LESSON 9:  THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT—MEEKNESS (GENTLENESS)

AIM: To show through the life of Christ the perfect example of meekness and gentleness in the face of torture and provocation. Children need to know that the Holy Spirit gives us the same power to live gently and humbly even when faced with violence.

NOTE: This area is particularly difficult for children when it comes down to the nitty-gritty of everyday living. Most children, especially Christian children, face the temptation of retaliating when teased or physically pushed around. The power of the Holy Spirit working in them and the putting into practice of Jesus’ words can be their strength in times of testing.

“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hurt you, and pray for those who persecute you.” (Mt 5:44)

You may need to explain the word persecute. It means to be treated badly again and again, especially because of one’s beliefs— to annoy or harass.

MEMORY VERSE: “Be always humble, gentle and patient. Show your love by being tolerant with one another.” (Ephesians 4:2).

Jesus is the perfect example of meekness and gentleness in the face of adversity. This is why He alone is called the Lamb of God, for the nature of a lamb is one of vulnerable gentleness (open to attack, non-defensive). Jesus could have defended himself, but chose not to. Remind the children that it is easy to be meek and gentle when everything is going well, but not so easy when we are up against opposition.
STORY: JESUS’ AND HIS FRIENDS (Matthew 26:36-75, 27:1-150)

Jesus and his disciples had finished their meal, and Judas had gone to the temple to betray Jesus. Going into the garden with his friends, he left them and went off alone to pray. Suddenly a great mob of people armed with swords and clubs led by Judas came to arrest Jesus.

Immediately one of the disciples pulled a sword to defend Jesus and slashed off the ear of the High Priest’s servant. Jesus reached out and touched the servant’s ear and it was immediately healed. Even though the mob threatened Jesus with sticks and clubs, he rejected violence as the solution to the problem. In fact, Jesus went quietly with the hostile crowd even though he was not guilty of the accusations they made against him.

All of Jesus’ friends were so afraid, they deserted him. He was left all alone to face the vicious mob. Jesus was taken away to the house of the High Priest where all the leaders and the mob gathered to sentence him to death. They found many people who were willing to tell terrible lies about Jesus, but he said nothing. He just stood calmly, trusting in his heavenly Father.

When he finally answered one question, the crowd went crazy and spat in Jesus’ face, slapping and punching him with intense hatred. They yelled horrible things at Jesus, teasing and ridiculing him. That is why Jesus is able to help us when we are cruelly treated and teased—because he has been through it all.

Jesus was relentlessly questioned throughout the long night, put into chains and taken to Pilate, the Roman Governor. People lied about Jesus again, but he did not say a word to defend himself. Jesus was then pushed around, cruelly whipped until the skin on his back looked like a ploughed field. The soldiers made fun of him while everyone stood around and laughed by making a crown out of sharply pointed thorns, and pushing it harshly down onto his head until he bled. They spat on him, bashed him on the head with a stick and tortured him by pulling out bits of his beard. But still Jesus stood quietly.

After he carried the cross to the hill of Golgotha, Jesus was nailed to the cross and a sword jabbed into his side as his blood dripped onto the ground. But even then, he did not get angry or try to get back at those who were hurting him. Jesus did just what he tells us to do in Matthew 5:44—he prayed for his enemies. He said, ‘Father, forgive these people for they don’t known what they are doing’ (Lk 23:34).

We may never have to face anything as awful as Jesus did, but we know that he will give us strength through the power of the Holy Spirit living in us to face every situation with meekness and gentleness.

Even though our story today is a sad one, it has a happy ending because Jesus rose up from the dead and came back to life and is alive today!

DISCUSSION

Children may like to discuss difficulties they have, either at home or at school, or with their friends. Ask them how they react in such situations—with anger or meekness. Encourage them to commit these problems to God in prayer.

ACTIVITY

Make a wall hanger, using the verse from the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:44). Pray for the children that this truth may become effective in their lives.
JESUS’ AND HIS FRIENDS (Matthew 26:36-75, 27:1-150)

Jesus and his disciples had finished their meal, and Judas had gone to the temple to betray Jesus. Going into the garden with his friends, he left them and went off alone to pray. Suddenly a great mob armed with swords and clubs led by Judas came to arrest Jesus.

Immediately one of the disciples pulled a sword to defend Jesus and slashed off the ear of the High Priest’s servant. Jesus reached out and touched the servant’s ear and it was immediately healed. Even though the mob threatened Jesus with sticks and clubs, he rejected violence as the solution to the problem. In fact, Jesus went quietly with the hostile crowd even though he was not guilty of the accusations they made against him.

All of Jesus’ friends were so afraid, they deserted him. He was left all alone to face the vicious mob. Jesus was taken away to the house of the High Priest where all the leaders and the mob gathered to sentence him to death. They found many people who were willing to tell terrible lies about Jesus, but he said nothing. He stood calmly, trusting his heavenly Father.

When he finally answered one question, the crowd went crazy and spat in Jesus’ face, slapping and punching him with intense hatred. They yelled horrible things at Jesus, teasing and ridiculing him. That is why Jesus is able to help us when we are cruelly treated and teased—because he has been through it all.

Jesus was relentlessly questioned throughout the long night, put into chains and taken to Pilate, the Roman Governor. People lied about Jesus again, but he did not say a word to defend himself. Jesus was then pushed around, cruelly whipped until the skin on his back looked like a ploughed field. The soldiers made fun of him while everyone stood around and laughed by making a crown out of sharply pointed thorns, and pushing it harshly down onto his head until he bled. They spat on him, bashed him on the head with a stick and tortured him by pulling out bits of his beard. But still Jesus stood quietly.

After he carried the cross to the hill of Golgotha, Jesus was nailed to the cross and a sword jabbed into his side as his blood dripped onto the ground. But even then, he did not get angry or try to get back at those who were hurting him. Jesus did just what he tells us to do—he prayed for his enemies. He said, ‘Father, forgive these people for they don’t known what they are doing’ (Lk 23:34).

We may never have to face anything as awful as Jesus did, but we know that he will give us strength through the power of the Holy Spirit within to face every situation with meekness and gentleness.
Jesus was meek and gentle even with His enemies
TRACING ACTIVITY
1. Place a white sheet of A4 paper over the lamb picture and glue (or staple) the top edges together.
2. Trace around the entire lamb shape with the words JESUS … GENTLE SPIRIT … LAMB OF GOD…
3. Use small, neat lettering and a sharp pencil.
4. Repeat until you have made a complete outline of the lamb with the words.

Write the Memory Verse, Ephesians 4:2, here ....