



Construction Crew/ Kid Builders!

Where worship and fun collide!

525 Garden Drive, Marysville, Ohio 43040

Being a Christian, Without Being a Character

Memory Verse: **Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.** Psalm 139:23, 24

Lesson Overview: This lesson is about Christian character, or the fruit of the Spirit. Children do not always know exactly what God expects of them in terms of behavior. They enter in to daily struggles with their flesh, just like any other person. This lesson will help them to understand Godly character, along with how to obtain it. This lesson will also help them understand what areas in their lives are weak, and that only God's fruitful Spirit can help them improve their character.

Requirements for the lesson:

1. Character Test
2. Friendship Contract

Object Lessons and Lead-in to the Lesson:

“Friendship Contract!” As you review the friendship contract prior to the lesson, you will quickly discover that this is not the type of friendship contract that anyone will want to sign! Give each child a copy of the lesson's friendship contract. Explain as you hand them out that you really like them, and you want all of them to be your friends--officially! Explain that you will review this contract with them, and that they may ask any questions at the end of the review. Be sure to give each child a pen or pencil, while at the same time telling them that you just know that they will want to sign it.

After the review, you will have everyone's attention! Some will try to hand it back! This is rightfully so. Of course, you don't really want anyone to sign it, but it does make a point that friendship is equal, and not one-sided. At this point, explain how this is the way many people approach Jesus. They want His saving grace, but they want it on their terms. They do not want to be held accountable, but they do expect their needs met. They want good things from Him, but they don't want to give up anything. They want Him to always be there for them, but they never care to be there for Him. They want to come to Him when they want to, but they never want Him come to them. Explain that the salvation of the Lord is never “a contract.”

“Character Test!” This is a simple test you can hand the children at the end of the lesson. It will help them discover which areas they need God's help in the most. It is not for open discussion; however, encourage the children to come to you privately if they care to discuss anything.

The Lesson:

DO THE OBJECT LESSON: "Friendship Contract!"

1. Character

QUESTION: Everybody knows what a cartoon character is. Who will tell me their favorite cartoon character? (Allow the children to respond) Pick one or two of the characters mentioned.

QUESTION: How would you say that this character acts? Honest? Greedy? Sneaky? Helpful?

a. What is Character?

QUESTION: What do you think the word character means? (Let the children respond)

It could mean all of these:

- A person's thoughts
- Expressions
- Habits
- Attitude
- Interest
- Actions

Have you ever heard the saying, "You are what you eat"? This is true for our human bodies, but it's even truer for our soul and mind. If we watch bad shows or allow ourselves to think bad thoughts, then that is the character that comes out of us. There is another saying: Garbage in--garbage out. The worst part about this is that we can't hide it! Everybody sees it except us. We just want to think others do not see our bad character.

b. Good Character

QUESTION: Why do you think it is important to have good character?

(There are lots of good answers for this: 1) Jesus/God commands it; 2) We are supposed to have good character—we're Christians; 3) So others will like us; 4) So we will be respected; 5) So we can be more like Jesus; 6) So we can even go to heaven.)

Our character is very important to God. Of course, just being good will not get us into heaven, but Jesus did say that we must love even our enemies and forgive them. He will not forgive us if we don't forgive. That means no forgiveness=no heaven. We do good things because we believe in Jesus and that He died for our sins. He loves us, and we love Him. Caring for others and being considerate of them is how we show that love. Remember: Love in—love out. Garbage in—garbage out.

(1) What's Good
Character?

QUESTION: So what is “good” character? (Let the children respond)

QUESTION: What do you think the Bible says good character is? (Allow the children to respond, then have someone look up Galatians 5:22, 23. Have someone read it to the class.)

If we allow ourselves to become like Jesus, then we can expect to act like these verses say that we should act. Like these verses say, we produce “fruit” wherever we go. It can be good-tasting fruit, or fruit that is rotten to the core.

QUESTION: What would you think if someone brought you old, rotten fruit?

You wouldn't like it much, especially if they did it on purpose. We think the same of those who are mean to us, which is a bad fruit. Let's look at what some of these good fruits are:

- **Love** is doing anything for others that is good, and not looking to get something back. Love is when you share half of your sandwich with someone at school because they don't have a lunch to eat.
- **Joy** is what comes when you do something nice for someone. It's like a happiness that lasts—even grows. It's being happy for others when something goes their way.
- **Peace** is being satisfied with what you have. You feel good in your heart because you know that Jesus will take care of you no matter what.
- **Longsuffering**, or patience is being able to put up with others who are not being so nice. It is also being able to wait a while instead of needing to have everything right now.
- **Gentleness** is being kind to others and doing what the Bible says to do. It's settling things with others without doing it in a mean way (like talking instead of fighting).
- **Goodness** is just what it sounds like—being good. If you are acting good, then you are being like Jesus.
- **Faith** is knowing that you can trust in God. It's also doing what is right—like the other fruits tell us to do—even if we don't know if good things will come from them. You will see how important these fruits are after you practice them a while. But, you must first do them on faith. Also, others are able to have faith in you because you keep your word—do what you say you will do.

(2) Importance of
Having Good Character

- **Meekness** is just a fancy word for treating others the same way that we want to be treated. Nobody likes to be picked on, so we shouldn't pick on others. God says to be kind and gentle with others, including those who are mean to us too. We also obey others because we want to obey.
- **Temperance** is self-control, and that's where we have patience with others, especially if they are different from us. Sometimes we just don't want to play with a younger brother or sister. When we don't do what we want to do, and instead play with our little brothers and sisters, then we are showing temperance.

