

PURPOSE-LED DISCIPLESHIP

BEARING FRUIT

A Joyful Morning of Growth, Gratitude, and Generosity

Leader's Guide · Saturday 8:45 AM–12:15 PM

THE HEART OF THE EXPERIENCE

Fruit is not proof that we tried hard enough. It is the beautiful evidence of a life that keeps receiving from Christ—and it is meant to nourish more than the branch that bears it.

Purpose-Led Discipleship

Kristal Walden

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WELCOME

A short retreat with room to notice and rejoice

Bearing Fruit is a joyful Saturday-morning gathering for churches, families, friends, ministry teams, small groups, and people at any stage of faith. No one needs to have read a book or attended another experience. The retreat stands on its own while also complementing Bearing Fruit: Reflect the Character of Christ and Live a Life That Makes a Difference.

The morning makes room for honest reflection without becoming heavy or performative. Participants notice where grace is already growing, consider how the character of Christ becomes tangible in everyday relationships, and choose one way to share what God has placed in their hands.

CORE DECLARATION

Christ is the Vine. We are the branches. Fruit grows from abiding, brings glory to the Father, blesses other people, and carries seed for what may grow next.

What participants should leave with

- A clearer difference between spiritual fruit, visible success, gifting, and performance.
- Gratitude for specific growth without comparison, shame, or self-congratulation.
- A practical picture of what the Spirit's fruit looks like in ordinary relationships.
- One joyful, accountable way to serve, encourage, give, or share Christ with someone else.
- A clear understanding of the gospel and a quiet opportunity to respond to Jesus.

Tone of the gathering

Let the room feel hopeful, warm, and alive. Laughter and celebration are welcome; forced enthusiasm is not. Leaders name difficulty honestly, protect private reflection, and make room for grief or slow growth without treating either as spiritual failure.

SAMPLE SATURDAY SCHEDULE

A joyful morning that releases on time

The schedule is an example and may be adapted to the host's setting, group size, and available time. Keep the three movements in order, protect the quiet gospel response near the end, and honor the promised release.

Time	Gathering	Duration
8:45–9:00 AM	Arrival, optional refreshments, and seating	15 min
9:00–9:20 AM	Welcome, worship, Scripture, community agreements, and Christ-centered foundation	20 min
9:20–10:00 AM	Movement 1: Notice What Grace Is Growing	40 min
10:00–10:20 AM	Shared celebration: Signs of Grace	20 min
10:20–10:35 AM	Refreshment and conversation break	15 min
10:35–11:15 AM	Movement 2: Let Fruit Become Something People Can Experience	40 min
11:15–11:50 AM	Movement 3: Share What Christ Has Grown	35 min
11:50 AM–12:10 PM	The gospel and a quiet, voluntary response	20 min
12:10–12:15 PM	Prayer, celebration, next step, and release	5 min

Optional refreshment idea

FUN, NOT REQUIRED

A colorful fruit tray or fruit-forward charcuterie board can make snack time feel festive. Simple crackers, cheese, nuts, or other host-appropriate foods may be added—or the host may offer ordinary refreshments instead. Food supports fellowship; it is not part of the teaching and should fit the group's budget, needs, and allergies.

A few bowls of fruit, a pitcher of water, coffee, or a familiar snack can be enough. The celebration comes from recognizing the goodness of God together, not from creating an elaborate table.

PREPARATION

Prepare for joy without manufacturing it

Room and supplies

- Bibles, Participant Workbooks, pens, index cards, and leaf- or fruit-shaped paper cards.
- A simple shared vine display, wall space, or tabletop basket for voluntary Signs of Grace cards.
- Markers, removable tape, comfortable seating, and a visible clock.
- A quiet place for private prayer and optional one-to-one leader conversation.
- Optional refreshments at arrival or during the scheduled break.
- A follow-through plan for new believers and anyone requesting prayer or support.

Community agreements

- Participants may pass, write privately, step out, or request a private conversation.
- Personal stories remain private unless safety or reporting responsibilities require help.
- Growth is celebrated without ranking stories, gifts, personalities, or visible outcomes.
- No one is pressured to describe a wound, display a response, or promise an unsafe action.
- Questions are welcome. Leaders do not pretend that every hard season has a simple explanation.

Leader posture

Model gratitude without hype. Use real examples, keep the activities moving, and resist filling every quiet moment. A participant may be celebrating, grieving, pruning, waiting, or beginning again. Fruit can grow slowly, and hidden roots may be strengthening before anything becomes visible.

OPENING WORD

We are here to notice grace, not to measure worth. We will celebrate what Christ is growing, return to Him where we are dry, and ask how His life in us can become a gift to someone else.

