



Making GOD Smile

11 Week Leader's Guide & Group Worksheets

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INTRODUCTION

Then, too, I need your help, for I want not only to share my faith with you but to be encouraged by yours: Each of us will be a blessing to the other.

Romans 1:12 The Living Bible

WELCOME

Welcome to the Leader's Guide for group study of *Making God Smile*, where we will learn how to match our desire to live as God intends with our everyday actions—to become more consistently faithful, self-controlled, patient, gentle, kind, loving, good, peaceful, and joy-filled. As you and your group work through the guide together, you will become more aware of your thoughts, words, and actions. As one reader summarized, “It inspired me to think more carefully about how I respond to daily challenges and to make more thoughtful choices on a consistent basis”, walking in, guided and empowered by God's Spirit.

This guide may be somewhat different from others you've seen. In this guide, you won't find completely structured questions or prepared fill-in-the-blanks. As your group studies together, you will find that one size does not fit all; something that may be important to one person, may not necessarily carry the same importance to another. The suggestions and questions you find here will be open-ended, to prompt discussion meaningful to *all* group members, wherever they are on their spiritual journey.

Because the book's goal is action, not just learning, its group study is tailored to the experience, situation, and needs of the group members. Together, we complement and inspire each other. Where one of us is weak, another is strong; where one has questions, another has answers. In this setting, the leader's role becomes not to ask a list of questions which may or may not have relevance to the entire group, but to elicit the questions that do, to lead each discussion in a way that encourages participation and ensures that all have an opportunity to contribute. God has equipped you, leader, for such a time as this.

TIMELINE

Making God Smile focuses forty days on each fruit of the Spirit, where each day looks at a different aspect and message of the fruit. So how do you fit 365 readings into a group study that will last just a few weeks?

This guide is designed for an 11-week study that gives an overview of all nine fruits. We'll spend a week on each fruit (two weeks on faithfulness), and then take a final week to review and focus on how our life has changed and will continue to change as a result of this study.

Optional Timeline: If your group is set up for a 12-week structure, consider adding a service project into the study. For example, after you study kindness (week 6), take the next group session to go out and perform random acts of kindness together in your community. Work together to decide what random acts to do. It could be as simple as visiting with an elderly neighbor or taking a care package to someone in the hospital. Take some time at the end of that night to reflect on how being kind feels and what it looks like on a daily basis.

MATERIALS

This guide provides:

- Suggested discussion questions and prayers for the group leader.
- A Table of Contents handout to help group members navigate between the different fruits.
- A Weekly Assignment Checklist showing what group members need to do before each weekly meeting.
- A Personal Statement worksheet to help group members articulate why they want to be faithful on this journey.
- Self-Assessment worksheets that members can fill out as they reflect on each week's reading.
- A Personal Action Plan worksheet to help members put what they are learning into action.

ORDER OF STUDY

Making God Smile does not present the fruits in the same order as you find them in the Bible. As explained in the book's introduction (Can I Really Make God Smile?), the fruits are arranged in a way that allows each fruit to build upon the previous one. While you can arrange a different order if your group believes it would be more beneficial, start your study with faithfulness. Without faithfulness, there will be no progress toward our goal.

GETTING STARTED

Two weeks before the first group study session, contact your group members to make sure everyone has a copy of *Making God Smile*. Remind them to bring the book to each group session, along with a Bible, a pen, and something they can write notes in. You will also need to provide each group member with the following (all included in this guide):

- Copies of all participant handouts and worksheets: the Table of Contents handout, the Personal Statement worksheet, 9 copies of the Self-Assessment worksheet (one for each fruit to be studied) and the Personal Action Plan worksheet.
- A reminder that the study will only be as successful as their participation and their commitment to complete the readings and assignments.
- Their assignment to be completed before the first group session:
 - Read the Introduction to *Making God Smile* (Can I Really Make God Smile?) and The Journey Begins (days 1 through 3).
 - Read the definition of faithfulness from day 5.
 - Read day 8 and ask yourself each question in that day's message as a self-assessment.
 - Fill out a copy of the Self-Assessment worksheet for faithfulness. You will do this for each fruit.

Finally, before you begin, pray! Pray for guidance and insight for your leadership of the study. Pray for the group members who you will be leading. Pray for open, honest, and helpful discussion. Pray God's Word will act in the lives of your group.

Now, let's get started!

LEADER'S GUIDE WEEK ONE



OPENING PRAYER

Dear Lord, We're about to embark on a journey, a journey to bring us closer to who you want us to be, a journey to bring us nearer to the life you want us to have. We thank you that you will be with us every step of the way. Help us to remember to turn to you, share with you, trust in you, and follow you. We give you our hearts Lord. May we be our best for your glory. May we always make you smile. Amen.

