

SESSION 12

The Fruits

Galatians 5:16-26 • John 15:1-8

Part 1: Leader Preparation Guide

Session Overview

Discovery Aim

Gifts are the equipment; fruit is the produce, the visible evidence that the equipment is being used and the tree is alive. Participants work through Paul's two lists in Galatians 5, the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit, and notice the grammar Paul chose on purpose: works, plural, are things you DO; fruit, singular, is one thing that GROWS. In the live discovery they find the vine and the branches, and inside it a verb they have met before: the Spirit REMAINED on Jesus at the Jordan, and Jesus' one command to his branches is the same word, remain in me. The session answers the question every honest teenager eventually asks about religious people, whether all this actually changes anyone, with Paul's testable claim: rooted lives grow recognizable produce.

Catholic Touchstone

The fruits of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory; the tradition of the Church, following the ancient Latin text of Galatians, lists twelve of them (CCC 1832). Grafted onto the true vine, we can bear the fruit of the Spirit (CCC 736), and Galatians itself gives the walking orders: "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25). Apart from the vine, the branches can do nothing (CCC 2074).

What You Need to Know

The grammar is the theology. Paul writes "the WORKS of the flesh," plural: a pile of separate deeds a person commits, and any subset qualifies. Then "the FRUIT of the Spirit," singular, followed by nine facets: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Not nine fruits on a menu where you pick your strengths; one organic life with nine visible facets, the way one healthy tree shows leaf, blossom, and fruit together. As a pastoral insight, hold it this way: the Spirit tends to form an integrated life, so a person cannot indefinitely claim deep love while running on zero patience; and yet growth in particular virtues is often uneven and gradual, and unevenness is not fraud. Make the group find the singular themselves in Question 2; it lands harder discovered than announced.

Nine or twelve, and the honesty pattern holds. The Greek text of Galatians 5:22-23 lists nine. The ancient Latin translation lists twelve, adding generosity, modesty, and chastity, and the Catechism's traditional list follows the Latin (CCC 1832). This is the third time this study has hit a count question, after the six-or-seven gifts and the two three-thousands, and the same policy applies: tell the truth immediately, and the truth is undramatic. The Latin tradition unpacked three of the Greek terms into their near neighbors; nothing was invented, and the reality being described, one Spirit-grown life, was never a matter of arithmetic. Spend the credibility you have banked; by now the group trusts the study precisely because it tells them these things first.

Fruit takes seasons. Nobody plants an orchard Tuesday and picks fruit Friday. The fruit metaphor carries a timescale teens badly need: growth is slow, mostly invisible, seasonal, and dependent on staying planted. A candidate who prays for patience and blows up Thursday has not disproven the

Spirit; they have described week one of an orchard. This also defuses the post-Confirmation crash before it happens: the sacrament plants and waters; the produce is measured in seasons, not weekends.

The remain thread. The live discovery is John 15, and buried in it is the study's favorite verb. The Spirit descended and REMAINED on Jesus (John 1:32, the sign the Baptist was told to watch for); Jesus' one command to the branches is the same Greek verb, *meno*: REMAIN in me, abide in me. The Spirit remains on Christ; the Christian remains in Christ; and fruit is what grows at that address and nowhere else. If a participant catches the verb, the study's architecture has paid out again; the answer box hands it over if nobody does.

For the parents in the room. Tonight's steelman quotes the objection every parent has heard from a teenager or thought themselves: plenty of unbelievers are kinder than churchgoers. Do not flinch from it and do not let the room flinch; the answer concedes real natural goodness, and the concession is Catholic doctrine, not diplomacy. The distinctive claim is narrower and stronger than "Christians are nicer," and parents who absorb tonight's version of it will be better equipped for their kitchen-table apologetics than by any amount of defensiveness.

Old Testament Roots and Fulfillment

- Psalm 1:1-3 (the man who delights in the law of the LORD is a tree planted by streams of water, yielding fruit in its season): the Bible's first page of songs already measures a life by planting, seasons, and produce.
- Israel as God's vine (Psalm 80, Isaiah 5) stands behind John 15: when Jesus says "I am the TRUE vine," he is claiming to be, in himself, the faithful Israel the old vine failed to be, and grafting his people into himself.
- Ezekiel 36:26-27, the study's Session 4 memory verse, is the mechanism under tonight: fruit grows outside because the Spirit was put WITHIN.

