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Week 9 Activity

November 4th, 2019

Fruits of the Spirit

The Fruits of the Spirit are nine Christian virtues in which define our spiritual life. As Christians, we are supposed to incorporate these virtues into our daily life and try to live up to the standard of Christ-likeness. As stated in Galatians 5:22-23, the fruits of the spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. Although these virtues have a religious foundation, they are important qualities that students should learn to have in order to develop good character, and therefore are important for teachers to incorporate into moral education.

For this paper, I was required to take a Christian character index which surveys my responses to determine which Fruits of the Spirit I am strong in and which ones could use more work. I have to say I was truly surprised with the results of my survey. The categories in which the survey tested were, love, which was an overall combination of all the other categories, joy, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gratitude, forgiveness, and compassion. My highest scores were 54% tied for faithfulness and kindness, and my lowest score was 20% in patience. The questions that these three virtues answered were: how much do you love your neighbor? (kindness), are you really living your life for God? (faithfulness), and how well do you handle a difficult situation? (patience).

The more I thought about the questions these virtues answered the more it began to make sense why kindness and faithfulness were my top two. Kindness is determined by how much we

are able to love our neighbor, and for me I have a large capacity to love others and care for their well-being. I genuinely enjoy getting to know people, hearing about their lives and stories, and developing a personal relationships with people. These qualities incorporated into a classroom provide an environment of caring. Having kindness as a teacher is important because it allows me to view my students as more than just a number, but rather as humans who have strengths, weaknesses, and feelings, all of which matter to me. Within this, my kindness allows me to find the best in everyone, use that to make them better people, and encourage them every step of the way. Faithfulness was also tied for first and I think I do consistently want to be on the path God has for me. I can reflect back on moments when God said 'go' and when I heard him I went. Sometimes, I think faithfulness seems very spiritual but a synonym for faithfulness is loyalty. Therefore, this virtue allows me to build trust with my students so that they know what to expect from me. Lastly, my lowest was patience and I wanted to include this because I feel like this being my lowest score has a huge impact on my classroom. As a teacher patience is so important and without it I can't build trust with my students. Therefore, in the time before I become a teacher I want to make an effort to learn how to step back, when in a difficult situation, and think of the many ways it can be handled. If I practice this now, it will become second nature when I am a teacher with my own classroom.

One Fruit of the Spirit that I think would be important to teach my future students is love. Within teaching students how to love each other, I can also teach them other virtues like selflessness and patience that directly affect the virtue of love. I believe that everyone is naturally wired to love, but I think I would focus on teaching my students how to love each other well or better. The best way to teach students anything, is to model it for them. Therefore, the number

one thing I can do to teach love in my classroom is to set an example of what that looks like. I think that in order to love each other well we need to develop relationships with everyone, so as a teacher I would make it a priority to create bonding experiences for my students where they can develop relationships through conversation, or through working together.

Lastly, selflessness is a very important aspect of learning to love each other well. In order to love someone well, we need to put our own needs aside in order to be there and meet the needs of others. I can cultivate selflessness in my classroom in many ways. One way I can do this is to create an environment of giving and acts of service by incorporating this idea into lessons or classroom management. For example, I can use a writing lesson where I require the students to write a letter to the person next to them about all the things they think they are good at. Selflessness can often be taught through responsibility, which is represented through classroom management. For example, I can assign jobs to everyone in the class which gives them responsibility, but along with this I can stress the importance of helping each other with their responsibilities when they need it. This can teach students to be selfless in offering their help. Finally, community service opportunities are always a wonderful way to get students thinking outside of themselves. Community service teaches students to empathize with others as well as volunteer their time and help.

Among all the Fruits of the Spirit, love is a culmination of all of them and probably the most important. Although we can not teach love on the basis of religious foundation, we can teach students to be selfless, which is another part of loving each other well. The Fruits of the Spirit within my life provide the foundation of the kind of environment I will create in my classroom and I am sure it will be one that is filled with trust, respect, and care.