MOVEMENT 1 | SATURDAY 9:20–10:00 AM

Notice What Grace Is Growing

Anchor Scripture: John 15:1–8; Galatians 5:22–23 (KJV)

CENTRAL TRUTH

Fruit is evidence of life with Christ. It is not a performance the branch creates to earn His love.

Read Along teaching

Jesus does not describe the Christian life as a branch straining to look alive. He tells us to abide in Him. The branch receives before it bears. Christ is the source; the Father is the husbandman; fruit is the visible result of life that has been nourished, corrected, and kept close to the Vine.

That changes the way we look at growth. Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance are not trophies for unusually strong believers. They are the Spirit's fruit. We participate through surrender and obedience, but we do not take the credit that belongs to God.

Healthy reflection notices real change without turning it into comparison. Perhaps you pause before reacting, apologize more honestly, set a wise boundary, serve with less resentment, or trust God in a place that once ruled you with fear. Small fruit is still fruit. Hidden roots matter too. A quiet season is not proof that God has stopped working.

Where unhealthy fruit appears, conviction invites us back to Christ. Shame says, 'Hide until you are better.' Jesus says, 'Abide in me.' Today is not an inspection designed to expose failure. It is a grateful chance to recognize grace, return to the Vine, and thank God for what only He can grow.

Joyful practice • Signs of grace

Give each participant two leaf- or fruit-shaped cards. On one, write a specific way Christ has grown you; on the other, write an area where you want to remain close to Him. The first card may be placed on a shared vine display as a testimony of God's grace. The second remains private for prayer. Sharing is always voluntary, and leaders celebrate God's work without comparing stories.

Reflect or talk together

- What change in you could only be explained by God's patient grace?
- Where have you confused visible success with spiritual fruit?
- What would returning to the Vine look like in one ordinary part of your life?

Prayer

Jesus, You are the Vine and I am not my own source. Thank You for every sign of grace, including the growth no one else can see. Keep me close, correct me without shame, and grow fruit that brings glory to the Father.

ONE JOYFUL PRACTICE

Name one sign of growth aloud to God today, then thank the person whose faithful encouragement helped nourish it.

MOVEMENT 2 | SATURDAY 10:35–11:15 AM

Let Fruit Become Something People Can Experience

Anchor Scripture: Luke 6:43–45; Colossians 3:12–14; Matthew 5:16 (KJV)

CENTRAL TRUTH

Fruit becomes visible in ordinary relationships—especially when patience, kindness, truth, restraint, and repair cost us something.

Read Along teaching

Fruit is not a spiritual label we attach to ourselves. It becomes something another person can experience. Love listens. Joy refuses to let hardship have the final word. Peace steadies a room. Longsuffering stays faithful without pretending harm is harmless. Gentleness carries strength without using it to wound.

Goodness chooses integrity when no one is watching. Faithfulness keeps showing up. Meekness is strength submitted to Christ. Temperance lets feelings speak without letting them rule. This does not require a polished personality; it requires a life that keeps yielding its reactions, words, and choices to Jesus.

Some of the clearest fruit appears in repair. A sincere apology names what happened, accepts responsibility, and makes room for change. Forgiveness releases revenge to God, but it does not require instant trust, unsafe access, or denied consequences. Peace is not passivity. Wise boundaries can be part of faithful love.

The goal is not to seem pleasant in every moment. It is for Christ's character to become recognizable in the way we tell the truth, carry pressure, honor limits, serve, give, and respond when life does not go our way. The people nearest us often see that fruit first.

Joyful practice • What would fruit look like here?

In groups of three or four, choose one everyday situation: an interruption, disagreement, inconvenient need, or mistake that requires repair. Name the automatic response, then imagine a response shaped by two parts of the Spirit's fruit. What would someone actually hear, see, or receive? Each group may share one practical response.

Reflect or talk together

- Which part of the Spirit's fruit do people most readily experience from you?
- Which reaction most often competes with that fruit when you are tired, hurried, or hurt?
- What apology, boundary, kindness, or act of integrity could make Christ's character more visible this week?

Prayer

Holy Spirit, form the character of Christ in my ordinary responses. Let love become action, peace become steadiness, and self-control become freedom to obey. Show me where Your fruit needs to become tangible.

ONE JOYFUL PRACTICE

Choose one situation you will enter differently this week. Write the first faithful sentence or action before you leave.

MOVEMENT 3 | SATURDAY 11:15–11:50 AM

Share What Christ Has Grown

Anchor Scripture: John 15:16; 1 Peter 4:10; 1 Corinthians 3:6–7 (KJV)

CENTRAL TRUTH

Fruit nourishes others and carries seed. We freely give what Christ grows while trusting God with the increase.

Read Along teaching

A fruitful life does not end with private improvement. Fruit is meant to bless someone. It may look like a meal, a ride, a generous gift, a protected confidence, a place at the table, patient teaching, courageous truth, a practical skill, or the full attention we give when someone needs to be heard.

