

# Practice Self-Control

Quarter 9 • Lesson 12

Focus on Life Skills

- 1. Connecting:** Play a game to practice self-control.
- 2. Teaching:** Review how to choose self-control (Proverbs 17:27; 1 Samuel 24).
- 3. Responding:** Ask God for help with self-control.

## SUPPLIES

- Bible

*Optional Supplies:*

- Memory Verse Poster
- *The Action Bible*, image of David holding cloth
- Music played on a phone or from a CD
- Student Pages
- Crayons

Before class, choose a song to sing or play on a phone or from a CD that is about 2–3 minutes long. You will use this in the Connecting section of the lesson.

## Teacher Devotion

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*My dear brothers and sisters, pay attention to what I say.  
Everyone should be quick to listen. But they should be slow to speak.  
They should be slow to get angry.  
Human anger doesn't produce the holy life God wants.  
James 1:19–20*

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Self-control has many benefits. When we choose self-control, we often enjoy better relationships. Self-control helps us to make wiser decisions, become better leaders, and even feel better about ourselves. Self-control can also help us to live longer and happier lives! But there is an even more important reason to live a life of self-control: we belong to God. As God's people, we reflect His image to the world around us. We do not reflect Him well when our lives lack self-control.

Consider an area of your life where you struggle to practice self-control. What do you think might help you use self-control in that situation? Just as human anger does not produce the holy life God wants, neither does human effort. God promises that self-control is a fruit of the Spirit who lives within us as His children. Ask God to help you to practice self-control so that you will reflect more of Him.

**Family Connection:** Ask the children to share with their families 1 of the ideas they learned to practice self-control. If possible, the family members may practice this skill with their children.

## LESSON TIME

### 1. Connecting: Play a game to practice self-control.

Greet the children as they arrive. Invite them to get into a large circle to play a game.

**In a moment, I will sing a song. When I start singing, you will move to the music. But as soon as the music stops, you must stay still and “freeze” in the position you are in.**

*Optional:* If you have music that you can play during the activity, you can stop and start the music recording instead of singing.

Begin singing for 5–10 seconds. Then stop. Look for all of the children to be still. Then start singing again. If you are able to, sing an entire song by stopping and starting every 5–10 seconds. After the song is over, have the children sit in their usual places.

**In our game, you had to control your actions. When the music stopped, your body had to stop too. When the music started, your body started moving.**

- **We have learned a lot about self-control. How can we show self-control?**

Review with the children the ways to choose self-control: in their actions, in their words, and while waiting.

**Let’s practice what you have learned to help you to show self-control in your actions and words, and when it is difficult to wait for something.**

### 2. Teaching: Review how to choose self-control (Proverbs 17:27; 1 Samuel 24).

When you control yourself, you think before you act or speak. You know some bad things that might happen if you choose hurtful words and actions. Hurtful words could lead to an angry friend, and hurtful actions may make it difficult for a family member to trust you. Listen to what the Bible says about controlling your words and actions.

If possible, read this verse directly from your Bible.

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*Anyone who has knowledge controls their words.  
Anyone who has understanding is not easily upset.*  
Proverbs 17:27

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**Others can see that we are choosing self-control when we are careful with our words and when we are able to control the way we respond to our emotions.**

- **What are some other ways we can choose self-control?**

Allow 2–3 children to respond.

**You can control your actions and words when you are sad, angry, or excited.**

- **How do you think others feel when we choose self-control?**

Allow 2–3 children to respond.

**Others feel happy and safe when we are able to control ourselves. Also, self-control makes it more peaceful for others to spend time with us.**

Divide the children into groups of 3.

**Let's talk about some of the ideas you have learned in the last 3 weeks to help you practice self-control in your actions.**

Read each idea and then do the action with the children.

- 1. Stand up with your legs apart and touch your toes. Let your head hang down toward your feet.**
- 2. Rub your head in little circles where your hair meets your forehead and rub out to over your ears.**
- 3. Close your eyes and take a big breath—then let your breath out very slowly.**

**Now listen to this situation. With your group, decide which of these ideas would help you to choose self-control in this situation. Think also about why you think that is the best choice.**

**Situation 1: Your friend pushed you so hard that you bumped into someone else.**

Give the groups about 2 minutes to decide which of the ideas they would use in this situation and do that action. Then have 2 groups share their answers with the whole class.

**Here are a few ideas to help us to choose self-control with our words:**

Read each idea and then do the action with the children.

- 1. Hug yourself as hard as you can before you speak.**
- 2. Speak softly when you feel excited or angry.**
- 3. Count to 5 silently before you say anything.**
- 4. Put your hands over your mouth when you want to say something that does not show self-control.**

**After I read the next situation, talk with your group about which of these ideas would help you in the situation and why that is the best idea.**

**Situation 2: Your friend told you that she hates you.**

Give the groups about 2 minutes to decide which of the ideas they would use in this situation and do the actions. Then have 2 groups share their answers with the whole class.

