

Walk The Jesus Way:

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

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You can Walk The Jesus Way trail individually or with a group at Camp Kinard or Coastal Retreat. On our website in the resources section, you will find other themes that you can use for a devotion-filled walk.

*May this time of active prayer and contemplation feed your spirit!
Get ready to move and to be moved!*

Station 1

Reflection: *The Holy Spirit*

We worship one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We quote Isaiah's vision and sing "Holy, Holy, Holy" in our liturgy often. We regularly recite the creeds, and we faithfully commemorate a Holy Trinity Sunday, yet describing the mystery of the Triune God is NOT easy.

Many of us can conjure up images in our mind of God the Father, and recounting the stories and parables of Jesus of Nazareth is not too difficult, (even though we might not win Bible Trivia games), yet talking about the Holy Spirit is more challenging. Why do you think that is? When you think about the Holy Spirit, the breath of life, the gift of God's presence with us now, the creative spark that connects us to all that is holy, what do you think of? How do you describe the Holy Spirit?

Prayer: God of heaven and earth, before the foundation of the universe and the beginning of time, you are the Triune God: Author of creation, eternal Word of salvation, life-giving Spirit of wisdom. Guide us to all truth by your Spirit, that we may proclaim all that Christ has revealed, and demonstrate the endless love of our Heavenly Father. Amen.

Station 2

Reflection: *The fruits of the Spirit*

In Galatians 5, we hear "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity (goodness), faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things." In our freedom found in Christ Jesus, we are free to be extravagant in our love of others. There is no limit to the excess of these good things. We can be abundant, (over the top, even!), in demonstrating these values of love and compassion. Can you think of someone you know who embodies one of these traits? Talk about their witness in your life. Can you imagine that someone else might be thinking of YOUR life and witness as an example of one of these fruits?

Prayer: Holy God, thank you for the fruits of your Holy Spirit evident in our lives. Tend to the soil of our hearts that we may be fertile ground from more growth in You. Thank you for the saints who go before us and now rest from their labors, that their witness continues to inspire us. Amen.

Station 3

Reflection: *Love*

Love makes the world go round. Love is a many splendored thing. Love lifts us up where we belong. All you need is love. Love songs are all around us. Have you ever thought of the hymns we sing in church as love songs? "Love divine, all loves excelling" is certainly a good one. What's

your favorite hymn and how does it sing about love? What does it reveal about God's love for us, our love for God, or our love for one another?

Thinking about a fruit of the Spirit being love, how is the love that we share with each other the result, the culmination, the "fruit" of God's love for us?

Prayer: God of love, mercy, and compassion, you teach us to love each other, our brothers and sisters, the widow, the orphan, the stranger, and yes, even our enemies. Help us to love as you have first loved us. Amen.

Station 4

Reflection: *Joy*

"Joyful, joyful, we adore you!" Joy is more than just happiness in a moment. Joy is a contentment, a delight, a deep sense of bliss. It can come from a moment of gratitude or it can surprise us with an unexpected gift. What gives you joy? Do you know someone who is joy-filled? What does it mean to have the gift of joy? When was the last time you knew true joy? What was it like? Being around joyful people is contagious. How can you spread joy to others?

Prayer: God of smiles, laughter and delight, we praise you! We rejoice with those who rejoice, we grieve with those who grieve. In our relationships, O Lord, help us reclaim the joy of joy and have fun with this beautiful gift of life. Amen!

Station 5

Reflection: *Peace*

"When peace like a river, attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll, whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul!" This well-known hymn was written by Chicago lawyer Horatio Spafford in 1873 after the loss of his four-year-old son, bankruptcy in the Great

Chicago Fire, and the drowning of his four daughters in a transatlantic ship wreck.

Peace does not deny or ignore the hardships and challenges of this life, but exists alongside our heartaches. Even though ultimate peace we search for throughout our lifetimes, reflect on a time that you have known peace and contentment. Who is a peace maker that you respect and admire?

Prayer: Grant us peace, Lord. We come to you with this prayer often. And it is our sincere hope that we all know and experience peace. In lands and hearts torn asunder by war and violence, unrest and turmoil, provide a measure of your peace, that we may relax in your love. Amen.

Station 6

Reflection: *Patience*

Give me patience, Lord, and give it to me now!! So often this is our petition, when really God gives us opportunities to practice patience all the time. We practice patience, like we practice other skills, talents, and traits. We strengthen our "muscles" and forge engrained habits, so that when we need it, it is already there. "Wait for the Lord, whose day is near. Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart" is a beloved Taizé hymn that is meant to be sung repeatedly. Reflect on a time when you had patience and, on a time, when you did not.

Prayer: O infinite Wisdom, grant to your impatient people, a sense of holy waiting, so that we might recognize our dependence upon You. Amen.

Station 7

Reflection: *Kindness*

"To us, to all in sorrow and fear, Emmanuel comes a'singing, his humble song is quiet and near, yet fills the earth

with its ringing: music to heal the broken soul, and hymns of loving-kindness, the thunder of his anthems roll to shatter all hatred and blindness.” How does kindness shatter hatred?

Who has been kind to you lately?

Prayer: Merciful One, the world sees kindness as weakness, yet we know the strength behind choosing kindness. Instill in us a spirit of compassion so that small acts make a big difference to others. In your name we pray. Amen.