DISCUSSION

- In the book's Introduction and Days 1, 2, and 3, what resonated most with you?
- What questions or insights did you have as you read?
- Do you feel you're doing your best for God? Whether your answer is yes or no, will you share more about your answer with the group?
- How can your life make God smile?
- Read out-loud Galatians 5:16-17, 22-23. Is your relationship with the Holy Spirit what you want it to be? If not, how would you like it to change? What can you do to bring about that change?
- Are you consistently self-aware or do you tend to operate on auto-pilot?
- Why is self-awareness important?
- Does the definition of faithfulness that's discussed on day 5 match your definition? If not, how does it differ?
- Who's willing to share their Self-Assessment for this fruit? (If no one volunteers, you can discuss the questions on day 8 together.)

ASSIGNMENT:

If you have not already, distribute next week's assignment checklist handout provided later in this guide and go over it with your group. Remind your group that they will need to:

- Read all forty days of faithfulness (days 4-43).
- Prepare their own Personal Statement worksheet. You may also want to let them know they will be invited to read this out loud in the next group session.
- Fill out week 2 of the Personal Action Plan worksheet.

CLOSING PRAYER

We're excited and eager to begin this journey with you Lord, and to share it with each other. Thank you for your gift of newness—that no matter what has gone before, we can start fresh, and learn to truly live the fruit of your Spirit every day. Keep us aware of our thoughts, words, and actions. Help us to never again allow ourselves to run on the auto-pilot of our sinful nature. Amen.

LEADER'S GUIDE
WEEK TWO: FAITHFULNESS



OPENING PRAYER

Dear Lord, Thank you that you are faithful and that you never change. Thank you that we can count on you to be with us, hear us, guide us. You have blessed us richly. You've given and given without asking anything in return, save that we believe in you, love you, and follow you.

We believe in you Lord, and we love you. It's in following you that we so often fall short.

Thank you for never giving up on us. You know our hearts: you know we want to obey you. You also know how frequently we've forgotten to turn to you first and instead followed our sinful nature. As a result, we've created messes and then turned to you to clean them up. We want to stop doing that. Help us learn to follow you not just sometimes but at all times.

Help us to be faithful. Faithful to you, faithful to this study, faithful to each other, faithful in everything. May faithfulness become part of who we are. We want to live the fruit of your Spirit, and we acknowledge we can't do that without your help. We are weak. You are strong. Thank you that we can be strong through you.

Please empower us to stay faithful to you. Refocus us when we wander. Help us remember to seek you first in all we do. Rid us of the rotten fruit we produce and replace it with a continuous harvest of your life-giving fruit. Help us to follow you, obey you, serve you, and glorify you with our lives. Amen.

PERSONAL STATEMENTS

Take turns reading your Personal Statements out loud to the group. These statements will help group members verbalize how and why they want to be faithful to this study. Reading them out loud will help them stay accountable, but if any group member is not comfortable with sharing, invite him/her to summarize what they hope to get from this group.

DISCUSSION

To start your discussion, go around the room and take turns identifying which day's message resonated with each member the most (this could be a day, a story, or a Scripture that benefitted them the most or challenged them the most.) This is a great way to make sure each member participates by allowing everyone to recap their own reading experience. Compare and contrast the answers among the group. This time will more than likely grow into an organic discussion session. As that discussion concludes, move on to the following questions that focus on implementing the fruit throughout the next week:

- Have you found it difficult or easy to live faithfulness consistently? How can the readings for this week help you be more consistent?
- What is your one most important take-away from this week's readings?
- What specific things will you do to apply these lessons to your life? What will you do to make sure

you remember to do these things? As you discuss each other's answers to these questions, invite the group to make any additions they'd like to their Personal Action plan.

CLOSING PRAYER

Thank you Lord for this time we've had together, to share, to listen, to encourage, to walk alongside each other. Lead us, guide us in the week to come. Help us to be as faithful to you as you are to us. Amen.

ASSIGNMENT

Remind your group that they will need to:

- Review and assess their Personal Action Plan from the previous week.
- Read all forty days of self-control (days 44-83).
- Fill out a Self-Assessment worksheet for self-control. To help, they can look at day 46 and ask themselves each question in that day's message.
- Add to their Personal Action Plan for week three, listing specific things they will do to apply more self-control to their lives and to make sure they remember what they've learned.

LEADER'S GUIDE
WEEK THREE: SELF-CONTROL



OPENING PRAYER

Dear Lord, Of all the fruit of your Spirit, self-control can be the hardest to live. We have strong emotions. We feel deeply. We get caught up in the moment. Because of that, we often act based upon our feelings, without thinking or praying first. We do and say things we later regret. Afterward we think; afterward we pray. But words can't be taken back; actions can't be undone.

It's easy to follow what we feel, what we want, and what we think we need immediately. Sometimes those things shout so loudly they drown out all else. It's hard to remember that feelings, wants, and needs can be fleeting and deceptive. We need self-control to get over the hump of "right now" and on to the wisdom of consequences, long-term impacts, and true needs.

We need your Spirit guiding us, giving us the strength to listen and follow that guidance before we say and do things we'll later lament. We're eager to get started, Lord. Please give us self-control. Amen.

