

Fruits of the Holy Spirit – Session 4
Peace
Galatians 5

Timing: 30-45 minutes, then leading into ministry

Buzz groups: Suggestions are boxed, pairs or groups of 3-4 will work best

Illustrations: Suggestions are noted, but your own ideas and stories are preferable

Focus: Major on the one or two points most relevant to your group

Icebreaker: Where, whom or what do you associate with a feeling of being “at peace”?

Introduction

Key Point: Our lives get better and better as we give our lives over to the Holy Spirit

Key Verse: “*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*” (Galatians 5: 22-23).

Introduce this week on *peace*

Key Point: The fruit of the Spirit is peace

Key Verse: “*The fruit of the Spirit is...peace*” (Gal 5:22)

How do you define peace? What’s the opposite of peace and what the absence of peace look like?
How do you and others benefit from peace?

Get feedback from people. Look up and share dictionary definition of peace. Compare this and people’s responses with the following bible verses from Proverbs:

- Proverbs 12:20
- Proverbs 14:30
- Proverbs 29:9
- Proverbs 29:17

1. Receive Peace

The Point: “Jesus is our peace” (Eph 3:14)

- Jesus’ peace is available to us, dispelling and transforming our fears (John 20:19)
- peace doesn’t depend on our understanding, and protects our hearts and minds (Phil 4:6-7)

Illustration: In advance, ask someone in the group to share an example of a time when they have been anxious or afraid. What were the consequences? How did they receive peace?

Application: How would you rate your anxiety levels on a scale of 1 to 10? Talk to God about your deepest fears/anxieties. Ask God to help you identify/name each fear. Allow God time to gently speak His peace into these areas.

Journalling may help you keep track of your key fears and anxiety (name yours!). If you journal, bring it and show it to the group (not the detailed contents) to show them how easy and useful it is.

2. Give Peace

The Point: Jesus reconciled us to Himself on the cross so we are at peace with Him.

Verse: Colossians 1:19-22

Being reconciled to God enhances our relationships with one another. We are commended to live at peace with others (Hebrews 12:14)

- loving one another as Christ loved us (John 13:34)
- a consequence of our loving attitude to one another is evangelism (John 13:35)
- peace enables us to forgive (John 20:21-23)
- being at peace with our enemies pleases the Lord (Proverbs 16:7)
- peace does not depend on the absence of adversity (Isaiah 43:2)

Illustration: Ask a group member to share a testimony of how being a Christian has improved their relationship with someone else.

In small groups: consider other situations, of which you are personally aware, in which you can promote relational peace? Eg when driving (road rage), in married relationships/families (domestic violence), workplaces (overtly abusive bosses or passive anger expressed in oppressive tactics) etc.

3. Make Peace

The Point: God is a peace-maker, and calls us to be the same.

Verse: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Explain the concept of an ambassador, particularly the role of diplomacy in peace-making. Perhaps find a story about that, or a film clip about the success of courageous ambassadors eg Terry Waite Archbishop Runcie's envoy to the Middle East (google it if you don't know the story)

Application: *The Middle East* – Quote from 'the Vicar of Baghdad' by Andrew White: "If you had asked me a few years ago what peacemaking boils down to, I would have given you a long-winded answer. Nowadays, I would simply say one word: love. It is love that leads us to forgiveness, which is the only thing that can prevent the pain of the past from dictating the future"... "so much of my time is spent with unpleasant people, and so before I approach them I simply pray 'Lord, help me to love them!' If there's one passage in the Bible that is a prescription for my work, I would suggest it is Romans 12:9-21" Pray for peace in the Middle East. In particular, pray for those who are involved in peace-making that they would nurture the right relationships and for wisdom.

Pray. Read Romans 12:9-21. Ask the Holy Spirit to give us this kind of peace.

Ideas for Ministry

- All stand and ask the Holy Spirit to come. Remind people that the first fruits in Gal 5:22 are love, joy and peace, and that they're often the first things people experience when they become aware of God's presence. Then split into 3's/4's to pray for each other in to the specifics in our lives where we need to receive, give and make peace.