

BigHeart Farms

Where God's Fruit Grows!

VBS Administrator's Manual

Galatians 5:16-26



Introduction

Thank you for choosing BigHeart Farms Vacation Bible School this summer! I pray that this program would be a blessing to you and your children. BigHeart Farms is a fluff-free, Bible based VBS program intended for churches who don't have a budget for VBS, but still want the benefits that a week-long, intensive study will provide for their children. Each day should last about three hours. VBS is a chance for children to refresh themselves in the Lord and grow closer to him. VBS is for children what retreats and weekend seminars are for adults. Please be willing to put in the extra work this program may require, as it will be a great blessing to your children. Start recruiting volunteers and searching for supplies early to ensure your VBS is a success!

Theme

BigHeart Farms centers on Galatians 5:16-26, which covers the Fruit of the Spirit. A farm theme seemed best to coordinate with the idea of spiritual growth. Get creative in how you decorate your VBS space. Bring in hay bales and straw hats. Have gardening equipment leaned up against the walls and a scarecrow to welcome the kids. Having a fun and obvious theme will help the kids have fun and make connections between the Bible and "real" life. But don't forget, above all else, VBS is about God, not a fun theme.

Content

In this kit you will find all the information you need to pull off a fun and exciting week of VBS, including fruit stand guides, letters home to parents, "Bible Seeds" large group talks, crafts, games and snacks. Please take the time to go through all of the content before sharing it with your volunteers so you can be prepared to answer any questions they may have. Copy the appropriate pages to give to the volunteers at least a week in advance of VBS. The fruit stand guides are for whoever will teach about the fruit of the spirit at each center. You could either have the small group leaders teach every one, or have one teacher per fruit stand, teaching about the same fruit of the spirit all week. It depends on how many volunteers you have. The Gardening Tools booklet is to be sent home for parents the first day. The large group talks are for you (or whoever will lead in the

morning) to read at the beginning of each day. These do not need to be read word for word, but try to stick to it closely, as they are written to reach children on their level without sacrificing or watering down Biblical truth.

The Volunteers

Volunteers are the people who make VBS possible. BigHeart Farms cannot happen without adults and teens willing to put in a little elbow grease and a lot of love. Be sure when you are recruiting volunteers that you allow everyone to work in their gifting. People are happiest when they are working at something they are good at and enjoy doing. Feel free to encourage people to break out of their comfort zones and try something new, but do not force them as this will negatively affect the impact they can have.

Farmer: If you are responsible for heading up BigHeart Farms VBS, you are probably the Farmer. The Farmer is in charge of BigHeart Farms. He or she is the one who makes sure all the other volunteers know what they are doing and leads the opening and closing large group sessions. While the kids are in their small groups, the farmer goes around visiting the various stations, making sure everything is running smoothly.

Gardeners: Small group teachers are referred to as gardeners because they play the greatest role in planting and nurturing God's Word in the hearts of the children. They will either be in charge of a single fruit stand all week, thus getting to see every child in VBS, or they could each have their own small group, whom they lead to every station and then teach just their small group at each of the nine fruit stands. If they lead a small group, other volunteers will be needed to keep the fruit stands clean, organized and well-stocked. If the gardeners teach at one stand all week, then volunteers should be chosen to stay with the small groups and guide them to and from each station. The children should then have the same volunteer guiding them every day.

Chefs: As you may have guessed, the chefs are in charge of the snacks. The children will put together the snacks themselves, and the chefs are in charge of preparing the ingredients in individual portions for the children. They could also use their contact with the children to talk about what the kids are learning. They could ask questions and encourage the children to think

about the lessons and how they could apply them to their lives. Qualities of good chefs include the ability to plan ahead and to listen and talk with kids. They should also be organized and of course have a heart to serve God.

Harvesters: The Harvesters must be energetic and able to discipline rowdy groups of kids, because they are in charge of the field games. The Harvesters help teach the children the practical application to the day's Bible Seed. Playing games that relate to the large group talk provides the children with yet another chance to understand the Gospel, and the Harvesters "harvest" this chance by discussing the Biblical point after playing the game. Be sure the Harvesters are gifted encouragers and can comfortably handle groups of active children, as this is the time where the children are most likely to be injured or disorganized. Patience and a firm hand will be key to keep the children safe and on topic here.

Hootenanny Band: Music worship is an important part of the morning, and the Hootenanny Band is glad to share their musical expertise! This is a great chance for teen musicians in your church to spread their wings and learn to lead worship, or your usual Sunday worship team can lead. Be sure the songs you sing are on a level the children can understand, or use ones they already know. It may help to have the words projected on a screen so they can follow along.

Farmhands : Farmhands are volunteers who get to run around throughout BigHeart Farms and make sure all needs are met. They refill water, find props and help with sign in. Anyone can be comfortable serving here, since this job requires no outside preparation.

Sprouts: Last but not least, the children will be referred to as Sprouts at BigHeart Farms. They may be spiritually small in their knowledge and understanding of God now, but at BigHeart Farms and throughout their lives, they will grow to be big for God. When apple seeds are planted in good soil, they sprout and grow into big and beautiful trees that bear delicious fruit. Pray that your children's hearts may be good soil, so the seeds of God's Words they receive will sprout and grow in them, bearing much spiritual fruit.

The Activities

Large Group Time

Worship

After the children are signed in, worship is the first thing to happen in the morning. Every day you will first welcome the kids and pray with them. Then the Hootenanny band can take over. Limit the songs to three or four and try to use simple songs that the children may already know. If possible, find songs that relate to the day's or week's topic. Be sure the last song is a slower one, so the children can sit down and start to relax from an upbeat time of worship.

Bible Seeds

Every day starts with all the children gathered in one place, each small group sitting together with their leader. After settling down from worship, children will be alert and ready to hear the Word of God. The Bible Seeds are sermons prepared for children that discuss five main points from the Gospel as found in Galatians 5:16-26. At the end of each talk (which I have provided), in bold you will find the Bible Seed. This is the main point of the discussion, the thing kids should take away if nothing else. Each child will record the daily Bible Seed in a Farmer's Almanac, a small book made from one piece of paper. At the end of the week, they will take these books home and be able to refer to them as a quick overview of the Gospel.

Small Group Time

The small groups will rotate through the following activities each day. More than one group can be at the snack station, and games, but try to limit the number of groups at the fruit stands to no more than two.

Fruit Stands

The Fruit Stands are where the Sprouts will learn about the Fruit of the Spirit. They will learn about one fruit at each stand. Each day the students will visit two fruit stands. The last day of VBS, they will visit one stand and use the extra time to review all nine traits with their small group.

Plowing Fields

The Plowing Fields are where kids get to burn off some extra energy playing physical games. Each day they will participate in a game that relates to the Bible seed. After playing the game, the Harvester will discuss the

spiritual meaning behind the game. This gives the children another chance to hear the Gospel point. Be sure to provide water at the Plowing Fields.

The Watering Hole

The snack area is called the watering hole, a place where people gather to relax and talk about the day. The snacks should be prepared by the kids, so be sure all the ingredients are laid out and ready to go, so they have as much time as possible to eat. Provide water and maybe lemonade at the Watering Hole. Be sure the Chefs are prepared to talk with the kids about what they are learning at BigHeart Farms.

Large Group Time

Close in large group time with prayer and making a Farmer's Almanac page to provide one last chance to understand that day's Bible seed. Also use this time to practice the week's memory verse: 2 Peter 3:18. *"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."*

Closing in large group time provides closure to the day and makes it easier for parents to find their children.

Daily Overview

	Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four	Day Five
Bible Seed	<p>The Spirit Jesus died for our sins and after he went to Heaven, he sent his Holy Spirit to guide us and help us grow closer to God and to each other.</p>	<p>The Flesh Following our flesh and sinful nature takes us away from God, but Jesus took our punishment so we could be with him.</p>	<p>The Law Even though we are sinners and break God's law, when we follow Jesus, God no longer sees our law-breaking, he just sees Jesus in our hearts.</p>	<p>The Kingdom I am a member of the kingdom of God when I follow King Jesus. I get to tell everyone about Jesus and live with him forever in Heaven!</p>	<p>The Cross I belong to Jesus forever when I stop following my flesh and follow the Spirit. All I have to do is pray for Jesus to help me to follow him.</p>
Watering Hole	Ants on a Log	Farm Fresh Butter	Hay Bales and Pig Slop	Worms in Dirt	Fruit of the Spirit Cups
Plowing Fields	Spirit Walk	Heavy Weights	The Rules	Homebound	Scrap the Sin

Following are the details of each day's activity. Please read through them and copy the booklets to give to the appropriate volunteers at least one week in advance.

BigHeart Farms

Where God's Fruit Grows!
Farmer's Duties



BigHeart Farms, Day One

Farmer's Duties

Preparation:

One of your daily duties is to be sure all of the volunteers know what you expect of them. Start each day at least half an hour before the kids arrive, so you have time to talk and pray with all the volunteers, and to handle any last-minute mishaps. Before you pray, check to be sure the following is taken care of:

- € Worship team: do you know the songs? Is everything set up and ready to go?
- € Chefs: do you have all the ingredients you need and do you know how to set up today's snack?
- € Harvesters: do you have your equipment? Do you know how to play the game and the Spiritual point behind it?
- € Gardeners: do you understand the fruit stand content you will be teaching? Do you have your class roster?
- € Farmhands: do you all know where you will be serving today? Who is doing sign in, etc?
- € Share the Bible seed with the leaders.
- € Answer any questions.
- € Pray together.

Bible Seed Sermon

This is just what I suggest you say. Please do not read it word for word, staring at the paper the whole time. You can either memorize it, or have it on a stand to follow as notes. Be sure to interact with the kids. Don't come off as preaching to them. Do your best to make this conversational and light. Pray with the kids before beginning.

Welcome to BigHeart Farms, where God's fruit grows! First off, let me explain, down here on the farm, we have a rule: whenever I say "BigHeart Farms," I need you all to shout back, "Where God's fruit grows! You all think you can do that for me? Alright, let's try this welcome thing again. Howdy, welcome to BigHeart Farms, where God's fruit grows! Is that as loud as y'all get? Well we're going to have to do better than that if we're going to do any barn raisin' around here. Now one more time, Welcome to BigHeart Farms, where God's fruit grows! Now that's more like it! Now we're going to kick things off here with praying, and then we're going to boogie down to some barnyard tunes. You all ready to get started?

Start by reading Galatians 5:16-26

So there are a lot of big words in this passage, aren't there? Well this week we'll take some time at the beginning of each day to try to understand some of these words. Today we're going to start with the Spirit.

