

# Unit 1: Fruits of the Spirit

## Lesson 1.8: Fruits of the Spirit – GENTLENESS (Meekness)

### Teacher Preparation and Materials Needed:

### Scriptural Reference:

### Activities:

*\*Choose based on time available. Instructions and supplies listed below.*

Activity 1: Gentleness Skits

Activity 2: Science meets Scripture: “Soft Answers” Experiment

### Words of the week:

հեզուրթիւն - hez-oo-toon - gentleness/meekness

կոպիտ go-bid - rude

հանգիստ han-keesd - calm

### Objective:

Children will understand that gentleness is not weakness but strength under control. They will learn that gentleness is shown through soft words, calm actions, and kind hearts, even when others are angry or unfair. Gentleness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, and we grow it by staying close to God.

### Moral Character Focus:

**Knowledge:** Children will learn that gentleness means using kind, calm words and actions even when situations are difficult.

**Understanding:** Children will understand that being gentle doesn't mean being weak. It means choosing peace over fighting, love over yelling, and calm over anger.

**Application:** Children will practice ways to respond gently in everyday life: when someone is mean, when they feel frustrated, or when someone makes a mistake.

**Values:** Children will desire to become gentle like Jesus, trusting the Holy Spirit to help them speak and act with kindness and peace.

### Memory Verse:

“Let your gentleness be known to all men.”

- Philippians 4:5

# Lesson

## Open with prayer:

Իմաստութիւն Յօր՝ Յիսուս, տո՛ւր ինձ իմաստութիւն, զբարիս խորհել եւ խօսել եւ գործել առաջի Քն՝ յամենայն ժամ. ի չար խորհրդոց, ի բանից եւ ի գործոց փրկեա՛ զիս. եւ ողորմեա՛ Քն արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն:

Eemasdootyoon Hor Heesoos, door eents eemasdootyoon uzparees khorel yev khosel yev kordz arachi ko hamenayn jham. Ee char khorhrtos, paneets yev kordzots prgya zees yev voghormya ko aradzots eents pazmameghees. Amen.

Wisdom of the Father, O Jesus, grant to me the wisdom to think, speak, and do that which is good in Your sight. Save me from all evil and distracting thoughts, words, and deeds. Have mercy upon your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.

*\*Wisdom Prayer, written by St. Nersess the Grace-filled (Shnorhali).*

## Lesson Body: Fruits of the Spirit - GENTLENESS (MEEKNESS)

Have you ever felt so mad that you wanted to yell or push? Maybe someone was mean to you, or a sibling took your toy. That feeling is real and at times it can feel powerful, but God gives us something stronger than anger. He gives us gentleness.

### What is Gentleness?

Gentleness, also known as meekness, means staying calm and kind, even when you feel like shouting or getting upset. It's not weakness at all. It's having real strength and choosing to use it with love. Gentleness shows up when someone is rude to you and you respond with a soft voice. It's when you could hurt someone's feelings, but instead you choose to be kind. Imagine carrying a full glass of water without spilling it. You move slowly and carefully, paying attention to every step. That's how we should treat our words and actions; with care and respect. Gentleness is the way Jesus treated people. He was full of love, even when others were angry or hurting.

### Jesus and Gentleness

Jesus was meek, even with people who were rude or unkind. He didn't yell at His enemies. He didn't hit those who hurt Him. On the cross, He said, *"Father, forgive them."* That's the strongest kind of gentleness in the world.

### A Story of Gentleness: Monk Hovakim and the Angry Man

High in the quiet mountains of Armenia lived a humble monk named Hovakim. People in nearby villages often spoke of him not because he was famous, but because he was deeply kind and understanding. Wherever he went, peace seemed to follow.

One icy winter day, the peaceful silence of the monastery was shattered. BAM! BAM! BAM! Someone was pounding on the monastery doors.

"Open up!" a man shouted. "I've been robbed! The thieves must be hiding in there!" His voice roared like thunder. His face was red. His fists were clenched. Snow blew wildly around him, but his anger burned hotter than the storm.

