

# Lesson SERIES

## Growing in the Christian Life.

**Aim:** To encourage the children to commit their lives to Jesus Christ and through His power to develop traits of Christian character— becoming like Christ.

**Theme Memory Text:** 2 Peter 1:5-8 NIV For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Overview:**

The material is designed to cover each of the 8 character traits mentioned in the theme text. You may like to take one for each time your children's group meets. If you meet on a monthly basis, it is suggested that you do two topics a quarter with the other month on an issue relevant to your group such as alcohol, respect for authority, gambling, drugs, smoking, peer pressure etc. and try to make it a practical application of the previous two characteristics.

### **Sample Yearly Program Planner:**

*QUARTER ONE: REBIRTH—A New Start*

Month 1: Faith and Salvation

Month 2: Goodness—Virtue and Moral Purity

Month 3: Commitment in Relationships

*QUARTER TWO: GROWTH IN GRACE*

Month 4: Knowledge—Bible study

Month 5: Self-control—Temperance

Month 6: Practical work on Drugs, alcohol, anger management, etc.

*QUARTER THREE: AGAINST THE ODDS*

Month 7: Perseverance—endurance

Month 8: Godliness—humility and service

Month 9: Respect for authority

*QUARTER FOUR: JOY IN MINISTRY*

Month 10: Brotherly Kindness—alertness to needs

Month 11: Love—Forgiveness

Month 12: Service for others, mission outreach  
(can incorporate with Christmas)

# FAITH

## **SUGGESTED MEMORY TEXTS TO LEARN:**

Hebrews 11:1 TEV To have faith is.... to be certain of the things we cannot see.

Psalm 91:2 My God; in Him will I trust.

Psalm 118:8 It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

## **ACTIVITY & CONTENT SUGGESTIONS:**

- Talk about how we can know a person is there even if we can't see them—e.g. talking on a phone, playing hide and seek
- Do a faith activity—put children in pairs and have one blindfolded. They must follow a course as described verbally by their partner. Then have them do another course with their partner leading them. Talk about the difference between verbal instruction and being led by hand. How did they feel? Which was easier? Did it make a difference if they knew the person they were paired with. Relate to how we can have faith in what God tells us and how there are times when we may even sense Him beside us.
- Find animal tracks—observe them as evidence that animals have been there. Talk about what evidences they see that help them to know that God is real.
- Ask what every day things show we have faith? e.g. Sitting on a chair. We put our whole weight onto something because we believe it will hold us up. Relate this to how we depend on God. Do we put our whole weight on God or is our relationship with Him like crouching over a chair and not really sitting on it.
- Share stories of people who demonstrated faith in God or in others.
- Find promises in the Bible and make a scrapbook or promise box. Plan ways that the children can witness to others about how God keeps His promises.
- Give children responsibilities to carry out. Show that you have confidence in them. Explain that we can have confidence in what God says.
- Talk about the greatest promise of redemption. Encourage children to put their whole belief in Jesus for salvation.

## **FAITH ILLUSTRATION:**

Charles Blondin the tightrope walker announced one day that he wanted to perform a special feat. He wanted to pull a steel cable across the Niagara Falls and walk across the falls from the Canadian side to the American side while pushing a wheel barrow full of rocks.

No one believed he could do such a feat especially a reporter who wrote in the newspaper saying that the tightrope walker was crazy.

So one day he had a steel cable pulled across the Falls and announced he was going to perform this feat on Sunday.

Many people came (to see him fail - and die).

When the time came, he took a wheel barrow full of rocks, got on the steel cable and began his difficult journey.

It was very windy in Niagara and the rushing waters from the falls were very disturbing and frightening. A steel cable that stretched for over a kilometer was very unstable and swayed under his feet. One step at a time, he walked that steel cable. Many times he stopped to catch his breath.

About six feet from the end – he pushed the wheel barrow on to the other side – did a cartwheel along the rope and made it to the other side!

When he was getting congratulated, he saw the reporter, the one who wrote in the paper saying that he was crazy. He immediately asked the reporter if he still believed he was crazy. The reporter replied he now believed he wasn't crazy as he saw the feat being done.

Blondin then asked "Do you think I could do it again?" and the reporter said, "Yes."

Blondin then asked the reporter, "Do you *believe* that I can do this again?" to which the reporter replied, "Yes I believe you can do this again"

Blondin then asked again, "Do you really believe?" and the reporter said, "Yes".

Blondin then emptied the wheel barrow full of rocks and said to him, "If you really believe, get in..."

Blondin's manager, Harry Colcord, had faith in Blondin and had Blondin carry him on his back across the Niagara River on the tightrope.

God is stronger than any tightrope. He is mightier than any stunt artist. Do you have faith? Will you trust Him completely. He promises to carry us through to heaven.

