

# FIGS AND FRUITLESSNESS

*God wants us to be fruitful and have faith.*

## Lesson Plan

**Prepare For It**  
(Teacher prep,  
before class)



**Get To It**  
(Begin the lesson)



**Dig Into It**  
(The meat of the  
Bible lesson)



**Make It Real**  
(Hands-on activity)



**Own It**  
(Lesson wrap-up,  
review, & challenge)



## COLLIDE WITH THE WORD

*“Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God’s promises to be fulfilled” [Romans 15:4, NLT].*

## PREPARE FOR IT

*This time is for you, the teacher, to prepare for the week’s lesson—heart, soul, mind, and strength. Read, contemplate, and pray.*

One of the beautiful benefits of being a teacher of preteens is accountability. When you study, prepare, and teach a lesson, the process brings to the surface questions for yourself: How am I doing with this? If someone were to film me all week long for an illustration video, is there footage I would want edited out? Can I teach these truths today with authenticity—knowing that I’m living it out? Certainly perfection is not required. None of us would be qualified if that were the case. The hope though, is that each of us is pursuing holiness in our daily lives—admitting our tendency to sin and allowing the power of the Holy Spirit to daily help us become more like Christ. That kind of example will influence students more than any lesson could!

*Check out the words in **BOLD** throughout the lesson. This is conversation for you to use with preteens. Remember to use your own words and to speak naturally.*

### Related Topics

Faith  
Character  
Prayer

### Primary Texts

Matthew 21:18-19  
John 15:4-5  
Galatians 5:22-23

### Grab It

- Bibles
- *Crashbooks* (always grab pens, colored pencils, and markers)
- *Crashcards* (on DVD, send this home with parents)
- *Collide DVD*
- DVD player
- scissors
- tape
- fruit snacks
- three blindfolds
- napkins
- construction paper and tissue paper
- glue

Scripture quotations marked (NIRV) are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Reader’s Version®, NIRV® Copyright © 1995, 1996, 1998 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIRV” and “New International Reader’s Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright ©1996, 2004, 2007, 2013, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

## GET TO IT

Dive into the lesson and encourage conversation.

## Grab It

- Collide DVD
- Crashbooks
- DVD player
- scissors
- tape
- fruit snacks
- three blindfolds
- napkins

## MEMORIZE IT

**View It:** Play the Collide with the Word video for this unit. After the video, take 90 seconds to let any preteens show off their memorization skills.

**Crash This Verse:** Pass out the Crashbooks, scissors, and tape. Say, **Turn to page 39. Cut out the words of the verse and tape them in correct order on the top half of the page.**



## Fruit Snacks

1. Bring in fruit snacks—the kind that’s in the shape of fruit. Have three blindfolds—longer tube socks (clean!) or scarves work great.
2. Choose three volunteers. Send them outside the classroom (with an adult). Blindfold the three students before bringing them back to class. While they are gone set out three napkins, each with a package of fruit snacks poured onto it. Have the adult guide the blinded volunteers to the table, each one in front of a napkin.
3. Say to the blindfolded preteens, **Your challenge is to figure out the fruit flavor of each fruit snack. You can feel it, smell it, or taste it.** Go down the line and have each preteen try to correctly guess the flavors of the fruit snacks.
4. **These fruit snacks aren’t necessarily the best for you, but real fruit is a healthy and smart snack. Fruit had a different meaning when Jesus talked about it in the Gospel of Matthew. Let’s see what Jesus had to say about fruit.**

## DIG INTO IT

*The meat of the Bible lesson: where you and your students will discover the BIG POINTS and what God has to say*

## Big Point #1: *In order to be fruitful, we need to be connected to God.*

1. Have everyone turn to **Matthew 21:18-19**. To give them the context of the passage say, **During this time of Jesus’ ministry, crowds of people were following Him and believing in His name. Surprisingly, those who did not believe in Him, but challenged Him, were the religious leaders—the Jewish leaders of God’s people, the nation of Israel. Jesus, who was God himself, was frustrated because they didn’t believe He was the promised Messiah. Think about this as we read Matthew 21:18-19.** Read the passage, or have a preteen do it.
2. **Jesus took advantage of this moment to teach His disciples about being true followers of God. His rebuking of the fig tree was a rebuke to those who looked religious and faithful on the outside—like a fruit tree with lush leaves—but didn’t have anything of substance inside—like the fruit tree without fruit. They were hypocrites.**
3. **A hypocrite is a person who pretends to have high beliefs but doesn’t behave in line with those beliefs. As genuine followers of God, we should be producing fruit because we are connected to the vine, Jesus.**

## Help For It

Context is important. Each time you teach on a specific verse or set of verses, be sure to give the students the context it comes from so they have a fuller understanding of the Bible.

