

Wonderful

YOUTH

'love, joy, peace and patience'

Four Biblical sessions created for Black History Month to empower young people between the ages of 13 and 16 to become
'The best that you can be'

Contents

The four studies in this resource may be used in any order.

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Even though there is a vast number of resources on the Christian market to aid young people reflect on their Christian faith few, if any, intentionally enable young people of colour to see their image reflected in the resources. Drawing from a wealth of material coupled with exercises and activities, *Wonderful Youth* aims to address this imbalance by particularly enabling young people of colour to read the Bible through their cultural and theological lenses.

Commissioned by the Baptist Union Racial Justice Hub, *Wonderful Youth* has been written by contributors from Six Ways Baptist Church, Birmingham and John Bunyan Baptist Church, Oxford (both multicultural churches). Their aim is to equip young black and minority ethnic people to appreciate and love God's Word. Designed to be used during Black History Month in October 2021, *Wonderful Youth* also provides a window of opportunity for churches and youth groups to explore and celebrate some of the historical and current unique contributions from people of colour.

Introduction

A brief introduction to Galatians 5 and the Fruit of the Spirit

In his letter to the Galatians Paul really goes for it in setting out his divinely appointed credentials (chapter 1): evidently, he feels the need to assert himself and the powerful message he brings from Jesus for the church in Galatia!

Paul is concerned that the Galatian Christians are slipping back into their old ways and are being distracted and 'bewitched' by dodgy teaching (chapters 2 and 3).

The letter plays on contrasts between sound and unsound teaching; grace and law; freedom and slavery; spirit and flesh. And so, when we get to chapter 5 Paul is urging the people there, and us also, to not get caught up in our basic fleshly desires and excesses. Instead, Paul asserts that if the believers in Galatia are the 'real thing' it should be obvious in how they conduct themselves - in the good qualities that they exhibit.

Therefore, he offers this list of noble qualities that we know as being the 'fruit of the Spirit'. If we have God in us, if we believe in Jesus, these are the marks that others should notice and that we should be aware of: 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control'. Helpfully, Paul does not specify how much of each of these we should have. The reality is that some of them come easier than others depending on who we are, how we have been shaped, what is going on in our lives. But they are helpful tools for us to measure ourselves by as Christians trying to live out our lives in this broken world.

And finally, Paul says 'there is no law against such things' (Galatians 5: 23). Is he being a bit sarcastic here? Maybe, but more likely he is wanting to emphasise this contrast between the freedom there is with the Spirit of God and the very human preoccupation with being all legalistic about religion.

So, in this edition of *Wonderful Youth* we focus on the first four qualities that Paul features in his list: love, joy, peace and patience. And we explore how it is that young people, (all people!), can work with God on these fruit of the Spirit.

Love

Galatians 5: 22

Aim

- » To enable the young people to be reminded of the fundamental importance of love, and to work on ways of being people who show love and respect towards others.

Session outcome

For our wonderful youth...

- » to gain a richer understanding of the Christian concept of love
- » to be able to develop more of a distinction between agape love and other forms of love
- » to adopt some new ways of showing love to others.

Materials needed

- » Computer with internet access to show videos
- » Projector and screen (if you have a large group)
- » Dice
- » Love Heart sweets
- » Bibles (including *The Message* version)
- » Flip chart or large pieces of paper to make posters
- » Pens and paper
- » Word searches and puzzles about love
- » Ingredients to make and/or decorate biscuits



Introduction

Love is one of the fruit of the Spirit that Paul lists in Galatians chapter 5.

Love is at the heart of who God is and how the world works: Paul writes elsewhere about it binding everything together (Colossians 3:14). Here we are looking at love as the feeling that we have and the things that we do which reflect God's nature. Love is like the glue that holds everything together and helps us to be truly human with each other. It is fundamental to being human and yet really hard to pin down exactly what it is!

In the context of what Paul is writing about, love is something we do, as we show we are *being* loving.

Introductory activity

1 Watch

Look at this John Lewis advert to begin thinking and talking about what it means to show love.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nrty4kt2KKA

2 Marmite game

Using a list of items, such as those listed below, get the group to give a quick response if they love or hate it by saying "Love It" or "Hate It!" as appropriate.