Station 8

Reflection: *Goodness*

“Praise to the Lord, who will prosper your work and defend you; surely his goodness and mercy shall daily attend you.” We see glimpses of God’s goodness every day. Look around you right now wherever you are and see if you can spot a sign of God’s goodness attending you daily. Some translations choose generosity here. What’s the connection between goodness and generosity? What does it mean to you to go above and beyond?

Prayer: Giving God, you pour out an abundance of love upon us, and in the parable of the Good Samaritan, we see true generosity of spirit. Help us not just to do the bare minimum of what is required, but to overflow with doing what is right and good. Amen.

Station 9

Reflection: *Faithfulness*

“Great is thy faithfulness!” Remember the old-fashioned word ‘thy’ means ‘your’. The song is about how great God’s faithfulness is, not mine or yours. Loyalty, devotion, and fidelity are synonymous with faithfulness. In our culture today, “loyalty” cards are commercial identity cards that ensure we get a discount at our favorite grocery stores. Yet, truthfully, they don’t ensure loyalty because we have

many of them jangling off our keychains. Who or what are you loyal to? Why?

Prayer: O Jesus, you have promised to all who follow you that where you are in glory, your servant shall be too. And Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end, oh, give me grace to follow, my master and my friend. We don’t always keep our promises, but you do, O God. Give us grace, grant us mercy, show forgiveness, Holy One, when we fall short. Amen.

Station 10

Reflection: *Gentleness*

“Spirit, Spirit of gentleness, blow through the wilderness, calling and free. Spirit, Spirit of restlessness, stir me from placidness, wind, wind on the sea.” There are times when the Holy Spirit is far from gentle and there are times when we are called to be impatient. However, generally, we see gentleness as a respected ideal, a value that connotes meekness and humility. Gentleness is also a tactile word that relates to our sense of touch. What is the most gentlest thing you have ever felt? How is the Holy Spirit gentle with you and how does the Holy Spirit nurture gentleness within you?

Prayer: Mothering God, you long to gather your chicks like a hen under her wings. Ease us into a sense of comfort and peace and help us reach others with this same compassion. Amen.

Station 11

Reflection: *Self-control*

Hmmm. I am struggling to think of a hymn that centers on self-control. If you were to write one, what would you say about it? Self-discipline, restraint, willpower are not overtly explored much in our hymnody (at least that I can think of!) I don’t think it is because these words are hard to rhyme! Self-

control is a challenging topic, because too much self-control is as dangerous as too little. We don't want to censor the life out of ourselves, but we also don't want to be without any 'off' button. What's the right balance? Maybe the psalmist has some wisdom for us.

"Set a watch before my mouth, O Lord, and guard the door of my lips", we sometimes sing these words during evening prayer and comes from Psalm 141:3. How does self-control show love and compassion for our neighbor?

Prayer: Teach us, O Lord, the consequences of our actions, so that we may avoid hurt and harm of others. Amen.

Station 12

Reflection: *Time to mature*

Fruit takes time to mature. While in the garden it might seem like overnight that the fruit emerges, it is really the product of countless days of soil preparation and many hours of sunlight, darkness, and rain. The workers in the field spend weeks, months, and years cultivating what appears to bloom in a moment. What is the longest you have ever waited for something? What does it mean in your life to actively "wait for the Lord"?

Prayer: O God, our help in ages past, our hope in years to come. We confess that we often seek instant gratification, and we want resolution in a hurry. Grant us a vision of the big picture, that we might appreciate the slow churn of time. In this season of *now* and *not yet*, help us fill time with preparing for You by serving others. Amen.

Station 13

Reflection: *Rotting fruit*

Fruit left on the vine can rot. While compost certainly helps the ecosystem, we don't want to leave our gifts unshared. Sometimes, saving something for a "special" day

or occasion means that it is never used or enjoyed. Can you think of a time when you saved something for a special use that never happened? How does hoarding something actually waste it? What gifts do you need to share before they "rot on the vine"?

Prayer: Holy God, you call us to give generously with open hearts. Oftentimes fear compels us to withhold our gifts. Give us a sense of abundance over scarcity so that we might share with others. Grant us a sense of trust in you that you will provide our daily bread. In your name we pray, Amen.

Station 14

Reflection: *Transformed fruit*

Fruit gets transformed into lots of different things. Once a gift is given, we give up control over it. This can be a challenge, but it can also be its own reward. Fig jam, pineapple upside down cake, apple juice, fruit roll-ups all have life in a very different form than the plant that comes from the ground. Think of all the creative ways fruit is transformed. Now imagine the numerous ways God multiplies the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Your gifts become seeds in other people's lives and often have a life of their own outside of your own expectation or imagination. The founders of SCLRC more than 50 years ago could hardly have imagined the thousands of people who have benefited from their seed planting. But it is comforting (and challenging!) to know we are the living embodiment of their hopes and dreams. Today we continue that legacy by planting more seeds of ministry for future generations.

Prayer: Holy God, Father, Son, and Spirit, thank you for the fruits of the Spirit that are revealed throughout the life of the church: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control. Help us make room for others who come after us that they too might sense an abundance of your love. Send us out to boldly tell others of your holy harvest. In your name we pray, Amen.