DISCUSSION

To start your discussion, ask if any group member is willing to share their Self-Assessment on self-control. Invite the group to review the questions on day 46 together.

To continue your discussion, go around the room and take turns identifying which day's message resonated with each member the most (this could be a day, a story, or a Scripture that benefitted them the most or challenged them the most.) This is a great way to make sure each member participates by allowing everyone to recap their own reading experience. Compare and contrast the answers among the group. This time will more than likely grow into an organic discussion session. As that discussion concludes, move on to the following questions that focus on implementing the fruit throughout the next week:

- Does the definition of self-control (see day 44) match your definition? If not, how does it differ?
- Have you found it difficult or easy to live self-control consistently? How can the readings this week help you be more consistent?
- What is your one most important take-away from this week's readings?
- What specific things will you do to apply these lessons to your life? What will you do to make sure you remember to do these things? As you discuss each other's answers to these questions, invite the group to make any additions they'd like to their Personal Action plan.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Lord, Thank you for all we've learned this week and for the progress we're making toward being who you want us to be and living the life you want us to have. As we go about our busy days, help us keep in mind what you're teaching us, and help us to truly live what we're learning. We thank you for giving us the guidance and the strength we need, for we cannot do it in our own power. We love you and we need you. Amen.

ASSIGNMENT

Remind your group that they will need to:

- Review their action plan from the previous week.
- Read all forty days of patience (days 84-123), and take special note of the definition of patience on day 84.
- Study day 85 and ask themselves each question in that day's message as a self-assessment.
- Fill out a Self-Assessment worksheet for patience.
- Add to their Personal Action Plan for this week.

LEADER'S GUIDE

WEEK FOUR: PATIENCE



OPENING PRAYER

Dear Lord, Life is filled with challenges and difficulties. When things get tough, it's tempting to get angry or give up. Please fill us with patient endurance instead.

So many things require waiting. Waiting is hard. When we want something, we want it right away. When someone or something isn't to our liking, we want change immediately.

Rather than responding with impatience, may we always seek you before we act and speak, for you have perspective that we do not. You know all things, see all things, and understand all things. We tend to see what we want to see, know so little, and understand even less. When we become impatient, remind me that impatience will not give what we truly want or need.

We are grateful, Lord, that you have perfect patience—with us and with mankind. May this fruit blossom in us, no matter what urge we feel. Help us to always pray with trust, knowing that your answer, whatever it is and whenever it may come, will be the right answer at the right time, even if the wait seems long to us. Amen.

DISCUSSION

To start your discussion, ask if any group member is willing to share their Self-Assessment on patience. If you have no volunteers, review the questions on day 85 together.

To continue your discussion, go around the room and take turns identifying which day's message resonated with each member the most (this could be a day, a story, or a Scripture that benefitted them the most or challenged them the most.) This is a great way to make sure each member participates by allowing everyone to recap their own reading experience. Compare and contrast the answers among the group. This time will more than likely grow into an organic discussion session. As that discussion concludes, move on to the following questions that focus on implementing the fruit throughout the next week:

- Does the definition of patience (see day 84) match your definition? If not, how does it differ?
- Have you found it difficult or easy to live with patience consistently? How can the readings for this week help you be more consistent?
- What is your one most important take-away from this week's readings?
- What specific things will you do to apply these lessons to your life? What will you do to make sure you remember to do these things? As you discuss each other's answers to these questions, invite the group to make any additions they'd like to their Personal Action plan.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Lord, Thank you for all we've learned this week and for the progress we're making toward being who you want us to be and living the life you want us to have. As we go about our busy days, help us keep in mind what you're teaching us, and help us to truly live what we're learning. We thank you for giving us the guidance and the strength we need, for we cannot do it in our own power. We love you and we need you. Amen.

ASSIGNMENT

Remind your group that they will need to:

- Review their action plan from the previous week.
- Read all forty days of gentleness (days 124-163), and take special note of the definition of gentleness on day 124.
- Study day 125 and ask each question in that day's message as a self-assessment.
- Fill out a Self-Assessment worksheet for gentleness.
- Add to their Personal Action Plan for this week.

LEADER'S GUIDE
WEEK FIVE: GENTLENESS



OPENING PRAYER

Dear Lord, Please help us with this fruit of gentleness. May we see it not as a weakness but as the strength it is.

Often we've taken the easy way and been harsh in our thoughts, words, and actions. We've experienced the damage this can cause. It builds walls where they shouldn't be.

Even though we don't always act with gentleness, we respond positively to it in others. It makes us feel loved, valued, cared for, understood, and grateful. Please remind us of this when we're tempted to be less than gentle. Help us treat others the way we want them to treat us. You've put the need for gentleness inside all of us and, through your Spirit, given us the ability to fulfill that need for each other.

Help us remember the truth that when we choose gentleness, we're choosing your way, and your way is always best. Grant us the strength to be gentle. Amen.

DISCUSSION

To start your discussion, ask if any group member is willing to share their Self-Assessment on gentleness. If no one volunteers, go over the questions on day 125 together.

