

FRUITFUL: DAY ONE

KINDNESS & GENTLENESS

Teen / Adult Lesson

Fruitful - Day One - Kindness and Gentleness

Teen/Adult Bible Lesson

TRUTH

God demonstrated His love for us by sending His Son Jesus. Jesus could have come in any form, but He came as a baby. Jesus showed us and taught us how to live—kindly and gently towards others.

VERSES

Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.
Philippians 4:5

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.
Ephesians 4:32

LESSON

The Birth of Jesus
Luke 2:1-20

Read the story of Jesus' birth from the Bible.



Discussion Question:

If we knew that a mighty king would be born soon who would grow up to rule every nation on earth, where would you imagine that baby being born? In a palace? In a large, powerful nation? In a wealthy family?

God's word promised His people, Israel, that one day he would send the Messiah—a deliverer—to save them from persecution. The Messiah would bring them safety and security once and for all.

Israel had been under Roman rule for a long time. Life under Roman rule was hard. The Romans mistreated the Jews and made life miserable for them. God's people in Israel remembered God's promise of a Messiah and waited patiently for their new king to arrive.

They might have expected a king who would arrive from Heaven with Godly power and sweep the Romans away. They might have imagined the Messiah appearing in the sky with an army of angels, swooping down to wipe Israel's enemies from the face of the earth.

When the Messiah came, though, he came in an unexpected way. He wasn't born in a palace, a nation's capital, or a fortress. He didn't arrive with a heavenly army or a flaming sword.

He was born to an ordinary girl in a tiny town—Bethlehem. The town was so crowded his parents couldn't even find a room to stay in. He was born in a stable. His parents laid him in an animal feeding trough instead of a crib. Instead of an angel army, his birth was celebrated by an angel *choir*, singing and praising God for fulfilling His promise of the Messiah.

God's plan was far better than anyone could have imagined. The Messiah came to free the people of Israel from their woes, but he also came to free *all of us* from sin and eternal separation from God. The Messiah came for *all* people, not just for the people of Israel. The angel who first announced the birth of the savior to the shepherds shared the news like this:

Fear not, for behold I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

Luke 2:10

After that, the angel choir sang out:

Glory to God in the Highest,
and on earth, peace, goodwill among men!
Luke 2:14

Discussion Question:

Why do you think God chose to send His son Jesus as a tiny baby instead of a conquering King?

In every part of the Bible we read stories of God doing amazing things through ordinary people who were faithful to him. He used Joseph, an ordinary boy sold into slavery by his own brothers, to save Egypt and all the countries around them from seven years of famine. He used Moses who barely escaped death as a baby to lead the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. He used a young shepherd boy named David to defeat a giant named Goliath and later to lead Israel as King. Over and over again God showed people that He works through common, ordinary people to fulfill His promises. He even said that He does things that way so we'll know it was *God* who did the amazing thing, and not any human.

God uses gentle, ordinary folks to do amazing things. It should not have been too surprising that Jesus—the one who would defeat sin and death and rule at the right hand of his Father forever—was born in a stable.

When Jesus grew up he taught people about God and His plans for us; he didn't act like a conquering hero. He was a gentle teacher. He didn't gather his disciples by staging a loud rally and shouting, "DOWN WITH THE ROMANS! WHO'S WITH ME?" He gathered them simply by walking up to fishermen, a tax collector, or some other ordinary person, and saying:

"Follow me."
Matthew 9:9

Jesus used stories (we call them parables) to share truths about God, and many people came to him to hear those stories and learn from him.

When the crowds following him were hungry, he felt compassion for them and fed them. When his disciples missed the point of what he was saying and had to ask him questions, he gently explained it to them again.

His way of teaching fit perfectly with everything God had been telling His people for thousands of years. Jesus brought gentleness and kindness to people's

attention by telling them to remain gentle and kind, even in the most terrible situations. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said:

But I say to you, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who hurt you.

Luke 6:27-28

Do to others what you would have them do to you.

Luke 6:31

If you love only those who love you, what benefit is that to you? Even sinners do that! If you do good only to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? Even sinners do that!

Luke 6:32-33

But love your enemies, and do good...and expect nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High God, for He is kind to the ungrateful and those who don't deserve kindness.

Luke 6:35

Discussion Questions:

Is it difficult to be kind and gentle towards our friends?

Is it difficult to be kind and gentle towards others in our family?

Is it difficult to be kind and gentle towards people who don't like us?

It can be difficult to be kind and gentle, especially when others are being mean to us. It's so hard, in fact, that kindness and gentleness are listed as 'fruit of the Spirit'. That means that when we see people being truly kind and gentle—even to people who don't deserve it—we are not seeing ordinary human behavior. When we see that kind of kindness and gentleness, we can know that the Spirit of God is at work in someone.

Pray that God will allow his Spirit to work in you. Pray that people will see the Spirit at work in your life when you are being kind and gentle in all situations.



Activities

Name + Food Game - Getting to Know Each Other