

Class Title: Fruit of the Spirit Manners Class

Teacher Name: Raychel Koons (raychelkoons@gmail.com)

Grade(s) Taught: 7th and 8th

Course Foundations

- **Objective of Course:** To equip middle-grade students with practical, modern social etiquette/manners rooted in biblical character. Students will learn that good manners are not rigid, outdated rules, but active expressions of respect, empathy, and leadership that build strong relationships and honor God.
 - **Class Scripture Theme:** *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."* — Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV)
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Class 1: First Impressions & Digital Spaces

- **Sub Topic:** Confident greetings and polite online communication
- **Scripture:** *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."* — John 13:34 Discuss which fruits of the spirit apply.
- **Resource/Curriculum Used:** [TpT: Cyberbullying & Online Safety Scenarios](#) framework for evaluating digital footprints and texting habits.
- **Whole Group Instruction:** Begin with an opening prayer. Read John 13:34 aloud. Discuss how looking someone in the eye and offering a warm greeting is a direct way to make them feel loved and valued. Transition to the digital space: explain the "Three-Second Rule" (pausing before hitting send to check if text tone is kind or passive-aggressive).
- **Small Group/Partner Work: The Greeting Gauntlet.** Split the class into two lines facing each other. Students step forward to face a peer, make eye contact, deliver a firm handshake or respectful wave/nod, introduce themselves, and step back. Rotate the lines so every student meets.
- **Individual Work:** Students analyze and write reflections on a digital communication scenario card from the *Online Safety Scenarios* set, diagnosing how a digital message could be misinterpreted.

- **Whole Group Review and Prayer:** Review the connection between eye contact and showing love. Close with a prayer asking for the courage to greet others boldly and protect people's feelings online this week.
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Class 2: The Art of Conversation

- **Sub Topic:** Active Listening and Disagreements
 - **Scripture:** *"Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger."* — James 1:19 Discuss which fruits of the spirit apply.
 - **Resource/Curriculum Used:** [TpT: Communication Activities & Active Listening Skills Bundle](#) by Informed Decisions.
 - **Whole Group Instruction:** Opening prayer. Read James 1:19. Discuss why God designed us to listen twice as much as we speak. Teach the core mechanics of active listening: maintaining open body language, tracking with eyes, and letting a speaker finish entirely before planning your response.
 - **Small Group/Partner Work:** Use the Activity Direction Cards from the *Communication Activities Bundle*. In pairs, students practice drawing structured topics where one person must speak for one minute while the partner practices non-verbal cues and verbal tracking without interrupting.
 - **Individual Work:** Students complete the *Activity Reflection Worksheet* from the bundle, evaluating their own primary conversation bad habit (such as interrupting or letting their mind drift).
 - **Whole Group Review and Prayer:** Reiterate how attentive listening brings peace to a relationship. Conclude with a prayer asking for the patience to listen well to family and friends this week.
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Class 3: Table Manners & Self-Control

- **Sub Topic:** Table Settings and Dining Mindfulness
- **Scripture:** *"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."* — 1 Corinthians 10:31 Discuss which fruits of the spirit apply.
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- **Resource/Curriculum Used:** [TpT: Table Etiquette and Manners Bundle](#) by Practically Perfect Lessons.
 - **Whole Group Instruction:** Opening prayer. Read 1 Corinthians 10:31. Discuss how dining etiquette is an exercise in self-control to ensure the comfort of others. Present the instructional slides from the *Table Etiquette Bundle* covering basic settings and napkin placement.
 - **Small Group/Partner Work: The Messy Meal Challenge.** Give pairs a set of paper plates, plastic utensils, and napkins. Provide snacks like crackers, dip, and grapes (to check/confirm with parents in advance). Partners must practice passing food to the right, placing silverware in the "resting position" when talking, and utilizing proper utensil handles.
 - **Individual Work:** Provide the student answer sheet from the bundle's *Table Etiquette Task Cards*. Students solve the multiple-choice dining scenario questions individually to test their baseline knowledge.
 - **Whole Group Review and Prayer:** Review the "No Phones at the Table" rule. Close with a prayer thanking God for provision and asking for the self-control to prioritize people over screens during meals.
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Class 4: Gratitude & Giving

- **Sub Topic:** Gracious Receiving and Handwritten Thank-Yous
- **Scripture:** *"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."* — 1 Thessalonians 5:18 Discuss which fruits of the spirit apply.
- **Resource/Curriculum Used:** [TpT: Middle School Manners Social Skill Builders](#) by Simple in Seattle.
- **Whole Group Instruction:** Opening prayer. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Discuss how expressing gratitude generates joy. Teach the 4-step formula for a meaningful thank-you note: greet, name the specific gift/action, explain why it matters to you, and repeat the thanks.
- **Small Group/Partner Work: The Awful Gift Relay.** Using the *Manners Skill Building Cards*, partners roleplay receiving an unwanted or strange gift. They practice keeping a pleasant facial expression and genuinely thanking the giver for their time or thought, rather than complaining about the object.