**Now let's talk about the ideas we learned to help us to choose self-control when we are waiting.**

- 1. Think about or do something else.**
- 2. Talk with someone about it.**

### 3. Do the difficult thing first.

Here is another situation. Decide which of these ideas would help you in this situation, and show what this would look like.

**Situation 3:** You just learned that your favourite auntie is coming to visit. You know she will bring you a wonderful present. You hear her coming to the door.

Give the groups about 2 minutes to decide which of the ideas they would use in this situation and do the actions. Then have 2 groups share their answers with the whole class.

Ask the children to sit for the next part of the lesson.

**We learned 1 more idea to help us with self-control. This is the most important idea! We learned to ask God for help. Let's listen to a story about self-control. As I tell this story, I will ask you to think about what David did to show self-control.**

*Optional:* If possible, share the image from *The Action Bible*.

The Bible tells a true story about King Saul and David. King Saul hated David. Saul was angry because David was a great warrior and he was loved by the Israelites. This made Saul very jealous. So he threatened to kill David. David was forced to run away and hide. Saul and his armies searched for David for a while.

One day, David was hiding in a cave when King Saul came into the cave. David came up behind the king quietly—so quietly that the king did not hear or see him.

- What could David do to show self-control in his actions? Remember, we talked about taking a deep breath, rubbing our heads, or looking at things in a different way.

David could take a deep breath.

David did not hurt Saul, but he cut off a corner of Saul's robe! David showed self-control. While he did think about hurting Saul, he did not do it. David felt bad about this. Listen to what he told the men who were with him.

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*He said to his men, "May the LORD keep me from doing a thing like that again to my master. He is the LORD's anointed king. So I promise that I will never lay my hand on him. The LORD has anointed him."*

1 Samuel 24:6

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- What did David do to help him show self-control?

Allow 1–2 children to respond.

David wanted to show self-control and do what was right by not hurting Saul. He prayed and asked God for help. David did not allow his men to hurt Saul. When the men were out of the cave, David told Saul he would never hurt him.

David chose self-control because he honoured God. You can honour God by choosing self-control, too!

*Optional:* If you are using the Student Pages, give the children 3 minutes to play the game on their pages. After about 1 minute, give the children the hint that if they watch and wait for the paper to drop in front of their stomachs, it will be easier to catch.

### 3. Responding: Ask God for help with self-control.

**Teacher Tip:** The unstructured movement and talk in the following activity will help the children process what they have just learned. It will also allow them to practice self-control.

**You all did a great job listening to the story! You participated and showed self-control in your actions and words. Before we move on to the next activity, I will give you a moment to move around and talk. When I say, "Go," you may wiggle your body, talk to a child near you, or both. When I clap 4 times, you will sit down quietly. Ready? Go!**

Allow the children to move and talk for about 1 minute. Then clap your hands 4 times. If any or all of the children do not stop the first time, clap your hands 4 times again then sit down.

**Sometimes we all struggle with self-control. It is difficult to control our anger, and it is difficult to think about what we say before we say it. It is also difficult to wait when we are very excited or very angry about something. But we can ask God to help us. He gives us self-control when we need it.**

**Let's think about how we can ask God to help us choose self-control in our own lives. Think of something you are either excited or angry about. Perhaps your brother did something to make you angry. Or, maybe you are excited because a family member is coming to visit. Whatever you are excited or angry about, let's take a moment to pray and ask God to help you to choose self-control in this situation.**

Pause after each statement.

**God, we ask that You would help us to control our anger and excitement.  
Help us to pause and to think before we act.  
We thank You for helping us to control ourselves.  
In Jesus' name, amen.**

**God promises to help us with self-control. So, even when it is difficult, we can choose self-control when we ask for His help. Our memory verse today reminds us of this.**

If you are using the Memory Verse Poster, show it to the students.

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*God gave us his Spirit. And the Spirit doesn't make us weak  
and fearful. Instead, the Spirit gives us power and love.  
He helps us control ourselves.  
2 Timothy 1:7*

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**Teacher Tip:** If you changed any of these actions, make sure to use the ones you noted from the previous lesson. Note any additional changes you make to the actions this week.

**God gave us—**Hold your hands open with your arms stretched out in front of you.

**His Spirit—**Pull your hands toward you and place them over your heart.

**And the Spirit doesn't**—Shake your head to indicate you are saying "no."

**Make us weak and fearful**—Stand with your hands hanging in front of you and your body bent forward at your hips.

**Instead, the Spirit gives us power and love**—Hold up your arm, clench your fist, and tighten your arm muscles as a sign of strength.

**He helps us control ourselves**—Stand very straight with your legs together and your arms at your sides.

Review the verse and motions 3 times. Then continue:

End class by saying this blessing, based on Proverbs 17:27, over the children.

**Blessing: May God give you the knowledge to control your words and the understanding to control your anger. May He fill you with His Spirit so that you can choose self-control.**

Lead the children in singing this quarter's song, if possible.

"Agnus Dei" by Michael W Smith <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVFzxazTQNM>