

We hope you enjoy these sample pages. For ordering information, visit Liguori.org.

This Little Light of Mine

Living the Beatitudes

Kathleen M. Basi



 **Liguori**
ONE LIGUORI DRIVE
LIGUORI MO 63057-9999

Imprimi Potest:
Harry Grile, CSsR, Provincial
Denver Province, The Redemptorists

Published by Liguori Publications
Liguori, Missouri 63057

To order, call 800-325-9521
www.liguori.org

Copyright © 2013 Kathleen M. Basi

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior written permission of Liguori Publications.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Basi, Kathleen M.

This little light of mine: living the beatitudes / Kathleen M. Basi.—1st ed.
p. cm.

1. Beatitudes. 2. Families—Religious life. I. Title.
BT382.B3698 2013
241.5'3—dc23

2012041847

p ISBN 978-0-7648-2223-0
e ISBN 978-0-7648-6802-3

Scripture texts in this work are taken from the *New American Bible*, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C., and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the *New American Bible* may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Excerpts from English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America © 1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—*Libreria Editrice Vaticana*; English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modifications from the Editio Typica* © 1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—*Libreria Editrice Vaticana*.

Liguori Publications, a nonprofit corporation, is an apostolate of The Redemptorists. To learn more about The Redemptorists, visit Redemptorists.com.

Printed in the United States of America
17 16 15 14 13 / 5 4 3 2 1
First Edition

Contents

Introduction.....	5
How to Use This Book	9
Chapter 1	
Living in Humility.....	11
Chapter 2	
Suffering, Freedom, and Sin.....	19
Chapter 3	
The Gifts and Fruits of the Spirit	25
Chapter 4	
Liturgy and the Liturgical Year.....	33
Chapter 5	
Putting the Focus on Mercy	43
Chapter 6	
Sacraments and Private Devotion	57
The Sacraments	58
Devotions	68
Chapter 7	
Celebrating the Saints	73
Chapter 8	
Persecution in the Modern World	79
Chapter 9	
Putting It All Together: Faith in the Modern World	87
Pattern 1	94
Pattern 2	95

How to Use This Book

This Little Light of Mine is divided into chapters based on the Eight Beatitudes. Within each chapter, I have broken down other topics of importance to life in faith (for example, the Ten Commandments and the fruits and gifts of the spirit). These are listed in the chapter subtitles.

Each chapter includes sections for adults and children, and ends with a section called “Just Live It.” The activities in this section offer you and your family the opportunity to apply the lessons learned to your everyday lives, so that faith becomes integrated into daily living. In some cases, the activities are done as a group. But what is appropriate for a child’s level of understanding often doesn’t challenge an adult, so in certain cases I have included separate activities for adults and children.

No one can teach well what he or she doesn’t know well. The best way to ensure that religious formation “takes” is for parents to live their faith, to be seekers alongside their children. Then, children see that religion is not something you learn about in childhood and consider finished. Rather, it must grow and change throughout life.

For this reason, I’ve gone into more depth in the sections for adults. I hope these reflections make it easier to synthesize the topics for your children. Use this book as an opportunity to dig deeper, to think about your own faith journey and discern

This Little Light of Mine: Living the Beatitudes

what God is calling you to do. Although I speak to parents, these reflections are for all adults, parents or not, who want a real and active faith, one that lights a fire and spurs you to go out and do something about it. A stagnant faith is a dead faith; my hope is that by using this book, you will find ways to bring your experience of being Catholic out of the theoretical realm and integrate it into real life.



Chapter 3

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land"
(Matthew 5:5).

"Love is patient. Love is kind....It endures all things"
(1 Corinthians 13:4, 7).

The Gifts and Fruits of the Spirit

The consumer culture is a cliché these days; but like it or not, it tugs on us all. We always want more than we have: more money, a bigger house or car, the newest TV and phone. Acquisition of power, at least over our own destiny, is the goal of almost everything we do, whether or not we realize it. Promotions and a higher salary may help us support our families, but the reality is that we need much less than we want. Have you ever looked at images of third-world poverty and wondered if it's downright immoral to go out for a fancy dinner? Why is that?

If there's one thing you can count on, it's that God will always turn expectations on their head. When the Jews set their sights on a Messiah who would drive the Romans out of Israel, God sent a baby so poor he was born in a manger. When Jesus' disciples

expected him to raise a grassroots rebellion, he instead emptied himself on the cross. Why is it that God considers the meek his own special ones?

Maybe it's because they're under no illusions about their own power and importance. When you have nothing, there's no one to depend on but God. Like those who suffer, the meek don't have to work so hard to keep their priorities straight.

We may never be meek in the physical sense of destitution, but we can aspire to separate ourselves from the things of the world and pursue a Godly meekness. Fortunately, the Spirit is waiting to give us what we need. When we admit we are not God (blessed are the poor in spirit), when we learn to weather hardship with grace (blessed are those who mourn), then we become fertile soil, ready to inherit the blessings the Spirit wants to share: the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit.

The gifts of the Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. These gifts are character traits that shape the way we view and interact with the world. These virtues help us recognize God's presence (or absence) in the people, places, and situations we face every day. They help us discern and obey God's will in our lives.

The fruits of the Spirit are charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, and chastity. These are gifts of another kind: things that others can sense in us through our actions.

