



## LOW-ENERGY GAME

### Ping-Pong Race

[10 min]

#### Supplies

- masking tape
- ping-pong balls (1 per child)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

#### Easy Prep

- For every 4 or 5 kids, use masking tape to create a wavy line that's approximately 6 feet long.

#### Blow Ping-Pong Balls Along the Path

Say: **Let's play a game where you'll need self-control in order to move ping-pong balls along these wavy lines.**

- Form teams of four or five kids, and have each team line up at one end of a wavy line.
- Give each child a ping-pong ball, and have the first kids in line place their ping-pong balls at the end of the wavy line.
- On "go," the first child in line must blow the ping-pong ball so it stays on the line as it makes it to the other side. To keep the game moving, once that child is halfway down the line, the next child may start.
- If a child blows the ball off the line, he or she should return to the end of the team's line.
- If you'd like, play high-energy music while kids play.
- The team that blows all its ping-pong balls to the other end of the wavy line first is the winner. Play again as time allows.

#### Talk About It

Ask: • **How did self-control help you in this game?**

Say: **It would have been so easy to take a deep breath and blow the ping-pong balls in a straight line across the room. But in this game, you had to control your breathing and guide the ball along the wavy line. Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. When we have self-control, God helps us carefully consider the best way forward rather than charging full speed ahead with what we want to do.**



## TALK-ABOUT VIDEO

### Selfies & Self-Control

[10 min]

#### Supplies

- “Selfies & Self-Control” teaching video

#### Discuss and Watch “Selfies & Self-Control”

Say: **We’re learning that self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. Sometimes it’s hard to have self-control!**

Ask: • **What are some things that distract you from what you’re supposed to be doing—like homework?**

Say: **Our video today is about a girl who got distracted by a lot of things. She wasn’t using self-control to limit her distractions. Let’s see how she turned things around. As you watch, think about which of her distractions happen to you, too.**

Watch “Selfies & Self-Control.”

Ask: • **Which distractions did she have that you have, too?**

• **How could you have self-control and limit those distractions?**

• **The girl in the video said, “I feel like Jesus was right beside me, like he gave me the strength to turn this around.” How can you turn to Jesus for strength to have self-control?**

Say: **Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. Like the girl in our video, we can turn to Jesus for help with self-control when we’re having a hard time with it.**



## DEEPER BIBLE

### What Do I Do When I Don't Have Self-Control?

[15 min]

#### Supplies

- Bibles
- timer
- paper
- markers, including red markers

#### Have a Color Challenge

Say: **I've got a challenge for you. For the next minute, don't think about the color red.** Start a timer. As the minute ticks by, say: **Don't think about roses. Don't think about stop signs. Don't think about apples. Don't think about hearts. Don't think about strawberries. Don't think about cardinals. Don't think about cherries. Don't think about firetrucks. Don't think about blood. Don't think about tomatoes. Don't think about licorice. Don't think about Clifford the Big Red Dog. Don't think about lobsters.** Repeat this list until the minute is up.

Ask: • **So how did you do?**

• **Why was it so hard to follow my instructions to not think about the color red?**

• **Have you ever felt frustrated because you *want* to show self-control, but you just don't feel like you can? Talk about that.** Share your own story first, such as oversleeping even though you try really hard to get up on time or eating a whole row of Oreos when you planned to eat only two cookies.

After kids have shared, say: **The Bible describes the lack of self-control in a unique way.**

Read Proverbs 25:28.

Say: **Clearly, self-control is important. And we're learning that self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. But do you ever feel like maybe God skipped giving you that fruit? Like you just can't help what you do? What do we do when we don't have self-control? Let's dig in to that.**

#### Dig Deeper

Say: **First, think of an area where you need more self-control. It could be limiting your screen time, not overeating junk food, talking less in class, not saying things you shouldn't say, or anything else you can think of. You don't need to say what it is—just get it in your head.** Pause for kids to think.

Say: **Let's learn about one tool the Bible tells us to use when it comes to self-control and see what that really looks like.**

Read the first sentence of 1 Peter 1:13.

Say: **This Bible verse tells us to prepare our minds. Let's try that with our color red challenge. I'm going to do the exact same thing I did before, but first you'll have time to prepare.**

Distribute paper and markers—but not the red ones!—and have kids each make a list of things they can think of that are *other* colors; for example, blueberries, car tires, puppies, and the sky.

Say: **Now that you're prepared, let's try it again. As I say all those red things you're not supposed to think about, tune me out! Use the list you prepared to think of things that are other colors. Ready?**

Start the timer, and repeat the same list of red things from before. After a minute, stop.

Ask: • **What difference did it make to be prepared with a list of things to think about?**

Say: **Sometimes we know we're going into a situation where self-control will be hard. Maybe self-control in class is hard for you, and you know tomorrow is going to be an *extra* boring school day. If you know ahead of time that you'll need self-control, plan ahead and *pray* ahead. Plan how to make good choices, and pray for God's strength to do it. Let's try it now. Close your eyes and picture a situation where self-control is hard. Now imagine yourself showing self-control.**

Pause for about 30 seconds for kids to think.

Say: **Self-control isn't all about us trying harder; it's about God working through us! So take some time to ask God for his help in a situation you have coming up where self-control might be hard.** Allow time for prayer.

