

Growing in Self-Control

Lesson Scripture: Daniel 1:1-21

Bible Truth: My self-control can grow.

Bible Story: Daniel 1:1-21

**Bible Verse: "Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control."
(Proverbs 25:28, NIV)**

FOCUS

Learning Activity: "Do You Have Self-Control?"

Preparation

None



Presentation

Give each child a small treat that they would enjoy. Invite them to hold it and smell it, but tell them that they absolutely cannot eat it until you give them permission. Continue talking about how great this treat will be until most of the children are begging to eat it.

Say: **Is it really hard to wait for your treat?** Allow children to answer. **You have to use a lot of self-control to keep from eating it before you have permission.** Pause. **You can eat it now.** Continue talking as children eat their treat.

Say: **The last fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians is self-control. Can you think of a situation where you would need to use self-control?** Allow children to answer. **Sometimes you have to use self-control to keep you from yelling at someone who is mean to you. Sometimes you have to use self-control to keep you from talking disrespectfully to your parents. Sometimes you have to use self-control to stop playing and take time to read your Bible. When you give up something you want, whether it is something good or bad, so you can do what God wants you to do, you are using self-control. The Holy Spirit can help your self-control grow.**

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Proverbs 25:28

Preparation

Write Proverbs 25:28 on a piece of poster board.

Gather enough blocks for children to work in groups and build small cities and walls. If you do not have enough blocks, construct one walled city before class and refer to it as you discuss the verse.

Write the following phrases on separate boxes. Make two sets. If boxes are not available, you can write the phrases on separate sheets of paper.

Box 1: Like a city

Box 2: whose walls

Box 3: are broken through,

Box 4: is a person

Box 5: who lacks self-control.

Box 6: Proverbs 25:28

*If you are using paper instead of boxes, draw a picture of a house on one piece of paper.

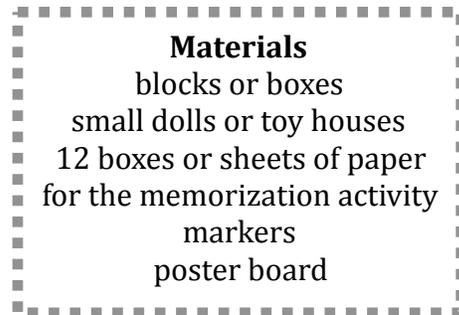
Explanation

Divide children into groups. Give each group several blocks or boxes and ask them build a wall around a small doll or toy house.

Say: **In Bible times, people built walls around cities to protect them from their enemies. As long as there was a wall around the city, the enemy could not get inside to attack them. If the walls were broken down (knock down some of the blocks or boxes), it was much easier for the enemy to attack the people inside the city.**

Read Proverbs 25:28 to the children.

Our Scripture memory verse tells us that a person who does not have self-control is like a city whose walls are broken down. Image that you are the city. Rebuild the wall of blocks or boxes around the toy. **When you have self-control, it is much harder for your enemies to attack you. Who is your enemy?** Allow children to answer. **Satan is our enemy, and He wants to tempt you and cause you to sin. When you allow the Holy Spirit to grow the fruit of self-control in your life, it is much harder for Satan to invite you to sin. However, if you lose your temper and do whatever you want, it is like your protection is gone.** Knock down the blocks or boxes again. **Without self-control protecting you, you are more likely to sin and do wrong. We all want to keep our walls of self-control around our lives.**



Memorization Activity

Divide children into two teams. Give each team a set of prepared boxes. Ask each team to stack their boxes in correct order. Read the verse together. Knock the boxes down and repeat the activity several times. If you have a small group, you may want to allow children to take turns and stack the boxes individually.

*If using paper instead of boxes, allow children to arrange the verse in the correct order around a picture of a house.

**adapted from a lesson from the Ministry to Children website. <http://ministry-to-children.com/self-control-bible-lesson-fruit-of-the-spirit/>

INSTRUCT

Bible Story: "Daniel Uses Self-Control," Daniel 1:1-21

Preparation

Read and study Daniel 1:1-21.

