

Teachers Dig In

Dig In to the Bible

- Read: John 15:1-17
- In This Passage: Jesus describes his relationship with us using a plant metaphor. He says he is the vine and we're the branches. As we remain attached to him, like branches are attached to a tree, his love grows in us and we produce good fruit!
- Bible Point: Jesus is the vine...
- Application: ...so we grow in his love.
- Summary Verse: "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Dig Deeper

- You'll Be Teaching: *Jesus is the vine*. This lesson is a guiding principle behind the whole Heart of God theme. An apple branch doesn't *try* to produce apples; it does because of the power that flows through the tree and out of the branch. In the same way, being a disciple isn't about trying to be a better Christian; it's about knowing Jesus more and more so that his fruit naturally grows out of us.
- Think About: Take some time to just sit in Jesus' presence. Remain in him!

Dig In to Prayer

- Pray that kids will stop making faith about their own efforts to be better and will instead learn how to remain attached to the vine.

Quick Tip

- This point is a little more abstract than usual, but through the intentionality of the lesson, kids will understand what it means. Try to use the spoken text we provide so kids don't walk away wondering what it means that Jesus is a vine.

This Lesson at a Glance



OPENING

Preschoolers share about a topic related to the lesson.

Supplies

- Bible



CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Preschoolers prune a paper vine, learn the Bible point, and sing a song.

Supplies

- Bible
- brown, green, and black bulletin board paper
- purple construction paper
- masking tape
- picture of a grapevine from a book or the internet

Easy Prep

- Make a long vine on your wall using the brown and green bulletin board paper. Place it where preschoolers can reach it. Include several “healthy” brown branches and at least 1 branch that has died (black) for each child. Use construction paper to make at least 1 grape for each child, and attach the grapes to the tree. Lightly tape the dead branches to the vine so kids can easily remove them.
- Use the brown bulletin board paper to make a large man figure (representing Jesus) and a child figure (representing the kids). Hang them side by side and holding hands. Make at least 3 purple hearts per child, and tape them to or around Jesus’ empty hand. Lightly tape the hearts so they can easily be moved to the child’s empty hand.



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Preschoolers squat down and then “grow” to a standing position.



OBJECT LESSON

Preschoolers use magnets to make hearts stay on a cookie sheet.

Supplies

- metal cookie sheets (1 for every 5 kids)
- paper hearts (at least 1 per child)
- child-safe magnets (at least 1 per child)



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Preschoolers try to step on and stop wiggling jump-ropes.

Supplies

- jump-ropes (1 for every 2 adult or teen helpers)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)



LOW-ENERGY GAME

Kids play a slow version of Crack the Whip.

Supplies

- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)



CRAFT

Preschoolers make measuring tapes with heart stickers.

Supplies

- white card stock
- heart stickers (several per child)
- crayons
- hole punches
- paper fasteners (several per child)

Easy Prep

- Cut 1x8½-inch strips of card stock. You'll need 6 or 7 strips per child.
- Make a sample craft to show kids.

**Marked supplies can be reused from Core Bible Discovery*

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



Supplies

- Bible

Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, have preschoolers give an “elbow-five” to three friends.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by having preschoolers do jumping jacks as many times as the birthday child is old. With each jumping jack, they’ll say “Happy birthday!”
- Collect the offering.

Introduce the Lesson

Say: **Today we’ll learn that Jesus is the vine. A vine is a plant that grows fruit, vegetables, or flowers on it. We’ll learn later what it means that Jesus is the vine, but first let’s start by talking about our favorite fruits since they sometimes grow on a vine.**

Share

- Share what *your* favorite fruit is. Explain what you like about it.
- In leader-led small groups, have preschoolers share what *their* favorite fruits are. Encourage them to share why they like the fruit—they might like the color or the way the fruit squishes in their mouths.
- After small groups have discussed, have adult or teen helpers share with the whole group what they talked about in their small groups.

Summarize

Open a Bible, and say: **There are so many delicious fruits. Jesus talks in the Bible about fruit to help us understand something important about our lives. He says that he’s the vine, and he’ll help us grow in love. Jesus means that when we’re friends with him, he shares his love with us and helps us love others, too!**

Pray, thanking Jesus that he’s the vine and he helps us grow in love.