The Spirit that this passage is talking about is part of the Trinity. The Trinity is the name we use to describe the three different personalities, or sides to God. This is an idea that we can never completely understand. Since God is so different from anything else we know, we don't have anything to compare the Trinity to. We use that word because trinity means three. There are three people that make up the Trinity, but there is only one God. One person that makes up the Trinity of God is the Father. God the Father created all things, even you and me. The Father sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to earth. Jesus Christ, the Son, is the second part of the Trinity. Jesus is completely human, and at the same time he is completely God. Jesus came to earth and lived a perfect life. He never did anything wrong, but a group of people still got mad at him and killed him. But after three days, he came back to life! Before Jesus went up to Heaven to be with the Father, he told his followers not to worry, that he was going to send them a helper (John 16:7). That helper is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third person in the Trinity. He is the one that teaches us things about the Bible and helps us to live according to what the Bible says (John 14:26). The Spirit is the one that convicts us of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8). When we become Christians, the Holy Spirit guides us in doing what is right. He is the one that helps us understand the Bible when we read it on our own. He also helps us pray (Rom 8:26). The Holy Spirit is a gift from God that we get when we repent, or change how we live, and start living for God, just like Jesus lived for God (Acts 2:38). The Spirit has always been around, since the very beginning of the Bible, even before the whole universe was made (Gen 1:2). When we have the Holy Spirit living in us, it means we have decided to follow Jesus with all our hearts. Having the Holy Spirit in our hearts means we are together with God, it means we have a relationship with him. The Holy Spirit allows us to talk to God and learn from his Word, the Bible. Having the Holy Spirit is a sign that we are friends with God and walk with him, just like Adam and Eve did at the very beginning of the world. Adam and Eve were the very first people God ever made, and God actually walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. He was friends with them. For a while, Adam and Eve loved God and obeyed his commandment to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. While they followed his rule, God was with Adam and Eve. Today, God gives us his Holy Spirit when we become Christians because the Spirit guides us and helps be friends with God and helps us grow closer to him. When we grow closer to God, something amazing happens. You know that when you plant an apple seed and take good care of it, eventually that little seed will grow into a big apple tree, with lots of delicious fruits on its branches. The same thing happens in us when we are growing in God. We grow spiritual fruit. Now in the passage I read from the Bible, it lists nine character traits that make up the fruit of the spirit. This fruit that develops when we are living and growing with God is: love, joy, peace, patience,

kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. When we let the Spirit guide us, we begin to see these things happen in our lives. We become more loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and have more self-control. All this week we are going to learn about these traits with our small groups. An important thing to remember is that we cannot make these character traits, this fruit grow on our own. We have to rely on the Holy Spirit to work in us and help the fruit grow in us. We have to be like good soil, like what farmers plant their seeds in. We can be like good soil when we love Jesus and obey what the Bible tells us to do. So this morning's Bible seed to remember is: **we have to believe that Jesus died for our sins and after he went to Heaven, he sent his Holy Spirit to guide us and help us grow closer to God and to each other.**

Closing Time

To review the Bible seed, take this closing time to make the Farmer's Almanac page. (See last page of packet for instructions on making these books.) The first page should be labeled "The Spirit." Have the older kids write the Bible seed on their own. (Project this on a screen.) For younger kids, print off stickers or the pre-made version of the Almanac provided at the end of this manual. Have the Gardeners provide each Sprout with a dove sticker. Explain that the dove represents the Holy Spirit, because when Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended on him like a dove. Have the children color the dove (or outline the page) in yellow. Explain that the color yellow represents our light. The Holy Spirit is our guiding light. He guides us to Jesus and guides us through life. Have the Sprouts write their names on the cover and then give them to their small group leaders. They will get to take them home at the end of the week. Pray with them. Tell the Gardeners to hand out the parent take home sheets. Practice the memory verse together. Have the kids stay in their small groups and review the fruit stands they visited while they wait for their parents.

Wrap Up

After the kids leave, help get everything cleaned up and meet with your volunteers. Listen as they tell you how the day went. Ask what worked and what did not work. Make any necessary changes in your layout or schedule to make tomorrow run smoother.

BigHeart Farms, Day Two

Farmer's Duties

Preparation:

One of your daily duties is to be sure all of the volunteers know what you expect of them. Start each day at least half an hour before the kids arrive, so you have time to talk and pray with all the volunteers, and to handle any last-minute mishaps. Before you pray, check to be sure the following is taken care of:

- € Worship team: do you know the songs? Is everything set up and ready to go?
- € Chefs: do you have all the ingredients you need and do you know how to set up today's snack?
- € Harvesters: do you have your equipment? Do you know how to play the game and the Spiritual point behind it?
- € Gardeners: do you understand the fruit stand content you will be teaching? Do you have your class roster?
- € Farmhands: do you all know where you will be serving today? Who is doing sign in, etc?
- € Share the Bible seed with the leaders.
- € Answer any questions.
- € Pray together.

Bible Seed Sermon

So yesterday in our large group talk we discussed "the Spirit." After Jesus died for our sins and went to Heaven, he sent his Holy Spirit to those who believe in him. This Holy Spirit guides us to do what is right and helps us grow closer to God and each other. Today we are going to discuss what guides us when we are NOT following the Spirit: the flesh, or our sinful nature. I have a few questions for you all. I want you to just shout out the answers together. What is the opposite of up? Light? Clean? Good? Right? You all are pretty smart. Well, the flesh is almost like the opposite of the Spirit. The flesh here, or "sinful nature" as some translations of the Bible say, is what we call our desire to NOT follow God, to do things our own way. Adam and Eve decided to do things their own way. God gave them one rule: he told them not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Guess what they did? They disobeyed God. They ate that fruit. They knew better, but Adam and Eve decided to follow their flesh and their own desires instead of following God's Spirit. Galatians 5:18-21 tells us what some of the fruits of the flesh are. (Read these verses.) None of these things sound very fun, do they? All of the things on this list are bad and hurtful, but these are the things we do when we are not walking with God, when we are living according to the flesh. Romans 7:18 says, "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out." This verse tells us that even though we want to do good things, we can't do them on our own, in our flesh. We need the Spirit of Jesus in order to do good things, to produce

good fruit. The "good things" the Bible is talking about is the Spiritual fruit we are talking about this week in small groups. With the Spirit, we are free to do good. We are free from sin. Walking in our own flesh, our sinful nature, is like having handcuffs on all the time. We can't do anything worth doing when we are in handcuffs, when we are tied up by our sins. These sins weigh us down and keep us away from God. When Adam and Eve followed their sinful nature and disobeyed God, God had to discipline them. Think of a time when you were disciplined. Don't tell anybody, just think about a time where you did something you knew you weren't supposed to do, and then someone punished you for it. Maybe your parents sent you to your room after you fought with your little brother, or maybe your teacher gave you detention for cheating on a test. Think about how you felt after you were punished. Did you feel guilty, sad, sorry? How do you think Adam and Eve felt when God disciplined them? Adam and Eve didn't get sent to their room or get a detention. God made them leave their beautiful home, the Garden of Eden, for disobeying him. God sent Adam and Eve away from him. They were dirty with sin, and our perfect, holy and sovereign God will not be around sin. Being away from the Creator, the one who made the whole universe and made you, is a pretty big punishment. You know what? This is a punishment we all face. Romans 3:23 says, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." That means every single one of us deserve the punishment of being separated from God forever. We have all disobeyed and followed our flesh. All of us, that is, except for one Man. Jesus is the only one who has never sinned, he is the only one who has never disobeyed God and followed his flesh. Jesus is the only one who can keep us from being punished forever by being sent away from God. We have all sinned, and Jesus died to take away those sins from us. Jesus was punished so we don't have to be. Today's Bible seed is: **following our flesh and sinful nature takes us away from God, but Jesus took our punishment so we could be with him.**

Closing Time

To review the Bible seed, take this closing time to make the Farmer's Almanac page. The second page should be labeled "The Flesh." Have the older kids write the Bible seed on their own. (Project this on a screen.) For younger kids, print off stickers or the pre-made version of the Almanac provided at the end of this manual. Have the Gardeners provide each Sprout with a handcuffs sticker. Explain that handcuffs represent how we are prisoners to the flesh when we follow our sinful nature. We are not free to follow God when we are trying to follow our flesh. Have the children color the handcuffs (or outline the page) in brown. Explain that the color brown represents our dirtiness. God is clean, he is holy and perfect. Our perfect creator will not be in the presence of someone who is spiritually covered in dirt. Have the Sprouts give the Almanacs back to their small group leaders. They will get to take them home at the end of the week. Pray with them.

Ask the Gardeners to hand out the parent take home sheets. Practice the memory verse together. Have the kids stay in their small groups and review the fruit stands they visited while they wait for their parents.

Wrap Up

After the kids leave, help get everything cleaned up and meet with your volunteers. Listen as they tell you how the day went. Ask what worked and what did not work. Make any necessary changes in your layout or schedule to make tomorrow run smoother.

BigHeart Farms, Day Three

Farmer's Duties

Preparation:

One of your daily duties is to be sure all of the volunteers know what you expect of them. Start each day at least half an hour before the kids arrive, so you have time to talk and pray with all the volunteers, and to handle any last-minute mishaps. Before you pray, check to be sure the following is taken care of:

- € Worship team: do you know the songs? Is everything set up and ready to go?
- € Chefs: do you have all the ingredients you need and do you know how to set up today's snack?
- € Harvesters: do you have your equipment? Do you know how to play the game and the Spiritual point behind it?
- € Gardeners: do you understand the fruit stand content you will be teaching? Do you have your class roster?
- € Farmhands: do you all know where you will be serving today? Who is doing sign in, etc?
- € Share the Bible seed with the leaders.
- € Answer any questions.
- € Pray together.

