



# I AM THE VINE

JOHN 15:1-17

## GOAL

- ▶ To teach children that just as a branch cannot grow without being attached to the vine, we cannot prosper, flourish, and carry out God's purpose for our lives without Jesus.
- .....

## WORDS TO KNOW

- ▶ **Abide:** to obey, act in accordance with, or follow.
- .....

## MEMORY VERSES

- ▶ **John 15:5:** I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

**John 14:15:** If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

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## OVERVIEW

- ▶ **Read John 15:1-17:** Jesus teaches a group of people the importance of maintaining a relationship with Him by comparing Himself to a vine, the people as branches off the vine, and God as the gardener. He explained that to bear fruit and flourish in this life, a person must be connected to Him, the source of life and blessing. To stay connected to Him, Jesus explained that we must obey His commandments: Love each other as He loves us.



## SUGGESTIONS

In this story, Jesus explains a complex concept to people by comparing the idea to something that was commonly understood: farming.

**1. Growth:** Just as branches of a tree or any other crop cannot live or grow if it is not connected to the main plant, a person cannot live or carry out his or her full potential apart from God.

**2. Love:** Maintaining a connection and relationship with Jesus enables us to live full, fruitful lives. We stay connected to Jesus by showing our love for Him. Jesus says that we can show our love for Him by obeying His commands.

**3. Obedience:** Jesus commands us to love each other the way He loves us. He goes on to say that this form of love often calls us to sacrifice something of our own to help someone else in need. By ensuring that everyone has what they need, we are showing Jesus that we love Him and that we are grateful to Him for giving us life and sustaining us.

## PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY

**Ages 5-7 Fruit Bearers | Supplies:** cut outs of bunches of grapes and crayons, markers, glitter, glue, and other supplies for decorating.

On the back of each cut out, write, "Jesus is the vine; we are the branches." Give each student a cut out to decorate.

### **Ages 5-10 Fruit, Fruit, No Fruit**

Choose one student to act as the Gardener, and have the rest of the students sit in a circle on the floor. Play Duck, Duck Goose, but ask the Gardener to use the words Fruit, Fruit, No Fruit instead. Students the Gardener taps and says, "Fruit," remain seated. Students the Gardener taps and says, "No Fruit," must jump up and try to catch the Gardener before he or she reaches the student's now empty seat. If the student doesn't catch the Gardener, he or she becomes the new Gardener. Continue the game until everyone has had a chance to be the Gardener or until the class needs to move on.



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**Ages 8-10** **Harvesting the Fruit** | **Supplies:** basket and balloons

Divide the class into teams, and have the students line up. Put a basket filled with inflated balloons at one end of each team's line and an empty basket at the other end. The person in front of the line should pick up a balloon and place it between his or her chin and chest so the student is holding the balloon without using any hands. Students may use their hands to put the balloon into this position, but not afterwards. The student at the front of the line then faces the next student in line and passes the balloon without using their hands. If the balloon drops, the student trying to pass it may use his or her hands to pick it up and try again. Once the balloon reaches the person at the back of the line, the balloon is dropped into the empty basket, and the whole thing starts again until all the balloons have been passed to the back or until the class needs to move on. The first team to pass all balloons to the back wins or the team with the most balloons at the back of the line when time runs out wins.

**MEMORY  
VERSE  
MEANING**

▶ **John 15:5:** We need Jesus to live a full, abundant life. Without Him, we cannot hope to live life to the full potential God intended.

**John 14:15:** To show our love for Jesus, we must obey His commandments to love God with everything we are and have, and to love each other as He loves us.



## POST-LESSON ACTIVITY

**Ages 5-7** **Withering Branches** | **Supplies:** pool noodles and pipe cleaners.

Stick a bunch of pipe cleaners of all different colors into a pool noodle, creating a “vine” and “branches.” Create these vines for the number of teams there will be in the class. Make sure that each pool noodle has at least enough brown pipe cleaners in it so that every team member has a chance to find one. Put enough pipe cleaners into each pool noodle so that it’s not too easy to spot the brown pipe cleaners. Divide the class into teams, and have the students line up. On the word “Go,” instruct the students to inspect the vine, looking for withered branches (brown pipe cleaners). When they find one, they should pluck it from the vine, and return to the line. Continue until one team finds all the brown pipe cleaners or until the class needs to move on. The team with the most brown pipe cleaners wins.

**Ages 5-10** **Pin the Fruit on the Branch** | **Supplies:** construction paper, cut outs of fruit, markers, crayons, glitter, other decorating supplies, and tape.

Make a vine out of construction paper with more branches than students in the class. Tape the vine to the wall. Let the students choose their favorite kind of fruit from the cut outs. Have the students write their names on the fruit and then decorate it however they want. Next have the class line up. After being spun around in a circle a few times, let the students take turns trying to tape their decorated pieces of fruit to one of the vine’s branches. The student who gets closest wins.