Supplies

- Bible
- brown, green, and black bulletin board paper
- purple construction paper
- masking tape
- picture of a grapevine from a book or the internet

Easy Prep

- Make a long vine on your wall using the brown and green bulletin board paper. Place it where preschoolers can reach it. Include several “healthy” brown branches and at least 1 branch that has died (black) for each child. Use construction paper to make at least 1 grape for each child, and attach the grapes to the tree. Lightly tape the dead branches to the vine so kids can easily remove them.
- Use the brown bulletin board paper to make a large man figure (representing Jesus) and a child figure (representing the kids). Hang them side by side and holding hands. Make at least 3 purple hearts per child, and tape them to or around Jesus’ empty hand. Lightly tape the hearts so they can easily be moved to the child’s empty hand.

Prune the Vine

Say: **Today we’ll learn what it means that Jesus is the vine. A vine is a plant that grows things like grapes.** Point out the vine you made on the wall. **That probably seems confusing—how can Jesus be a vine? Jesus is a *man*, and he’s also God! In the Bible, Jesus said:** [Read John 15:1.]

Say: **Jesus doesn’t mean he’s really a grapevine. He’s telling a story to help his friends understand. Let’s look at this vine on the wall to help us understand, too.**

A healthy vine has lots of grapes! How many grapes does our vine have? Lead kids in counting all the grapes.

Say: **This vine also has healthy branches, but some of them aren’t so healthy. When branches die, we take them off the vine to keep the vine healthy. Let’s take all the dead branches off this vine.** Lead each child to remove one “dead” branch and toss it in the trash.

Say: **In the Bible, Jesus calls us the branches. He wants us to be like these healthy branches. He wants us to stay connected to him. And when we’re connected to him, he helps us grow and learn! That’s like this vine that’s growing grapes on its healthy branches. When we’re friends with Jesus, he’ll grow love in us. He’ll grow us to be helpers and good sharers. And he’ll grow us to be kind to others. When we’re “healthy branches,” love and kindness grow in our hearts. But Jesus is the vine—that means *Jesus is the one who can grow all these great things in our lives!***

Move the Hearts

Say: **Let’s think about it in another way.** Point to the Jesus figure. **Pretend this is Jesus.** Point to the child figure. **Pretend this is you.**

Point out the purple hearts in Jesus’ hand. Say: **Jesus is amazing, so we can always learn from him about how to love and care for others. Jesus has so much love for every person in the world!**

When you’re friends with Jesus, he helps you grow in love. Point out how the child figure is holding Jesus’ hand. **When we’re connected to Jesus by being friends with him, he shows us how to love others.** Transfer a heart from Jesus’ hand to the child’s empty hand.

Ask: • **What are some other good things you know about Jesus?** Encourage children to think of ideas, such as Jesus takes care of people, Jesus forgives people, and Jesus is always kind. As children think of ideas, encourage each child to move one purple heart from Jesus’ hand to the empty hand of the child paper figure. After each child has shared at least one idea, move on. Be sure to leave plenty of hearts in Jesus’ hand.

Say: **Jesus is the vine because when we’re best friends with him, it’s like we’re the branches on a vine, and Jesus grows great things in us like love, kindness, forgiveness, and care! Look at how all that love went from Jesus to us. And Jesus never runs out of love and goodness!** Point out how Jesus

has many hearts left in his hand.

Sing a Song

Say: **Jesus is the vine, and we grow in his love.** Let's sing a song to help us remember that.

Lead kids in singing the following song to the tune of "Frère Jacques."

How do I grow, how do I grow, (*questioning pose with palms up*)

Grow in love, grow in love? (*questioning pose with palms up*)

When I'm friends with Jesus, when I'm friends with Jesus, (*nod head and smile*)

I grow in love, I grow in love. (*hug self*)

Repeat as time allows.



Squat and Grow

Squat

Say: **Today we learned that Jesus is the vine, and we grow in his love. We found out that when we stay close to Jesus, he shows us how to love others really well. Let's do something to help us think about that.**

Lead kids to squat down and be as "tiny" as possible. Say: **Let's share some things that are good about Jesus.**

Share one or two things you know are good about Jesus, such as that he loves us or he takes care of us. For each thing you mention, lead kids to "grow" a tiny bit by moving toward a standing position, and tell kids "Jesus can grow [example you shared] in us, too." (They'll still be squatting, but it'll be less and less as they "grow.")