Bible Seed Sermon

Welcome to day three at BigHeart Farms! Can you believe we made it through two whole days of Vacation Bible School? Are you all having fun? What is your favorite part of BigHeart Farms so far? (Have a few kids answer.) All those things were a lot of fun! Now, I didn't hear anyone say that their favorite part of VBS is that we let you do whatever you want. Why do you think that is? Right, it's because we don't let you do whatever you want. We have rules here at BigHeart Farms that we expect everyone to follow. We expect you to stay with your group, get along with each other, and listen to your teachers. Why do you think we have these rules? Are we trying to be mean to you? Of course we aren't trying to be mean to you. We love each and every one of you. That's why we have rules. These rules are in place to help keep you safe and so you can have as much fun as possible together. Can you think of other places that have rules? (Take some answers.) School has rules, too, doesn't it? At school you are expected to show up on time, listen to the teacher and do your homework. What about at home? Do your parents have rules? Maybe some of the rules at your house include no running inside, no fighting with your brothers and sisters, and no talking back to your parents. Did you know God has rules that he expects us to follow too? How can we find out what God's rules are? Are they written down anywhere, or are we just

supposed to guess? God would never make us guess about what he wants us to do. God is very good to us, and in his goodness, he had people write down the rules for us. We find God's rules for life in the Bible. In fact, the whole Bible can kind of be looked at like a rulebook. Just like sports have rulebooks for how to play the game, the Bible is like our rulebook for life. When you don't know what to do in a game of soccer, you can turn to the rulebook to find out the right way to do things. The rules in the Bible are often referred to as the Law. Every society, every city needs rules for people to follow so we all get along well. The Bible is the Law for Christians to follow. It tells us how to get along with everyone. In everyday life, if you don't know what to do, where can you turn? That's right, the Bible. The Bible has all the answers we need to live a righteous life, to live like God wants us to. (Hold up a Bible, preferably a big, family sized one.) Now look at this thing, it's pretty big, isn't it? Now I just told you that this whole book is our rulebook, our guide to living life the way God wants us to. Does anyone here think they can follow every single rule in this book? Of course we can't. Adam and Eve had only one rule, remember, and they broke that one rule: to not eat from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As we learned yesterday, they broke that one rule and God, being perfect and holy, disciplined them by kicking them out of the Garden of Eden. We have a lot more rules to follow than Adam and Eve did. Let's look at just a few of them. Have you all heard of the Ten Commandments? These are ten very important rules God gave to Moses to share with all the people of Israel. These were the most important rules the Israelites had to follow. The Ten Commandments are:

1. You will have no other gods but me.
2. You will not make an idol of anything in heaven or on earth.
3. You will not misuse the name of God.
4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
5. Honor your father and mother.
6. Don't murder.
7. Don't commit adultery.
8. Don't steal.
9. Don't give false witness.
10. Don't covet.

These all seem fairly easy, don't they? But if you think for a little bit, I'm sure you all will be able to think of at least one time where you disobeyed your parents, or lied to someone, or stole something, or wanted something that belonged to a friend. All of those things are against God's law. Maybe you're thinking, "but at least I haven't murdered!" Jesus says "everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment" (Matt 5:22). Jesus is saying that whoever gets mad at someone and insults them is breaking this law. To our perfect and loving God, just thinking mean things about someone is the same as killing them. Now think to yourself, have you really kept that law? Have you never been mad at someone and thought bad things about them? On top of these ten commandments, these ten laws, Jesus adds two more that are more important than all of these. Jesus says, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" None of us have ever followed those two rules perfectly all the

time. Like we learned with Adam and Eve, that means we deserve God's punishment. When we decide to follow our flesh instead of the Spirit and break the Law, we don't get to be with God. That sounds pretty scary, doesn't it? But don't worry, there is good news! The passage we have been studying this week about the fruit of the Spirit tells us something great. Galatians 5:18 says, "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law." That means that when we love Jesus and let his spirit lead us, we no longer have to worry about following the law perfectly. All we have to do is follow Jesus. When we follow Jesus, following the law will come naturally. We will just do what God wants us to. This leads us to today's Bible seed: **Even though we are sinners and break God's law, when we follow Jesus, God no longer sees our law-breaking, he just sees Jesus in our hearts.**

Closing Time

To review the Bible seed, take this closing time to make the Farmer's Almanac page. The third page should be labeled "The Law." Have the older kids write the Bible seed on their own. (Project this on a screen.) For younger kids, print off stickers or the pre-made version of the Almanac provided at the end of this manual. Have the Gardeners provide each Sprout with a stone tablets sticker. Explain that stone tablets remind us of Moses, who was given the law by God to share with all the people of Israel. Have the children color the stone tablets (or outline the page) in black. Explain that the color black represents our hopelessness. When we try to reach God by just following the law, we won't make it. We will still be left in the dark, spiritually. Have the Sprouts give the Almanacs back to their small group leaders. They will get to take them home at the end of the week. Pray with them. Ask the Gardeners to hand out the parent take home sheets. Practice the memory verse together. Have the kids stay in their small groups and review the fruit stands they visited while they wait for their parents.

Wrap Up

After the kids leave, help get everything cleaned up and meet with your volunteers. Listen as they tell you how the day went. Ask what worked and what did not work. Make any necessary changes in your layout or schedule to make tomorrow run smoother.

BigHeart Farms, Day Four

Farmer's Duties

Preparation:

One of your daily duties is to be sure all of the volunteers know what you expect of them. Start each day at least half an hour before the kids arrive, so you have time to talk and pray with all the volunteers, and to handle any last-minute mishaps. Before you pray, check to be sure the following is taken care of:

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- € Chefs: do you have all the ingredients you need and do you know how to set up today's snack?
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- € Gardeners: do you understand the fruit stand content you will be teaching? Do you have your class roster?
- € Farmhands: do you all know where you will be serving today? Who is doing sign in, etc?
- € Share the Bible seed with the leaders.
- € Answer any questions.
- € Pray together.
- € *Today you will have an opportunity to invite children to Christ. Please be sensitive to the needs of the children. Let the Holy Spirit speak through you in Truth, gentleness and love as you share the most important truth out there, that Jesus came for everyone.*

Bible Seed Sermon

Let's start off today with a quick review. When we follow the Spirit, it means we are doing what God wants us to do, we are letting Jesus guide us. When we follow the flesh, our sinful nature, we are not following the Spirit. We are sinning and disobeying God. We know when we are doing wrong because we have the law, the Bible, to show us what to do. Two days ago, we talked about what some of the "works of the flesh" are. Galatians 6:21 tells us that if we do those things, we will not inherit the kingdom of God. What is the kingdom of God? What does it mean that when we sin, we don't get to inherit the kingdom of God? Why would we want to inherit the kingdom of God? Let's work to answer these questions. First of all, it may help if we understand what a kingdom is. A kingdom is just a fancy word for a place ruled by a king. You may have heard of a famous kingdom called Camelot, which was ruled by King Arthur. The kingdom of God is different from Camelot or

any other kingdom. For starters, the kingdom of God is ruled by the King of all kings. Does anyone know who that is? (Let a child answer.) Right, the King of kings is Jesus, and we know that Jesus is God. Since Jesus is the King of the Kingdom of God, that would make us, the people who follow Jesus, part of the kingdom of God. That means we are citizens to God's kingdom. Being a citizen means you are a part of a country or place, it means that is where you belong. Most of us here are probably citizens of (insert your country name here.) That means we consider this country our home. But wait a minute, where is the kingdom of God, and how can we be citizens of this country and of God's kingdom at the same time? This is the tricky part. The kingdom of God is not another country on this planet. It is not a place for which you can get a passport and hop on a plane to visit. The kingdom of God is also called the kingdom of Heaven. Jesus talks about the kingdom a lot in the Bible. When Jesus describes the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of Heaven, he uses parables. Parables are stories in the Bible that use common ideas and objects to explain something about God. When you read parables, you have to think about what God is trying to say in them. In one parable, Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed. The mustard seed is one of the tiniest seeds in the world, but when you plant it, it grows into a big tree where birds can live. Jesus is like the little mustard seed. After he died and was buried, he came back to life, he rose again. He proved that he is God, and that he is big enough for everyone. (John 13:31-32). The kingdom of God is not a place like we would think of a house or a city or a country. The kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven is wherever Jesus is. Wherever the King is, that is where you will find the kingdom of God. That means that if Jesus lives in your heart, the Kingdom of God is in you! (Luke 17:21). Having Jesus living in our hearts is kind of like having a passport. A passport lets us travel to other countries, and it shows people what country we are from. (Show children your passport or a picture of a passport.) When we follow Jesus, we get to be with God *all the time*. Jesus is our passport to God the Father. Without Jesus dying for our sins and then living again in us, we would not be able to be forgiven of our sins, we would not be able to spend forever with God. If we do not have Jesus living in us, that means we will be punished forever by spending forever away from God, in Hell. We have to believe in Jesus and follow him so we can inherit the kingdom of God. This means we have to follow Jesus so we can be forgiven of our sins and go to Heaven. The great news is, there is no age limit on who can be a citizen of the kingdom! In Mark 10:14-15, Jesus says that the kingdom of God belongs to children, and in order to get to Heaven, you have to come like a child would. Jesus is saying that you guys right here have the easiest time following Jesus. If you start following Jesus now, it will be easier to follow him for the rest of your lives. That's what Jesus wants. So how do we do that? John 3:3 says we have to be born again. That means we have to change the way we do things and start over, doing things the way God wants us to. Mark 1:15 tells us we have to repent, or change the way we do things, and believe in the Good News of Jesus. So in order to be citizens of the kingdom of God, in order to be with Jesus forever and ever, we have to stop

following our flesh and sinful nature and start following the Spirit of Jesus. Jesus will forgive us of our sins and bring us to live with God forever and ever. As citizens of the kingdom of God, we have a very important job to do: we get to tell everyone else about how great Jesus is! (Luke 9:2, Acts 28:31.) So today's Bible seed is: **I am a member of the kingdom of God when I follow King Jesus. I get to tell everyone about Jesus and live with him forever in Heaven!** Now listen carefully. Today if you are ready for the first time ever to start following Jesus with all your heart and to be a member of his kingdom forever, please talk to your teacher, so they can help you pray to Jesus and start following him forever.

Closing Time

To review the Bible seed, take this closing time to make the Farmer's Almanac page. The fourth page should be labeled "The Kingdom." Have the older kids write the Bible seed on their own. (Project this on a screen.) For younger kids, print off stickers or the pre-made version of the Almanac provided at the end of this manual. Have the Gardeners provide each Sprout with a crown sticker. Explain that the crown reminds us that Jesus is our King, and he rules over Heaven and can rule in our hearts. Have the children color the crown (or outline the page) in purple. Explain that the color purple represents Jesus' royalty. Purple is the color kings wear to show that they are kings. Have the Sprouts give the Almanacs back to their small group leaders. They will get to take them home at the end of the week. Pray with them. Ask the Gardeners to hand out the parent take home sheets. Practice the memory verse together. Have the kids stay in their small groups and review the fruit stands they visited while they wait for their parents.

Wrap Up

After the kids leave, help get everything cleaned up and meet with your volunteers. Listen as they tell you how the day went. Ask what worked and what did not work. Make any necessary changes in your layout or schedule to make the last day run smoother.

BigHeart Farms, Day Five

Farmer's Duties

Preparation:

Start each day at least half an hour before the kids arrive, so you have time to talk and pray with all the volunteers, and to handle any last-minute mishaps. Before you pray, check to be sure the following is taken care of:

- € Worship team: do you know the songs? Is everything set up and ready to go?
- € Chefs: do you have all the ingredients you need and do you know how to set up today's snack?
- € Harvesters: do you have your equipment? Do you know how to play the game and the Spiritual point behind it?
- € Gardeners: do you understand the fruit stand content you will be teaching? Do you have your class roster?
- € Farmhands: do you all know where you will be serving today? Who is doing sign in, etc?
- € Share the Bible seed with the leaders.
- € Answer any questions.
- € Pray together.

