

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

Poem – *by Deborah Ann Belka*

Offer a cup of kindness to someone hurting today
offer them a sip of grace, tell them things will be okay.

Offer a cup of compassion to someone who needs a lift
offer them a sip of love, share with them your gift.

Offer a cup of gentleness to someone who is down
offer them a sip of mercy, it will take away their frown.

Offer a cup of helpfulness to someone who lives alone
offer them a sip of hope, show them your eternal home.

Offer a cup of forgiveness to those who have hurt you
offer them a sip of peace, you'll please God if you do.

Offer a cup of kindness to someone you meet today
offer them a sip of joy, it's yours to give away!

Crafts to meditate on the fruits of the Spirit

1. Painting

- You will need a piece of paper, nine colours of paint, and brushes, sponges, or printing shapes.
- Think about the fruits of the Spirit, and the colours that you have. Which colour are you going to use to represent which fruit? For example, you might want to choose yellow to represent joy, or green to represent patience. If you're mixing colours you might want to use that time to think about how God mixes the fruits of the Spirit into us when we pray.
- When you have your colours ready, paint a picture that uses all nine colours. You can use brushes, your fingers, you can use pasta shapes or string to make patterns, but it's important that you can see all of the colours in the finished picture. As you put the paint onto the paper, think about the fruit of the Spirit that it represents. You might want to thank God for showing you love and faithfulness. You might want to ask God to show the gifts of kindness and peace in your life, in our towns and villages, and across the world.
- When your picture is finished, you will be able to see how the different fruits of the Spirit work together to build up the beauty of the world that we live in. Thanks be to God!

2. Braids

- You will need a circle of card approximately 10-15cm across. Make a hole in the centre, and eight cuts into the edge at roughly equal distances around the circle, each about 1cm deep. You will also need a pen or pencil and seven pieces of wool, string or thick cotton that are all roughly the same length, anywhere between 30 and 50cm.
- You may wish to choose different coloured threads to reflect on the diversity and colourfulness of creation or you could use threads of the same colour to reflect on how the fruits of the Spirit are all bound up together to make you unique. It may depend on what you have available to you at home, so any combination of colours or any single colour will work.
- Take your card and write love next to or around the hole in the middle. Write the names of the other eight fruits of the Spirit, one next to each cut around the edge. You may wish to draw a picture to remind you of each fruit as well, for example a dove for peace or a feather for gentleness. The purpose is to help you to think about the fruits of the Spirit as you braid.
- Tie your seven pieces of thread together with a knot and push them through the hole in the card, so that the knot is on the side with no writing on it. A pen or pencil can help you to push the threads through.
- Pull one thread into each of the cuts around the edge of the card, there will be one empty cut left over. You make the braid by moving the threads in a pattern around the card, always moving the thread that is two positions to the left of the gap into the gap, crossing over the threads next to it. It's much less complicated than it sounds! One complete circuit of the card, starting with the gap at 1 would be:

Move the thread that is in 6 to 1
Move the thread that is in 3 to 6
Move the thread that is in 8 to 3
Move the thread that is in 5 to 8
Move the thread that is in 2 to 5
Move the thread that is in 7 to 2
Move the thread that is in 4 to 7
Move the thread that is in 1 to 4



- As you repeat this pattern the braid will form on the back of the card. When the threads are too short to work with anymore, pull the ends through the card and tie a knot in the end.
- Once you are used to the pattern you can use this as a way to pray about how the fruits of the Spirit work together in your life, all bound together in God's love at the centre. You can use the completed braid as a bracelet, or as a bookmark, to remind you of your prayers and the ways that God is working in your life. Thanks be to God!