# GOODNESS

## **SUGGESTED MEMORY TEXTS TO LEARN:**

Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Psalms 19:14 NLT May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be pleasing to you, O Lord.

1 Corinthians 14:40 NLT But be sure that everything is done properly and in order.

Zechariah 8:16 NLT But this is what you must do: Tell the truth to each other.

## **ACTIVITY & CONTENT SUGGESTIONS:**

- Try cleaning some mirrors—use some smeary clothes and others that clean well. Talk about purity as opposed to filth.
- Put clean water in a jar. Let the children see how clean it is. Then drop little clods of dirt into it. Show how every little piece makes it dirtier and dirtier. Explain that even little habits of selfishness, disobedience or filthy talking can dirty up our lives.
- Make tomato sandwiches together. Children choose which tomatoes they want to use for the sandwiches. Have one bowl of lovely clean tomatoes and a bucket of table scraps with a couple of very good tomatoes in amongst the scraps. Talk about how when we spend time with friends who have bad habits it will not be long before we will go rotten too unless we ask Jesus to remove us and wash us clean. Talk about clean talking and living
- Have speakers come or show a video or DVD on staying pure in friendships.
- Help children to understand the importance of being modest, well ordered and honest in all their dealings with others. Use stories and illustrations to get across the idea of moral purity.
- Make a set of traffic lights. Talk about how our conscience is like a set of lights. Talk about what happens when the warning light flashes and why it is used. Relate to what we should do when our conscience gives us a warning and when it says stop.

# KNOWLEDGE

## **SUGGESTED MEMORY TEXTS TO LEARN:**

Luke 2:52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Proverbs 1:5 Let the wise also hear and gain in learning.

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God,... and it will be given to him.

Psalms 119:99—100 I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts.

## **ACTIVITY & CONTENT SUGGESTIONS:**

- Show how skin grafts or tree grafts work. Explain that learning about God in His Word is like grafting it into our lives—it becomes a part of us.
- Find promises in the Bible regarding what studying or meditating on God's Word does for us.
- Discuss the different senses and how they help us to understand what is happening in our world. Find references in the Bible to show that God wants us to use all our senses in getting to know Him.
- Have the children commit to daily reading the Word of God. Show them how to read and study God's word. Use the acrostic ESCAPES in studying a passage of scripture. A passage will at least have one of these and sometimes all of them:
  - Example to follow
  - Sin to avoid
  - Command to obey
  - About God or Jesus
  - Promise to Claim
  - Explore more
  - Something to pray about
- Memorise scripture. Play a memory or concentration game, e.g. Ball tag. Every time a person is tagged with the ball or bean bag they must recite a text of scripture.
- Share information regarding Christian living and drug information. Show them that knowing about the truth helps us make better decisions.
- Demonstrate that we learn more when we share information. Have children discover information, and present it to the group.

# SELF-CONTROL

## **SUGGESTED MEMORY TEXTS TO LEARN:**

James 4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Philippians 4:5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven.

Isaiah 42:14 For a long time I have kept silent, I have been quiet and held myself back.

## **ACTIVITY & CONTENT SUGGESTIONS:**

- Take a piece of wood and hammer a nail into it. Pull out the nail and show the scar that is left. Explain that every time we sin it leaves a scar and that we need to ask God to help us rely in Him in order to prevent our lives from being scarred.
- Talk about how we need to develop self-control. In the same way that a physical activity gets easier as we practice so self-control needs to be practiced.
- Discuss the things that we find hard to resist. Discuss the place of television and make a list of acceptable programs. Encourage abiding by the list.
- Make time charts for activities and help them to regulate their lives in a balanced way. Have them create a well-regulated system to follow that fits in to their family's system. Make sure they take ownership of their system.
- Illustrate that when we give in to temptation it becomes easier and easier to give in. Use two magnets to show the resistance in polarity. Talk about resisting sin.
- Illustrate moderation. Explain that temperance is moderation in good things and abstinence from what is bad. Show that if you blow a balloon too full it bursts. Even good things in too large a quantity can destroy.
- Have someone come and present an anger management segment. Practice ways of helping to control feelings and letting others know gently when they are stepping over boundaries long before it becomes an issue.
- Look at budgeting and how to be thrifty. Show children how they can save. Look at ways they can sacrifice for someone else's benefit—sponsor a child etc.

# PERSEVERANCE

## **SUGGESTED MEMORY TEXTS TO LEARN:**

Galatians 6:9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Philippians 4:12 I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation.

