

Growing in Jesus

Bible Story • Grow Fruit . . . Lots of It • Galatians 5:22-23

God's Word

"Live a life worthy of the Lord and . . . please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God."
Colossians 1:10

For Younger Children:

"As you grow, obey Jesus in everything you do."

God's Word & Me

When I grow as a Christian, I talk and act in ways that show love for God and others.

Missions Focus

What fruit of the Spirit do you think missionaries show the most? Why?

What fruit of the Spirit might be the hardest for missionaries to show? Why?

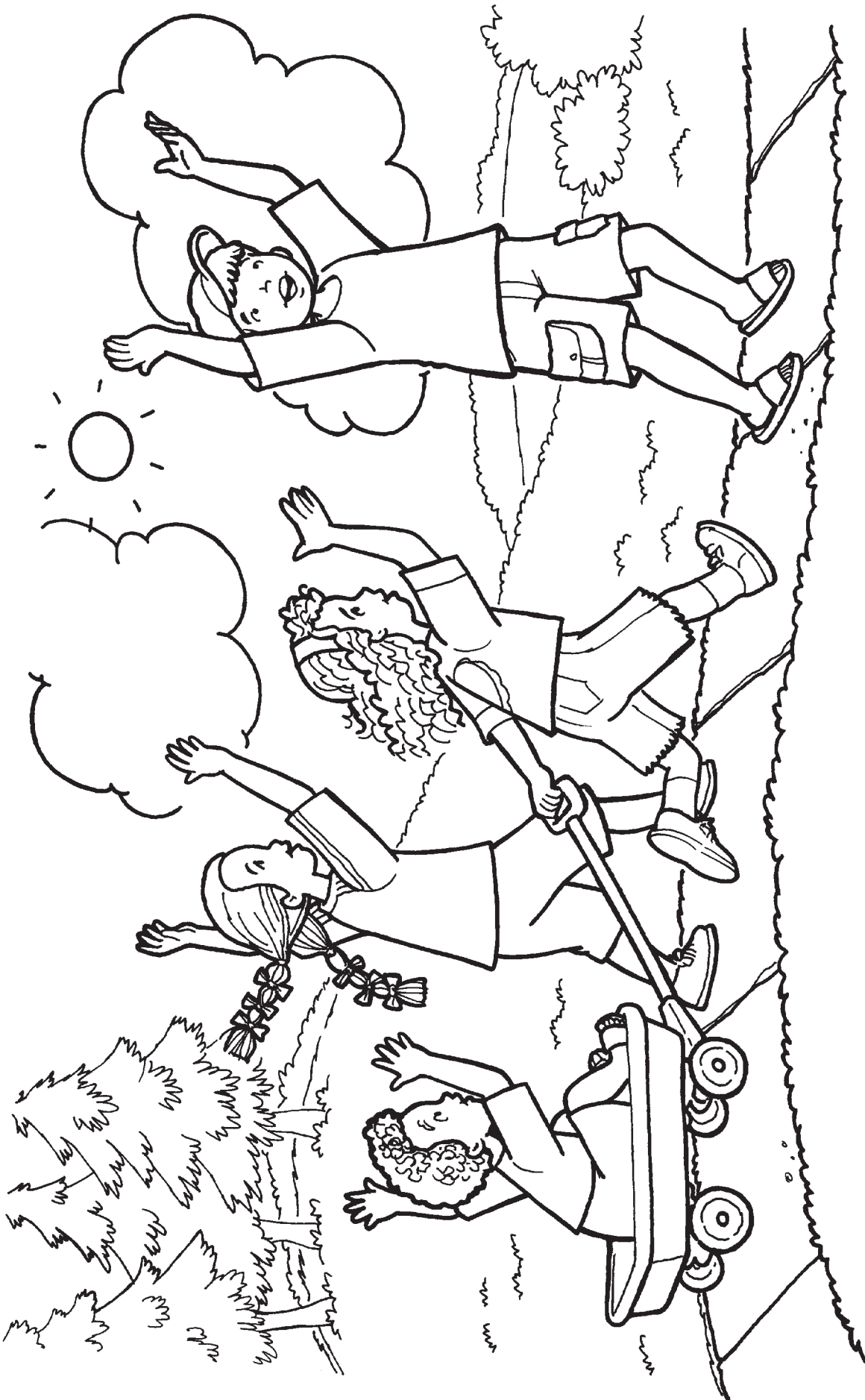
What do missionaries do to show love for Jesus and obey Him?

Teacher's Devotional

The two greatest commands of all time involve love: First, we are told to love God and to love our neighbors with the same kind of love we have for ourselves. Sadly, there are always times when our response to this command may be to grit our teeth and whine, "Love my grouchy, ornery neighbor? I don't want to." And on top of that, Jesus gives us a second command. He tells us in Matthew 7 to love our enemies as well. That's tough, isn't it? It almost seems unreasonable!

Our human nature draws us far more quickly toward loving *ourselves* and our *things* than to loving others! But did you know that loving God and others is the first sign of spiritual growth after deciding to follow Jesus? Love is the first fruit of God's Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23.

Imagine that! God not only tells us to love others, but also holds up that love as a true test of our being followers of Christ (see John 13:35). And because we are human, it's not going to be easy: It's not meant to be. Unless we come to Jesus ourselves, with our likes and dislikes, we will find we have very little love for some people. We'll find that if we try to love in our own strength (what the Bible calls "the flesh"), we'll burn out and fail miserably. And God's love for others may not—zip-zap-zoom—suddenly appear in our hearts. Learning to live as loved children and learning how to show God's love to others is a life-long process! But do not fear; we have God's Spirit to nurture this spiritual fruit inside us. We will mess up at times, gritting our teeth when we have to love one another, but that's when God's Spirit turns our weakness into strength and helps us to love beyond our capabilities!



“As you grow, obey Jesus in everything you do.” (See Colossians 1:10.)
How can you obey Jesus this week?