Bible Seed Sermon

Whew, it's hard to believe that today is our last day together at BigHeart Farms! I have really enjoyed getting to know you all and learning about God with you. I hope that you have all learned a lot about the Fruit of the Spirit and about Jesus this week. Today we have one last very important thing to discuss. First, let me read our passage of Scripture from Galatians 5:16-26. (Read the Scripture clearly, trying to emphasize the Bible Seeds from throughout the week.) At the beginning of this week, this seemed like a pretty confusing part of the Bible, didn't it? I hope by now you understand some of these big words and big ideas a little better. Let's review them real quick. On Monday we learned that Jesus died for our sins and after he went to Heaven, he sent his Holy Spirit to guide us and help us grow closer to God and to each other. Tuesday we talked about how following our flesh and sinful nature takes us away from God, but Jesus took our punishment so we could be with him. Wednesday we learned that even though we are sinners and break God's law, when we follow Jesus, God no longer sees our law-breaking, he just sees Jesus in our hearts. Yesterday we discovered that we are members of the kingdom of God when we follow King Jesus, and that we get to tell everyone about Jesus and live with him forever in Heaven! Today we are going to talk about the most confusing and most important part of this Bible passage. Verse 24 of Galatians

chapter five says, "And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." First, let's talk some about what it means to belong to Jesus. We belong to Jesus when we believe in him and follow him. Belonging to Jesus means we are a part of his family. It means God has adopted us and calls us his children. When we believe in Jesus, we get to be a part of the Kingdom of God. Belonging to Jesus is a very special thing. Can you think of something that belongs to you that you really care about? I bet you take real good care of it, don't you? Think about your parents. You belong to your parents. Your parents are in charge of you. That means your parents love you and take care of you. Jesus takes care of us, too. The Bible calls Jesus the good shepherd, (John 10:11-16.) A shepherd is someone who takes care of sheep. Shepherds care for their sheep and are willing to die for their sheep. We are Jesus the Good Shepherd's sheep. Jesus cares for us and he did die for us. Jesus had to die for us so we could be with God in Heaven forever. We cannot get to Heaven or be with God on our own. We are all sinners, we are all dirty, and our perfect God will not be around sin. But God loves us so so much, that he sent his son Jesus to earth for us. Jesus was crucified and died for us because that is the punishment we all deserve. None of deserve the lives we have. We all deserve to be punished, but Jesus, because he loves us, took our punishment for ourselves. Imagine doing something wrong and your mom says she is going to ground you because of it. But then just before she sends you to your room, your big brother comes up and says, "no Mom, punish me instead." Your brother gets grounded instead of you. He has to stay in his room, but you get to go for ice cream with your friends. That's what Jesus did for us. He took our punishment so we could have a good life, and so we could live forever with him in Heaven. Now let's focus on the last part of this verse: we have crucified our flesh. We know what the flesh is. It is our sinful nature, our desire to do wrong. But what does it mean to crucify our flesh? I said earlier that Jesus was crucified for us. Jesus died on a cross for us. He died in one of the most humiliating and painful ways imaginable, and he did it willingly. Jesus was beat up, teased and had a crown made of sharp thorns shoved onto his head. He had nails hammered through his hands and feet and into the wood of the cross. All of his friends left him as he was dying because they were too afraid to stay. Jesus was crucified and went through all of that for you and me. He was tortured to death and left alone by his friends because he loves you and wants to be with you forever. He knew that was the only way to make up for our sins, to wash them away like it never happened. This is a very sad story, but thankfully it doesn't end here! After he was dead and buried for three days, Jesus came back to life! Jesus can now live forever in our hearts if we let him. Jesus was willing to get dirty and take our punishment so we could be clean and sinless before God. Our lives are like dirty dry-erase boards, covered in sin. When we believe that Jesus died for us, all of our sins and dirtiness gets washed away so we can stand before our Creator God. All we have to do to be with God forever is crucify our flesh. Now this does NOT mean we get nailed to a cross. It means that we have to give up following our sinful nature. We have to believe Jesus was crucified and came back to life for us and we

have to follow him with our lives. We have to live by the Spirit. This can sometimes seem like hard work, but I promise you, it is better to follow Jesus and the Spirit than it is to follow our flesh. So I want to challenge each and every one of you today. If you have not already decided to follow Jesus with your life, I pray that you would make that decision today. A good way to start following Jesus is to pray to him. Prayer is just talking to God. So I am going to give all of you a chance to start following Jesus. I am going to pray with you all. If you are ready to follow Jesus with your life and let his Spirit lead you, please pray along with me. I want everyone to close their eyes, so you can focus on just talking to Jesus while we pray. If you already follow Jesus, please pray to yourself for those around you who may not follow Jesus yet. Now let's close our eyes so we can pray. (Take this time to lead the children in the sinner's prayer.) You can open your eyes now. If that was the first time you ever prayed to have Jesus take away your sins so you can follow him, please find a teacher or other leader to talk to so they can help you take the next steps to following Jesus with your life. Now for our last Bible seed: **I belong to Jesus forever when I stop following my flesh and follow the Spirit. All I have to do is pray to Jesus to help me to follow him.**

Closing Time

To review the Bible seed, take this closing time to make the Farmer's Almanac page. The fifth page should be labeled "The Cross." Have the older kids write the Bible seed on their own. (Project this on a screen.) For younger kids, print off stickers or the pre-made version of the Almanac provided at the end of this manual. Have the Gardeners provide each Sprout with a cross sticker. Explain that the cross is where Jesus died for our sins. He died on the cross so we could be clean and stand before God. Because Jesus died on the cross, we are not weighed down by the law. All we have to do is follow Jesus and love him. Have the children color the cross (or outline the page) in red. Explain that the color red represents Jesus' blood that was poured out for us on the cross. Jesus' blood had to be poured out, because the punishment for sin is death. He died for our sins, he died in our place. The Sprouts get to take home their Almanacs today. Take some time to review all five Bible seeds. Pray with them. Ask the Gardeners to hand out the parent take home sheets. Practice the memory verse together. The children should be able to say it on their own by now. Have the kids stay in their small groups and review what they learned this week while they wait for their parents.

Wrap Up

Since a long week of VBS is coming to a close, after cleaning up with your volunteers, consider doing something special for them today. Give

them each a small gift or share a meal together as you discuss the highs and lows of the week. Be sure to take notes on what worked well and what did not go so well so you can improve VBS for next summer. Pray together one last time, then go home and get a good night's sleep. You've worked hard for it!

BigHeart Farms

Where God's Fruit Grows!
Chef's Duties



BigHeart Farms, Day One

Chef's Duties

Thank you for volunteering to help out at BigHeart Farms! As a chef, you will provide healthy snacks and a listening ear to the Sprouts every day. Don't worry if you do not feel confident in the kitchen. The chef is mainly responsible for preparing the ingredients. The children will put the snacks together. More important than the food, you get to listen to the children talk about what they are learning. Be attentive and ask them questions, help them to apply the lesson to their lives. Look them in the eye, let them know you care!

Ants on a Log

Ingredients:

Celery sticks, chopped into 3-inch logs

Cream cheese or peanut butter

Raisins

Plastic knives or spoons

How to make it:

Give the children each a few celery sticks and a Dixie cup of cream cheese or peanut butter. Let them spread the creamy stuff into the hollow of the "log." Then let them put about 6 "ants" (raisins) on the cream. Enjoy!

Variations: buy the single serve cream cheese packets found at bulk stores and give each child one. It's the more expensive route, but less work is involved.

BigHeart Farms, Day Two

Chef's Duties

Thank you for volunteering to help out at BigHeart Farms! As a chef, you will provide healthy snacks and a listening ear to the Sprouts every day. Don't worry if you do not feel confident in the kitchen. The chef is mainly responsible for preparing the ingredients. The children will put the snacks together. More important than the food, you get to listen to the children talk about what they are learning. Be attentive and ask them questions, help them to apply the lesson to their lives. Look them in the eye, let them know you care!

Farm Fresh Butter

Ingredients:

Heavy cream

crackers

Small jars with lids

One marble per jar

How to make it:

Baby jars would work best, so try to get donations from families with babies well in advance. If you don't have baby jars, use other small containers with tight lids. Tupperware would work fine, but you might want to tape the lids shut to avoid a mess, or stick the Tupperware in a baggie.

Put about 3 tablespoons of room temperature heavy cream into each jar, add a marble and screw on the lid. Put on some upbeat music and let the kids shake, shake, shake away! The marble helps to stir up the liquid and cause all the little fat particles to stick together, making butter. Soon the cream will thicken into what looks like whipped cream. Keep shaking. The whipped cream will break up and soon turn into butter. The liquidy stuff around your lump of butter is buttermilk. Help the kids drain this into a container. It can then be refrigerated and used in any recipe calling for buttermilk. Remove the marbles from the smaller children's jars to avoid choking hazards. Give the children crackers to dip into their butter.

BigHeart Farms, Day Three

Chef's Duties

Thank you for volunteering to help out at BigHeart Farms! As a chef, you will provide healthy snacks and a listening ear to the Sprouts every day. Don't worry if you do not feel confident in the kitchen. The chef is mainly responsible for preparing the ingredients. The children will put the snacks together. More important than the food, you get to listen to the children talk about what they are learning. Be attentive and ask them questions, help them to apply the lesson to their lives. Look them in the eye, let them know you care!

Hay Bales and Pig Slop

Ingredients:

Mini shredded wheat (any kind)

Various vegetables, all diced and in separate bowls. (The food processor is your friend.) Some ideas:

Carrots, celery, red onion, cucumber, bell peppers, tomatoes, lettuce.

A few salad dressing options

How to make it:

Give the children two or three mini shredded wheat, calling them hay bales, or horse food. Let the children fill up their own "troughs" (small cups) with veggies. Supervise them as they add salad dressing, then let them enjoy their animal food.

BigHeart Farms, Day Four

Chef's Duties

Thank you for volunteering to help out at BigHeart Farms! As a chef, you will provide healthy snacks and a listening ear to the Sprouts every day. Don't worry if you do not feel confident in the kitchen. The chef is mainly responsible for preparing the ingredients. The children will put the snacks together. More important than the food, you get to listen to the children talk about what they are learning. Be attentive and ask them questions, help them to apply the lesson to their lives. Look them in the eye, let them know you care!

Worms in Dirt

Ingredients:

Chocolate pudding

Gummy worms

Chocolate sandwich cookies, crushed up

How to make it:

Give each child a pudding cup and let them add a couple of gummy worms and "dirt" (cookie crumbs) to their cups of mud. Have them mix it all up and enjoy. This would be a good time to discuss the parable of the soils found in Matthew 13. Variations: rather than buying the expensive pudding cups, smaller-budget groups may consider making lots of box pudding and spooning it out into plastic cups to give to the students. Consider using another flavor of pudding and cookie if you have any children allergic to chocolate in your group.

