

The vine and the branches

**Bible verses:**

John 15:1-11

Jesus is like a vine

**Aim:**

To explore how and why we stay close to God

**Today's fruit:**

Faithfulness



In this session we will discover what Jesus meant when he described himself as the vine, God as the gardener, and his followers as the branches.

Jesus gathered with the disciples to celebrate the Passover festival. He had so much to share with them and knew the time was drawing near when he would no longer be with them. We'll find out ways that we can stay close to him and grow the many fruits of the Spirit.

God is faithful to his promises. The Spirit helps us to be faithful, including being faithful, and staying close, to God.

Each child will need:

- A selection of fruit to taste – please be aware of allergies
- *Memory verse* wristband
- *Grapes* handout
- Scissors, glue, pens/pencils, paper plus green paper (optional)
- *Explore It ideas* handout

You will need:

- *Vines* handout or *Vines* presentation
- A flipchart and pen
- To think of an example of someone who has shown you what it means to stay close to Jesus (optional)
- To create a display of a long vine with branches (one branch per child) from brown card / paper – see *Action it*
- Today's fruit sign: *Faithfulness*

Start it

Start with a fruit-tasting session. Working within your budget and the children's tastes, share a selection of fruits together. Discuss which ones they like the most and which ones they've never tried before. What is their favourite fruit? What is their least favourite fruit?

Ask:

- Have you ever tried to grow your own fruit? If so, what happened?
- If you could grow any fruit at home, which one would you choose? Explain why.

Say:

Our session today is all about God working as the gardener as we grow his fruit in our lives.

Sing it

Say:

Our story today contains the memory verse for this month. It reminds us that we are all growing together like grapes on a vine in God's family.

Give each child a memory verse wristband and share the memory verse together.

Memory verse

'I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.'

(John 15:5 *NIV*)

Say:

Our song for today will help us to remember our memory verse.

Song

'John 15:5 I am the vine' (Scripture memory song) by JumpStart3 (stop at 3:13)

Share it

Say:

From this week's song and memory verse we have already discovered that Jesus described himself as the 'true vine'. Let's watch the clip to find out more.

Video

Jesus, the true vine (Slapstick Theatre) by Saddleback Kids (2:27)

Ask:

- What festival were the Jewish people celebrating?
- What event does the festival of Passover remember?

Say:

In our story today, Jesus is spending time with the disciples during Passover. He comforts them and gives them advice for a time when he won't be physically with them any more.

Ask:

Jesus described himself as the vine and God as the gardener. What do you think he meant?

Read:

'I am the true vine; my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that does not produce fruit. And he trims and cleans every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce even more fruit. You are already clean because of the words I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can produce fruit alone. It must remain in the vine. It is the same with you. You cannot produce fruit alone. You must remain in me.'

(John 15:1-4 ICB)

Use the Vines handout or presentation to show the children what grapes growing on vines looks like (images 1 to 3). Ask them to describe what they see and how they know it is a healthy plant.

Then show images of pruned grapevines (images 4 to 8). Ask them to describe what the vines look like and why they think the gardener removes so much of the plant. Explain that pruning takes away any parts of the plant that are no longer needed and gives the buds a chance to grow into healthy grapes. Did they spot how close the gardener has to get to the vines to prune them?

Ask:

- What do you think God wants to prune from our lives?
- What kind of fruit would God like us to grow?
- Why do you think Jesus says that we cannot produce fruit on our own?

Say:

Every week we think about a fruit of the Spirit and how the Holy Spirit helps us to grow that fruit in our lives.



Ask:

Can you name the fruit of the Spirit (from Galatians 5:22-23)?

Say:

God wants to grow love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control in our lives. Sometimes that might mean that he needs to remove some of the things that stop us from growing in him.

Write the fruits of the Spirit on a flip chart for the children to see.

Read:

'I am the vine, and you are the branches. If a person remains in me and I remain in him, then he produces much fruit. But without me he can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, then he is like a branch that is thrown away. That branch dies. People pick up dead branches, throw them into the fire, and burn them. Remain in me and follow my teachings. If you do this, then you can ask for anything you want, and it will be given to you. You should produce much fruit and show that you are my followers. This brings glory to my Father. I loved you as the Father loved me. Now remain in my love. I have obeyed my Father's commands, and I remain in his love. In the same way, if you obey my commands, you will remain in my love. I have told you these things so that you can have the same joy I have. I want your joy to be the fullest joy.'

(John 15:5-11 *ICB*)

Say:

Jesus told the disciples that God is a gardener and that the branches growing fruit will be kept and looked after, whereas the branches without fruit will be cut off. He said that the branches can't grow fruit on their own – they can only grow fruit when they're attached to the vine.

Ask:

In what ways can we, as followers of Jesus, stay attached to the vine?

Say:

Think about someone you know who closely follows Jesus.

Ask:

- What kind of things do they do to stay attached to the vine?
- What kind of fruit do you see them producing in their lives?

You may want to share your own example of someone who has shown you what it means to stay close to Jesus. When the children have shared, then show them again one of the vine pictures, full of grapes. How is it different from the pruned vine you looked at earlier? Explain that when we stay attached to the vine, then God can grow amazing fruit in our lives, just like these grapes growing on the vine. And remember – the gardener always works very close to the vine to help it grow.

Ask:

Have you ever felt like God was really close to you? If you feel comfortable, then tell us all about it.

Say:

Jesus is the vine. It's him we need to stay with. He tells the disciples that the way to 'remain' in him is to stay in his love and keep his commands.

Action it

Explain that the children are going to make a display of a vine and branches to put up in the room that you meet in or share with the rest of the church in a public space. First, you will need to create a long vine using brown card. One of the children can write the memory verse on the main vine.

Each child can write their name and decorate their own branch. These can then be attached to the main vine. On their Grapes handout, the children can write each fruit of the Spirit in a grape, decorate it and attach it to their branch. By the end of this activity there should be a vine, with a branch for each child and a bunch of grapes showing the fruit of the Spirit. Children may wish to cut and add leaves to their branch using green paper.

Pray it

Say:

Take a moment to look at the fruit of the Spirit shown on your bunch of grapes.

Ask:

Which fruit of the Spirit would you like God to grow in you? Explain your answer.

Display the *Faithfulness* sign.

Say:

God promises that if we stay close to him, he will grow the fruit of the Spirit within us. One of the fruits of the Spirit is faithfulness. God keeps his promises and can be trusted. He wants to grow the fruit of faithfulness in us, so that we can be more like him. As you listen to the music, ask God to grow his fruit within your life and make a promise always to stay close to him.



Listen

'Faithful' (lyrics) feat Sarah Reeves by music meets heaven (4.09)

When the music finishes, bring the session to a close in prayer.

Explore it

Remember to send home the *Explore It ideas* for children and families.



The vine and the branches

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:
John 15:1-11



Aim:
To explore how and why we stay close to God



Today's fruit:
Faithfulness



Draw

Watch the clip and see if you can draw a bunch of funny grapes.

Art Core: overlapping - how to draw funny grapes by Art for Kids Hub



Grow

Watch the clip with someone from home and see if you can grow your own strawberries.

How to grow strawberries (YouTube shorts) by @creative_explained



Song for the week

'John 15:5 I am the vine' (Scripture memory song) by JumpStart3



Memory verse

'I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.'

(John 15:5 NIV)