Prepare a tray of food that would be appealing to your children. Include a special drink as well. Prepare a second tray of food that only has fruits, vegetables, and a glass of water.

Presentation

Use the two trays of food as illustrations as you tell the story.

Say: **We have already learned the story of Daniel when he was an adult and had to face the lions. However, long before Daniel was thrown in the lion's den, he faced another enemy. This enemy was the king's food.** Show the tray of appealing foods.

When Daniel was just a boy, the city where he lived was taken over by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. The king ordered his soldiers to capture several boys and bring them to live in Babylon. These boys had to be very smart because they were going to be trained to work for the king. Daniel was one of these boys.

The king ordered the boys to eat only the best food in the kingdom, food that had been prepared in the king's kitchen. This was the best food you could find anywhere. This should have made Daniel happy, but there was a problem. Just like we pray before eating, this food had been prayed over too. However, the people who prayed over this food had prayed to false gods. Daniel and the other boys served the one true God. God did not allow them to eat food that had been offered in prayer to false gods. If they ate it, they would be sinning.

Materials
Bible
food appealing to
children in your culture
fruits
vegetables
water

Hold up the tray of appealing foods. Say: **The food looked really good, and I am sure that the boys were hungry! However, Daniel and three of the other boys decided to use self-control and not eat this food. Instead, they asked the man in charge of the food to only feed them fruits, vegetables, and water that had been not been offered in prayer to false gods.**

Show the tray of fruits, vegetables, and water. **The man was worried that the boys would get weak only eating this food, but he agreed to let them try.**

At the end of ten days, Daniel and his three friends, who had eaten the fruit and vegetables (show correct tray), were stronger and healthier than the boys who had eaten the food (show the tray of appealing foods) from the king. God also made Daniel and his three friends the smartest of all of the boys taken to serve the king.

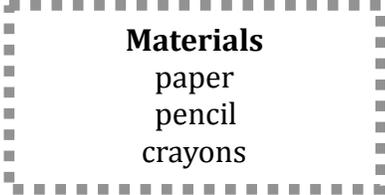
Because Daniel used self-control, it was as if he had a wall built around his life. His self-control kept sin out of his life. His self-control caused him not to eat the food. Because of Daniel's self-control God blessed his life. God will do the same thing for you when you use self-control!

APPLICATION

Learning Activity: Art, "Controlling Myself"

Preparation

Divide a sheet of paper into four sections. At the top of each section write one of the following words: "mouth," "hands," "feet," and "mind." Prepare one paper for each child.

A dashed rectangular box containing the materials list.

Materials

paper
pencil
crayons

Presentation

Say: **It is important to let self-control grow in our lives. Can anyone think of a situation when you would need to control your mouth?** Allow children to answer. **When would you need to control your hands or feet?** Allow children to answer. **When do you need to control your mind?** Allow children to answer.

Give each child a prepared sheet of paper. Ask them to list or draw situations in the appropriate box to demonstrate when self-control is needed.

MINISTRY TIME

Preparation

Cut the colored paper into fruit-shaped pieces. Make enough for each child to have one.

Presentation

Say: **God can make the fruit of self-control grow in your life.** Take any fruit-shaped papers with the word "self-control" written on them (located at the bottom of the poster from Lesson 1) and move them from the bottom of the poster into the tree.

Say: **Over the last few weeks we have learned about the fruit of the Spirit. Can anyone name the different fruit we have learned about?** Allow children to answer. **God wants to grow the fruit of the Spirit in your life.**

Give each child a piece of fruit-shaped paper. Ask them to write their name on the paper. Pray a special prayer over the children asking God to grow the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. Help the children attach their fruit-shaped papers to the tree.

Materials
"Christian" tree poster (from Lesson 1)
colored paper
scissors
adhesive