

DEVOTION 1: LOVE

Seasonal Bible Verse: Memorize

"But the fruit of the Spirit is LOVE, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." - Galatians 5:22-23

Weekly Bible Verse: Emphasize

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God." - 1 John 4:7

Welcome

- Can anyone tell me something they love? Maybe their family, or a favorite toy?
- Today, we're learning about LOVE – not just the love we have for our favorite things, but the kind of love God gives us!

Bible Story: Jonathan's Love for David (1 Samuel 18:1-4, 20:1-42)

"¹ After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself... ³ And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. ⁴ Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt." - 1 Samuel 18:1,3-4

Story Highlights

- David and Jonathan were best friends.
- Jonathan showed love by helping and protecting David, even though David was chosen by God to be the next king instead of Jonathan.
- Jonathan gave David his royal robe, sword, and bow to show his friendship and love.
- Jonathan's love was a picture of God's love – selfless and kind.

Connection to Kids

- Jonathan didn't think about himself; he thought about what was best for David. That's the kind of love God shows us!
- Can you think of a time when you shared or helped a friend, even when it wasn't easy?

Key Takeaway

- God loves us so much that He sent Jesus to show us how to love! When we love others, we are showing God's love to the world!

Closing

- Pray: "Dear God, thank You for loving us so much. Help us show Your love to others, just like Jonathan did for David. We love You! Amen."
- Encourage families to spend time with those they love this week, and to continuously show love through words and actions.

DEVOTION 2: JOY

Seasonal Bible Verse: Memorize

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, JOY, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." - Galatians 5:22-23

Weekly Bible Verse: Emphasize

"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." - John 15:11

Welcome

- What makes you happy? Maybe it's playing with your friends, eating your favorite snack, or spending time with your family?
- Today, we're learning about JOY! Joy is like being happy, but it's even better! It's a gift from God that we can feel no matter what's going on around us because God loves us so much.

Bible Story: Mary's Joy at the Birth of Jesus (Luke 1:26-38; 46-55)

³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ⁴⁶ And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant..."

Story Highlights

- Mary was a young woman who loved God and lived in a small town.
- One day, an angel came to her and told her she would have a very special baby – Jesus!
- At first, Mary was surprised and didn't know what to think, but she trusted God and believed His plan was good.
- Mary sang a beautiful song to God, thanking Him for choosing her and sharing her JOY about what He was doing (Luke 1:46-55).
- Mary's joy came from knowing God was with her and loved her.

Connection to Kids

- Mary was so happy to hear that God had a special plan for her, even though it was a little scary. She trusted God and felt JOY because she knew He loved her. We can have JOY too because God loves us and takes care of us!
- What makes you feel really happy? Did you know you can have JOY even when things are hard, because God is always with you?
- What are some ways that you can have joy playing basketball?

Key Takeaway

- JOY is more than just being happy – it's knowing that God loves us no matter what. When we remember how much God loves us, we can share that JOY with others!

Closing

- Pray: "Dear God, thank You for giving us joy! Help us to feel Your joy every day and share it with others. We love You! Amen."
- Encourage families to talk about joy and celebrate what God has given and done for them.

DEVOTION 3: PEACE

Seasonal Bible Verse: Memorize

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, PEACE, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." - Galatians 5:22-23

Weekly Bible Verse: Emphasize

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." - John 14:27

Welcome

- Have you ever felt scared or worried? Maybe during a thunderstorm, when it's dark at night, or before trying something new?
- Today, we're learning about PEACE! Peace is when we feel calm and safe, even when things around us are scary. Jesus gives us peace because He is always with us!

Bible Story: Jesus Calms the Storm (Mark 4:36-41)

³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" ³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. ⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" ⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Story Highlights

- One day, Jesus and His friends were on a boat when a big storm came. The wind was blowing hard, and the waves were crashing into the boat!
- The disciples were very scared, but Jesus was sleeping peacefully.
- The disciples woke Jesus up and said, "Jesus, help us! We're going to sink!"
- Jesus stood up and said, "Peace! Be still!" Right away, the wind stopped, and the water calmed.
- Jesus asked His friends, "Why were you afraid? Don't you trust me?"
- Jesus showed that He is powerful and can bring peace, even in the middle of a storm.

