

## Got Fruit?

Ready (*Plant the seed*)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.  
-Galatians 5:22-23

Set (*Get the conversation started*)

As an athlete matures in his sport, he develops his skills through listening to his coaches, practicing his craft and taking good care of his body. He'll get faster. He'll get stronger and more agile. He'll become a better player. He'll become an important part of his team. He'll earn medals, trophies and rings. These are the fruit of his physical labor. These show he is a dedicated athlete.

Once you choose follow Jesus, the gift of the Holy Spirit dwells within you and grows fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. As you grow in your relationship with the Lord, you will see these fruit grow as well. They will be evident to others and identify you as a Christ follower, much like the trophies identify an athlete. As an athlete learns through both victory and defeat, God will develop your character through both trials and successes if you trust in Him. Just as the skill and success of the athlete is dependent upon his dedication to his sport, the magnitude of your spiritual fruit is dependent upon your dedication to the Lord. You need to be obedient to Him just as you are to your coach. Listen, practice and take care of yourself.

This season we will have the opportunity to hear how God works through each of these fruit in our lives.

Grow (*Take it away*)

-Great Christian athletes have both physical skills and good character. How does the growing fruit of the Spirit within you make you a better athlete?

-The growing of fruit takes time. Think about yourself two years ago. How has your character developed in that time? How do you think you will change in the next two?

-How can we maintain a relationship with God to be sure that we are open to His instruction and are able to develop our spiritual fruits?

Pray

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit to guide us. We pray that we will continue to strengthen our relationship with you and further develop these qualities of good character both as your child and as an athlete. Help us to recognize opportunities to share these fruit that you have given us with others. Let us shine your light that others may see and honor you. Amen.

Overtime (*Optional object lesson using attached diagram. For fun, have the players become the parts of the tree.*)

Think of yourself as a tree...

Roots: Roots grow deep to keep a tree growing strong. They also transport nutrients from the soil. Our lives should be rooted in the word of God to help us grow strong in our faith and keep us from being taken down in life's storms.

Trunk: The trunk transports the nutrients and water through the tree. When you pray and read the Bible, you continue to grow in knowledge and your relationship with God.

Sunlight: A tree kept in the dark will not grow. The sunlight gives it energy. Jesus is the light of the world. You must have the saving light of Jesus to grow in your Christian walk.

Water: Trees need water. Jesus is the Living Water. Through salvation, anyone who drinks of him shall never thirst.

Branches: A strong tree has large branches. Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. The Bible says that if we try to live life without Jesus, we are like branches that have been cut off. We will not grow the leaves that collect the sunlight. We will wither and die.

Fruit: A healthy tree grows. A Christian walking with Jesus and following the word of God will bear fruit of the Spirit.