**Ages 8-10** **Friends for the Win** | **Supplies:** paper and envelopes

For this game, the class will be divided into teams. Each student will be given an envelope with words from one of the memory verses. Some of the envelopes contain all the words for the verse, others contain only some, and others contain more than needed to complete the verse. Each student must put the words in the correct order. Those with more words than necessary must help other team members who weren’t given all the words in the verse. The first team to have every member complete their verses with all the words in the correct order wins.

Sometimes loving others means sacrificing what we have to help others. Living life is teamwork with Jesus and fellow believers.



TAKE  
HOME



**To grow, we must stay connected to the creator and sustainer of life:** Jesus. We cannot grow without Him. We stay connected by showing our love for Jesus. We show our love for Jesus by obeying His command for us to love each other as He loved us. Here are some ways we can grow, love, and obey.

**1. Growth:**

- Study the Bible
- Prayer
- Attend Sunday school

**2. Love:**

- Participate in worship services
- Share your faith with people you meet
- Help people in need

**3. Obedience:**

- Forgive people who have wronged you.
- Give to the needy
- Heed the guidance of the Holy Spirit



## QUESTION & ANSWER

### SLIDE 1



**Q1a:** How would Jesus often teach people while He was on Earth?

**A1:** Jesus would often teach people through parables and examples of things that occur in nature.

**Q1b:** Can you teach a newborn baby to walk?

**TN:** No, newborn babies need time to develop muscle so they can carry their own weight. While Jesus was on Earth, He had so much information that He needed to share with us, but our limited ability to understand the concepts He was imparting to us was a roadblock. Jesus, being the perfect teacher, knows how to meet us where we are in our ability to understand. He presented these complex concepts to us in small, manageable pieces. It was in this way that Jesus taught us about Himself, His Father, and their deep, unyielding love for us.

### SLIDE 2



**Q2a:** What happens to branches that do not bear fruit?

**A2:** Branches that do not bear fruit are cut off and thrown away.

**Q2b:** Can a seed grow without anyone to care for it?

**TN:** Yes, a seed can grow without anyone caring for it; however, a plant cannot bear its best fruit without the help of a skillful gardener. It the same way God works in our lives to bring about growth and the fruit of good works.



## QUESTION & ANSWER

### SLIDE 3



**Q3a:** A branch not attached to a vine cannot do what?

**A3:** A branch not attached to a vine cannot grow or bear fruit.

**Q3b:** How did you meet your best friend?

**TN:** Let the students answer. Then ask them if those particular circumstances hadn't happened that way, how would they have met their best friends? Without the initial connection, these friendships may not have occurred. It is because of the connection we make and the work we put in that our friendships continue.

### SLIDE 4



**Q4a:** What happens to the branch if it is not connected to the vine?

**A4:** A branch that is not connected to the vine gets weak, shrivels up, and fails to bear fruit.

**Q4b:** The straw in your fruit smoothie is blocked by a big piece of strawberry. Can you still drink it through the straw?

**TN:** No, if one end of the straw is blocked, nothing is going to come through it. Even though the straw is in the cup with the smoothie, the strawberry is blocking our connection to the smoothie. In order to keep drinking the smoothie through the straw, we would have to dislodge the strawberry. Branches are connected to the vine, but if they are not drawing from the vine, they will not flourish. The same is true of us. Jesus will never leave us, but we need to make an effort to keep our connection strong. If we do not draw on Jesus, we will not flourish. Often things in life come up that seem important and draw our attention away from Jesus. These things can sometimes block our connection to the vine, just like the strawberry stuck in the straw. It is up to us to keep our connection to Jesus strong and unclogged.



## QUESTION & ANSWER

### SLIDE 5



**Q5a:** What are the keys to staying connected?

**A5:** The keys to staying connected are love and obedience.

**Q5b:** Can you hug someone while crossing your arms across your chest?

**TN:** No, to hug someone properly, we have to have our arms open wide. If someone hugs us and we have our arms crossed, we are showing that we are not receiving the loving gesture they are offering. To have a strong connection to Jesus, we need to receive His love with open arms. This means working to maintain our relationship with Him and obeying His commands.

### SLIDE 6



**Q6a:** What did Jesus command us to do?

**A6:** Jesus commands that we love each other the way He loves us.

**Q6b:** Can you complete a puzzle if some of the pieces are missing?

**TN:** No, a puzzle cannot be completed without all the pieces. Sometimes, we experience times in our lives when we don't have everything we need in life to succeed and move forward. It is in these times that we can see God work in our lives. When we are connected to Jesus, He gives us everything we need to survive and prosper. Jesus is the vine, we are the branches, meaning that through Jesus, we are connected to all other believers. Jesus knows our needs, and He knows what others have. Through the Holy Spirit, He urges the people who have to give to those who are in need. By giving what we have to help others, we are showing Jesus how much we love Him and how grateful we are for everything He gives us. So, without Jesus, we cannot complete a puzzle if some of the pieces are missing, but with Jesus, it is possible. With Jesus, everything is possible.



## QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 7



**Q7a:** What does Jesus call those who obey command?

**A7:** Jesus calls those who obey His command His friends.

**Q7b:** Does Jesus love us only if we obey Him?

**TN:** Jesus loves us no matter what we do. There is absolutely nothing we can do that will ever make Jesus not love us. It is important to understand that even if we follow every rule and obey every command, Jesus will not love us any more than He already does. We cannot earn His love or the salvation we find in Him. He calls those who obey His commands His friends because they are working to advance His mission of love. We make mistakes, but Jesus will always be there to help us get back up again and make better choices in the future. He will never leave us or stop loving us.



## QUESTION & ANSWER

### MEMORY VERSES

▷ **John 15:5:** I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

**John 14:15:** If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

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### BIG IDEA

▷ Without Jesus, we cannot grow or flourish. With Jesus, we are blessed and called His friends.

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### CLOSING PRAYER

▷ Father God, thank You for giving us life and for blessing us so abundantly. Help us to stay connected to You, as You are what sustains our lives and helps us to bear fruit. We ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen.



## LESSON TRANSCRIPT

### SLIDE 1



When Jesus was on Earth, He was both fully man and fully God, meaning that He knew everything there ever was or is to know. He wanted to pass on as much information as He could, but much of what Jesus had to share would be difficult for his listeners to understand. To help, sometimes, Jesus would teach using stories called parables, other times He would use examples of things that occur in nature. One such instance occurred while Jesus was teaching a group of people while in Jerusalem. Jesus told the crowd, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener."

### SLIDE 2



Jesus knew that the people in the crowd that day would understand what it takes to plant, grow, and care for a fruit-bearing vine. By using this comparison, Jesus taught the audience how God cares for us. A vine is planted in good soil, watered, and watched carefully to see if anything is needed to help it grow. Branches sprout from the vine—some grow fruit, others do not. Branches that bear no fruit are cut off and thrown away. These steps help the vine to grow strong, flourish, and bring about lots of beautiful, delicious fruit. The people in the crowd that day understood that a seed planted and left alone could grow and maybe even bear fruit, but it would not do as well or live as long as one tended to lovingly.



## LESSON TRANSCRIPT

### SLIDE 3



Jesus continued by telling the crowd that God is the gardener, Jesus is the vine, and we are the branches. This means that God, the gardener, is our creator and loving caretaker, and Jesus is the vine from which we, the branches, draw life and the ability to grow and bear fruit. The people in the crowd that day understood that a branch not attached to a vine cannot grow or bear fruit. Likewise, Jesus taught that without a connection to Him, it is not possible to prosper. Jesus was using this illustration to help us understand that only in Him do we find full and abundant life.

### SLIDE 4



Jesus made it clear that if a branch is not connected to the vine, it is impossible for that branch to survive. The branch has to be able to receive the vine's life-giving nutrients in order to live. Without drawing on the vine's full power, the branch will get weak, shrivel up, and fail to bear fruit; these sad branches are cut off and thrown away. When we accept Jesus as our savior and try our best to obey Him, we are like branches connected and fully drawing sweet life from the vine. Living a life connected to Jesus provides us with support, blessing, forgiveness, and the promise of never-ending life in Heaven.



## LESSON TRANSCRIPT

### SLIDE 5



Jesus longed for his followers to experience a strong connection to Him. He explained that the keys to staying connected are love and obedience. Jesus loves us the way His Father loves Him. Jesus explained that He shows His Father love by obeying His commands. That means for us to show Jesus that we love Him, all we have to do is obey His commands. Obeying Jesus' commands makes Him happy, and making Jesus happy will fill us with absolute joy! Our lives become like healthy branches that bear wonderful fruit.

### SLIDE 6



To remain connected to Jesus, we must obey His command to love each other the way Jesus loves all of us. Jesus showed His love for us by coming to serve and through sacrifice. We can show each other love like this by helping people and by putting the needs of others before our own. By focusing our attention, effort, and love on others rather than ourselves, our lives bear the good fruit that pleases God. Through this obedience, we show Jesus how very much we love Him.

### SLIDE 7



As we show our love for Jesus by obeying His command to love others, we begin to discover just how deep His love for us is: Jesus now calls us friends! As friends, our connection to and knowledge of Jesus blossoms and becomes stronger. Our strengthened connection and faith helps us to prosper and bear fruit that will last forever. The friendship with Jesus that has begun in this life will grow and thrive for all eternity—our connection to him will never end!