Inside, the monks were frightened. Some whispered, "Should we hide?" Others thought about calling for help. But Monk Hovakim stayed calm. Without a word, he walked slowly to the door and opened it.

The angry man stormed in, eyes blazing. "Where are they?" he shouted. "Where are the thieves?"

But Hovakim didn't argue. He didn't raise his voice. With steady eyes and a gentle voice, he said, "You must be cold and upset. Come sit by the fire. I'll bring you tea. Then you can tell me everything."

The man froze. No one had ever answered his anger with kindness.

### Words of the Week:

հեզուրթիւն - hez-oo-toon -  
- gentleness/meekness

կոպիտ go-bid - rude  
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### Memory Verse:

**“Let your gentleness be  
known to all men.”**

**- Philippians 4:5**



Slowly, his shoulders dropped. His hands opened. His face softened. He sat down on the wooden bench, and Monk Hovakim placed a warm cup in his hands. While the man spoke, Monk Hovakim listened with patience. He didn't interrupt. He didn't accuse. He simply listened with care.

When the man finished, Monk Hovakim said gently, "I'm truly sorry for what happened, but I assure you there are no thieves here. Only travelers, like you, who are seeking rest." Then he added, "Would you like to pray with me?"

Surprised again, the man nodded. They went into the chapel. And as they prayed, the storm outside faded, and so did the storm inside the man's heart. When they stood up, the man's eyes were full of tears. "I'm sorry," he whispered. "Your gentleness showed me more strength than my shouting ever did."

He never found the thieves that day, but he found something better: peace.

That's the quiet power of gentleness. It turns loud storms into soft prayers, and strangers into friends.

## Gentleness in Church Life

During the Divine Liturgy, we don't rush or shout. We move slowly, sing softly, and bow our heads. That teaches us gentleness. When we greet others with the Kiss of Peace, we gently say, "*Christ is revealed among us,*" and the response is, "*Blessed is the revelation of Christ.*" These are soft, beautiful words of love.

## Gentleness in Our Lives

Meekness doesn't mean being weak. It means having the strength to stay calm, even when you feel hurt, frustrated, or angry. It's choosing kindness when it would be easier to yell or push back. Just like Jesus stayed gentle when others were cruel to Him, we can learn to carry peace in our hearts, especially when things go wrong.

Here's how we can practice gentleness every day:

- When someone is mean, instead of yelling back or getting even, we can say with calm words: "Please don't do that. It hurt me." This shows strength and respect not just for others, but for ourselves too.
- Before reacting, we can pause. Take a deep breath. Whisper a prayer: "Lord, help me be gentle like You." That short moment can change what happens next.
- When someone makes a mistake or says something unkind, we can choose to forgive instead of fight. Gentleness makes room for healing instead of hurt.
- If someone else is upset, we can be the calm in the storm. Sit with them. Listen. Say something comforting. Gentleness helps others feel safe and loved.
- Every time we act with gentleness, we become more like Christ and we bring peace into a world that really needs it.

## Why Gentleness Is Important

1. Gentleness stops fights
  - Proverbs 15:1 says, *“A gentle answer turns away anger, but a harsh word stirs up more anger.”*
  - Think about it: If someone yells at you and you yell back, what happens? The fight gets bigger!
  - But if you speak calmly and kindly, the other person often calms down too.
2. Gentleness shows you’re strong
  - Anyone can yell. Anyone can hit. Anyone can be mean.
  - But staying calm? Being kind when you’re mad? That takes real strength.
3. Gentleness shows people Jesus
  - When you’re gentle, people see Jesus in you.
  - Your kindness tells others about God’s love.
4. Gentleness keeps friendships strong
  - Mean words break friendships.
  - Gentle words make them stronger.

## What Does Gentleness Look Like? (optional)

Let’s talk about real life. When can you be gentle?