1 Peter 2:20 ..If you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

## **ACTIVITY & CONTENT SUGGESTIONS:**

- Set a date for a special treat. Make a paper chain representing one day until the treat. The last link will be a different color. Cut off one link a day. Encourage patience.
- Play games that develop patience.
- Talk about adaptability. Play a "what if" game. Have children think up what they could do if they were in different circumstances. e.g. What if you didn't have a bed to sleep in? What could you do?
- Encourage children to invite children they don't normally play with or younger siblings to enjoy a game.
- Tell the story of Corrie ten Boom and the fleas.
- If children are experiencing a hard time, discuss ways to help them through it.
- Be alert to others who are in need. Plan some way to bring them encouragement.
- Have children write down 5 things each day that they are thankful for.
- Start a project that will take a little time and work together on it until it is completed. Discuss how they felt when it was finished. List the things that were hard along the way. What helped them to get through the hard parts.

# GODLINESS

## **SUGGESTED MEMORY TEXTS TO LEARN:**

1 Peter 5:6 Humble yourselves,.. under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

Psalms 100:4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

Matthew 5:48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

1 Thessalonians 5:15 Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.

## **ACTIVITY & CONTENT SUGGESTIONS:**

- Explore what is meant by Godliness. To be like God. What is God like? He is always looking out for the needs of others. He is always willing to serve. He is forgiving and compassionate. He hates sin. He protects us.
- Help the children to notice and appreciate when other people or children do things well and thank them. Make some bookmarks or cards to give to someone who has helped them.
- Seek out stories of persons who while achieving great accomplishments remained humble. e.g David Livingstone, George Washington Carver etc.
- Encourage children to think of others who are needing prayer. Develop a prayer request book or box and pray for others.
- Encourage children to be protective of others. Take on a project where they need to be responsible for an animal or something fragile. Discuss how they can be protective.
- Talk about loyalty and how to be a loyal friend or a good citizen. Show how disloyalty to God brought sin into the world. Show that obedience to God demonstrates our love for Him and our loyalty to Him..
- Discuss differences in cultures and how we can be gracious to others who do things differently to us. Try to encourage a friendship with at least one child from a different culture.
- Discover the beauty in flowers, snowflakes and other things in nature. Discuss the perfection and intricate detail. Study the human body and how we are made in the image of God. Talk about ways that we can help to keep our bodies beautiful.
- Emphasize that the beauty from within is the most important. Show that only by have a relationship with God can we be like Him.



# BROTHERLY KINDNESS

## **SUGGESTED MEMORY TEXTS TO LEARN:**

Matthew 25:40 Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.

Matthew 7:12 So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.

2 Corinthians 9:7 God loves a cheerful giver.

Zechariah 7:9 Show mercy and compassion to one another.

2 Timothy 2:24 The Lord's servant... must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.

Matthew 22:39 Love your neighbor as yourself.

## **ACTIVITY & CONTENT SUGGESTIONS:**

- Have children start a kindness diary. Have a picture of Jesus on the first page to emphasize that with Jesus in our hearts we are kind. Have the children draw a picture illustrating how he or she demonstrated kindness. Discuss how to deal gently with pets and other animals.
- Adopt an elderly citizen and visit them frequently. Have the children make special treats for them. Have them choose a toy to take to a child in hospital.
- Role play a situation in which someone is being mistreated. Discuss how they can show kindness and defend someone who is being teased or bullied.
- Discuss ways that they can behave thoughtfully if someone is ill or disabled. Encourage children to be involved in assisting at a camp for the underprivileged or disabled.
- Have children make a gift for a family member even if it is not a special day.
- Encourage children to look after new friends or visitors at meetings. Talk about how to be a real friend.

# LOVE

## **SUGGESTED MEMORY TEXTS TO LEARN:**

John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

1 John 4:12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

1 John 3:18 Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

## **ACTIVITY & CONTENT SUGGESTIONS:**

- Talk about the different ways we can show love. Verbally, doing kind deeds, spending time with people, giving gifts, touching and hugging. Help them identify what their love language is and those in their family. Plan ways they can show their family members love in their own love languages which may be different from the child's.
- Discuss forgiveness using stories to illustrate. Demonstrate that forgiveness is extended by the person wronged and acts to heal their hurt, regardless of whether the person who wronged them seeks forgiveness. When we do not extend forgiveness, we become bitter. Role play situations where forgiveness is needed. Show that reconciliation can only take place when the wrong-doer accepts the forgiveness offered and confesses their wrong.
- Use the story of the Good Samaritan to illustrate that love is best seen when we love those who are our enemies. Find stories of where enemies were turned into friends because someone showed love.
- Enjoy lining up rows of dominoes. Show that when the first one tips over it sets off a chain reaction. Show that zeal (enthusiasm for something we love) is like that. When we share that with others it causes a chain reaction.
- Demonstrate that all nature is involved in giving. Nothing exists for itself alone. Find ways in which your children can be involved in giving to others. If it is Christmas time, plan ways to give to others and show love.
- Plan a mission project as a team.