Ask: • **What are some good things you want to share about Jesus?** Preschoolers might say that Jesus helps people who are sick, Jesus listens to people when they talk to him, or Jesus forgives people when they do something wrong. For each example kids mention, have them "grow" a little bit. Continue until kids are standing straight and tall, perhaps even stretching their arms above their heads if they had a lot of things to share.

Pray

Say: **Jesus is so loving, and because he's the vine he can grow all these loving ways in us, too. Jesus grows our hearts so we love and care for others and help and forgive them, too. Let's thank Jesus now.** Have kids hold hands, and lead them in a short prayer, thanking Jesus and asking him to grow you and the kids in love.

Say: **I'm so glad we were all here together today to learn about Jesus and grow in his love! Please come back next week so we can find out more about Jesus' love.**

**Supplies**

- metal cookie sheets (1 for every 5 kids)
- paper hearts (at least 1 per child)
- child-safe magnets (at least 1 per child)

Tip

- Magnets can be harmful if swallowed. Ensure that children don't put the magnets in or near their mouths.

Place Hearts on Cookie Trays

Say: **In our Bible story, Jesus told his friends that he loved them, and he told them to stay close to him. Love reminds me of hearts! Let's put hearts on cookie sheets and see if they stay close to the cookie sheets.**

- Form groups of five, and assign an adult or teen helper to each group. Give each group a metal cookie sheet.
- Give each child a paper heart, and have kids place the hearts on cookie sheets.
- Have kids take turns holding a cookie sheet and then flipping it over so the hearts fall off.

Use Magnets to Secure Hearts

Say: **The hearts didn't stay close to the cookie sheet—they fell off. Let's pick them up and see if magnets will help the hearts stay close to the cookie sheet.**

- Have each child pick up a heart and place it on the cookie sheet again.
- Have adult or teen helpers give each child a magnet and assist kids as they place the magnets on top of the hearts.
- Have adult or teen helpers hold the cookie sheets and then flip them over. The magnets will hold the hearts in place.
- Pass the cookie sheets, and give each child a chance to hold it upside down. Encourage kids to give it a gentle shake or move it from side to side. The magnets will keep the hearts attached to the sheet.

Talk About It

Say: **Those magnets really worked to keep the hearts close to the cookie sheet. Like the hearts stayed on the cookie sheet, we can stay close to Jesus! And when we do, he grows love in us. Jesus is the vine, and we grow in his love.** Share about something that helps you stay close to Jesus. Perhaps singing praise songs, reading your Bible, or praying at the start of each day helps you stay close to Jesus' love. Have kids gather close around the cookie sheets and say, "We love you, Jesus!"



Supplies

- jump-ropes (1 for every 2 adult or teen helpers)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).

Step on Wiggling Jump-Ropes

Say: **Today we're learning that Jesus is the vine, and when we stay connected to the vine, we learn from Jesus and grow in his love. Let's play a game where you'll do your best to connect to a wiggly vine.**

- Have your adult or teen helpers pair up, and give each pair a jump-rope. Partners will hold the jump-rope on both ends and kneel or sit on the ground to keep the rope on the ground.
- Then the adult and teen helpers will move the ends of the rope back and forth to create a waving, wiggling motion in the rope as it stays on the ground. Make sure the helpers know it's very important to keep the ropes on the ground.
- Once the ropes are in motion, kids try to step on a rope.
- If a child steps on a rope, he or she is connected to that "vine" and can stay standing on the rope.
- Once a rope has so many kids standing on it that the rope can no longer move, everyone can jump off, and you can play a new round.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play.

Talk About It

Ask: • **Why was it hard or easy to connect to one of the wiggly vines?**

Say: **Jesus doesn't make it hard for us to connect to him. If we love Jesus, we're connected to him and we'll grow in his love. And when we're connected to Jesus, we can help others connect to him, too. That happened in the game. When one of you connected to a vine, it made it easier for others to connect to it, too!**

Tell about a person in *your* life who helped connect you to Jesus, such as a friend or family member who loves Jesus.

Ask: • **Who's someone who helps connect *you* to Jesus?** Preschoolers might share about parents, grandparents, other family members, or even friends who love Jesus.

Say: **Jesus is the vine, and it's so good to hear about the many people who are connected to Jesus and growing in his love!**



Vine Line

Supplies

- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).