BigHeart Farms, Day Five

Chef's Duties

Thank you for volunteering to help out at BigHeart Farms! As a chef, you will provide healthy snacks and a listening ear to the Sprouts every day. Don't worry if you do not feel confident in the kitchen. The chef is mainly responsible for preparing the ingredients. The children will put the snacks together. More important than the food, you get to listen to the children talk about what they are learning. Be attentive and ask them questions, help them to apply the lesson to their lives. Look them in the eye, let them know you care!

Fruit of the Spirit Cups

Ingredients:

Various chopped up fruits, such as:

Strawberries, berries, apples, oranges, bananas, grapes, watermelon, honeydew, cantaloupe, peaches, pears.

Whipped cream (optional)

How to make it:

Have children fill up plastic cups or small plastic bowls with various fruits. Let them pick their own fruit, but for every scoop they take, they need to try to name one of the fruits of the Spirit they learned about this week. Top off with a dollop of whipped cream, if desired. Take this time to review the fruits of the Spirit you have learned about all week.

BigHeart Farms

Where God's Fruit Grows!
Harvester's Duties



BigHeart Farms, Day One

Harvester's Duties

Thank you for Volunteering to help out here at BigHeart Farms! As a Harvester, you will be directing the physical games at the Plowing Fields. You will be responsible for praying with the kids before the game, teaching them how to play, encouraging and if necessary disciplining them during game play and then most importantly, helping the kids to discover the Bible point the game makes. Listen during the Bible Seeds talk at the beginning of each day, because this lays the foundation for the game. Above all, have fun with the kids, and love them like Jesus does!

Spirit Walk

The Play: Set up an obstacle course of various objects stretching the length of the field. Use empty boxes, broomsticks, orange cones, hula hoops, etc. On one side of the field, have kids partner up. Blindfold one kid per pair. (Bandanas and scarves work great.) Have the blindfolded kid spin in place five times, to get them slightly dizzy. When you say go, the non-blindfolded kid guides his partner through the obstacle course, being sure to avoid the obstacles. Have all the teams go at once, or as many as you can possibly fit on the field. Once the team reaches the other side of the field, switch roles. Blindfold the kid who was just the leader and have them spin around five times. Their partner leads them back across the obstacle course. Wait for everyone to finish before discussing spiritual meaning.

The Point: When we let the Spirit guide us, we don't always see where he is taking us. Just like we did not see where we were going with blindfolds on. It can sometimes be scary to follow the Spirit, because we don't know if we will run into things (problems) along the way. It can be hard to listen to the Spirit's voice, too. Sometimes we can hear other voices calling out and we may want to follow those voices instead of God's voice, just like we heard the other leaders' voices during the game. We had to listen carefully for our leader's voice. Sometimes our leader may have made a mistake and accidentally run us into an obstacle. But the Spirit will never make us go the wrong way. Even though it is sometimes scary and hard to do, when we follow the Spirit, we glorify God.

BigHeart Farms, Day Two

Harvester's Duties

Thank you for Volunteering to help out here at BigHeart Farms! As a Harvester, you will be directing the physical games at the Plowing Fields. You will be responsible for praying with the kids before the game, teaching them how to play, encouraging and if necessary disciplining them during game play and then most importantly, helping the kids to discover the Bible point the game makes. Listen during the Bible Seeds talk at the beginning of each day, because this lays the foundation for the game. Above all, have fun with the kids, and love them like Jesus does!

Heavy Weights

The Play: This is essentially a potato sack race. Each child will race three times. You will need a potato sack for each child. (These can be purchased online for about \$2 each, or you could have a crafty seamstress from your church make you a bunch for cheap.) You will also need a backpack for each child, weighted down with rocks or water bottles or books. The bags should be pretty heavy, but not to the point that it would hurt the kids' backs. For the first race, have the children race with just the sack. This is the practice round, to get used to potato sack racing. Don't worry about winning or losing. Congratulate everyone for just finishing the race. The second round, load each kid down with a heavy backpack. Have them complete the race with the heavy weights. Mention how that was harder. Race one more time with no load, so they can feel the difference of having the weight lifted from their shoulders.

The Point: This race represents our lives. When we follow our flesh and sinful nature, it's like we have a heavy weight on our shoulders. It is hard to do anything well with something weighing us down. Our sin weighs us down. There is nothing we can do to take away our sins and lift that weight. Jesus has to do it for us. He took away our heavy weights, our sin, when he died for us on the cross. Now, when we believe in Jesus, we can run the race without the heavy weight of sin. Jesus makes life easier!

BigHeart Farms, Day Three

Harvester's Duties

Thank you for Volunteering to help out here at BigHeart Farms! As a Harvester, you will be directing the physical games at the Plowing Fields. You will be responsible for praying with the kids before the game, teaching them how to play, encouraging and if necessary disciplining them during game play and then most importantly, helping the kids to discover the Bible point the game makes. Listen during the Bible Seeds talk at the beginning of each day, because this lays the foundation for the game. Above all, have fun with the kids, and love them like Jesus does!

The Rules

The Play: You will need ten buckets. Line five small up on one side of the field with a couple of feet between each of them and the other five (bigger buckets) lined up the same way across the field. For one set of buckets, label each bucket with a different color. (Sand pails may work great for this.) For example, have one bucket labeled purple, one blue, one red, yellow, and green. Label the other set of buckets with shapes. Have a triangle, circle, square, heart and star. You also need five balls, all the same size. Label these to correspond with the colors on the small buckets. Start the game. Do not tell the children the rules, but blow a whistle or shout when they do something wrong. Tell them they can't do whatever they did wrong before continuing game play. You want them to get frustrated with this. My suggested rules are: The can't use their hands to grab the balls. The red ball has to go in the blue bucket. The blue ball goes in the yellow bucket, the purple ball in the green bucket, the green ball in the red bucket and the yellow ball in the purple bucket. They have to work as a team to get the right ball in the right bucket. Then they have to work as a team to get the right small bucket into the right big bucket. When they are holding a color bucket with the right ball in it, they can only take one step, then they have to pass the bucket off. The red bucket goes with the star, the yellow bucket with the circle, the green bucket with the heart, the blue bucket with the triangle, the purple bucket with the square. If these supplies or rules won't work for your group, make up something equally challenging and ridiculous. Just be sure the kids don't know the rules and have to work together. You may need to simplify this for younger players.

The Point: This is a frustrating game. It is hard to play when you don't know the rules. Fortunately, real life is not like this game. We have a way to know the rules, so we don't get the whistle blown on us. The Bible is our rulebook, our guide on how to get through life the right way. We should read our Bibles daily so we know how to follow God and please him.

BigHeart Farms, Day Four

Harvester's Duties

Thank you for Volunteering to help out here at BigHeart Farms! As a Harvester, you will be directing the physical games at the Plowing Fields. You will be responsible for praying with the kids before the game, teaching them how to play, encouraging and if necessary disciplining them during game play and then most importantly, helping the kids to discover the Bible point the game makes. Listen during the Bible Seeds talk at the beginning of each day, because this lays the foundation for the game. Above all, have fun with the kids, and love them like Jesus does!

Homebound

The Play: This game is a variation on freeze tag. It would be best to have a helper play this game with the kids. You need someone to play the Enemy, Satan. An adult or teen volunteer would be best for this. Have the Enemy stand in the middle of the field. (You may need multiple enemies, depending on the number of kids you have. You should have one enemy for about every ten kids.) Line the kids up on one side of the field. Give them each an index card to write their name on. Have them drop the index card right behind them, so it does not get stepped on. On the far end of the field, past the enemy, have tokens of some sort just past the finish line. Be sure you have one for each child plus a few extras. Small wooden crosses would be great for this. Even further back, at the very end of your playing space, have a large poster or banner with a crown on it. Use the same poster for every team, every round, all day. Leave the names on the poster, so by the end of the day, every kid can see their name on the poster. Have tape available in small strips to hand to the children. The goal of the game is to have every kid make it to the other end of the field without the Enemy touching them. If the enemy touches them, they are frozen. Make sure the enemy lets at least one or two kids through. The kids who make it to the far side of the field need to rescue their frozen friends. In order to rescue their frozen friends, they have to take a token to their friends. Whoever has a token cannot be frozen by the enemy. So it would be a great idea for these kids to take a token for themselves as well as their friends. Once they hand the token to the frozen friend, the frozen friend can run to the finish line. Once everyone reaches the finish line, the kids then need to run back to the starting line and get the index cards with their names on them. (The enemy does not need to be on the field now, since all the kids have a token.) The kids need to grab the card with their name and then run back to the finish line. They can then tape their name onto the crown poster. For a simpler version of the game, skip having the enemy. Have younger players run across the field, collect their token, run back to get their names, and then run to the finish to tape their names on the crown poster.

The Point: The Kingdom of God is a place of community. It is not only a place to get to someday, but the kingdom of God is in us when we believe in Jesus. Satan freezes us and our sin keeps us from being in the Kingdom, but when we have Jesus, Satan can't stop us from being in the kingdom. Just like the tokens stopped the Enemy from freezing us. Our job as Christians is to tell everyone about Jesus, to help "unfreeze" them and free them from their sins. That way, everyone can add their name to the kingdom.

BigHeart Farms, Day Five

Harvester's Duties

Thank you for Volunteering to help out here at BigHeart Farms! As a Harvester, you will be directing the physical games at the Plowing Fields. You will be responsible for praying with the kids before the game, teaching them how to play, encouraging and if necessary disciplining them during game play and then most importantly, helping the kids to discover the Bible point the game makes. Listen during the Bible Seeds talk at the beginning of each day, because this lays the foundation for the game. Above all, have fun with the kids, and love them like Jesus does!

Scrap the Sin

The Play: You will need the large buckets from Wednesday for this game. This time, they will act as trash cans. Label these with a large, simple cross. Line them up on one end of the field with a few feet between each one. On the other side of the field, scatter sheets of paper with age-appropriate sins written on them. Feel free to write the same sin more than once. For younger kids, use pictures of sins, such as one kid pushing down another or stealing candy from a grocery store. Make sure you have a lot of papers spread around, enough for each kid to have a chance to grab at least five sheets. The goal is to get rid of the sins. Make this into a team game. Divide the kids as evenly between the five buckets. (Use fewer buckets if you have fewer kids. Try to have at least five kids per team.) Have the children line up in front of the buckets. When you give them the signal, they have to race to the other end of the field, grab a piece of paper, crumple it up and race back to throw it in their bucket. Then they repeat this process until all the sins are gone. They can only grab one sheet of paper at a time, no cheating! Whichever team has the most sins in their bucket wins. To make this game harder, you can add things that aren't sins to the sins. Older children will have to read the papers and decide if the act on it is a sin or not. Don't throw away making a new friend or helping your sister clean her room, those are good things! If you want to save on paper, you could use snack sized paper plates to write/ draw the sins on. These could be reused throughout the whole day.