QUESTION: Why is it important to have good character?

This is a good question, and it has three good answers:

1. You can't say, "I'm a Christian" if you don't have Christ-like character. Galatians 5:24, 25
2. If you don't have good character, you can't enter the kingdom of God. Galatians 5:19-21
3. You can't have bad character and enjoy the things of God. 1 Corinthians 10:21

God expects us to act like Christians if we're going to say we are Christians. Someone can say he is an elephant, but that does not make him an elephant. We are Christians when God says we are Christians, and not because we say we are. We know we are Christians when right actions and words come out of us. We may still mess up now and then—we're all still learning. Making mistakes and learning from them is also part of good Christian character.

c. Bad Character

We know now that bad character will get us into trouble with God and others too. In fact, bad character usually gets everybody mad at us all at once—especially God.

QUESTION: What is character that God just plain hates?

- Jealousy (toward others)
- Fits of rage
- Idolatry (putting anything higher than God in your life)
- Witchcraft (rebellion, to parents/authorities)
- Hatred (opposite of love, acting like the devil)
- Discord (stirring up trouble)
- Envy (wanting to be better than others or having more favor with someone than they have)

We have to fight against these things. God is so proud of us when we have the character that he gives. God will not put up with the junk in our lives forever. The key is getting His good character in our lives as soon as possible.

2. Getting Good Character

QUESTION: How do you think we can get and keep good Christian character?

- Learn about Jesus--how He acted with all kinds of people, and how He behaved—even as a little boy
- Read the Bible
- Walking in the Spirit (explain)
- Listen to Him
- Follow His lead (go where He takes you)
- Obey Him
- Trust and depend on Him

DO THE OBJECT LESSON:

“Character Test!”

Give each child a test. Be ready to help the younger children, just in case they do not understand. If they are too young or are unable to understand the test, then don't pressure them with it. Just let the Lord show them what they need during the ministry time. Remember not to discuss the results in class.

3. Time to Dedicate

Have the children close their eyes.

1. If there are children in the class that you know are not saved, then give them an opportunity to become saved. Lead them in a sinner's prayer if even one child responds.
2. After this, and while they still have their eyes closed, ask the children to raise their hand if they want Jesus to help them with their character. Lead them in a prayer of repentance.
3. Finally, speak a blessing over the children. Tell them that they are good children, and to stop believing a lie that tells them they are bad and can't be good. Encourage them. Tell them that they are as important as anyone else is in their church, school, or home.

Friendship Contract:

Dear Friend:

Congratulations! You have the privilege of being my friend. I am confident that you will be a great friend and do whatever I ask. I trust that you will be there whenever I need you without asking me questions like others do. I will need money from time to time, but I am sure that you will provide this to me whenever I need it. Please stay on the beeper that I have provided you, because I may need you at any moment of crisis. This is extremely important to me, because I often need pulled out of bad situations--and you know how I hate bad situations. As my friend, I know that you will provide protection from my enemies: I have lots of those too. Above all, I know that you will never hold anything against me, and that you will accept me as I am, **because I have said that I am your friend too**. Even more than all this, love me as I am, with everything you got.

Terms of The Contract:

Contract Length: Indefinite **Contract is voided when:** Never--only if I say so

Exceptions: As I am a unique, special person, I reserve a few rights in this contract with *you*:

1. I will call upon you, don't call upon me. (It may be an inopportune time)
2. Don't ask for my help--I'm busy enough.
3. Because of item #2, I will contact you when I need you. (Don't forget to keep the beeper charged and turned on!)
4. You must supply the beeper.
5. Don't ask me for money--I have too many bills and things to buy.
6. I can't be burdened with your other friends. They slow me down, and they are not my class of people. How would this look if they hang around with me?
7. I can't loan you anything, on the chance that I may need it, and you would have it.
8. I'm not used to changing, so you will have to change to suit me.
9. Your other friends are pretty lame, so don't hold me accountable when I treat them bad (after all, I didn't make them that way, and how can I help being so brilliant!).
10. I reserve the right to back out of anything else not mentioned herein, and not to be held accountable for my actions--anytime.

I'm certain that you will keep this contract agreement. Please make every effort to fulfill your terms of this contract, as I am sure that you will see me keeping mine. It should be great fun being friends.

Sign Here--in blood

WWJD?

Character Test

Here is a simple test to help you see just how much Christian character you have. Answer the questions honestly. Only you and God will know what your answers are. We will not discuss them openly in class. If you are honest with yourself, then God can help you change your weak areas. That's exactly what He wants to do. He will help you if you really want to change.

| Christian Character | Always | Usually | Some-times | Almost Never |
|---|---------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Love -- I do for others before I do for myself. | | | | |
| Peace -- I have peace in my life no matter what is going on around me. | | | | |
| Joy -- I am happy even when it seems to be a bad day. | | | | |
| Patience -- I do not get even with others, but try to see their side. | | | | |
| Kindness -- I don't look badly at others because they are not like me and my friends, or as fortunate as me. | | | | |
| Goodness -- I want to give to others, even if it means giving something up of myself with nothing in return. | | | | |
| Faithfulness -- I do exactly what I say I will do, and do exactly what God and His Word tells me I must do. | | | | |
| Gentleness -- I listen to others who are wiser than myself, and I am considerate of others all the time. | | | | |
| Self Control -- When others have a problem with me, I try to work it out with them rather than explode. | | | | |

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