Connection to Kids

- Jesus' friends were afraid, but Jesus wasn't scared at all. He knew that God was in control. When we feel scared or worried, we can remember that Jesus is always with us, and He gives us peace.
- Can you think of a time when you were scared? What helped you feel better?
- We can pray and ask Jesus to help us feel peaceful, just like He calmed the storm for His friends.

Key Takeaway

- PEACE is knowing that God is in control and that we don't have to be afraid. When we trust Jesus, He gives us peace in our hearts!

Closing

- Pray: "Dear God, thank You for giving us peace. When we feel scared or worried, help us to trust You and remember that You are always with us. We love You! Amen."
- Encourage families to talk about peace at home and be agreeable with others this week.

DEVOTION 4: PATIENCE

Seasonal Bible Verse: Memorize

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, PATIENCE, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” - Galatians 5:22-23

Weekly Bible Verse: Emphasize

“But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.” - Romans 8:25

Welcome

- Have you ever had to wait for something? Maybe a turn on the swings, for cookies to finish baking, or for your birthday to come?
- Waiting can be really hard! But today, we’re learning about PATIENCE—trusting that God’s timing is best and learning to wait with a happy heart.

Bible Story: Joseph Waits on God (Genesis 37, 39-41)

37:3-4 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him. 39:2-3 The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did... 41:39-40 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.'

Story Highlights

- Joseph was his father’s favorite son, and his brothers were jealous of him. They did something very mean—they sold him as a slave, and he was sent to Egypt!
- Joseph worked hard, but was put in prison for something he didn’t do.
- Even though Joseph had to wait for a long time, he trusted God and didn’t give up.
- One day, Joseph was brought before Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to help interpret his dreams.
- Because Joseph trusted God and was patient, Pharaoh made him a ruler over Egypt! He was able to save many people—including his own family—from a great famine.

Connection to Kids

- Joseph had to wait a long time for things to get better, but he didn’t give up. He trusted God’s plan! When we have to wait, we can remember that God is with us and has a plan for us too.
- Can you think of a time when you had to wait for something? How did it feel?
- When we practice patience, we’re showing that we trust God and know that good things come in His perfect timing!

Key Takeaway

- PATIENCE means trusting God’s timing and not getting upset when we have to wait. God is always working for our good, even when we don’t see it yet!

Closing

- Pray: “Dear God, thank You for teaching us patience. Help us to trust You when we have to wait and to remember that Your plan is always best. We love You! Amen.”
- Encourage players to practice patience when they don’t get what they want immediately.

DEVOTION 5: KINDNESS

Seasonal Bible Verse: Memorize

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, KINDNESS, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." - Galatians 5:22-23

Weekly Bible Verse: Emphasize

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." - Ephesians 4:32

Welcome

- Can you think of a time when someone was kind to you? Maybe they shared their toy, gave you a hug, or helped you when you needed it?
- Today, we're learning about KINDNESS—showing love to others in the way we talk and act. Kindness is one of the ways we can be like Jesus!

Bible Story: Ruth's Kindness to Naomi (Ruth 1:3-18)

16 But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go, I will go, and where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. *17* Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me."

Story Highlights

- Ruth and Naomi were family, but something very sad happened—Naomi's husband and sons, including Ruth's husband, died. Naomi decided to go back to her hometown.
- Ruth could have gone back to her own family, but instead, she showed kindness by choosing to stay with Naomi.
- Ruth told Naomi, "Where you go, I will go... Your people will be my people, and your God my God." (Ruth 1:16-17)
- Ruth worked hard in the fields to gather food for Naomi, and God blessed her kindness.
- Because Ruth was kind and faithful, God had a special plan for her—she became part of the family line of Jesus!