Voices of the Church

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Augustine of Hippo (*Homilies on the First Letter of John*)

St. Augustine compressed the fruit-borne life into five famous words: love, and do what you will. He did not mean that anything goes; he meant the opposite, that a heart truly rooted in the love of God can be trusted with freedom, because what grows from that root will be good: if you keep silence, silence out of love; if you correct, correct out of love. The root determines the produce. Get the root right, Augustine says, and the branches will take care of themselves.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. John Chrysostom (*Commentary on Galatians*)

St. John Chrysostom, expounding Galatians, noticed Paul's grammar before your group does: Paul says WORKS of the flesh but FRUIT of the Spirit, and Chrysostom drew the contrast: evil deeds are wrought from ourselves, while the good grown in a believer is the Spirit's fruit, not our unaided product. The inventory-and-harvest wording that follows is this study's gloss on his point: what we manufacture is inventory; what the Spirit grows is harvest.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Thérèse of Lisieux *(Story of a Soul)*

St. Thérèse, a Doctor of the Church who died at twenty-four, found her whole vocation inside tonight's subject, writing in Manuscript B of *Story of a Soul*: in the heart of the Church, my Mother, I will be love. Her sanctity was made almost entirely of fruit borne in hidden, ordinary places: patience with the sister whose habits irritated her, kindness with no audience, joy held onto in a long illness. No missions, no miracles in her lifetime, no platform: just the produce of a life that never left the vine. She is proof that the fruit list is a real job description, achievable at any age, in any hallway.

Catechism Connection

- **CCC 736.** By the power of the Spirit, God's children can bear fruit; he who has grafted us onto the true vine will make us bear the fruit of the Spirit.
- **CCC 1832.** The fruits of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory; the tradition of the Church lists twelve.
- **CCC 2074.** "Apart from me you can do nothing": united to the vine, we bear much fruit; cut off, nothing.

Thread Watch

The meno payoff. When John 15 is found, listen for anyone connecting "abide/remain" to the Spirit remaining on Jesus (Session 5). Confirm it fully if caught; the answer box delivers it otherwise. From tonight, the group should hear "remain" as this study's verb: the Spirit remains on the Head; the members remain in Him; the fruit follows the remaining.

One session of story left before the summit of Part IV. Next week is Witnesses: what the equipment and the produce are FOR, plus sponsors and saint names, the session with the most direct practical payload for candidates' actual preparation. The week after is the Rite, and the sealed pages come home. Remind households at the door, casually, to make sure Take-Home 1 is still findable and still sealed. Watch the reaction; it will tell you who has peeked.

Session Goals

1. Participants can state the works-versus-fruit grammar and why the singular matters.
2. Participants can name at least five facets of the fruit from memory by the end of the night.
3. Participants have found the vine themselves, and the remain verb has been connected across the study.
4. The group has faced the "this is just being nice, no Spirit required" objection at full strength, with natural goodness honestly conceded.
5. Each household has chosen its one fruit for the week and knows the practice.

Time Note

Full plan runs about 75 minutes. To land at 60, make these cuts and no others: drop Win question 1 (keep question 2), skip the Dig Deeper box on Psalm 1, and present the steelman objection yourself in one minute rather than building it with the group. Never cut the grammar question, the vine discovery, or the household fruit-choosing; those carry the session.

Part 2: Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer

Leader: *Come, Holy Spirit, Gardener of every soul in this room. You do not decorate lives; You grow them. Show us tonight the difference between what we manufacture and what You harvest, and plant us so deep in the true Vine that fruit becomes inevitable. We are done performing. We would rather grow. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Win: Opening Questions

Parent and candidate pairs. Two minutes each question, then a few pairs share with the table.

1. Have you ever grown anything, a garden, a houseplant, a sourdough starter, anything alive? What did it actually require of you?
2. Who is the most genuinely good person you know personally, not famous, known to you? What is it like to be around them?

Build: Into the Text

Scene One: Two Lists (Galatians 5:16-26)

Households read this at home. Have verses 16-23 read aloud now, both lists, unhurried.

Question 1. Start with the first list, the works of the flesh, and resist the urge to rush past it. Paul's catalog runs from the obvious (immorality, drunkenness) to the churchy (enmity, strife, jealousy, dissension, party spirit). Which items on this list are the ones religious people are most tempted to treat as not really counting, and what is Paul doing by filing them with the others?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Let the room say it: the respectable sins. Enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, dissension, factions, envy, the works of the flesh that thrive in parishes, group chats, and families, wearing better clothes than the obvious ones. Paul files the feud with your cousin in the same catalog as the sins everyone gasps at, and he means the filing: flesh is flesh, whether it looks like a party or a grudge. For a room of teens and parents preparing for a sacrament, the list is a mirror before it is a weapon; the instruction "walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh" is addressed to us, about our own catalog, before it is ammunition about anyone else's.