To continue your discussion, go around the room and take turns identifying which day's message resonated with each member the most (this could be a day, a story, or a Scripture that benefitted them the most or challenged them the most.) This is a great way to make sure each member participates by allowing everyone to recap their own reading experience. Compare and contrast the answers among the group. This time will more than likely grow into an organic discussion session. As that discussion concludes, move on to the following questions that focus on implementing the fruit throughout the next week:

- Does the definition of gentleness (see day 124) match your definition? If not, how does it differ?
- Have you found it difficult or easy to live gentleness consistently? How can the readings for this week help you be more consistent?
- What is your one most important take-away from this week's readings?
- What specific things will you do to apply these lessons to your life? What will you do to make sure you remember to do these things? As you discuss each other's answers to these questions, invite the group to make any additions they'd like to their Personal Action plan.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Lord, Thank you for all we've learned this week and for the progress we're making toward being who you want us to be and living the life you want us to have. As we go about our busy days, help us keep in mind what you're teaching us, and help us to truly live what we're learning. We thank you for giving us the guidance and the strength we need, for we cannot do it in our own power. We love you and we need you. Amen.

ASSIGNMENT

Remind your group that they will need to:

- Review their action plan from the previous week.
- Read all forty days of kindness (days 164-203), and take special note of the definition of kindness on day 164.
- Study day 165 and ask each question in that day's message as a self-assessment.
- Fill out a Self-Assessment worksheet for kindness.
- Add to their Personal Action Plan for this week.

LEADER'S GUIDE
WEEK SIX: KINDNESS



OPENING PRAYER

Dear Lord, Often we struggle to be kind. We wish that weren't the case. Kindness makes helping others and meeting their needs more important than meeting our own needs, and that's not something we always feel like doing.

Please help us set aside our self-centeredness. We want to be kind people, putting you first; others, second; and ourselves, last. Too frequently we reverse that order. May we remember that it's in giving we'll receive what truly matters; it's in dying to ourselves that we will fully live.

Your Spirit can help us share the kindness that points people to you. Help us live with kindness, serving others and glorifying you. Amen.

DISCUSSION

To start your discussion, ask if any group member is willing to share their Self-Assessment on kindness. If no one volunteers, go over the questions on day 165 together.

To continue your discussion, go around the room and take turns identifying which day's message resonated with each member the most (this could be a day, a story, or a Scripture that benefitted them the most or challenged them the most.) This is a great way to make sure each member participates by allowing everyone to recap their own reading experience. Compare and contrast the answers among the group. This time will more than likely grow into an organic discussion session. As that discussion concludes, move on to the following questions that focus on implementing the fruit throughout the next week:

- Does the definition of kindness (see day 164) match your definition? If not, how does it differ?
- Have you found it difficult or easy to live with kindness consistently? How can the readings for this week help you be more consistent?
- What is your one most important take-away from this week's readings?
- What specific things will you do to apply these lessons to your life? What will you do to make sure you remember to do these things? As you discuss each other's answers to these questions, invite the group to make any additions they'd like to their Personal Action plan.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Lord, Thank you for all we've learned this week and for the progress we're making toward being who you want us to be and living the life you want us to have. As we go about our busy days, help us keep in mind what you're teaching us, and help us to truly live what we're learning. We thank you for giving us the guidance and the strength we need, for we cannot do it in our own power. We love you and we need you. Amen.

ASSIGNMENT

Remind your group that they will need to:

- Review their action plan from the previous week.
- Read all forty days of love (days 204-243), and take special note of the definition of love on day 204.
- Study day 214 and ask each question in that day's message as a self-assessment.
- Fill out a Self-Assessment worksheet for love.
- Add to their Personal Action Plan for this week.

LEADER'S GUIDE

WEEK SEVEN: LOVE



OPENING PRAYER

Dear Lord, It's time to focus on your fruit of love. Where do we even start? The immensity of this next week is overwhelming because our goal is to learn to love as you love. Your love is infinite. We can't even begin to comprehend its magnitude. You love extravagantly, lavishly. It's incredible to think we can love that way, too, if we let you lead us. Our attempts at love appear so small in comparison.

You've said the two greatest commandments are to love you with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength and to love our neighbors. So, it looks like we begin with you, God. You are love. Help us understand what that means. Make us aware of evidence of your love in every aspect of our lives. Show us what loving you with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength entails. And who is our neighbor? How do we love them as you want us to? We love you, Lord, but we want to love you even more—not just in thought, but in word and deed, in every action of our lives.

Love seems so complex and complicated, yet it's also simple and pure. Thank you for your gift of love. Amen.

DISCUSSION

To start your discussion, ask if any group member is willing to share their Self-Assessment on love. If no one volunteers, go over the questions on day 214 together.

