

# Fruit of the Spirit - Gentleness

Galatians 5:22-23

PPT Title

## Fruit of the Spirit: Gentleness

**Main Point:** We must be gentle toward others with our words and actions.

**Key Verse:** *A gentle answer turns anger away. But mean words stir up anger.* – Proverbs 15:1

**Props:** A hammer, a board with a nail halfway through, a soccer ball, a baby chick.

### BACKGROUND/REVIEW

**Say:** For the past few weeks, we have been studying the fruits of the Spirit. Can anyone name all the fruits of the Spirit, or tell me what verse we find them in?

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.* – Galatians 5:22-23

Who remembers which fruit we studied last week? *Goodness*. That's right. We learned about how when God created the world, everything was *good*, and that after we sinned, Jesus came to earth to make everything *good* again. This week, we'll look at gentleness.

## Gentleness

### INTRO

**Say:** Think for a second about how you handle different things. Do you treat every object the same? Let's look at an example of what I'm talking about. Can I have a volunteer to come help me? *Choose a volunteer and have them come up front.* Here I have a hammer, a nail and a board. Do you know what you do with these things? Can you show me? *Have the volunteer hammer the nail.* Think about this hammer and this nail. When you're hammering a nail, do you need to take care that you don't break the hammer? Or do you hammer very softly, so that you don't hurt the hammer or the nail? No! Your hammer is made to hit things. You don't have to worry about it breaking. You can hammer with it as hard as you want, and the hammer will be just fine.

Will two more people come up to help me today? I have a soccer ball with me today. Who here likes to play soccer? *Choose two more volunteers.* Volunteers, do you two know what to do with a soccer ball? Can you please show us what you do with one? *Have volunteers kick the ball back and forth.* Now let me ask you two a question. Were you ever worried that you would hurt the ball when you kicked it? *No!* You're *supposed* to kick a soccer ball. You never worry about breaking or hurting it.

But some things are different. Will one more person please volunteer to help me? *Choose a last volunteer.* I have something else with me today, something different than a hammer or a soccer ball. *Hand the volunteer the baby chick.* Look at this sweet chick. Would you ever treat it like our other examples? Would you ever bang it around like a hammer, or kick it around like the soccer ball? Of course not! You don't treat a baby chick like those things! You hold a chick very carefully and with gentleness. You wouldn't jerk it around, you would move slowly. You are gentle with some things, like this chick. *Gentleness* is when we act with kindness and care towards something.

## GENTLENESS

God said...

**Say:** It's pretty easy to see the difference between how we can treat things rough or gentle *with our hands*. Now, let's think about being gentle with our words. Last week we talked about when God created the Earth and everything in it. How did God create things? God spoke; He used His words! Just think about that for a second. God spoke, and there was dry ground. Guess what we are standing on right now? We are standing on that dry ground – on the word that God spoke! God spoke and created the trees. Who in here has ever climbed a tree? Did you know that you were climbing on the word of God? The book of Job says that God spoke and told the ocean just how far it is allowed to go up on the shore. Who has been to the beach and run back and forth as the tide goes in and out? Did you know you were running with the word of God?

Have God's words lasted? Yes! They have lasted for thousands of years and will last forever more. **Words are very powerful things.** Today, I want you to realize that **your** words are powerful. Everyone say, "My words are powerful." Did you know that a brother can say something when he is 9 years old (use age of your students) that can affect his brother or sister for the rest of their life? A word spoken to a child can cause that child to act a certain way even when he is all grown up. (Leader, share a story of something that someone said to you when you were a child – good or bad – that has affected you in some way.)

Who in here has a brother? Who in here has a sister? Who has a parent? Okay, so we all live with other people. We speak a lot of words to those people. Our words can be harsh or our words can be gentle.

### PPT Key Verse

*A gentle answer turns anger away. But mean words stir up anger.* – Proverbs 15:1

Some words are mean. They can feel like a hammer striking our heart and mind. But some words can be gentle and kind. They feel more like they are gently petting our soul.

### GENTLENESS IN JESUS (John 8:1-11)

**Say:** Just like all the fruits of the Spirit, the perfect example of gentleness is Jesus.

(Teacher Alert: the nature of this woman's sin was sexual, so we should not mention this to the kids. You may not even want to have the kids turn here this week. The main point, certainly, is Jesus' response to her accusers.)

One day, Jesus was sitting in the Temple courtyard teaching a group of people. Some Pharisees and other leaders marched in with a woman who had been caught sinning. The leaders did not care about the woman. They were testing Jesus to see if He would follow the Law. The law said that they were allowed to throw stones at the woman to punish her. "What do You say?" they asked Jesus.

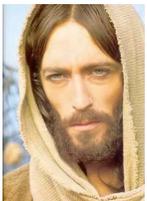
*But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with His finger.*

*They kept asking Him questions. So He stood up and said to them, "Has any one of you not sinned? Then you be the first to throw a stone at her."*

*He bent down again and wrote on the ground.*

*Those who heard what He had said began to go away. They left one at a time, the older ones first. Soon only Jesus was left. The woman was still standing there.*

*Jesus stood up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Hasn't anyone found you guilty?"*



"No one, Sir," she said.

"Then I don't find you guilty either," Jesus said. "Go now and leave your life of sin."  
– John 8:6b-11

Wow. Wasn't that a beautiful gentle answer? Jesus didn't scold the Pharisees. He didn't yell at the woman because of her sin. He was gentle with both. We could say that Jesus even had the right to be harsh with both the Pharisees and the woman. But He gave a gentle answer, and **His gentle answer changed all of their hearts!**

## GENTLENESS IN US

**Say:** If Jesus' gentle Spirit lives in us, then how should we speak to other people? *Gently!* No matter who we are talking to, we should use gentle speech.



You should know that even though someone may look pretty tough on the outside like this hammer (show hammer), on the inside, we are all tender and fragile like this chick (show chick).

Again, how would we treat the chick? Softly, slowly, carefully. **Teacher: Write words on white board.** So we should make sure the words that we speak are like that.

- Speak **softly** - without raising your voice or shouting.
- What does it mean to speak **slowly**? Did you know there is a Bible verse about this? James 1:19 says we should be quick to listen and slow to speak. That means really listen to what the other person is saying. Slow down and think before you speak so you won't say something that you shouldn't.
- Speak **carefully** - with care. Do your words show that you care about the other person? Think before you speak – especially when you are frustrated or angry. It is far better not to say anything than to say something that is harsh or mean.

Remember Proverbs 15:1, "A *gentle answer turns anger away. But mean words stir up anger.*" Use your words to turn anger away. Use your words to compliment and encourage, to build each other up. Use your words so that 20 years from now, someone will have a story to tell about how your words affected their life in a very good way.

**Your words are powerful and they will last!**

And as with all the fruits of the Spirit, you just have to hang out with Jesus for them to show in your life. Spend time reading His word. Pray to Him all throughout your day. Ask Him what you should say to others!

**Key Verse:** *A gentle answer turns anger away. But mean words stir up anger.* – Proverbs 15:1

### PPT Main Point

**Main Point:** We must be gentle toward others with our words and actions.