- **Individual Work:** Provide each student with a physical blank thank-you card, envelope, and stamp. Every student writes a structured, handwritten appreciation letter to someone who has invested in them (a parent, pastor, coach, or co-op teacher).
 - **Whole Group Review and Prayer:** Review how a simple "thank you" honors a giver's generosity. Conclude with a prayer of thanksgiving for the people who support the students' lives.
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Class 5: Navigating Authority & Group Projects

- **Sub Topic:** Respectful Feedback and Reliable Teamwork
 - **Scripture:** *"A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."* — Proverbs 15:1 Discuss which fruits of the spirit apply.
 - **Resource/Curriculum Used:** [TpT: Conflict Resolution Print + Digital SEL Game](#) framework for communication.
 - **Whole Group Instruction:** Opening prayer. Read Proverbs 15:1. Discuss how gentleness is strength under control. Teach how to transform defensive, combative "You-Messages" into calm, respectful "I-Messages" when questioning a rule, grade, or peer teammate's behavior.
 - **Small Group/Partner Work: The Tower Disruption.** Divide the class into teams of 3 or 4. Give each team a pack of index cards to build the tallest tower in 5 minutes. Secretly assign one student per group a "difficult role" (the slacker, the bossy dictator, or the constant arguer). Afterward, debrief how groups handled the tension gently.
 - **Individual Work:** Students complete a personal conflict-escalation worksheet from the *SEL Game* materials, tracking how small frustrations can snowball into massive group arguments if gentleness isn't used.
 - **Whole Group Review and Prayer:** Review how gentle words defuse tense moments in group work. Close with a prayer asking for faithfulness in duties and gentleness when facing frustration.
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Class 6: Inclusivity & Handling Social Drama

- **Sub Topic:** Eliminating Gossip and Practicing Inclusion

- **Scripture:** *"Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear."* — Ephesians 4:29 Discuss which fruits of the spirit apply.
 - **Resource/Curriculum Used:** [TpT: Conflict Resolution Booklet Series](#) for relational communication principles.
 - **Whole Group Instruction:** Opening prayer. Read Ephesians 4:29. Discuss how manners extend to protecting people's reputations when they are not around. Teach the concept of a "Gossip Firewall"—using simple phrases to stop a rumor in its tracks.
 - **Small Group/Partner Work: The Gossip Firewall Practice.** Using prompt sheets from the *Conflict Resolution* resources, partners practice acting out scenarios where someone is left out or talked about. Partners practice stepping in with phrases like, *"Hey, let's talk about something else,"* or *"That doesn't sound like them, let's not spread it."*
 - **Individual Work: The Rumor Shredder.** Students anonymously write down one common rumor or mean phrase they frequently hear at their age onto a strip of paper, walk up to the front, and physically run it through a paper shredder or drop it into a trash can to symbolize extinguishing gossip.
 - **Whole Group Review and Prayer:** Review the responsibility of looking out for the lonely. Close with a prayer asking for the courage to stand up for others and speak words that build up instead of tear down.
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Class 7: The Cafe Peer Celebration

- **Sub Topic:** Peer-to-Peer Hospitality and Honor
- **Scripture:** *"Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor."* — Romans 12:10 Discuss which fruits of the spirit apply.
- **Resource/Curriculum Used:** **TpT: Google Slides Dining Trivia Game** from the Class 3 Practically Perfect Lessons set.
- **Whole Group Instruction:** Opening prayer. Read Romans 12:10. Explain that today is a celebration of community where students put everything they have learned into practice. Discuss how hospitality among peers shows deep honor and care for friends.
- **Small Group/Partner Work: The Cafe.** Divide the students into two equal teams. For the first 20 minutes, Team A acts as the restaurant staff: they greet Team B, seat them at tables, take orders, and serve them refreshments with proper etiquette. Team B

practices excellent table talk and manners, leaving a written "compliment tip" for their server. Swap roles for the next 20 minutes.

- **Individual Work:** While sitting as guests, each student writes a brief card to their peer, naming one specific Fruit of the Spirit they witnessed in that person over the 7 weeks.
- **Whole Group Review and Prayer:** Read the *Dining Trivia Game* from Class 3 as a fun, quick group wrap-up challenge. Conclude the class with prayer to walk in all the fruits of the spirit by using good manners.