Question 2. Now the second list, and read verse 22 with a magnifying glass. Paul called the first list "the WORKS of the flesh." What exact word does he use for the Spirit's list, and is it singular or plural? Nine things follow it. Why does the grammar matter?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

"The FRUIT of the Spirit is": fruit, singular, one word governing nine facets. Works are deeds, plural, separate, manufactured, done and done with; any assortment qualifies. Fruit is one organic growth showing nine faces, the way one healthy tree carries leaf and blossom and fruit as a single life. Two consequences worth pressing, as pastoral wisdom rather than iron law. First, no menu: you do not get to claim love while permanently excusing yourself from patience; the Spirit grows an integrated life, even though particular virtues ripen unevenly and at different speeds. Second, no

manufacturing: you can DO a kind act with gritted teeth, and it counts for something, but kindness as FRUIT is what comes out of you when you are not performing, at 11 p.m., with family, when tired. Works are what we produce; fruit is what we become. St. John Chrysostom saw the same grammar sixteen centuries ago: what we manufacture is inventory; what the Spirit grows is harvest.

Question 3. Count the facets in verses 22-23 as your Bible prints them: nine. The Church's traditional list (CCC 1832) has twelve: generosity, modesty, and chastity join the nine. Third time this study has hit a counting question. Based on the first two times, what do you predict the honest answer is, and does the difference change what Paul is describing?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

The group should be able to predict the shape of the answer by now, which is itself the point. The Greek text lists nine; the ancient Latin translation the Western Church prayed with for centuries renders the list as twelve, unpacking some of the Greek terms into near neighbors (goodness opening into generosity, self-control into modesty and chastity), and the Catechism's traditional list follows that Latin heritage. Nothing was smuggled in; a fuller wording of the same life was handed down. And no, the count changes nothing Paul is describing, because he was never doing arithmetic: fruit is singular, one Spirit-grown life, and whether you describe its facets with nine words or twelve, the tree is the same tree. Give the room its due: they have now watched this study handle six-or-seven, three-thousand-and-three-thousand, and nine-or-twelve the same way, truth first. That habit is itself a fruit; its name is faithfulness.

Scene Two: Live Discovery

Do not announce the passage. Read the clue and let the tables hunt. Allow three or four minutes; if they stall, tell them it was spoken between the supper and the garden, then that this study has visited that night twice before.

DIG DEEPER

The clue. *"A vine, a vinedresser, and branches: some pruned to bear more, some gathered and burned. And one command, the same word over and over and over: stay. Find the vine."*

When found, have the discovering table read John 15:1-8 aloud, slowly.

Question 4. Jesus gives the branches exactly one job: "Abide in me." Everything else, fruit included, is promised as a consequence. What does abiding actually consist of for a person, practically? And verse 5 makes a claim about the alternative: "apart from me you can do nothing." Nothing is a strong word. What kind of nothing does he mean?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Abiding is staying connected where the sap flows, and for a Christian the connection points are not mysterious: prayer that actually happens, the sacraments actually received, his words actually dwelling in you (verse 7), his people actually yours. Not heroics; residence. The branch's whole contribution is not leaving. And the "nothing" of verse 5 is precise: not "you can accomplish no

tasks," since obviously the severed can still build careers and win trophies, but "you can bear no FRUIT," nothing of the kind tonight is about, nothing that lasts into eternal life. A cut branch can be useful; it cannot be alive. One more thing, and let a participant find it if they can: the verb translated "abide" or "remain" is *meno*, and this study has met it before, at the Jordan, where the Baptist was told the sign of the Christ was the Spirit descending and REMAINING on him. The Spirit remains on the Vine; the branches remain in the Vine; and fruit grows at that address and nowhere else. The study's favorite verb turns out to be the Christian life's foundational instruction, the root from which the rest, keeping his commandments, loving one another (verses 9-17), grows.

The Push-Back: Nice Without God

Build the objection at full strength before answering it. Ask the group to make it as strong as they can with you; every teenager in the room has heard it or thought it.

The objection. Look at the fruit list: love, kindness, patience, self-control. Aristotle taught these four centuries before Christ and never met the Holy Spirit. Every culture prizes them; every decent scout troop produces them. And be honest about the field data: plenty of atheists and Buddhists and nones are visibly kinder, calmer, and more patient than plenty of weekly communicants, some of whom are on this list's FIRST catalog by Wednesday. If ordinary human decency produces this fruit reliably, and religious observance demonstrably fails to guarantee it, then calling character "fruit of the Spirit" is the Church stamping her logo on produce she did not grow. Virtue is human. The theology is packaging.