To continue your discussion, go around the room and take turns identifying which day's message resonated with each member the most (this could be a day, a story, or a Scripture that benefitted them the most or challenged them the most.) This is a great way to make sure each member participates by allowing everyone to recap their own reading experience. Compare and contrast the answers among the group. This time will more than likely grow into an organic discussion session. As that discussion concludes, move on to the following questions that focus on implementing the fruit throughout the next week:

- Does the definition of love (see day 204) match your definition? If not, how does it differ?
- Have you found it difficult or easy to love consistently? How can the readings for this week help you be more consistent?
- What is your one most important take-away from this week's readings?
- What specific things will you do to apply these lessons to your life? What will you do to make sure you remember to do these things? As you discuss each other's answers to these questions, invite the group to make any additions they'd like to their Personal Action plan.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Lord, Thank you for all we've learned this week and for the progress we're making toward being who you want us to be and living the life you want us to have. As we go about our busy days, help us keep in mind what you're teaching us, and help us to truly live what we're learning. We thank you for giving us the guidance and the strength we need, for we cannot do it in our own power. We love you and we need you. Amen.

ASSIGNMENT

Remind your group that they will need to:

- Review their action plan from the previous week.
- Read all forty days of goodness (days 244-283), and take special note of the definition of goodness on day 244.
- Study day 255 and ask each question as a self-assessment.
- Fill out a Self-Assessment worksheet for goodness.
- Add to their Personal Action Plan for this week.

LEADER'S GUIDE
WEEK EIGHT: GOODNESS



OPENING PRAYER

Dear Lord, You began this earth with goodness and have promised you'll end it with goodness. Meanwhile, we humans have tainted it with sin.

We want to live a life of goodness, yet much within and without tempts us to fail. The forces of evil try to get the best of us. Help us defeat them with goodness, for goodness is something Satan cannot tolerate.

You, God, are absolute goodness. You've offered it to us as a fruit of your Spirit. What a gift! Yet frequently, when we've reached for it, it's slipped from our hands because they're too full of the things of this world. Other times we've dropped this gift to pick up something Satan has held out, not recognizing until too late it was from him.

You've created a world of abundant goodness. Yet we have fallen for Satan's schemes and sullied your masterpiece—just as generations before us have. Help us notice, appreciate, and foster the goodness you pour out on your world. Use us to combat the darkness that tries to, but never will, extinguish your light.

Your plan is one of goodness, God. It includes our lives overflowing with that fruit. Oh, that it would be so. Teach us, lead us, walk with us. Amen.

DISCUSSION

To start your discussion, ask if any group member is willing to share their Self-Assessment on goodness. If no one volunteers, go over the questions on day 255 together.

To continue your discussion, go around the room and take turns identifying which day's message resonated with each member the most (this could be a day, a story, or a Scripture that benefitted them the most or challenged them the most.) This is a great way to make sure each member participates by allowing everyone to recap their own reading experience. Compare and contrast the answers among the group. This time will more than likely grow into an organic discussion session. As that discussion concludes, move on to the following questions that focus on implementing the fruit throughout the next week:

- Does the definition of goodness (see day 244) match your definition? If not, how does it differ?
- Have you found it difficult or easy to live goodness consistently? How can the readings for this week help you be more consistent?
- What is your one most important take-away from this week's readings?
- What specific things will you do to apply these lessons to your life? What will you do to make sure you remember to do these things? As you discuss each other's answers to these questions, invite the group to make any additions they'd like to their Personal Action plan.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Lord, Thank you for all we've learned this week and for the progress we're making toward being who you want us to be and living the life you want us to have. As we go about our busy days, help us keep in mind what you're teaching us, and help us to truly live what we're learning. We thank you for giving us the guidance and the strength we need, for we cannot do it in our own power. We love you and we need you. Amen.

ASSIGNMENT

Remind your group that they will need to:

- Review their action plan from the previous week.
- Read all forty days of peace (days 284-323), and take special note of the definition of peace on day 284.
- Study day 285 and ask each question in that day's message as a self-assessment.
- Fill out a Self-Assessment worksheet for kindness.
- Add to their Personal Action Plan for this week.

LEADER'S GUIDE

WEEK NINE: PEACE



OPENING PRAYER

Dear Lord, Life is complicated. There's so much going on in our lives, in the lives of those we love and care about, and in the world. Sometimes it's exhausting and scary. News headlines scream of crisis, tragedy, and trials. Your creation struggles under the weight of evil. Yet we find peace in knowing you will prevail.

Thank you for the certainty of you. Thank you for the knowledge that regardless of what we face, you are with us. Not only are you willing to handle all that comes our way, but you ask us to bring it to you. You want to bear our burdens. We don't have to be alone. That brings peace. In the midst of turmoil, may we look to you, for when we feel your presence, we experience your peace. Knowing your plan is for good and that you are in control brings calm.

In this moment, talking with you, we remember all these truths. Yet when storms rage, it's easy to forget, to feel unsettled instead of at peace. Help us to keep our hand in yours, and walk through every storm, serene with confidence.

Your peace is a priceless gift. But a gift is something we must receive to enjoy. Help us never forget to reach for you and accept what only you offer—deep, true, and lasting peace, resting in your embrace of assurance and love. Thank you, Lord, for your peace. Amen.