The Point: When we belong to Christ, we crucify our old way of living. We get rid of our sins and flesh by leaving it all at the cross. Because Jesus died for us on the cross and took our punishment, our sins are left on the cross. They are dead, and away from us forever. God forgets about all the bad things we have done when we throw them away to follow Jesus.

BigHeart Farms

Where God's Fruit Grows!

Farmhands' and Band's

Duties



BigHeart Farms, All Week

Hootenanny Band

Thank you for volunteering to lead worship at BigHeart Farms this week! Music worship is a great way to open each day at Vacation Bible School because it is not only fun and energetic, it gives the children a change to transition from whatever is going on in their lives and focus on God and what he may have to tell them. Be sure to choose songs that the children may already know from Sunday school or songs that go along well with the theme of Spiritual fruit and growth. Have the words projected on a screen so they can follow along. Children also benefit from having motions that go along with the song, so feel free to come up with little dances or hand motions to go along with the music. Have no more than 4 songs, with the first three songs being upbeat and the last song a slower one, so children have a chance to regain control of themselves and focus their attention on the upcoming lesson.

BigHeart Farms, All Week

Farmhands

Thank you for volunteering to help out at BigHeart Farms this week! We certainly need some willing farmhands to make sure things keep running smoothly around here! Your assistance is needed to help decorate around here and to make sure there is water available and supplies are stocked everywhere. We also need your help ensuring the teachers have their supplies and the chefs have everything squared away for snack. Keep an eye on the plowing fields, too, to make sure things aren't getting too rowdy down there. If you're aren't sure what needs to be done, just ask someone and I'm sure they will be able to help you find something to do. Your servant's heart is most valuable around here, farmhand. Thank you once again for your willingness to do whatever is needed to be sure the kids have as much fun as possible this week!

BigHeart Farms

Where God's Fruit Grows!
Gardener's Duties



BigHeart Farms

Fruit Stands Explained

Thank you for volunteering to help out at BigHeart Farms this week! At the fruit stands, you will have the chance to teach children about a specific part of the fruit of the Spirit. Depending on how you as a leadership team choose to set up VBS, you may teach at one stand all week, meaning you will see every child attending BigHeart Farms, or you will teach all of the fruit stands over the span of the week, staying with one group of children all week and building deep relationships with them.

Each fruit stand will operate in the same fashion. At each fruit stand you will:

- Define the trait.
- Share a brief biography of an Old Testament character who exemplifies this trait.
- Share a Bible verse on it.
- Share how Jesus exemplifies it.
- Share real life examples of the fruit in action. (Share a personal story of how someone has shown that trait to you, or use my examples.)
- Help the children come up with ways to practically apply that trait to their lives.

While discussing the trait or after the discussion, you will do a small craft to help the information “stick.” Use the provided pages to make flower pieces. The flowers will be assembled on the last day. At the fruit stand, have the children write the name of the trait on the circle, and then fill out the appropriate information on each petal. Until the last day of VBS, these petals can be considered “seeds,” and on the last day, all of the seeds will grow into beautiful flowers that the children will assemble themselves. Until the last day, store all the pieces in envelopes labeled with the trait’s name. These are seed packets, and the kids can decorate their own seed packets as they wish. Encourage older kids to write the memory verse on the packets to help them learn it. Keep the craft pieces with you at VBS. Do not send crafts home until Friday. For younger children who are not yet proficient in reading and writing, have them draw the stories you tell or the things they will do. Don’t preach to the children. Rather, this is a time to discuss the fruit of the Spirit. Guide them in the truth, but let them talk too! Ask them questions and take questions from them. Be careful to stay on topic, as kids like to wander!

Your most important job this week is praying for the children with whom you will come in contact. God know their hearts, and if you allow him to use you, he will touch the lives of these children during Vacation Bible School. Be sensitive to their needs and remember that not all of your children will be coming from loving Christian homes. Keep in mind that this week may be the only time some of the children truly get to see Christ. Your job isn’t primarily to gift them with information, you are to only love the children and our Lord Jesus Christ loves them. If you do that, this is sure to be a great week!

BigHeart Farms

Love

Definition: Love is not just a warm fuzzy feeling we have for other people, it is something we do. Love is putting the needs and wants of other people before our own.

Sacrificing what you want and need so others can have what they want and need.

Bio: The story of Ruth shows love. Ruth left her homeland and everything she knew behind to follow her mother-in-law to a foreign country. Ruth loved Naomi, so she worked hard every day to make sure they would have enough food.

Bible verse: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." John 15:12

Jesus: Jesus loves us so much, that he came down from Heaven and became a human. He lived a life full of love, teaching others how to love. Then to show us how much he loves us, he died in our place on the cross, dying for our sins so we can be with him forever in Heaven.

Real life: This summer my husband and I went camping in the mountains. Not thinking I would need it, I did not pack a jacket. That night, it froze. I mean, there was ice on our cars. And all I had was a little sweater. My husband took his big heavy jacket and gave it to me so I could be warm. All he had then was a little sweater. My husband showed me love by putting my needs first. He loves me, so he wants me to be warm, even if that means he has to be cold.

Application: kids do this themselves. Talk about possible practical ways they could show love to others.

BigHeart Farms

Joy

Definition: more than being happy, Christians are filled with joy when they are living the way God wants us to. Joy is being glad no matter what is happening in our lives.

Being glad and knowing that God is in control no matter what is happening in our lives.

Bio: King David was a joyful man. Even though he had many enemies who were always chasing after him and trying to kill him, David wrote many psalms that we read today, all of them praising God for how great He is. Joy leads us to praise God for his greatness.

Bible verse: "Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory." 1 Peter 1:8

Jesus: More than anyone else in all of history, Jesus faced extremely difficult circumstances. He lived a perfect life, always caring for other, but people still hated him, and he was killed for it. Still, even though Jesus knew that he would have to die on the cross and even though so many people mocked him, Jesus was full of joy. (Luke 10:21) Being joyful leads us to praise God.

Real life: Laura is the most joyful person I know. Before I was a Christian, I wondered how she could always be so happy all the time. Even when her mom was diagnosed with cancer, I never saw Laura be sad, or heard her complain about her circumstances. Once I became a Christian, I realized Laura isn't happy all the time, in fact she did cry when she found out her mom had cancer, but she was always joyful and praising God.

Application: talk with the children about different ways to work on being joyful. (Like reading Psalms.)

BigHeart Farms

Peace

Definition: Peace is being free from worry and fear and getting along with people around you.

Freedom from worry and fear and getting along with others.

Bio: Shadrack, Mischack and Abednego showed peace when they refused to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's idol. Even though they knew they were going to be thrown into the furnace, they were filled with the peace of God and the knowledge that He would protect them. (Daniel 3:8-30)

Bible verse: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

Jesus: Jesus is the Prince of Peace, as we read in Isaiah 9:6-7. Jesus is the King of Heaven and can be the King of our hearts. When we let him be the King of our lives, he will fill us with peace.

Real life: I had a roommate who always showed peace. Even when we were broke and unsure we would be able to pay the rent, she did not worry. She knew that God would provide for us. Jackie always let God's peace take victory over her worries and fears.

Application: Kids think of practical ways they can be at peace.

BigHeart Farms

Patience

Definition: Patience is not getting angry when we want to, and not saying mean things when we want to. Patience is putting up with problems, confusion, frustration and pain without complaining about it.

Putting up with difficult situations without getting angry or complaining.

Bio: Job is known for his patience. God tested him by taking his belongings, his kids and his health. Job's friends came to comfort him but only made things worse by trying to blame Job for what he was going through. Even his wife told him to "curse God and die." Still, Job patiently waited on God and continued to believe in him in a very difficult situation. God blessed Job for his endurance.

Bible verse: "You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged." (James 5:8-9)

Jesus: Jesus is patient with us sinners. We keep following our flesh and doing what we know is wrong, but Jesus keeps on forgiving us and forgiving us and forgiving us. (1 Timothy 1:15-17)

Real life: My mom is the most patient woman I know. She runs a home daycare and always has kids running around, getting into trouble and demanding her attention. As exhausting as this is, my mom never loses her temper with the kids, or shouts at them or complains about her job. My mom has patience with the many children she cares for.

Application: Children come up with at least one situation where the need to work on patience.

BigHeart Farms

Kindness

Definition: Kindness is an attitude that puts others at ease. It is being nice to others and encouraging and uplifting them.

Uplifting others through encouraging words and actions.

Bio: Rahab, as an inhabitant of Jericho, by no means should have helped the Israelite spies. She showed them kindness in hiding them and thus saving their lives. This certainly put the spies at ease! (Joshua 2)

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

Jesus: Everywhere he went, Jesus was putting those who needed him at ease. He showed sinners kindness. There are many examples of this in Scripture. My favorite is the story of the woman anointing Jesus' feet with her tears. (Luke 7:36-50) The Pharisee wanted to rebuke her, wanted to use cruel words, but Jesus simply forgave her of her sins. He was kind to her in the way he reacted to her.

Real life: Teri always shows me kindness when we meet. She always takes the time to ask how I am doing and she listens to what I have to say. She encourages me when I need it and helps me solve my problems and overcome my sins by accepting me and uplifting me.

Application: Kids come up with a practical way they can show kindness. (EG, sit with the new kid in the lunch room.)

BigHeart Farms

Goodness

Definition: Goodness is actively showing that you follow Jesus by being generous and helping others. It means standing up for what you believe in and saying things that need to be said, even if it won't be taken well.

Standing up for what you believe in and helping others to do the same.

Bio: The prophet Elijah showed goodness when he helped lead the people of Israel away from false worship and back to worshipping the one true God. He knew that what they were doing was wrong, so he showed them that the LORD is the one true God and that they should follow him. Elijah stood up for what he believed in. (1 Kings 18:20-39).

Bible verse: "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." Galatians 6:9

Jesus: Jesus showed goodness when he cleansed the temple of the money changers. They were sinning against God and showed no signs of repentance, so Jesus stood up for what is right by kicking them out and allowing people to worship freely.

Real life: Patsy showed me goodness when I was a freshman in college and needed food. She would have me over for dinner at least once a week and when she needed to, she had no problems telling me that there was a sin in my life that I needed to take care of. She did this because she loves God and she loves me.

Application: Children think of practical ways to show goodness in their own lives.

BigHeart Farms

Faithfulness

Definition: Faithfulness means never turning your back on what you believe in. You always trust God and you are always there to help your friends and family when they need you. You do not forget about your responsibilities.