Connection to Kids

- Ruth didn't have to stay with Naomi, but she chose to be kind and take care of her. We can show kindness too—by sharing, helping, and loving others.
- Can you think of a way to be kind to a friend, your family, or someone at school?
- When we show kindness, we are showing people how much God loves them!

Key Takeaway

- KINDNESS means choosing to love and help others, just like Ruth did for Naomi. We can show kindness every day through our words and actions!

Closing

- Pray: "Dear God, thank You for showing us what kindness looks like through Ruth's story. Help us to be kind to our friends, family, and everyone we meet. We love You! Amen."
- Encourage families to talk about and practice KINDNESS at home this week.

DEVOTION 6: GOODNESS

Seasonal Bible Verse: Memorize

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, GOODNESS, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” - Galatians 5:22-23

Weekly Bible Verse: Emphasize

“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.” - Galatians 6:9-10

Welcome

- What does it mean to be ‘good’? Can you think of something good you’ve done or seen someone else do?
- Today, we’re learning about GOODNESS! Goodness is doing what is right and helping others because we love God.

Bible Story: Barnabas Encourages Others (Acts 4:36-37, 11:22-26)

³⁶ Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”), ³⁷ sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet... ²² News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³ When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. ²⁴ He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

Story Highlights

- Barnabas’ real name was Joseph, but the disciples gave him the name Barnabas, which means “Son of Encouragement.”
- Barnabas showed goodness by giving money to help others in need (Acts 4).
- When many people didn’t trust Paul because he used to hurt Christians, Barnabas stood up for him and helped him join the disciples.
- Barnabas was sent to help new believers in a city called Antioch. Instead of keeping the job for himself, he found Paul so they could work together to teach people about Jesus (Acts 11).
- Barnabas’ goodness helped many people follow Jesus!

Connection to Kids

- Barnabas showed goodness by helping others, standing up for Paul, and making sure new believers had what they needed.
- What are some ways we can show goodness to others?
- Goodness isn’t just about being nice—it’s about doing what is right and helping others because that’s what God wants us to do!

Key Takeaway

- GOODNESS means choosing to do what is right and helping others, just like Barnabas did. When we do good things, we show God’s love to the world!

Closing

- Pray: “Dear God, thank You for showing us how to be good. Help us to do what is right and help others, just like Barnabas did. We love You! Amen.”
- Encourage parents to emphasize what is good in the eyes of God this week.

DEVOTION 7: FAITHFULNESS

Seasonal Bible Verse: Memorize

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, FAITHFULNESS, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” - Galatians 5:22-23

Weekly Bible Verse: Emphasize

“Let love and faithfulness never leave you; write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.” - Proverbs 3:3-4

Welcome

- What does it mean to be faithful? Can you think of something or someone that you can always count on?
- What is it like to be a fan of a bad sports team?
- Today, we’re learning about FAITHFULNESS – sticking with God no matter what and trusting Him always!

Bible Story: Daniel and the Lions’ Den (Daniel 6)

¹⁶ Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!” ¹⁹ Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. ²¹ Then Daniel said to the king... ²² “My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him.”

Story Highlights

- Daniel was faithful to God and prayed every day, even when a law was made that said he couldn’t.
- The king’s advisors tricked the king into making a rule that anyone who prayed to God would be thrown into the lions’ den.
- But Daniel kept praying because he was faithful to God, no matter what.
- Even though he was thrown into the lions’ den, God protected Daniel. The lions didn’t hurt him!
- Because of Daniel’s FAITHFULNESS, the king saw God’s power, praised Him, and told all the people in his land to fear God.

Connection to Kids

- Daniel didn’t stop praying to God, even when it was scary. He trusted God completely!
- Can you think of a time when you had to be patient and trust God, even when it was hard?
- We can be faithful by trusting God, praying to Him, and following Him every day—just like Daniel!

Key Takeaway

- FAITHFULNESS means trusting and following God no matter what. When we are faithful, we show that we love and believe in Him!

Closing

- Pray: “Dear God, thank You for always being faithful to us. Help us to trust You, follow You, and be faithful like Daniel. We love You! Amen.”
- Remind families that God created everything in this world and is Lord over all. Encourage players to have faith, and not lose hope, when times are good and bad.