DISCUSSION

To start your discussion, ask if any group member is willing to share their Self-Assessment on peace. If no one volunteers, discussion the question on day 285 together.

To continue your discussion, go around the room and take turns identifying which day's message resonated with each member the most (this could be a day, a story, or a Scripture that benefitted them the most or challenged them the most.) This is a great way to make sure each member participates by allowing everyone to recap their own reading experience. Compare and contrast the answers among the group. This time will more than likely grow into an organic discussion session. As that discussion concludes, move on to the following questions that focus on implementing the fruit throughout the next week:

- Does the definition of peace (see day 284) match your definition? If not, how does it differ?
- Have you found it difficult or easy to live in peace consistently? How can the readings for this week help you be more consistent?
- What is your one most important take-away from this week's readings?
- What specific things will you do to apply these lessons to your life? What will you do to make sure you remember to do these things? As you discuss each other's answers to these questions, invite the group to make any additions they'd like to their Personal Action plan.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Lord, Thank you for all we've learned this week and for the progress we're making toward being who you want us to be and living the life you want us to have. As we go about our busy days, help us keep in mind what you're teaching us, and help us to truly live what we're learning. We thank you for giving us the guidance and the strength we need, for we cannot do it in our own power. We love you and we need you. Amen.

ASSIGNMENT

Remind your group that they will need to:

- Review their action plan from the previous week.
- Read all forty days of joy (days 324-365), and take special note of the definition of joy on day 324.
- Fill out a Self-Assessment worksheet for joy.
- Add to their Personal Action Plan for this week.

LEADER'S GUIDE

WEEK TEN: JOY



OPENING PRAYER

Dear Lord, We're now on the last fruit of your Spirit. It's been quite a journey. Thank you for walking it with us. Thank you for the distance we've traveled, for the progress we've made. Thank you for picking us up when we've stumbled, pointing the way when we've forgotten it, and patiently bringing us here, to our journey's culmination, the fruit of joy.

Joy is the icing on the cake, Lord, a lavish dessert in the meal of life. But it's more than that because we don't just get it at the end. When we follow you and let your Spirit lead us, we can en"joy" it every step of the way. That's so amazing—we can experience your joy even when we're not happy, even when our days are rough, even when we're barely holding on, as long as it's you we're holding onto. What a gift Lord.

We want to open your gift of joy and keep it with us always. Remind us, Holy Spirit, as we walk this sometimes-jarring road of life, that we can carry your joy constantly, as long as we keep in step with you.

You've given us such joy—exuberant and overwhelming, profound and abiding. May we remain aware of all that we have in you, with you, and because of you. Thank you for the joy of knowing you, trusting you, and of the vast blessings which saturate us with joy. We love you . . . with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. Amen.

DISCUSSION

To start your discussion, ask if any group member is willing to share their Self-Assessment on joy.

To continue your discussion, go around the room and take turns identifying which day's message resonated with each member the most (this could be a day, a story, or a Scripture that benefitted them the most or challenged them the most.) This is a great way to make sure each member participates by allowing everyone to recap their own reading experience. Compare and contrast the answers among the group. This time will more than likely grow into an organic discussion session. As that discussion concludes, move on to the following questions that focus on implementing the fruit throughout the next week:

- Does the definition of joy (see day 324) match your definition? If not, how does it differ?
- Have you found it difficult or easy to live with joy consistently? How can the readings for this week help you be more consistent?
- What is your one most important take-away from this week's readings?
- What specific things will you do to apply these lessons to your life? What will you do to make sure you remember to do these things? As you discuss each other's answers to these questions, invite the group to make any additions they'd like to their Personal Action plan.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Lord, Thank you for all we've learned this week and for the progress we're making toward being who you want us to be and living the life you want us to have. As we go about our busy days, help us keep in mind what you're teaching us, and help us to truly live what we're learning. We thank you for giving us the guidance and the strength we need, for we cannot do it in our own power. We love you and we need you. Amen.

ASSIGNMENT

Remind you group that they will need to:

- Read *The Journey Continues*.
- Review their Self-Assessment worksheets for each fruit. Complete the last part of each form, considering any new insight or inspiration they have gleaned through the study. Compare their before-the-study assessment and their after-the-study assessment. Invite each group member to think about how they've grown in living the fruit of God's Spirit.
- Review their Personal Statement and their Personal Action Plan. You may also want to let them know they will be invited to read their Personal Statement out loud in the next group session, just as we did at the beginning of this study.

LEADER'S GUIDE WEEK ELEVEN



OPENING PRAYER

Dear Lord, Please help us remember that though we're almost at the end of our study, we're not at the end of our journey. Help us to celebrate the progress we've made and live the truths we've learned together. As we continue on our own journeys, may we also continue to uplift and encourage each other. Amen.

