



PWOC

Protestant Women of the Chapel

Materials:
- Fresh fruit to display
- Slices of unripe fruit
- Whiteboard and Markers

WORKSHOP: CHOOSING GOOD FRUIT

by Brenda Marlin

LEADER'S GUIDE

RELEVANCE: As leaders, we have the opportunity to draw others to Christ through the fruit of the Spirit, which is a process that He develops within us. Being intentional about asking God to develop good fruit within us helps us to become leaders that are more fruitful. Knowing and understanding the characteristics of fruitfulness will aid in identifying fruitful leaders.

CONTEXT: This topic is appropriate for board training, leadership selection teams and teacher training. With a little adjustment (less emphasis on leadership), the module would be an effective training session for the entire body of PWOC.

TIME: 45 minutes

HOOK YOUR AUDIENCE: (5 minutes)

Prepare ahead of time a slice of unripe fruit for each participant. You may want to put a piece in a snack-size plastic bag. Ask someone to distribute them before you begin.

The more "holes" you can get your lesson to go through, the better (eyes, ears, nose, mouth). When the senses are engaged, your participants will be much more likely to remember the content. It is logical that the tools God has given us to explore the world (taste, touch, smell, sight, hearing) would be avenues to powerful learning and memory in the teaching/ facilitation environment. The sense of hearing tends to be the weakest in terms of lesson retention but is typically the one we utilize the most for instruction. Pairing even one other sense with hearing (i.e. providing a visual aid) significantly increases the odds for retention of information.



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We are going to take a taste test today. You each have a baggie with a piece of fruit. Open the bag and take a bite of the fruit- don't worry, it's safe! Share your thoughts about the taste with someone seated next to you.

After a few minutes, invite people to share their reactions with the whole group.

Bible Background:

It is interesting to note that the Greek word for "fruit" in Galatians 5:22 is singular. The passage describes one fruit, not a collection. It's as if we are looking at an apple and describing its characteristics. An apple is red, an apple is sweet; it is crunchy and juicy. All the descriptive adjectives still describe only one apple- so too with the fruit of the Spirit. All the adjectives (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control) simultaneously describe the evidence of God's Spirit at work within us. We may have seasons of working on patience or kindness, but it is still in tandem with the Holy Spirit's work as a whole in transforming our lives.

MAKE YOUR POINT 1: Good and Bad Fruit (5 minutes)

John 15:1-5 describes the process of developing spiritual fruit. Let's read it together:

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing." (John 15:1-5; NASB)

If we are producing rotten fruit and we belong to Him, He will help us get rid of that type of fruit through the power of the Holy Spirit. Although this pruning can seem difficult to accept, through His patience, grace, mercy and love, He always looks out for our best interest and helps us along the way. When we are bearing good fruit, He wants us to flourish with more; therefore, He will allow seasons of pruning.



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ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS 1: Good and Bad Fruit (10 minutes)

Have a volunteer read Galatians 5:16-26. Make a T-chart to list the fruit of the flesh – bad fruit (vs. 19-21) on one side and the fruit of the Spirit - good fruit (vs. 22-23) on the other. Invite responses of the group to help you fill in the chart- or invite volunteers to write directly on the chart.

Bad Fruit	Good Fruit
~sexual immorality	~love
~impurity	~Joy
~witchcraft	~faithfulness
~	~
~	~

Have the ladies split up into groups of 3-4 to discuss the difference between a life characterized by good fruit versus a life characterized by bad fruit. Can there be a combination of the two? What does that suggest?

Working in a group of 3-4 gives everyone a voice. Even the quietest learner will usually volunteer information in a group this size. Float between the groups to provide encouragement; they will be more likely to risk speaking to the whole group if you have encouraged them in a small group.

Bring the groups back together and give them the opportunity to share a meaningful part of their discussion.



MAKE YOUR POINT 2: The Results of a Fruitful Life (10 minutes)

The result of abiding with the Lord is the development of spiritual fruit. As leaders (both as individuals and as a team), we must be intentional about making sure we stay connected with Jesus, our one True Vine through daily interaction with Him. If we are responsible for building ministry leadership teams, we also need to be able to identify those who walk in the true fruit of the Spirit, so that the ministry we are involved in may grow and flourish.

There are ways to identify true fruit of the Spirit within us and within others based on some key identifiers within one's character. What do you think Matthew Henry meant when he wrote:

"From a vine we look for grapes, and from a Christian we look for a Christian temper, disposition, and life."¹

What are some things "Christian temper, disposition, and life" might include?

List responses on whiteboard or chart tablet. Consider adding the following examples if they are not included in the participant response:

- A willingness to forgive and ask for forgiveness
- A teachable spirit
- A humble attitude
- A firm identity in Christ rather than accomplishments
- A passion for Jesus
- A desire to share the love of Christ with others
- A boldness to fulfill His calling
- A servant's heart, esteeming others above self

Remember to stay very positive about people's responses. Every once in a while there's a comment that is really "off." It is an art to reframe what a person has said in such a way that makes the person feel they have been correctly heard and have contributed to the conversation. Avoid telling someone they are wrong. This creates a more threatening environment and may inhibit others from sharing.

All these things are examples of good and Godly fruit. Of course, ultimately the Lord knows the heart of a person; however, He can help us know if we are on the right path by staying connected with Him through prayer, reading His Word and by listening to Him.

¹ Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on John 15:1-8



ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS 2: The Results of a Fruitful Life

(10 minutes)

In your same small group of 3-4, briefly describe a time when you sat under someone's leadership who bore good fruit. How did it make you feel?

After you've shared in your group about good fruit, take a few minutes to discuss a time when you experienced leadership by someone who did not display spiritual fruit. How did it make you feel?

NOTE: It is important that we do not reveal specific incidents or include names. The network of PWOC is broad and connections are many. It is best to be general and nondescript about the situations that are shared. Focus on how it felt when something was not working correctly.

APPLY IT TO LIFE: (5 minutes)

Unfortunately, it is too easy to labor in our own strength and come up short in the abundant life Christ promises. The key is abiding with the Lord. Learning how to abide with Him takes time and effort, but He rewards even the initial steps taken in that direction. The words we read from John 15 hold the promise that if we remain in Him, we will bear fruit. Over a lifetime, abiding in the True Vine will reap a harvest of fruitfulness and give us direction for our lives and ministries, which will bring Him great glory.

Please pray this prayer of commitment with me as we close out our time together:

Lord God, I acknowledge that You are sovereign in all things concerning my life. You have a plan for me to bear much fruit for Your glory. I praise You for the many ways You work in my life to create fruitfulness within me and within the body of Christ. I ask You to develop the good fruit of the Spirit within me, so that I can attract others to You. I commit myself to a lifetime of learning how to walk fully in the Spirit and deny my flesh. Show me how to cooperate with You as You do the pruning in my life. Help me to remain in You and to be patient with the process as You complete this work in me. In Jesus' mighty name I pray, Amen.

Be sure to take a piece of GOOD fruit with you as you leave!



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