1. When someone is mean to you:
  - Say calmly: *“That hurt my feelings. Please don’t do that.”*
  - Take deep breaths before you answer
  - Choose to forgive instead of fighting back
2. When you’re really mad:
  - Walk away for a minute
  - Count to ten slowly
  - Pray: *“Jesus, help me be calm”*
  - Talk about it later when you’re not so upset
3. When your brother or sister annoys you:
  - Use a calm voice, not a mean voice
  - Tell them what you need without yelling
  - Remember that God loves them just like He loves you
4. When you’re right and someone else is wrong:
  - Tell the truth, but say it nicely
  - Don’t say *“I told you so”*
  - Help them without making them feel bad
5. Every day:
  - Close doors quietly instead of slamming them
  - Say *“please”* and *“thank you”*
  - Be patient with people who are having a hard time
  - Pet animals gently

## Activity 1: Gentleness Skits

**Objective:** Let students roleplay common situations where they can choose gentleness.

**Materials:**

- Scenario cards (you create 5 - 8 based on your lesson):
- “Your friend calls you a mean name”
- “Your brother won’t stop poking you”
- “You got blamed for something you didn’t do”
- “You want the last cookie, but someone else takes it”
- Simple props (optional)

**Instructions:**

1. Divide the class into small groups.
2. Each group draws a scenario card.
3. They act out two versions:
4. One without gentleness (what often happens)
5. One with gentleness (how Jesus would want us to act)
6. Discuss which felt better and why.

## Activity 2: Science meets Scripture: “Soft Answers” Experiment

**Objective:** Show how a gentle response can “diffuse” conflict.

**Materials:**

- Baking soda + vinegar (representing anger + anger)
- Oil + water (representing difference without gentleness)
- Sugar in warm tea (gentle words dissolving into peace)

**Discussion:**

1. When vinegar hits baking soda, what happens? BOOM! Like shouting back in a fight.
2. What happens when oil and water are shaken? They stay separated—just like people do when they don’t respond kindly.
3. What does sugar do in tea? It sweetens it.

**Verse tie-in:** “A gentle answer turns away wrath...” (Prov. 15:1)

# Review

## Memory Verse Review:

*“Let your gentleness be known to all men.” (Philippians 4:5)*

## Words of the Week Review:

հեզուութիւն - hez-oo-toon - gentleness/meekness

կոպիտ go-bid - rude

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## Lesson Review:

### Questions:

1. What does it mean to be gentle? *(To be kind and calm, even when things are hard)*
2. Is gentleness the same as weakness? *(No, gentleness is strong love and peace)*
3. Who helps us grow in gentleness? *(The Holy Spirit)*
4. What did St. Nerses do when the soldier was angry? *(He spoke calmly, listened, and helped him find peace)*
5. What does Philippians 4:5 say? *(“Let your gentleness be known to all men”)*
6. How can we be gentle when someone is unkind? *(Stay calm, speak kindly, forgive)*

## Life Application

### ***What are we going to do with what we have learned today?***

Gentleness isn't just something we learn about. It's something we live. This week, whenever you feel upset, hurt, or frustrated, stop and take a breath. Ask Jesus to help you respond with a soft voice and a kind heart, just like He did. Whether it's talking gently to a sibling, forgiving a friend, or helping someone who is upset, every gentle choice you make brings peace to the people around you. Gentleness turns small moments into powerful ways to show God's love.

*\* Departing Prayer, written by St. Nerses the Grace-filled (Shnorhali).*

### **Close with prayer:**

**Պահապան ամենայնի Քրիստոս, աջ Քո հովանի լիցի ի վերայ իմ, ի տուէ եւ ի գիշերի, ի նստիլ ի տան, ի գնալ ի ճանապարհ, ի ննջել եւ ի յառնել, զի մի երբեք սասանեցայց եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն**

**Bahaban amenayn Kreesdos, ach Ko hovanee leetsee ee vera eem; ee dveh yev ee keesheree, ee nsdeel ee dan, ee knal ee janabarh, ee nunchel yev ee harnel, zee mee yerpek sasanetsayts yev vog-hormya Ko araradzots yev eents pazmamyghees. Amen.**

**O Christ, guardian of all, let Your right hand guard and shelter me, by day and by night, at home and abroad, in sleeping and in waking, that I may never stumble. Have mercy upon Your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.**