DISCUSSION

- Who is willing to share their new self-assessments? Will you tell us how they compared or contrasted with your before-the-study self-assessments?
- Discuss how you've grown during this study.
- How can you best keep in step with the Spirit?
- Discuss your Personal Action Plans and your thoughts on your continuing journeys.

We celebrate that having focused on the fruit of your Spirit for a year, we're further along on that journey than we've ever been. Ensure we never grow complacent or think we've arrived. We can always do better and more, and that is the gift we offer you. We will never stop trying to live as you've taught, our hearts forever with you. Help us to never get tired of doing what is good, for we trust that at just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up (Galatians 6:9).

We pray that we have made you smile, and that we will continue to make you smile throughout eternity. Amen.

PERSONAL STATEMENTS

Take turns reading your Personal Statements out loud to the group. These statements will help group members verbalize how and why they can continue to be faithful to the fruits of God's spirit. Reading them out loud will help them stay accountable, but if any group member is not comfortable with that, invite him/her to summarize how they plan to continually seek to live by God's spirit.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord God, Many weeks have passed since we embarked on this journey. You've been with us through it all. We've stumbled, we've fallen, we've gotten up again. We've kept on, steadied by your hand and embraced by your love.

We took this journey for ourselves, yes, but more important, we took it for you. We want the abundant life you offer, but most of all, we want to give you the gift of loving you with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. And that means sticking with you no matter life's circumstances, putting you first always, and obeying you in all that we do. Because we are human, that is a journey, one that will never end.

MAKING GOD SMILE

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PERSONAL STATEMENT WORKSHEET



Why I want to be faithful on this journey:

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET



SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM FOR _____
(name of fruit being studied).

Answer the following prior to reading about this week's fruit

On a scale of 1-10, rate how you live the fruit you are studying this week. (1 =never; 10=always.)
Circle your self-assessment on the scale below:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Reflect on the number you chose. Why that number? What could you do to improve that number?

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Answer the following as you prepare for your final group session

On a scale of 1-10, rate how you live the fruit now that you have completed this study. (1 =never; 10=always.)
Circle your self-assessment on the scale below:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Reflect on the number you chose. Why that number? Has it changed? Why or why not? How can you continue to improve that number in the future?

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MY PERSONAL ACTION PLAN FOR LIVING THE FRUIT OF GOD'S SPIRIT



As you work through the study, use this worksheet to list specific things you will do to apply these lessons to your life and to make sure you remember what you've learned.

WEEK 2 of study

1.
2.
3.
4.

WEEK 3 of study

1.
2.
3.
4.

WEEK 4 of study

1.
2.
3.
4.

WEEK 5 of study

1.
2.
3.
4.

WEEK 6 of study

1.
2.
3.
4.

WEEK 7 of study

1.
2.
3.
4.

WEEK 8 of study

1.
2.
3.
4.

WEEK 9 of study

1.
2.
3.
4.

WEEK 10 of study: To help me remember to carry out my action plan, I will:

1.
2.
3.
4.

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST



Mark off the tasks as you read through *Making God Smile* each week. The tasks listed for each week are your homework to complete *before* you meet with your group that week. For example, complete week one tasks before your first session with the group.

WEEK ONE

- Read the Introduction to *Making God Smile* (Can I Really Make God Smile?) and The Journey Begins (days 1 through 3), praying the prayers given and/or prayers of your own.
- Read the definition of faithfulness from day 5.
- Read day 8 and ask yourself each question in that day's message as a self-assessment.
- Fill out a copy of the Self-Assessment worksheet for faithfulness. You will do this for each fruit.
- Take your copy of *Making God Smile*, a Bible, pen, paper, and your worksheets to the group session.
- Read all forty days of self-control (days 44-83), and take special note of the definition of self-control on day 44. As you read, consider which days resonated with you most, which days benefitted you the most, and which ones challenged you the most. Consider why. You will discuss this in your next group session.
- Study day 46 and ask yourself each question in that day's message as a self-assessment.
- Fill out a Self-Assessment worksheet for self-control.
- Add to your Personal Action Plan for this week, listing specific things you will do to apply these lessons to your life and to make sure you remember what you've learned.
- Take your copy of *Making God Smile*, a Bible, pen, paper, and your worksheets to the group session.

WEEK TWO: FAITHFULNESS

- Read all forty days of faithfulness (days 4-43). As you read, consider which days resonated with you most, which days benefitted you the most, and which ones challenged you the most. Consider why. You will discuss this in your next group session.
- Re-read day 42. Prepare your own Personal Statement worksheet, describing why you have chosen this journey and why you want to remain faithful to it.
- Fill out week 2 of the Personal Action Plan worksheet, listing specific things you will do to apply these lessons to your life and to make sure you remember what you've learned.
- Take your copy of *Making God Smile*, a Bible, pen, paper, and your worksheets to the group session.

WEEK THREE: SELF-CONTROL

- Review your action plan from the previous week. How are you doing so far?

