- Read Matthew 5:5 and discuss what it means that "the meek will inherit the earth."
- Read 1 Peter 3:15b-17 (NIV). How would answering someone's hostile question about Christ in a gentle manner show control? Suppose you answered them angrily. Which way would be the most effective?

SELF-CONTROL

- If a child throws a temper tantrum in a toy store, do not let him have the toy.
- Teach a young child to sit in "Big Church" quietly. (Just like mommy does.)
- Have self-control yourself. Try not to yell at your child. It has as much effect as a police officer yelling at you for speeding instead of calmly writing you a ticket.
- Teach your child not to interrupt when you are speaking with another adult.
- Give age appropriate allowance for spending money. At the end of the month, when it's gone, it's gone.

This life resource was taken from Sharon's book, *Being a Great Mom, Raising Great Kids*.