Play a Walking Version of Crack the Whip

Say: **In today's Bible story Jesus told us to stay connected to him like a branch stays connected to a vine. That's how the branches of plants can grow and be healthy—by staying connected to the vine. When we connect to Jesus, we'll grow in his love. Let's play a fun game where you'll connect and make a vine line!**

- Invite a teen or adult helper to be the first vine line Starter who'll try to tag others.
- Everyone will walk around the room, and the Starter will try to tag others.
- When someone is tagged, he or she will hold hands with the Starter or the last person in the vine line to connect to the vine and make it grow.
- As the vine line grows, kids in the line will stay connected by their hands and move in the direction the Starter decides in trying to tag others to add to the vine.
- If kids are having trouble walking and not running, tell them they can move only by taking *big* steps to slow down their movements.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play.

Talk About It

Ask: • **What did you like about being connected to the vine in the game?**

Say: **Awesome things happen when we stay connected to the real vine—Jesus. We grow in Jesus' love when we stay connected to him, and growing in Jesus' love means we become more kind, loving, and forgiving, and we put others first. One way Jesus' love has helped me grow is... Share an example of spiritual growth in your life, such as wanting to read the Bible to learn more about God or forgiving someone when it was hard to forgive.**

Ask: • **What are ways you want to grow in Jesus' love?** Help preschoolers with ideas. They might share about ways they want to physically grow, but you can help them think of spiritual growth examples, such as getting along better with siblings, learning to happily share, or forgiving friends who are sometimes mean.

Say: **Jesus is the vine, and you can connect to Jesus now and stay connected for life! Growing in Jesus' love is the best way to grow up!**

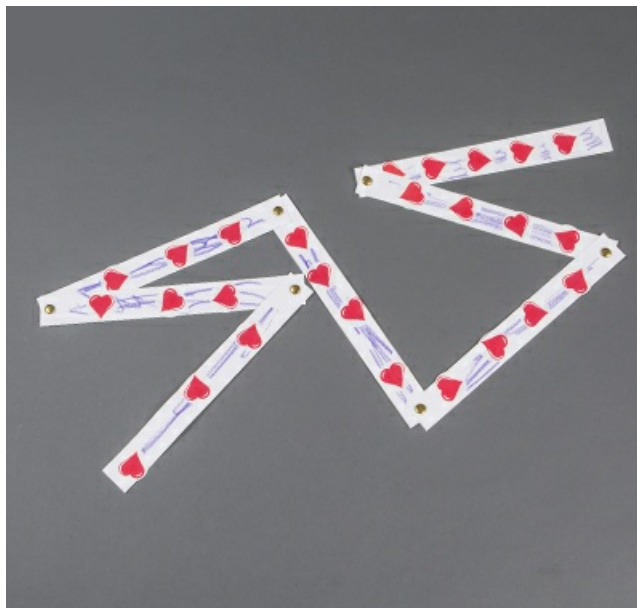


Supplies

- white card stock
- heart stickers (several per child)
- crayons
- hole punches
- paper fasteners (several per child)

Easy Prep

- Cut 1x8½-inch strips of card stock. You'll need 6 or 7 strips per child.
- Make a sample craft to show kids.



Make Measuring Tapes

Say: **Today we learned that Jesus is the vine, and we grow in his love. When we grow taller, we use measuring tapes to see how tall we've gotten. Growing in Jesus' love isn't the same as growing taller; instead of measuring how tall we are in feet and inches, we can measure how much love we show to others! Let's make special measuring tapes that measure love instead of how tall we are.**

- Give each child six or seven strips of card stock.
- Set out crayons, and have preschoolers color their card stock.
- Give each child several heart stickers, and have kids put them on their pieces of card stock.
- Help preschoolers punch a hole on both ends of each strip.
- Help kids put paper fasteners through the holes to attach the strips together.
- Preschoolers can fold up their measuring tapes by hinging them on the paper fasteners.

Talk About It

Ask: • **How many heart stickers do you have on your measuring tape?** Allow time for preschoolers to try to count theirs and share. It's okay if the younger preschoolers don't get the counting quite right.

Say: **When we're friends with Jesus, we grow in his love. He gives us more love. He helps us want to care for others more. He helps us want to forgive others when they hurt us. He helps us want to share and be great friends. Jesus is the vine, so he's the one who grows love in us—like we added these hearts to our measuring tapes! When we're friends with Jesus, our measuring tapes will fill up with hearts because of all the love he grows in us!**