Suggested items: Marmite, KFC, Man City, Hip Hop, Boris Johnson, Ginger Beer, dogs... *add more as appropriate.*

3 Get a sweet

The group take it in turns to roll the dice and if they roll a 2, 4 or 6 they can take a Love Heart sweet.

Open the Word

1 Love is...

- » Read Corinthians 13: 4-8 (*Message* version) Look at what Paul says about how we should act lovingly.
- » Talk about which of these ways of showing love come easiest and which comes harder.
- » Invite the group to add to Paul's list some examples of what love is.

2 Respect!

Sometimes it's hard for us to get a grip on what this kind of love is actually about. Rwandan writer Bangambiki Habyarimana says: "Respect is love in action".

Is it helpful to think about love as being pretty much the same as respect?

Take what Jesus says about the most important commandments (Mark 12:28-31): and replace love with respect... discuss what 'respect' means for the young people.

3 Loving our neighbour

In Mark 12:28-31 Jesus says we should love our neighbour. Talk about this in the group with reference to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. Is BLM a good example of what it means to love our neighbour?



Activity

Dr Martin Luther King, Jr said: "Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into friend."

The Power of Love

Listen to, or read, part of the sermon from Meghan and Harry's wedding.

- » Listen to the sermon:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhV0PL49d3Y

- » Read the sermon:

www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/speaking-and-writing/sermons/power-love-bishop-michael-currys-sermon-wedding-prince-harry-and



Focus especially on what Bishop Michael says about the power of love and his list of things he imagines if love is the way. What could the young people add to Bishop Michael's list?

Acts of Love

Look at: www.6seconds.org/2020/02/27/kindness-and-loving-75-ways and encourage the young people to make their own list of acts of love.

Showing Love

Create a heart-shaped poster with ideas of ways we can show love.

Puzzles

Find word searches or puzzles about love, for example from:

www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/65654107043648897/?nic_v1=1alrrhl4Xl7rnComxfvac%2BxWrzMkrPfhSoa%2FXaRIZA3gYq%2FWPXxvwLr2mBQp6CgGbE

Giving love

Make heart-shaped cookies to give away to other people.

Prayers

A Prayer of thanks and confession

Sometimes God, we can't be bothered to show love.

Please forgive us when we are too lazy to show love and respect to each other.

Forgive us when we disrespect one another.

Forgive our lack of care.

And yet, you, loving God...

You are love!

Thank you that you have shown us how to do it,

Thank you that you have told us how to do it.

Thank you that you love us so we can be loving others.

Amen.

A Prayer for others

Loving God,

We are made to give and receive love.

We pray today for more love to be given, more love to be received.

Where people are hurting and hating: put the love back in.

Where people are falling out and feel they are failing: put the love back in.

Where it has all gone wrong: put the love back in.

Where we disrespect and disappoint: put the love back in.

Loving God,

Help us to do love, be love, give and receive love.

We are made to love.

We are yours.

We pray in the name of Jesus, the King of love.

Amen.

Joy

Galatians 5: 22

Aim

- » To enable the young people to appreciate that joy is a gift from God given by the Holy Spirit.

Session outcome

For our wonderful youth...

- » to gain a richer understanding of the Christian concept of joy,
- » to be able to develop more of a distinction between being happy and being joyful,
- » to embrace being joyful.

Materials needed

- » Computer with internet access to show videos
- » Projector and screen (if you have a large group)
- » Bibles
- » Pens and paper
- » Art materials



Introduction

Joy is one of the fruit of the Spirit that Paul lists in Galatians chapter 5.

The concept of joy is of an emotion that brings great pleasure and happiness, but for the Christian it is also the belief that God is in control and that ultimately everything is going to be alright - which means we can choose to praise God in every situation.

Introductory activities

1 Top 10 things that give people joy

Have a look at the list of things that give people joy at: <https://vocal.media/motivation/10-things-to-bring-you-joy>

Discuss this list and then get the young people to write their own Top 10.

2 Chocolate game

Play any game that involves eating chocolate/ winning chocolate (eating chocolate is often said to bring people joy!)