WEEK FOUR: PATIENCE

- Review your action plan from the previous week. How are you doing so far?
- Read all forty days of patience (days 84-123) and take special note of the definition of patience on day 84. As you read, consider which days resonated with you most, which days benefitted you the most, and which ones challenged you the most. Consider why. You will discuss this in your next group session.
- Study day 85 and ask yourself each question in that day's message as a self-assessment.
- Fill out a Self-Assessment Handout for patience.
- Add to your Personal Action Plan for this week, listing specific things you will do to apply these lessons to your life and to make sure you remember what you've learned.
- Take your copy of *Making God Smile*, a Bible, pen, paper, and your worksheets to the group session.

WEEK FIVE: GENTLENESS

- Review your action plan from the previous week.
How are you doing so far?
- Read all forty days of gentleness (days 124-163) and take special note of the definition of gentleness on day 124. As you read, consider which days resonated with you most, which days benefitted you the most, and which ones challenged you the most. Consider why. You will discuss this in your next group session.
- Study day 125 and ask yourself each question in that day's message as a self-assessment.
- Fill out a Self-Assessment worksheet for gentleness.
- Add to your Personal Action Plan for this week, listing specific things you will do to apply these lessons to your life and to make sure you remember what you've learned.
- Take your copy of *Making God Smile*, a Bible, pen, paper, and your worksheets to the group session.

WEEK SIX: KINDNESS

- Review your action plan from the previous week.
How are you doing so far?
- Read all forty days of kindness (days 164-203) and take special note of the definition of kindness on day 164. As you read, consider which days resonated with you most, which days benefitted you the most, and which ones challenged you the most. Consider why. You will discuss this in your next group session.
- Study day 165 and ask yourself each question in that day's message as a self-assessment.
- Fill out a Self-Assessment worksheet for kindness.
- Add to your Personal Action Plan for this week, listing specific things you will do to apply these lessons to your life and to make sure you remember what you've learned.
- Take your copy of *Making God Smile*, a Bible, pen, paper, and your worksheets to the group session.

WEEK SEVEN: LOVE

- Review your action plan from the previous week.
How are you doing so far?

- Read all forty days of love (days 204-243) and take special note of the definition of love on days 205 and 206. As you read, consider which days resonated with you most, which days benefitted you the most, and which ones challenged you the most. Consider why. You will discuss this in your next group session.
- Study day 214 and ask yourself each question in that day's message as a self-assessment.
- Fill out a Self-Assessment worksheet for love.
- Add to your Personal Action Plan for this week, listing specific things you will do to apply these lessons to your life and to make sure you remember what you've learned.
- Take your copy of *Making God Smile*, a Bible, pen, paper, and your worksheets to the group session.

WEEK EIGHT: GOODNESS

- Review your action plan from the previous week.
How are you doing so far?
- Read all forty days of goodness (days 244-283) and take special note of the definition of goodness on day 244. As you read, consider which days resonated with you most, which days benefitted you the most, and which ones challenged you the most. Consider why. You will discuss this in your next group session.
- Study days 251-255 and ask yourself each question in those messages as a self-assessment.
- Fill out a Self-Assessment worksheet for goodness.
- Add to your Personal Action Plan for this week, listing specific things you will do to apply these lessons to your life and to make sure you remember what you've learned.
- Take your copy of *Making God Smile*, a Bible, pen, paper, and your worksheets to the group session.

WEEK NINE: PEACE

- Review your action plan from the previous week.
How are you doing so far?
- Read all forty days of peace (days 284-323) and take special note of the definition of peace on day 284. As you read, consider which days resonated with you

most, which days benefitted you the most, and which ones challenged you the most. Consider why. You will discuss this in your next group session.

- Study day 285 and ask yourself each question in that day's message as a self-assessment.
- Fill out a Self-Assessment worksheet for kindness.
- Add to your Personal Action Plan for this week, listing specific things you will do to apply these lessons to your life and to make sure you remember what you've learned.
- Take your copy of *Making God Smile*, a Bible, pen, paper, and your worksheets to the group session.

WEEK TEN: JOY

- Review your action plan from the previous week. How are you doing so far?
- Read all forty days of joy (days 324-265) and take special note of the definition of joy on day 324. As you read, consider which days resonated with you most, which days benefitted you the most, and which ones challenged you the most. Consider why. You will discuss this in your next group session.
- Fill out a Self-Assessment worksheet for joy.
- Add to your Personal Action Plan for this week, listing specific things you will do to apply these lessons to your life and to make sure you remember what you've learned.
- Take your copy of *Making God Smile*, a Bible, pen, paper, and your worksheets to the group session.

WEEK ELEVEN

- Read *The Journey Continues*.
- Review your Self-Assessment handouts for each fruit. Complete the last part of each form, considering any new insight or inspiration that you have gleaned through the study. Compare your before-the-study assessment and your after-the-study assessment. Think about how you've grown in living the fruit of God's Spirit.
- Review your Personal Statement and your Personal Action Plan. Talk to God about your ongoing journey.
- Take your copy of *Making God Smile*, a Bible, pen, paper, and your worksheets to the group session.