Trusting God no matter what, and being someone that others can trust no matter what.

Bio: Abraham is the father of faith. To test his faith, God told Abraham to sacrifice his only son. Without questioning what God said, Abraham took his son Isaac up on the mountain, tied him up, and was about to stab him when God stopped him. Abraham was willing to give up what he loved the most in this world to show God that he loved him more. Abraham was willing to do whatever God said. (Genesis 22)

Bible verse: "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God." Ephesians 2:8

Jesus: Jesus never lost faith in God's great plan. Jesus was faithful to the prophecies in the Old Testament. He knew that he would have to die to save us from our sins, and he was faithful to do so. He went through so much pain, and he could have stopped it at any time. But Jesus stayed on the cross until it was finished, until he died in our place for our sins.

Real life: Gail has been my best friend for 12 years now, and for 9 of those years, we haven't even lived in the same state! She is my faithful friend because she calls me often to talk and as often as possible, comes out to visit. It would be easier just to find a new best friend, but Gail chooses to be faithful to me as a best friend.

Application: Children come up with a practical way they can practice faithfulness.

BigHeart Farms

Gentleness

Definition: Being gentle does not mean being weak. Gentleness is a humble, calm attitude. Gentleness is having authority or strength of some sort and using it to guide others in a nice, non-threatening way.

Having the ability to hurt someone, but choosing instead to guide them in a humble way that points to God.

Bio: Moses was a gentle and humble man. With God, he had the power to destroy the Egyptians, but he humbly submitted to God and did what God wanted him to. He showed God's greatness not by yelling at Pharaoh, but by telling him what God would do if Pharaoh did not listen. (Exodus 7-11)

Bible verse: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." Matthew 11:29

Jesus: Jesus showed gentleness to the woman at the well. He knew her sins and her need for him to be her savior. Jesus could have said, "you are a sinner and I'm the only one who can save you, so believe in me." But instead, he talked with the woman and let her discover who he is.

Real life: My husband Aaron is the most gentle man I know. Our world thinks a man is "manly" when he is yelling and showing how strong he is. Aaron knows better. He knows that being gentle and submitting to God is what makes him a good man. Aaron leads me gently. He never yells at me or says that he's the boss, so I have to listen. He listens to God and then leads me prayerfully.

Application: Children think of practical ways to be gentle.

BigHeart Farms

Self-Control

Definition: Having self-control means being in charge of your emotions, thoughts, words and actions. It means doing what God wants you to do rather than what you want to do.

Being in charge of your emotions, thoughts and actions.

Bio: Joseph's life is marked by self-control. Not only did he show self-control in resisting temptation from Potiphar's wife, he showed self-control in how he interacted with his brothers when they came to Egypt to buy grain. He could have boasted like he did when he was young, but instead he control his emotions (he turned away to cry) and was able to rescue his entire family. (Genesis 42)

Bible verse: "A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls." Proverbs 25:28

Jesus: We cannot imagine the fear Jesus felt as he prayed to his Father before his arrest and crucifixion. He prayed that God would find another way to redeem us of our sins, but then he added "not my will, but yours be done." This is the picture of self-control. It is submitting to God and letting him take charge. Jesus controlled his agony he felt while praying and let himself be crucified for us.

Real life: Jesse is a man of self-control. As a youth pastor, he is always busy serving others. He is available day and night for those who need him. It would sometimes be easier for Jesse to be lazy, to let someone else teach youth group, but Jesse chooses to submit to God and let God's will rule in his life.

Application: Children come up with practical ways they can work on showing self-control.

BigHeart Farms

Where God's Fruit Grows!
Gardening Tools



*Ideas for parents to make the most of
Vacation Bible School*

BigHeart Farms, Where God's Fruit Grows!

Gardening Tools

A letter to parents

Dear Parents,

Thank you for your commitment to your child's spiritual growth. Vacation Bible School provides an important opportunity for children to grow in the Lord. With your help, your child's spiritual growth can go beyond the few hours they spend at BigHeart Farms. If you will invest the time to go through these "gardening tools" with your kids each day, it will help to reinforce what they are learning at BigHeart Farms and give you a chance to learn and grow with your child.

At BigHeart Farms, your child will get to hear the Gospel as presented in Galatians 5:16-26 and learn about the fruit of the Spirit. Since there are nine traits recorded in this passage and only five days of VBS, all of the children will rotate through the traits of the fruit of the Spirit throughout the week. So rather than sending home a letter with your child every day, we present to you this booklet, which contains tools to help you and your child grow closer to Jesus Christ. It includes daily summaries of the gospel presentations and questions to go along with them, overviews of each trait of the fruit of the Spirit, additional Biblical references to foster spiritual growth and extra activities for you to do with your child. I would suggest that each day you start with the "Bible Seeds" talk, in which we discuss the gospel as found in Galatians 5:16-26. Afterwards, ask your child which fruit stands he or she attended and then do those booklet pages together. At each fruit stand, your child defined a trait of the fruit of the Spirit, learned how an Old Testament person and Jesus exemplify the trait, learned a Bible verse on it and thought about how to work on this trait in their own lives. The extra activities are just that: extra. Be sure that you focus on the spiritual content more than the activities because the activities have little meaning when they are not backed by Biblical knowledge. Remember, when sitting down to do a Bible study with your child, the best way to start is with prayer. Invite Jesus to join you and the Spirit to guide you as you come together to learn more about our great God!

I pray that this would be a blessing to your family, and that together you may "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." (2 Peter 3:18)

In Christ,

BigHeart Farms, Where God's Fruit Grows!

Gardening Tools: Bible Seeds, day one: The Spirit

Begin by praying and reading Galatians 5:16-26 out loud with your child.

One of the first words we run into in this passage is "Spirit." We are told to "walk by the Spirit," but how can we follow the Spirit when we don't really know who he is? The Spirit mentioned here is the Holy Spirit, who we identify as a part of the Trinity. The Trinity is a word we use to describe the three sides, or personalities of God. The three parts of the Trinity are the Father (the Creator God,) the Son (Jesus, who was sent to die for us,) and the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Jesus, sent to guide us). The Trinity is a difficult thing to understand, because all three parts of it are fully God. The Father is God, Jesus is God, and the Spirit is God. They are all one God, all together. This is a mystery of God and something our little human brains cannot fully grasp. But it does help us to understand a fundamental truth. We learn in Acts 2:38 that when we repent of our sins and follow Jesus, we will receive the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 3:16 tells us that the Spirit dwells within us. This means that when we follow Jesus and turn away from our sinful lives, GOD will live in US. This is a beautiful sign of his love towards us! The Holy Spirit guides us in truth, convicts us of sins and helps us to pray. (John 16:7, 8; John 14:26; Romans 8:26.) The Spirit can work powerfully in us and through us! All we must do is to turn away from our sinful lives and ask God to help us live for him. His Spirit will then guide us. The Bible seed to remember for today is: Jesus died for our sins and after he went to Heaven, he sent his Holy Spirit to guide us and help us grow closer to God and to each other.

Questions to go through with your child:

- What is the Trinity?
- Who is the Holy Spirit?
- What can the Holy Spirit do?
- How can the Holy Spirit live in me?
- Have your child describe the game they played today and what it has to do with the Spirit. (They took turns leading each other and being led blindfolded through an obstacle course to demonstrate following the Holy Spirit, even when we don't know where he is leading.)

2 Peter 3:18 "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

BigHeart Farms, Where God's Fruit Grows!

Gardening Tools : Bible Seeds, day two: The flesh

Begin by praying and reading Galatians 5:16-26 out loud with your child.

Yesterday we discovered that after we repent of our sins, God sends us the Holy Spirit to guide our lives. What guides our lives before we accept that Jesus is our Savior? Galatians 5:16 says, "walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." The flesh, or "sinful nature" as some translations say, is what guides us before we let the Spirit guide us. We are either walking by the Spirit, or we are walking by the flesh. We either follow his Spirit and please God, or we do what our flesh wants us to do and we displease God. Adam and Eve, the first people God ever created, were also the first people to ever sin, or walk according to the flesh. Adam and Eve had one rule to follow. God told them not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Of course, they broke that rule. Adam and Eve sinned. After they sinned, they had to be punished, just like a parent will punish a child for misbehaving. The difference is that Adam and Eve did not get sent to their room, they were kicked out of their home, the Garden of Eden, and were sent away from the presence of God. It may seem a little harsh that by doing one thing wrong, they would be banished from the presence of the King, but this shows us something great about our God. God is so holy and just and perfect that he will not be around dirty sin. Adam and Eve aren't the only ones who face this punishment. Romans 3:23 says, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Sinning and walking in our flesh is like wearing handcuffs all the time. It's hard to do anything great when you are in handcuffs. We may want to take the handcuffs off, but we can't do this on our own. Romans 7:18 says, "'For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.'" Thankfully, Jesus can remove our handcuffs. He is the only Man who never sinned, so he is the only one who can be with God. Today's Bible seed tells us that following our flesh and sinful nature takes us away from God, but Jesus took our punishment so we could be with God.

Don't forget this week's Bible memory verse!

2 Peter 3:18

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

Questions to go through with your child:

- When we are not following the Spirit, what are we following?
- How were Adam and Eve punished after they sinned?
- How are we punished when we sin?
- Can we do anything to get rid of our "handcuffs," or sin?
- Who can get rid of our sin, and how does he do so?

BigHeart Farms, Where God's Fruit Grows!

Gardening Tools: Bible Seeds, day three: The law

Begin by praying and reading Galatians 5:16-26 out loud with your child. We know that when we follow the Spirit, we please God, but when we follow our flesh and sin, we displease God. But what is sin? Sin is disobeying God. We sin when we do what we want to do instead of what God wants us to do. We learned yesterday that Adam and Eve were told not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They broke that one rule, they sinned. God has given us more than one rule to follow today. These rules can be found in the Bible. The Bible tells us how to live life the right way. When we refer to the rules God has given us in the Bible, we call it the Law. The Law is a gift from God to show us how to live in community with him and with each other. Every society has laws to help keep things running smoothly and to help people get along nicely. God, in his perfect love and wisdom, gave us the Law not to hinder us from a relationship with him, but to help us be closer to him. There's just one problem. None of us can keep all of God's rules! Here's a list of some of the most important ones. The Ten Commandments can be found in Exodus 20.