## What Does God Say About It?



1. Have preteens turn to **John 15:4-5**. Have someone read it two times.
2. Have students turn to page 40 in their Crashbooks. Have preteens tear out and glue colored paper and tissue paper onto the page in order to recreate a vine with fruit and leaves on it. Encourage them to make the vine spill off the page. Then invite them to rewrite **John 15:4-5** in their own words. Have a few share their creations.
3. **These verses make it clear that we must be connected to God, the vine, in order to live fruitful lives. But how do we “remain in God?” Give me some ideas.** Provide the following examples if students are having a difficult time brainstorming. Read the scriptures associated with each one.
  - Loving God and loving others (Matthew 22:37-40)
  - Bible reading/study (Joshua 1:8)
  - Prayer (Jeremiah 33:3)
  - Christian community (Hebrews 10:24-25)
  - Worshiping God through music (Psalm 13:6)
4. **Which is your favorite way to connect with God?**
5. **The only way fruit can grow is if it’s connected to the vine or to the tree. It’s the same for us. If we want to be fruitful as Christians, we need to be tightly connected to God, who is our vine, through Jesus Christ.**

### Grab It

Bibles  
Crashbooks  
construction paper and tissue paper  
glue or tape  
colored pencils or markers

## Big Point #2: *Being fruitful glorifies God and blesses others.*

Last time I checked, we weren’t walking around with apples or strawberries growing from our heads. So, what does being fruitful mean? For a practical idea of what being spiritually fruitful looks like, let’s read Galatians 5:22-23. This isn’t a complete list, but it’s a great place to start.

## What Does God Say About It?



1. **The Holy Spirit produces fruit in our lives. All those things listed in the Galatians passage come from Him. The more we love Him and serve Him, the more like Him we become. It’s like when you begin to say things or act in ways that your best friend does. Your friends, and all the people you love, begin to rub off on you. The fruit of the Spirit is sort of like God rubbing off on us. The more we love Him and spend time with Him, the more these fruits (love, joy, peace, etc.) begin to show up in our lives. It is just another way that God is awesome!**
2. **When we live out these fruits we glorify God—that’s a fancy way of saying we show God’s awesomeness. Because God is greater than anyone or anything else, we could never make Him greater, but we can show off His greatness here on earth in how we behave. When God’s kindness, peace, and joy show up in our lives, others will take notice! We can point people to God as the source of our love, patience, and self-control!**
3. **Being fruitful not only shows God’s awesomeness, it blesses those around us! We can’t keep our fruit to ourselves. We need to give our love, gentleness, faithfulness, and kindness to those around us—not to just our family and friends, but to the lunch lady, the bus driver, the security guard, and that younger kid down the street.**
4. Have preteens turn to page 43 in their Crashbooks. Give these instructions:
  - **List the nine fruits of the Spirit.**

### Grab It

Bibles  
Crashbooks  
pens or pencils

- Circle the two fruits of the Spirit that come naturally to you—you hardly have to try, but it's a part of your daily life.
- Draw a rectangle around the two fruits that are difficult for you to see in your life.
- What are some opportunities you will have this week for God to show up in your life through these fruits? Some of you may be thinking, "OK, so the Bible says we're supposed to be fruitful, but it can be a lot of work! Why bother?" That's a legit question. Being fruitful requires God's help!

## MAKE IT REAL: MEMORIZATION

*A hands-on activity to solidify the lesson*

One great way for students to memorize verses or passages from Scripture is by learning actions to specific verses. Many preteens love the energy, challenge, and group nature of it—as long as you keep the environment fun and non-threatening. John 15:5 is a great verse to add actions to! Read the verse, and then have them come up with the motions.