The list begins with charity for a good reason. In contemporary usage, this word is associated with giving to the needy, but the Church uses it interchangeably with the word "love." This puts an altogether different spin on it. What we usually call "love," as it is portrayed in movies and songs—a feeling that overwhelms

common sense and self-control—is really not love at all. In Godly terms, the definition of love is a series of actions:

“Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Corinthians 13:4–7).

Kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness—these attributes direct how we interact with others, not only those closest to us, but coworkers, store clerks, and complete strangers. Self-control is key to resisting temptation; modesty and chastity ensure that we treat the temple of the human body (both ours and others’) with dignity. Peace is a quality we all would like in greater abundance, but it only comes from within. Patience? Same story.

You can probably think of people you know who embody these qualities. Their faith permeates the world around them. Somehow, they breathe peace into every situation. They don’t have to hold up a Bible and call on the name of Jesus; their very presence is evangelization. We can learn from them. Better yet—we can *be* them. Next time you go to the grocery store, ask yourself: When I leave, how will the cashier remember me? Will I leave behind a feeling of patience, kindness, and peace? Remembering the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit can help us to embody a Christ-like meekness day to day.

We can also learn from another kind of meekness: age and/or disability. By every measurable standard, my daughter, who has Down syndrome, doesn’t make the cut. All the custom orthotics, medical care, and costly education in the world will likely never result in her attaining a high-school reading level. Yet her

charisma and zest for life forges bonds wherever she goes. Her very presence in our life has inoculated us from much of the “rat race.” She really does seem to have a direct line to heaven. When I think of her, I have no doubt that the meek will, indeed, inherit the land.

For the Children

You know what the amazing part about faith is? Every lesson you learn helps you to be ready to learn the next one. So being humble, like we learned in chapter 1, and learning to be happy even when we suffer, like we learned in chapter 2, gives us what we need to be ready for the third beatitude: Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

There are some big words in that sentence. To be meek is a lot like being humble. It means we aren’t worried about having all the biggest and best clothes and toys. It means we live simply and don’t try to be better than everyone else. To inherit means to receive a big gift. Once we’ve learned to be humble and be happy even when things are hard, we are ready to receive some special blessings the Holy Spirit is waiting to share with us: the fruits and gifts of the Spirit.

The gifts of the Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. Wisdom and understanding help us know how to recognize what is good in the world. Counsel means knowing how to give good advice. Fortitude means we don’t freak out when life gets tough. Piety and fear of the Lord mean that we show God the respect he deserves.

These gifts help us think about God and the world in the right way. And that changes the way we act. The Spirit also gives us

twelve “fruits”: charity (also known as love), joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, and chastity.

Charity is the same word the Church uses to mean “love.” Love is more than a good feeling. When God asks us to love, he’s talking about the way we treat other people. Saint Paul wrote some famous words about love:

“Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Corinthians 13:4–7).

It can be really hard to act with love when we are angry with other people. Many of those other fruits—like kindness, patience, generosity, and gentleness—are ways we can show love to our family members and friends, especially when it’s hard. Self-control helps us to treat other people and ourselves with respect, even when we don’t want to. That is important because our souls are made in God’s image. Since God lives within each one of us, our bodies are holy. Modesty and chastity mean that we respect our bodies and the bodies of everyone around us.

This is too hard for us to do by ourselves. We need God’s help. That’s why he gives us the gifts and fruits of the Spirit.

Just Live It

1. Make apple dumplings or sugar cookies decorated with the name of a spiritual fruit or gift.

This Little Light of Mine: Living the Beatitudes

2. Get outside your comfort zone: interact with the powerless. Visit a nursing home or a group home for the disabled or homeless. When we interact with “the least of these,” it transforms our outlook on topics related to them, taking our opinions from a theoretical understanding of contemporary issues to one that is powerfully real.
3. Institute a “one in, one out” policy in your household: establish a cap on toys, books, and clothes for both adults and kids in the family.
4. Make a list of needs vs. wants.
5. Place limits on TV, web, phone, game usage—in other words, seek a less “plugged in” lifestyle, since that lends itself to a constant desire for more.
6. Make a mobile. To make a mobile, you will need several horizontal beams, which can be made from a cut-up clothes hangar, twigs, drinking straws or wooden kabob skewers, construction paper and art supplies, hole punch, and string or yarn for hanging.

Mobile

Using the patterns on pages 94 and 95, cut out and decorate **twelve apples (fruits) and seven presents (gifts)**. On each one, write “I will share the fruit/gift of _____ by _____.”

(Note: If you want the mobile to last, you might consider laminating it or coating it with contact paper.)

Punch a hole near the top of each apple or present.

Blessed Are the Meek

Attach two arms of the mobile to each other by placing them at right angles and wrapping tightly with string on the diagonal, alternating every time. When you are satisfied that they are stable, tie off a long piece of string to use for hanging the mobile. Now you have four “arms.” From them you can hang apples, presents, or more horizontal arms. Since there are nineteen items to hang, you’ll need multiple levels. You can make more crossed arms, or simply use single horizontal beams. Make the mobile as simple or as complex as you feel capable of balancing.

Assemble the mobile by using string to tie apples and presents to the beams. Remember, balance is a matter of both weight and leverage; you may have to move items toward and away from the center to find the right balance.