3 Cadbury advert

Watch the 45 second advert at:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLvBtcpSEx4

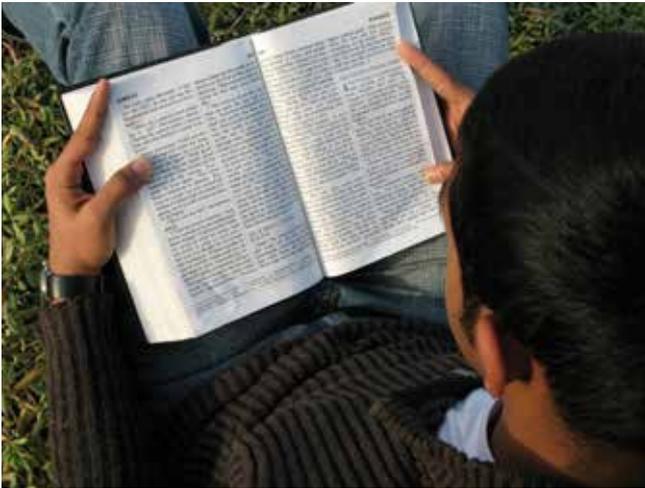
Discuss the advert and the idea of something as simple as chocolate bringing joy.

4 What makes us happy?

Discuss and develop the idea of joy being something much much deeper and more impressive.

Open the Word

If we have God in our lives, if we have the Holy Spirit in us, then we should also have joy in our lives.



There are many references to being joyful throughout the Bible. Ask the group to look up at least one of these verses about joy. What reasons might they be able to see for being joyful even when things are tough?

Proverbs 17:22

A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. (ESV)

John 16:22

So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. (ESV)

Psalms 30:5

Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning. (NLT)

Nehemiah 8:10

Don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the LORD is your strength. (NLT)

'Breath for joy'

Amanda Gorman, the youngest poet to speak at a US presidential inauguration, says that she hopes that there is a breath for joy in her poem, *The Hill We Climb*. Listen to, or read, the poem and talk about any joyful ideas or images.

www.cnbc.com/2021/01/20/amanda-gormans-inaugural-poem-the-hill-we-climb-full-text.html

Action

Provide the following template for the young people to complete:

Dear God

When I feel please help me to choose joy.

When things aren't good..... please help me to choose joy.

Singing for freedom in Eritrea

Watch this short film about Helen Berhane, a Gospel singer from Eritrea, who was imprisoned in a shipping container in appalling conditions, but chose to rejoice.

www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06s0fln

Discuss how the young people might react in such situations?

You might find it helpful to look at Paul and Silas' experience in prison (Acts 16:20-25).

Joy (We are Family)

Watch this South African acapella group The Soil singing 'Joy (We are Family)'.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UJEH4GbtQk

Discuss how people - family and friends - can bring us joy in our heart!



Joy emoji

Design an emoji or other short form way of indicating joy.

Work of art

Create a joyful work of art.

Worship songs

Listen to, watch and/or sing one or both of these worship songs.

» *Today O*

www.youtube.com/watch?v=-P-H9ha3fns

» *I'm trading my sorrows*

www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9lyunZraZc

Talk about how they work as ways of being joyful in spite of all we might face.

Prayer

A Prayer of thanks and confession

Thank you God for all the things in this world that give us joy!

Thank you God that joy is something you have given to us, something that you want for us.

So forgive us Lord when we act in ways that don't exactly set the world on fire with happiness.

Forgive us for when we get stuck in a downward spiral – and help us to get out of it!

Help us to remember the power of joy – to smile and laugh, to be positive with people and help others to feel OK about stuff.

Amen.

A Prayer for others

Loving God,
Hear our prayer for people whose lives have no joy in them.

Hear our prayers for people whose ears are closed to laughter.

Hear our prayers for people whose situations are full of hardship.

Hear our prayers for all whose hearts are full of bitterness and sad feelings.

We pray that all might experience the joy that you bring.

We pray that we might be people who bring joy. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

Peace

Galatians 5: 22

Aim

- » For our youth to recognise that peace is something God desires all people to experience.
- » For the youth to appreciate that God's gift of peace is freely given through the Holy Spirit.