## OWN IT

*Wrap up the lesson and challenge students to OWN the theme in everyday life.*



## Grab It

*Crashbooks*

*Crashcard,*  
one per family

*Collide DVD*

pens, markers, or  
colored pencils

tape

1. Have preteens turn to page 42. Say, **There are four fruits outlined on the page. First, read the quotes that make up the outline of each fruit. Then, ask someone around you what fruit they would like to focus on this week while they grow in their relationship with God. Where are they really needing God's help this week? Patience? Self-control? Another? Write down one inside each fruit. (Teacher, do this activity too!)**
2. **God is all-powerful and is working out His will right now. How cool to think that, just like the disciples, He was talking to us in this passage. WE have the opportunity to receive that same power and to be a part of working out God's will in our lives!**

## REVIEW IT:

In the last four lessons we have learned about UNCOMMON BIBLE STORIES. What did you learn that you didn't know before? Turn to page 41 in your *Crashbook*. There are four questions, each one correlating to the lessons in this unit. Draw or journal in response to these questions. (Keep an eye on the kids, but also participate in this activity.) Say, **When you are done fold the page toward the binding, and tape it closed.**

## Here's your challenge:

1. Turn back to page 43 where you listed the fruit of the Spirit. In this coming week, as you spend time connecting to God, ask Him to help others see those fruits in you. Share love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control with others. Let others see the sweetness of fruit that comes from a genuine relationship with God!
2. Pray that others in the class will have opportunities to use the fruit of the Spirit.
  - Ask for prayer requests, and close in prayer, thanking God for the fruit of the Spirit.
  - Keep in touch with parents. Send home the Crashcard for this week found on the Collide DVD.

## THE BASICS

### Savior-King-Friend

*Jesus loves you and wants a relationship with you!*

"Not even the highest places or the lowest, or anything else in all creation can separate us. Nothing at all can ever separate us from God's love. That's because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done."

Romans 8:39, NIRV

Being a Christian means you:

Love Jesus as **Savior**

Jesus saves us from sin: from poor decisions, bad attitudes, hurtful relationships, and a life without hope. He forgives us. He died and rose again for us.

1 John 4:9

Love Jesus as **King**

Jesus is all powerful. He protects us. He gives us all that we need. He is our good and wise King and we show our love by following Him.

1 John 5:3-4

Love Jesus as **Friend**

Jesus gave us His Holy Spirit and promised to never leave us. He listens to us, helps us grow in wisdom, and never lets us be without a Friend!

John 14:26

*Let's Talk About Salvation*

## GOING DEEPER

What does it take to be a Christian? Is it a special set of words that we have to say? Is it a special set of rules we have to follow? Though the words overflowing from our hearts and the way that we act are certainly indicators of a Christ-filled life, being a Christian is ultimately about a relationship with Jesus!

Loving Jesus as our Savior, King, and Friend is a simple way to talk about who He is and the relationship He wants to have with us. Being a Christian means:

### Loving Jesus as our Savior:

Jesus is our forgiver and bringer of hope. We're not stuck in sin because He has given us a way out! We believe people can really change! Jesus came not only to save us from death at the end of our earthly life, He came to save us from poor choices and bad attitudes starting now! Jesus loves us as our Savior, He forgives us, and He can change us from the inside out!

### Loving Jesus as our King:

Jesus is the all-powerful King of the world. We trust Him as our protector, we look to Him as our leader, and we submit to Him as the only judge. He spent His time on earth teaching us so that we would know how to live a Christ-like life. We show our love for Jesus by giving Him our worship, obeying His commands, and following His example. We live our life like He lived His, love people like He did, and submit to His authority as King of our lives!

### Loving Jesus as our Friend:

Jesus did not just save us, command us, and leave us. He sent His Spirit to be with us every day. What a gift! We can invite the Holy Spirit in as our primary influencer, affecting the way we think, act, and treat others. The Holy Spirit is our guide, our counselor, our comforter, and our friend. Jesus cares about us so much that He'll never leave us, no matter what!

If you have a preteen asking Jesus into their heart and life for the first time, that's super awesome! Celebrate with them! Make sure they tell their parents! Follow up with them this week. Don't let them forget the huge decision they made and continue to encourage them as they make discoveries in their relationship with their brand new Savior, King, and Friend!