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. You will have no other gods but me. | 5. Honor your father and mother. |
| 2. You will not make an idol of anything in heaven or on earth. | 6. Don't murder. |
| 3. You will not misuse the name of God. | 7. Don't commit adultery. |
| 4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. | 8. Don't steal. |
| | 9. Don't give false witness. |
| | 10. Don't covet. |

Jesus added two more very important laws in Matthew 22:37-39. He says, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" No one is ever able to follow all these rules perfectly. Even if we think we're doing okay because we've never murdered anyone, God puts us in our place. Jesus tells us that even being angry with someone and insulting them is as bad as murdering them. Our holy God sees being unjustly angry with someone to be just as bad as murdering them, and it is enough to separate us from God. Thankfully, we learn something great in our study this week. Galatians 5:18 says, "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law." That means that when we love Jesus and let his spirit lead us, we no longer have to worry about following the law perfectly. All we have to do is follow Jesus. When we follow Jesus, following the law will come naturally. We will just do what God wants us to. This leads us to today's Bible seed: Even though we are sinners and break God's law, when we follow Jesus, God no longer sees our law-breaking, he just sees Jesus in our hearts.

BigHeart Farms, Where God's Fruit Grows!

Gardening Tools: Bible Seeds, day three: The law, continued

Questions to go through with your child

- What is sin?
- What happens when we sin?
- How do we know what displeases God?
- What is the Law?
- Can you list some or all of the Ten Commandments?
- What did Jesus say is the greatest and second greatest commandment?
- Can anybody follow all the Law perfectly?
- What can we do to keep ourselves from being separate from God?

Don't forget this week's Bible memory verse!

2 Peter 3:18

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

BigHeart Farms, Where God's Fruit Grows!

Gardening Tools: Bible Seeds, day four: The Kingdom

Begin by praying and reading Galatians 5:16-26 out loud with your child.

Galatians 5:21 tells us that when we follow the flesh, we will not inherit the kingdom of God. This leads us to ask, "what is the kingdom of God, and why would I want to inherit it?" A kingdom is a place ruled by a king, so the kingdom of God is ruled by Jesus, who is the King of all kings. When Jesus describes the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of Heaven, he uses parables. Parables are stories in the Bible that use common ideas and objects to explain something about God. When you read parables, you have to think about what God is trying to say in them. In one parable, Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed. The mustard seed is one of the tiniest seeds in the world, but when you plant it, it grows into a big tree where birds can live. Jesus is like the little mustard seed. After he died and was buried, he came back to life, he rose again. He proved that he is God, and that he is big enough for everyone. (John 13:31-32). The Kingdom of God is different from any other kingdom. It is not a country on this planet you can visit whenever you want. The kingdom of God is wherever Jesus is. That means that if Jesus lives in your heart, the Kingdom of God is in you! (Luke 17:21). Having Jesus in our hearts is like having a passport. He allows us to enter into the kingdom of God, into Heaven. Without Jesus dying for our sins and then living again in us, we would not be able to be forgiven of our sins, we would not be able to spend forever with God. If we do not have Jesus living in us, that means we will be punished forever by spending forever away from God, in Hell. We have to believe in Jesus and follow him so we can inherit the kingdom of God. This means we have to follow Jesus so we can be forgiven of our sins and go to Heaven. As citizens of the kingdom of God, we have a very important job to do: we get to tell everyone else about how great Jesus is! (Luke 9:2, Acts 28:31.) When we are citizens of the kingdom of Heaven, we are like travelers to wherever we live, and God wants us to get as many people as we know to follow Jesus and be members of the kingdom of God! So to sum up, our Bible seed is: I am a member of the kingdom of God when I follow King Jesus. I get to tell everyone about Jesus and live with him forever in Heaven!

Parents, today your child was given an opportunity to accept Christ as their savior. If your child did so today, celebrate with them and talk about this big decision. If you have yet to accept Jesus as your savior and king, there is no better time than now! Pray that God would forgive you of your sins and that the Spirit would lead you in life so you can be with King Jesus forever in heaven. And then start living as a citizen of Heaven!

BigHeart Farms, Where God's Fruit Grows!

Gardening Tools: Bible Seeds, day four: The Kingdom, continued

Questions to go through with your child

- What is a kingdom?
- Who is the king of the kingdom of God?
- To what does Jesus compare the kingdom of God, and what does that mean?
- Where is the kingdom of heaven?
- How do we become members of the kingdom of God?
- If we are members of the kingdom of heaven, what does God want us to do?

Don't forget this week's Bible memory verse!

2 Peter 3:18

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

BigHeart Farms, Where God's Fruit Grows!

Gardening Tools: Bible Seeds, day five: The cross

Begin by praying and reading Galatians 5:16-26 out loud with your child.

The first day here at BigHeart farms, Galatians 5:26-26 may have seemed like a very confusing part of the Bible with a lot of big words. Now we are beginning to see the Good News of Jesus in a much clearer way. In order to please God, we have to follow the Spirit instead of our flesh. We know how to follow the Spirit because God gave us the Law. Even though we cannot follow the Law perfectly, Jesus lets us be a member of his kingdom when we follow him. Now we have one more very important detail to discuss. Galatians 5:24 says, "And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." First, let's talk some about what it means to belong to Jesus. We belong to Jesus when we believe in him and follow him. Belonging to Jesus means we are a part of his family. Families take care of each other. Jesus takes care of us, too. The Bible calls Jesus the good shepherd, (John 10:11-16.) Shepherds care for their sheep and are willing to die for their sheep. We are Jesus the Good Shepherd's sheep. Jesus cares for us and he did die for us. Jesus had to die for us so we could be with God in Heaven forever. We cannot get to Heaven or be with God on our own. We are all sinners, we are all dirty, and our perfect God will not be around sin. But God loves us so much that he sent his son Jesus to earth for us. Jesus was crucified and died for us because that is the punishment we all deserve. Now let's focus on the last part of this verse: we have crucified our flesh. We know what the flesh is. It is our sinful nature, our desire to do wrong. But what does it mean to crucify our flesh? I said earlier that Jesus was crucified for us. Jesus died on a cross for us. He died in one of the most humiliating and painful ways imaginable, and he did it willingly. Jesus was beat up, teased and had a crown made of sharp thorns shoved into his head. He had nails hammered through his hands and feet and into the wood of the cross. All of his friends left him as he was dying because they were too afraid to stay. Jesus was crucified and went through all of that for you and me. He was tortured to death and left alone by his friends because he loves you and wants to be with you forever. He knew that was the only way to make up for our sins, to wash them away like it never happened. This is a very sad story, but thankfully it doesn't end here! After he was dead and buried for three days, Jesus came back to life! Jesus can now live forever in our hearts if we let him. Jesus was willing to get dirty and take our punishment so we could be clean and sinless before God. All we have to do to be with God forever is crucify our flesh. Now this does NOT mean we get nailed to a cross. It means that we have to give up following our sinful nature. We have to believe Jesus was crucified and came back to life for us and we have to follow him with our lives. We have to live by the Spirit.

BigHeart Farms, Where God's Fruit Grows!

Gardening Tools: Bible Seeds, day five: The cross, continued

Parents, today your children were given a chance to accept Jesus as their savior. If they made that commitment today, be sure to rejoice with them! If you have yet to make that decision in your own life, take the time to think about all that Christ has done for you. Out of his love for you, Jesus died. He alone has the power to save you from Hell and death. Only Jesus can forgive you of your sins and let you live with God forever. All he asks for is your life. All you have to do is accept that Jesus died for you and pray that God would forgive you of your sins and lead you with his Holy Spirit. Let every day be a day to glorify and live for God.

Questions to go through with your child:

- What does it mean to belong to Jesus?
- Who is the Good Shepherd?
- What do shepherds do?
- Why did Jesus have to die for us?
- How did Jesus die?
- What happened to Jesus after he died?
- What do we have to do to live with God forever?

Don't forget this week's Bible memory verse!

2 Peter 3:18

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

BigHeart Farms, Where God's Fruit Grows!

Gardening Tools: Fruit Stands: Love

Definition: Love is not just a warm fuzzy feeling we have for other people, it is something we do. Love is putting the needs and wants of other people before our own. Love is sacrificing what you want and need so others can have what they want and need.

Bio: The story of Ruth shows love. Ruth left her homeland and everything she knew behind to follow her mother-in-law to a foreign country. Ruth loved Naomi, so she worked hard every day to make sure they would have enough food.

Bible verse: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." John 15:12

Jesus: Jesus loves us so much, that he came down from Heaven and became a human. He lived a life full of love, teaching others how to love. Then to show us how much he loves us, he died in our place on the cross, dying for our sins so we can be with him forever in Heaven.

Application: Ask your child how they will work on showing others love.

Discuss these points, as well as the following verses on love:

- 1 Corinthians 13
- 1 John 4:7-21
- John 3:16

BigHeart Farms, Where God's Fruit Grows!

Gardening Tools

Fruit Stands: Joy

Definition: more than being happy, Christians are filled with joy when they are living the way God wants us to. Joy is being glad no matter what is happening in our lives. Being glad and knowing that God is in control no matter what is happening in our lives. When we have joy in our lives, it leads us to praise God

Bio: King David was a joyful man. Even though he had many enemies who were always chasing after him and trying to kill him, David wrote many psalms that we read today, all of them praising God for how great He is.

Bible verse: "Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory." 1 Peter 1:8

Jesus: More than anyone else in all of history, Jesus faced extremely difficult circumstances. He lived a perfect life, always caring for others, but people still hated him, and he was killed for it. Still, even though Jesus knew that he would have to die on the cross and even though so many people mocked him, Jesus was full of joy. (Luke 10:21) Being joyful leads us to praise God.

Application: Ask your child how they will work on being joyful.

Discuss these points, as well as the following verses on joy:

- Psalm 43:3-4
- Psalm 66:1
- Habakkuk 3:17-19
- Luke 2:8-14
- James 1:2-4

How to make the Farmer's Almanac

The farmer's almanac is a useful guide that children can fill in at the end of each large group discussion to help them remember the Bible seed. By the end of the week, these books can help them remember and present the Gospel to their friends. Each almanac only requires one sheet of paper. I suggest that you get a group of willing volunteers to help fold and cut these ahead of time so you do not use time during VBS folding them with the kids. Their time at BigHeart Farms could be better spent learning more about God.

1. Print the appropriate number and types of almanacs for your children. There are multiple designs suited for different age levels.
2. Fold paper short side to short side with the words facing out.
3. Unfold. Fold Each short side in to center, lining it up with the crease you just made. The words should be facing out.
4. Unfold. Fold in half long side to long side.
5. Unfold. Fold in half short side to short side. (Just like in step two.)
6. Cut along dotted line. (From the crease to the middle of the paper.)
7. Unfold. Fold long side to long side. Bring your hands together, causing the short sides to come together and make a plus sign, opening up the cut you just made.
8. The cover should be facing you, in your right hand. Fold the pages in toward it, moving them clockwise. Crease together. Your pages should be in this order: cover, the Spirit, the flesh, the Law, the Kingdom, the Cross, and the Fruit of the Spirit. The back page should be blank.
9. That's it! Pass these out to the children on the first day, and let their group leaders hold on to them throughout the week. The students can take them home on the last day.

Templates provided in another document.