DEVOTION 8: GENTLENESS

Seasonal Bible Verse: Memorize

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, GENTLENESS, self-control; against such things there is no law." - Galatians 5:22-23

Weekly Bible Verse: Emphasize

"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." - Ephesians 4:2

Welcome

- Can you think of something that is gentle? Maybe a soft blanket, a baby animal, or the way we take care of something fragile?
- Today, we're learning about GENTLENESS—being kind and careful with our words and actions, just like Jesus wants us to be!

Bible Story: Moses Striking the Rock (Numbers 20:1-12)

² Now there was no water for the community, and the people gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron ⁵ Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to this terrible place? It has no grain, or figs. And there is no water to drink!" ⁷ The Lord said to Moses, "Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water."
¹¹ Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. ¹² But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them."

Story Highlights

- Before this passage, Moses had freed God's people from slavery. He led the Israelites out of Egypt with patience, even when they complained and disobeyed.
- God had just provided them with manna, bread, from heaven. But they're back to complaining again about not having better food or water.
- Moses got frustrated and hit a rock instead of speaking to it, like God commanded.
- Even though God still provided water, Moses' disobedience and lack of gentleness had consequences – unable to enter the Promised Land.

Connection to Kids

- Numbers 12:3 says Moses was very meek (humble and gentle), more than anyone on earth.
- Moses was a great leader, but this time, he slipped. He wasn't gentle when he should have been.
- Can you think of a time when it was hard to be gentle, when you were upset or frustrated?
- Being gentle, especially when things aren't going your way, can help those around you. Lacking gentleness has negative consequences, just as we saw with Moses and his brother.

Key Takeaway

- GENTLENESS means treating others with kindness and care through our words and actions, even when we feel upset. God helps us be gentle, just like He helped Moses!

Closing

- Pray: "Dear God, thank You for showing us how to be gentle. Help us to be kind and careful with our words and actions, even when we feel upset. We love You! Amen."
- Encourage players and parents to be gentle with their words and reactions this week.

DEVOTION 9: SELF-CONTROL

Seasonal Bible Verse: Memorize

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, SELF-CONTROL; against such things there is no law." - Galatians 5:22-23

Weekly Bible Verse: Emphasize

"For God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self-control." - 2 Timothy 1:7

Welcome

- Have you ever had to stop yourself from doing something you really wanted to do, like eating too much candy or getting mad when something didn't go your way?
- Today, we're learning about SELF-CONTROL—choosing to do what's right even when we feel tempted to do what we want.

Bible Story: Jesus in the Wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11)

⁸ The devil took him [*Jesus*] to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.' ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Story Highlights

- Jesus had fasted forty days in the wilderness, meaning he didn't eat for that long! He was hungry.
- Satan tempted Jesus with food. Satan tried to trick Jesus into eating and breaking his fast.
- Satan tempted Jesus three times, but Jesus remembered God's word to resist each attempt.
- Jesus quoted scripture to the devil in his defense for resisting temptation.
- He showed perfect self-control by choosing to obey and honor God instead of giving in and choosing what we wanted, food.
- Jesus teaches us that when we feel tempted, we can rely on God to help us have self-control!

Connection to Kids

- Jesus was tempted, just like we are. He knows how we feel.
- Have you ever been really hungry and wanted to eat something before dinner, but your parents said to wait? That's kind of like what happened to Jesus.
- Jesus showed us that self-control means trusting God and making the right choice, even when it's really hard. The good news is that God helps us do the same thing when we ask Him!

Key Takeaway

- SELF-CONTROL means making the right choice, even when it's hard. God helps us stay strong and make good decisions!

Closing

- Pray: "Dear God, thank You for helping us have self-control. When we feel tempted, help us make the right choices, just like Jesus did. We love You! Amen."
- Encourage players to control themselves at the last practice and game this season. Obey, have positive attitudes, and be a good teammate this week at home and the court/fields.