Question 5. The field data is real, so start by conceding what a Catholic actually must concede, which is more than people expect. Then find the actual claim of Galatians 5, which is narrower and stranger than "Christians are nicer," and test it against the hardest cases: what does this fruit look like under pressure that natural virtue cannot explain?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Concede generously, because the concessions are doctrine, not damage control. Natural virtue is real; Catholic tradition has always recognized genuine natural moral goodness, later integrating the best of the philosophers through St. Thomas, and grace perfects nature rather than replacing it. The unbeliever's genuine kindness is genuinely good, honored by God, and no Catholic may sneer at it. And the scandal of nasty churchgoers is not a gotcha we must dodge; Scripture itself files enmity, strife, and factions under works of the flesh precisely because Paul found them in churches. Now the actual claim, which was never "religious people are nicer." Galatians 5 claims something about SOURCE and SHAPE. Source: fruit is what grows from a life rooted in the Spirit, so the claim is only testable the way orchards are tested, from inside, over seasons, by planting; sampling strangers' behavior tests niceness, not roots. Shape: the fruit's full profile is not generic decency but the character of CHRIST under load, and at the extremes the difference shows: love of enemies, actually willed, for the persecutor by name; joy inside suffering, not despite it; peace while the cost is being paid; the martyrs forgiving their executioners with their remaining breath. Prudent natural virtue, as the philosophers honestly described it, does not counsel dying with a blessing for your killers; the SHAPE of that fruit is Christ's own, and while outward acts alone can never prove their supernatural source, God being free to give grace beyond all visible borders, the shape keeps recurring where people abide in the Vine, from Stephen to the present tense. The honest remainder, named plainly: you cannot prove the Spirit from the outside by behavior audit, and tonight does not claim to; the claim of Galatians 5 is an invitation with a growing season attached: remain in the Vine and inspect your own harvest in a year. It is falsifiable only by people willing to plant. That is

not a weakness of the claim. That is what claims about living things are like.

DIG DEEPER

Psalm 1:1-3. If time allows: the very first psalm measures a life exactly as tonight does: a tree planted by streams of water, yielding its fruit IN ITS SEASON. Planted, watered, seasonal. Anyone discouraged that their patience did not arrive this week is invited to notice that Scripture's own growth chart is marked in seasons, and to stay planted.

One Last Glimpse

Read Acts 1:8 aloud yourself, without introduction.

Jesus, in his last recorded sentence before ascending, tells them: you shall receive POWER when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my WITNESSES, in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Say only this, and then stop: sealed, gifted, growing fruit, and all of it, according to Jesus' final sentence, is FOR something, with an address list attached that ends at the end of the earth. Next week: what all of this is for, and the two helpers the Church gives every candidate for the road, one of whom is already in heaven.

Send: Closing Questions

1. Look back at the works list with the mirror rule: which respectable work of the flesh is the one your own week actually produces, and what would its opposite facet of the fruit look like grown in you?
2. The branch's one job is not leaving. What is the connection point, prayer, Mass, Scripture, this table, that you are most tempted to quietly disconnect from after Confirmation, and what would keep you attached?

Live It This Week

For every household, parent and candidate together. Tonight before leaving, choose together the ONE facet of the fruit your household most lacks right now; be honest, and let each person get a veto. Then, every day this week, each of you does one deliberate act of that facet at home, and at dinner or in the car, names what you did in one sentence, no speeches. One fruit, one act, one sentence, seven days. You are not manufacturing the fruit; you are practicing standing where it grows.

Closing Prayer

Leader: *Lord Jesus, true Vine, we have exactly one job and You have told us what it is. Keep us where the sap flows. Prune what wastes us, and let Your Father the Vinedresser find fruit on every branch at this table: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, in their season. We are staying. Amen.*

Scripture Memory Verse

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)

Part 3: Leader Reference Card

Every passage used in Session 12, in order of use. RSV2CE.

- **Galatians 5:16-26** (read at home this week; verses 16-23 aloud in session)
- **John 15:1-8** (Build, Scene Two: live discovery, the vine and the branches)
- **John 1:32** (recalled: the Spirit remained; the meno connection)
- **Psalms 1:1-3** (Dig Deeper: fruit in its season)
- **Acts 1:8** (One Last Glimpse: power, and witnesses)

Catechism: CCC 736, 1832, 2074.

Voices: St. Augustine of Hippo (Homilies on the First Letter of John); St. John Chrysostom (Commentary on Galatians); St. Thérèse of Lisieux (Story of a Soul).

Distribute at the door: Take-Home 12, one per household. Casual reminder at the door: locate Take-Home 1; keep it sealed.