Say: **A second tip about self-control comes from Jesus himself. We've learned that he showed self-control by staying on the cross even though he had the power to leave the cross. So how did he do it? There's a verse that tells us! Listen and see if you can figure out how Jesus was able to stay on the cross.**

Read Hebrews 12:2.

Ask: • **What was Jesus' secret? How did he have self-control?**

Say: **This verse says that when he was on the cross, Jesus was focused on the joy awaiting him. In other words, instead of focusing on the few hours of pain he had to suffer, he focused on the big picture!**

**When we put the things that feel out of control in perspective, we can focus on God and his plan for us to have self-control. Let me show you what I mean.**

Set out red markers. Give each child a new piece of paper, and have kids make a small red dot somewhere on their papers. Then have kids use other colors to make funky mosaic patterns all around the red dots.

Ask: • **How hard would it be not to think of red while looking at your picture?**

Say: **Sometimes we're focused on the things that make it hard to have self-control. We want to talk to our friends instead of listening to the teacher, so we focus on that. There are definitely distractions that make self-control hard. But instead of focusing on those "red dots" in our lives, we can ask God to help us see the bigger picture.**

Ask: • **What's a big-picture thing that can help you refocus when self-control is hard?** If kids need an example, continue the example of listening to the teacher. Kids can consider how important a good education will be in their lives and how God could use what they're learning to help them get a job that makes a difference for other people.

Say: **Put your finger on the red dot in your picture as I pray.**

Pray: **God, help us ignore the "red dots" that make us feel like we don't have self-control. Help us focus on your big plan and your desire for us to have self-control. Thank you that self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. In Jesus' name, amen.**



## LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

### Start and Stop

[5 min]

#### Pray an Echo Prayer

Read the following prayer, pausing after each line for kids to say, "God, give me self-control." Kids will run in place when you say your lines and then stop and stand still as they repeat their line.

Pray: **When I want to disrespect my teachers...** (God, give me self-control.)

**When I want to disobey my parents...** (God, give me self-control.)

**When I want to sneak an extra cookie...** (God, give me self-control.)

**When I want to stay up past my bedtime...** (God, give me self-control.)

**When I want to take something that isn't mine...** (God, give me self-control.)

**When I want to act up in class...** (God, give me self-control.)

**When I want to say something mean...** (God, give me self-control.)

**When I want to play instead of doing my homework...** (God, give me self-control.)

#### Wrap Up

Pray: **God, thank you for the fruit of the Spirit of self-control. There are a lot of times it's hard for us to live the way you want us to live. We thank you that we don't have to do it all on our own! You give us self-control to help us live your way. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Thank kids for coming, and encourage them to come back next week.



## ACTIVITY PAGES WITH A POINT A-maze-ing Self-Control

[10 min]

### Supplies

- “Fruit of the Spirit: Self-Control” Coloring Page
- pencils
- crayons

### Older Kids: Do an Activity Page

Say: **Today we’re learning about the fruit of self-control. When we follow Jesus, he grows self-control in our lives. Let’s see how well you can exercise self-control in this tough maze!**

Distribute the activity pages and pencils. Kids will go through the maze very carefully, trying hard to make sure their pencils don’t touch any walls of the maze.

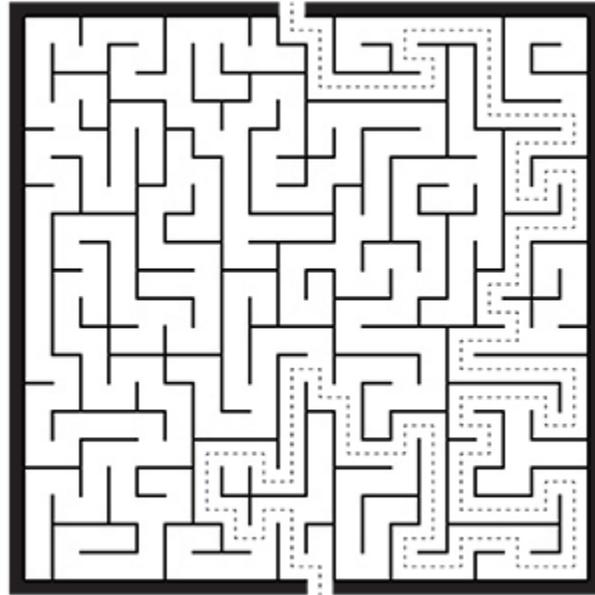
Ask: • **Well? How good was your self-control in this maze?**

• **In this maze, we were trying to control our hands to move carefully.**

**What does self-control look like when it comes to how we live?**

Say: **Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. That doesn’t mean we have good control of our hand movements—it means the Holy Spirit helps us stop when we’re about to do something wrong, and the Holy Spirit helps us keep doing the right thing even when it’s hard. Jesus showed self-control by staying on the cross, even though he had the power to get down.**

**ANSWER KEY:**



**Younger Kids: Color a Coloring Page**

Distribute the coloring pages and crayons. Say: **Today we learned that self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. Jesus kept doing the right thing and stayed on the cross, even though it was hard. Self-control means doing the right thing when it's hard and not doing the wrong thing when we want to. Jesus helps us have self-control. Let's color Jesus on the cross.**

Allow time for kids to color.

When kids finish coloring, three-hole-punch their pages and put them into binders, if desired.