Session outcome

For our wonderful youth...

- » to explore the notion of peace,
- » to appreciate that 'peace' is integral to feelings of well-being,
- » to recognise that God alone gives lasting peace through his Holy Spirit,
- » to actively pursue peace.

Materials needed

- » Straws - enough for one per young person
- » Two small light plastic balls, or pieces of paper
- » Words and emojis linked to peace or anxiety
- » One or more copies of the Black Lives Matter images (page 13)
- » Large board or pieces of flipchart paper
- » Pens and graph paper



Introduction

Peace, one of the fruit of the Spirit, is something people world wide strive to find wherever they can. In many places and amongst some people, peace is hard to see. Inner and outer conflict rules. Yet, Christians believe God offers a peace that remains, even when life seems tough. This is his gift, lovingly given, through his Holy Spirit.

Introductory Activities

1 Working together

Organise the youths into two teams. Hand each person a straw. Give each team a small, light, plastic ball, or a piece of paper (15cm x 15cm), or anything light enough to be held by a straw's suction. Each member of the team passes the paper or light object around the circle using suction through the straw. If the object falls, the team starts over again. The team that completes this task first, wins.

This game encourages working together.

2 Emoji game

Print and cut out words and emojis linked to peace or anxiety. Organise the youth into two teams/pairs. Tell each team to match the words with the emoji. The first team to finish wins.

3 Exploring Peace for Black and Brown people

Show the group the Black Lives Matter images, and ask these questions:

- » What do these images say to you?
- » What do you think peace looks and feels like for Black and Brown people?
- » How would Jesus respond to racism?
- » How do you think the following characters advocated for peace: Sam Sharpe, Payal Jangid, Emma Gonzalez, and Sophie Cruz?

Open the Word

Read: Galatians 5: 22

This reading is saying that God's Holy Spirit can produce beautiful fruit in us which can enhance our lives. God offers us peace and gives us Christ as an example of how living in peace is possible. Christ's character and nature is the greatest example of the fruit of the Spirit. He offered those who were down-hearted, distressed or in need, a way to find hope, comfort and peace.

The fruit of the Spirit are a by-product of Christ living in us and his Spirit working through us.

- » Ask the group to name some of the things that cause stress, and write them on a flipchart.
- » Hand each person a graph sheet. Ask them to individually choose and write down seven of the stress factors and then indicate the level of stress they feel this gives (stress levels 1-10).
- » Share and compare. Which of the stress points chosen have the highest figures. Which are relatively low (this is informative and is an indicator for future discussion/action/programmes).
- » What are the things young people do to find peace today?

Explore scriptures

Possible texts to explore:

Colossians:3:15

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Hebrews 12:14

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

1 Peter 5:7

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

James 3:18

Those who make peace sow the seeds of justice by their peaceful acts.

Psalms 29:11

The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.

1 Thessalonians 5:15

Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

Philippians 4:7

Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

Romans 12:18

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Romans 14:19

So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

Psalms 34:14

Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

1 Peter 3:9

Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

1 Peter 3:10

Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech.

1 Peter 3:11

They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it.

Romans 12: 17-21

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay', says the Lord. On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head'. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Psalms 119:165

Those who love your teachings will find true peace, and nothing will defeat them.

Prayer

Prayers for Peace

Dear Father,
sometimes it's hard to understand why life is the way it is.

The noise, the hostility, the differing messages,
the things that get in the way of my peace.

Father, help me to find calm in you,
lead me to a place of complete rest
safe in the knowledge that you,
through your Holy Spirit
will always bring me peace.

Lord,
I thank you that you are my peace,
You can cut through all of my anxiety
and the questions that sometimes bombard my
life.

Therefore I praise you.

Thank you that my faith rests in you.

When life threatens my peace, help me to
remember

that you are always present.

Thank you for your Son who has shown me how
to live in peace and love.

May I always remember that all things are
possible

through the working of your Spirit

Amen.

Dear Jesus,
When I scream, when I shout
when I throw things about,
give me your peace.

When I am sad
can't be glad
misunderstood
extremely bad,
give me your peace.

When the world seems ugly
when I am weary
when all is dreary,
give me peace.

When I don't know where to go
help me to remember
and to know
that you are still near me.

When I call
you will hear me
and will give me your peace.
Amen



Patience

Galatians 5: 22

Aim

- » To understand what it means to be patient
- » To reflect on the difficulty of always being patient
- » To consider the areas of the young people's lives where they may have to be patient.

Session outcome

For our wonderful youth...

- » to explore the idea of patience
- » to understand the importance of waiting patiently
- » to recognise the times when God has demonstrated patience, and continues to do so
- » to commit to developing ways of being patient.

Materials needed

- » Bibles
- » Computer with internet access to show videos
- » Projector and screen (if you have a large group)
- » Paper and pens

Introduction

Our God is long-suffering and of great mercy. The Old and New Testaments give numerous examples of God being very patient with his people; being slow to anger, abounding in mercy, and never ending in love.

As people of God we are called by his Holy Spirit to show the same patience to ourselves and others, we are called to do this time and time again - but no one said that this would be easy. When we hear the word of God we need to wait patiently and pray for it to be rooted and grounded in our hearts and spirit, so we become grounded in the faith into mature disciples.

We want our young people to be full of faith and patience as they walk in the faith so they can fulfil the purposes of God in their life.

Patience

Prayer

A Prayer of repentance

Dear God, we live in uncertain times when we want answers now and are frustrated when we have to wait. Sometimes our impatience causes us to make wrong decisions that go against your will.

Lord we are sorry for the times we haven't waited for your timing, when we have rushed ahead without waiting for an answer to prayer. We are sorry for the bad consequences this may have had on others.

Please Lord, help us to be like Noah who took you at your word and patiently prepared the ark; and like Job who knew all things would make sense in your timing.

Activity

Let's talk

- Discuss the following questions with your group
- » What is the longest time you've had to wait for something?
 - » How did it feel to wait?
 - » Was it worth the wait?

Many people in other countries have to wait for things that we in the UK may take for granted. For example, people in refugee camps or poorer countries have to wait for someone to collect clean water, for food, for electricity, and even for justice. Some people are still waiting patiently for the right to vote, and the right to practice their faith freely.

Ask the group to consider these examples of people waiting, and ask them if they would be able to wait patiently:

- » Asia Bibi waiting to be found innocent of blasphemy charges, and then waiting to be allowed to leave Pakistan.
- » Doreen Lawrence waiting for someone to be convicted of her son's murder.
- » MPs Diane Abbott, Keith Vaz, Bernie Grant, and Paul Boateng waiting until 1987 to be the first ethnic minorities elected to Parliament in over 100 years.

Open the Word

Open the scriptures and ask the group to choose one as a memory verse:

- » Hebrews 12: 1
- » James 1: 3
- » Romans 2: 7
- » Numbers 14: 18
- » Psalm 86: 15

Discussion questions

- 1 Are there consequences if we don't wait on God's patience?
- 2 Did *not* waiting for something have a bad impact on you?

Open the Word

What were the consequence of the actions below?

Genesis: Abraham decides not to wait for his promised son from Sarah, instead has a son with Hagar.

Genesis: Esau sold his birth-right because he couldn't wait for a meal.

Genesis: Israelites worship the golden calf instead of waiting for Moses to return.

Discussion questions

Watch one of these videos about the book of Hosea.

From the Bible Project (7 minutes 35 seconds):
www.youtube.com/watch?v=kE6SZ1ogOVU

From the Gospel project (3 minutes 37 seconds):
www.youtube.com/watch?v=MY05XI67ets

- 1 How much patience and love did God show to his people the Israelites?
- 2 Could you show this amount of love and patience to someone?

Individual reflection:

- » What can you do to increase your patience?
- » How much patience has God shown to you? Do you need to say thank you?
- » Ask the group to spend time in quiet prayer or write their own prayer of thanks.

Where would we be if these people hadn't shown patience:

- » In translating the Bible into English (and other languages)?
- » On gaining the right to vote?

Prayer

A Prayer of thanksgiving

Lord God,

Thank you for the people who have gone before us and shown great patience – our parents, siblings, and teachers when we thought we knew the right way.

Thank you for their love towards us.



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