Fruit also carries seed. A word of testimony can help another person recognize God's faithfulness. A simple act of service can make the love of Christ believable. A mature believer can walk beside someone who is learning how to pray, read Scripture, make wise choices, or recover after failure. Discipleship does not make people dependent on us; it helps them become rooted in Christ.

Witness includes both visible fruit and clear words. Our lives can open a door, but people still need to know the good news of Jesus. We can speak honestly about what He has done without exaggeration, pressure, or the burden of producing a response. One plants, another waters, and God gives the increase.

Faithfulness is not the same as fame. Much of the fruit that remains is carried in quiet obedience: one person encouraged, one child taught, one need noticed, one truth spoken with love, one invitation offered, one seed entrusted to God. Celebration is not a finish line. It is gratitude that gives us courage for the next faithful act.

Joyful practice • Fruit to share

Invite each participant to choose one fruit of the Spirit and one person or place that could receive it this week. Write a specific action on a card: 'I will offer patience by...', 'I will share goodness by...', or 'I will make room for a gospel conversation by...'. Participants may exchange cards with a prayer partner for encouragement or keep them private. No one is assigned another person's outcome.

Reflect or talk together

- Who has been nourished by fruit God grew in someone else? What did that look like?
- What gift, resource, testimony, or ordinary act of service is already in your hands?
- How can you point toward Christ without making yourself responsible for the harvest?

Prayer

Father, thank You for every person who planted, watered, served, and spoke truth in my life. Make me generous with what You have grown. Give me courage to love in action and speak clearly about Jesus, then help me trust You with every seed.

ONE JOYFUL PRACTICE

Complete one specific act of service, encouragement, generosity, or witness within seven days and ask God to use it beyond what you can see.

CLOSING RESPONSE

The gospel and a clear, quiet invitation

Bearing good fruit cannot save us. We do not become right with God by improving our character, serving enough people, or making our lives look fruitful. Present the gospel clearly near the end, after participants have had time to listen and understand. Offer a real invitation without using music, emotion, raised hands, public disclosure, or hurried repetition as proof of faith.

Suggested gospel explanation

God created us to know Him, but every person has sinned, and sin separates us from God. We cannot close that distance by our own goodness. Because God loves us, He sent Jesus Christ, His only Son. Jesus lived a blameless life without sin, died on the cross for all our sins, was buried, and rose again. He stood in our place and filled the gap we could never cross. Jesus is the only way to the Father, and salvation is God's gift of grace received through faith in Him.

John 14:6 (KJV): Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Romans 10:9–10 (KJV): That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Prayer is a conversation with God. It is the response of acknowledging our sin and need, confessing Jesus as Lord, accepting His gift of salvation, and receiving Christ as Savior and Lord. The prayer does not save us; Jesus saves. A person may speak honestly to God in their own words or use the prayer below.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, I believe You are God's only Son. You lived without sin, died on the cross for all my sins, and rose again. I know I have sinned and cannot make my own way to God. I turn from my sin and trust You alone. Forgive me. I accept Your gift of salvation and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Come into my life and help me follow, serve, and love You. Thank You for giving Yourself for me, standing in my place, and making the way for me to know the Father. In Jesus' name, amen.

Assurance and celebration

Confidence rests in Jesus, what He has done, and His promise—not in a particular feeling or perfect wording. Invite anyone who trusted Christ to speak privately with a leader so the church can celebrate, answer questions, pray, discuss baptism, begin reading Scripture, and connect the person with a healthy Bible-believing church. Voluntary sharing may be celebrated warmly, but no one should be put on display.

FOLLOW THROUGH

Let the celebration become a faithful next step

Before participants leave

- Complete the Fruit to Share card with one person, one action, and one realistic time.
- Choose a trustworthy prayer partner or keep the card private and place it where it will be seen.
- Give new believers a clear contact person and a simple next step in Scripture, prayer, baptism, and church community.
- Remind everyone that God is responsible for the increase; faithfulness is the next obedient step.

Within seven days

- Carry out the selected act of service, encouragement, generosity, repair, or witness.
- Thank one person whose fruit has nourished your faith.
- Follow up privately with anyone who requested prayer, pastoral care, counseling, or practical support.
- Contact each person who received Christ and help them begin walking with Jesus in a healthy church community.

After thirty days

- Gather briefly or communicate again to celebrate what God has done without judging visible outcomes.
- Ask which practice helped participants abide and which reaction still needs to be surrendered.
- Notice whether the fruit reached someone else or planted a seed for a new conversation.
- Choose one more ordinary place where the character of Christ can become tangible.

CLOSING WORD

Stay close to the Vine. Receive before you strive. Rejoice in every sign of grace. Then freely give what Christ grows, trusting the Father with every seed and every harvest.