

March 6, 2013

I am the Vine

John 15:1-9

## LESSON FOCUS

*You cannot do anything without me. John 15:5 (CEV)*

*I am the vine, and you are the branches. If you stay joined to me, and I stay joined to you, then you will produce lots of fruit. But you cannot do anything without me. John 15:5 (CEV)*

**Today's Bible Lesson:**

It's clear that Jesus used every-day events as a springboard for teaching eternal truths. He was setting an example of what all of us are called to do. In the Old Testament, Moses told the Israelites how they were to pass God's truths along to each new generation. He said: Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Deuteronomy 11:19

That's the kind of teaching that works. We need to be ready for "teachable moments" that come while we're going about our daily lives: sitting down to breakfast, walking (or more likely for us, driving) our children to school, putting the kids to bed at night. All of these daily events provide opportunities to teach about God. That's the way Jesus taught. He was always alert to "teachable moments" when he could tie eternal truth to the events of the moment.

Jesus made his last recorded I AM statement after the Last Supper. It is likely that he and his men were walking from the Upper Room to the Garden where Jesus would be arrested. During that walk, they would have seen a prominent symbol that hung over the entrance of the Temple. The symbol was made of gold wire and beads, delicately twisted to look like a huge golden grape vine. Jesus may have pointed to that golden vine when he told his Apostles, I AM the true vine. John 15:1

Jesus was using a word-picture that was very familiar to his men. For one thing, grapes were central to Israel's economy. The climate of Israel is ideal for growing healthy grapes. For another thing, the grapevine had always been a symbol of the nation of Israel. In fact, the symbol of the grapevine was on Israeli coins up until the time they were conquered by Rome.

In scripture, grapevines are used as three types of symbols, representing the past, present, and future.

Jesus said, I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man abides in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5

## WELCOME ACTIVITY

Bring purple clay dough for your students to play with.

Make bunches of grapes from the purple dough. Talk about grapes that we can eat.

## OPENING

### *Make Scratch and Sniff Grape Pictures*

Print out a picture of a bunch of grapes hanging on a vine and have your children paint the grapes with grape Kool-aid paint. To make the paint add one or two tablespoons of water to a package of powdered Kool-aid. When the pictures are dry, show them how to scratch them with their fingernails to smell the grapes.



## BIBLE STORY

### **I am the Vine – John 15:1-9**

*Open your Bible so children can see you “reading” God’s Word. Show them your Bible and the words to they know what you’re saying is coming from God’s Word. Use Tell the Story idea below.*

Have you ever thought that even while Jesus was teaching, He also told stories? Well, He did! Our lesson for today from the Bible is a story that Jesus told His followers.

Jesus was trying to talk about things they knew about to make it easier for them to understand a difficult lesson. He talked about grapevines. Now, today, most of us don’t know anything about grape vines because many of us live in cities and apartments. But maybe your grandparents have some wild grapes that you like to pick. Even if they do not, we will make sure you understand enough about grapes to understand Jesus’ story!

(Use a picture of a grape vine here to help your students see what you are talking about.)

Did you know that there are two parts to a grape vine? There is the vine part that is planted in the ground and grows up. The other part is the branch. The branch grows from the vine and the grapes hang from those branches. Good branches grow grapes. Bad branches do not. Bad branches need to be cut off of the vine completely because they don’t do anything. But sometimes good branches also need to be cut! Good branches, though, do not get cut off all the way, they just get cut back. And then an amazing things happens. Those little short pieces of branches start bulging with green bumps. Those green bumps turn into small green leaves. Those small green leaves become short stems that eventually grow into new branches. But this does not just happen in one place on that short branch. On one branch that has been cut back, many new branches will grow.

And if many new branches grow, there will be lots of new grapes! Yum!

But what in the world can you learn about God from a bunch of grapes? We can learn that just like a branch needs to be connected to the vine, we need to be connected to Jesus. We can do this by reading the Bible and coming to church. We can also learn that just as a branch should give us grapes, we should be doing good things. Those good things by themselves don't make us okay with God, but when we are spending time with Jesus we should want to do those good things. How about you? What good things can you do today?

**Sing: "He is the Vine" to the tune of "His Banner Over Me Is Love"**

He is the vine and we are branches, let's stay joined to Him.

He is the vine and we are branches, let's stay joined to Him.

He is the vine and we are branches, let's stay joined to Him.

We can't - do anything - without Him.

Pray: Thank you, Jesus, for telling us stories that help us understand more about You.

## **GOD'S WORD IN MY HEART**

***You cannot do anything without me. John 15:5 (CEV)***

Read this passage from your Bible. Help children learn this verse.

## **CREATING**

**ART Activity - Jesus said, "I am the vine"**

Using brown craft paper, colored construction paper and tissue paper, have them tear and form pieces to represent the vine, branches and fruit. They can make it 3D by crumpling the paper.

Help them to write the verse "I am the vine and you are the branches. John 15:5" on the vine. Have each of the kids include their names on a branch.

**Find the Verse Game** – In the vine you twisted, write today's Bible verse on leaves, children can follow a twisting vine to discover today's Bible verse.

**God showed them what to do.**

*Point outward*

## CLOSING ACTIVITY

Blessing:

**May God, who is all around you,  
pour his love upon you.**

**And Jesus, his life a sacrifice,  
walk right there beside you.**

**And may God's Holy Spirit,  
the one who lives inside you,  
keep you strong,  
comfort, lead and guide you!**

*Beginning at the bottom of the circle, slowly*

*make a large circle with your hands. Finish by bringing your hands down and wiggling the fingers to resemble rain.)*

*Slowly make a large sign of the cross. Then move your hands out to the sides.*

*Cross your hands over the heart.*

*Move to a "strong man" position. Then*

*cross your arms with the hands on corresponding upper arms to communicate comfort. Bring one hand forward with "lead" and the other with "guide" to complete the blessing.)*

**Let's sing Jesus Loves Me.**

**Sing: Jesus Loves Me**

***Jesus loves me, this I know  
For the Bible tells me so.  
Little ones to Him belong,  
They are weak, but He is strong.***

***Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me!  
The Bible tells me so.***