

## 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

Kids share about a topic related to the lesson.

#### Supplies

- Bible



### CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Kids staple fruit on trees, hold on to hula hoops, and make a commitment.

#### Supplies

- Bible
- construction paper in a variety of colors, including brown
- scissors
- markers
- stapler
- live plant
- hula hoops (1 for every 6 kids)
- mailing labels
- slips of paper
- glue sticks
- tape

#### Easy Prep

- Make a paper tree on the wall using construction paper—it doesn't have to be fancy! You can simply stack a few brown pieces to resemble a trunk, and then attach some brown strips to resemble branches. (See photo below.)
- On the mailing labels, write each fruit of the Spirit, 1 per label: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. You'll need at least 1 label per child, and it's okay to have repeats.
- Also write "being good" on a few slips of paper.



### LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Kids squat down and then "grow" to a standing position.



### OBJECT LESSON

Kids use paper towels to make liquid flow between cups.

#### Supplies

- small, clear cups (6 for every 4 kids)
- water
- food coloring
- spoons (1 for every 4 kids)
- super-absorbent paper towels
- scissors

#### Easy Prep

- Cut each paper towel into 4 long strips.
- Test the experiment to make sure your paper towels are absorbent enough to work within the time frame.



### HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Kids 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

**Kids 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 about 8 strips per child.
- Make a sample craft to show kids.



## DEEPER BIBLE

**Kids play Tug of War and practice being connected to Jesus.**

### Supplies

- Bibles
- rope to play Tug of War
- painter's tape
- bandanna or piece of cloth

### Easy Prep

- Use painter's tape to mark a line across your room.
- Tie knots in the rope. Tie the bandanna or piece of cloth around the center of the rope.

*\*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 kids shake hands with four friends using the *back* of their hands.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by having kids sing the words “happy birthday” like opera singers.
- 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 small groups, have kids 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 a few kids 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
- construction paper in a variety of colors, including brown
- scissors
- markers
- stapler
- live plant
- hula hoops (1 for every 6 kids)
- mailing labels
- slips of paper
- glue sticks
- tape

## Easy Prep

- Make a paper tree on the wall using construction paper—it doesn't have to be fancy! You can simply stack a few brown pieces to resemble a trunk, and then attach some brown strips to resemble branches. (See photo below.)
- On the mailing labels, write each fruit of the Spirit, 1 per label: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. You'll need at least 1 label per child, and it's okay to have repeats.
- Also write "being good" on a few slips of paper.



## Staple Fruit on a Tree

Say: **Think of something you'd love to have a lot of. Maybe it's money, pizza, or video games.**

Have kids use construction paper and markers to draw pictures of some things they'd like to have a lot of and then cut out the pictures.

Say: **Wouldn't it be cool if things like [name some of the things kids drew] grew on trees? Let's imagine what that would look like!** Have kids staple their pictures to the tree branches.

Ask: • **If you stapled these things to a real tree, why wouldn't that tree start to grow more of those things?**

Hold up a live plant.

Ask: • **What differences do you notice between this plant and the tree we just made?**

Say: **We all know that stapling something to a tree wouldn't make the tree grow more of that thing. In fact, if you stapled a piece of pizza to a tree, it would just get moldy and rotten. In order for leaves or fruit to grow, they have to be truly connected to the tree! They have to be a part of it.**

Jesus talked about our relationship with him by comparing it to a vine and branches. Listen to this.

Read John 15:4-6.

Ask: • **What do you think Jesus meant when he said "remain in me"?**

• **If Jesus is the vine and we're the branches, what does it mean for us to stay connected to him?**

Say: **Jesus wants us to bear fruit. That doesn't mean he wants us to make apples! But if you look at an apple tree, the apples are the fruit that grow from the branches. But if you did this (cut part of your live plant off and hold up the piece you removed), that detached branch wouldn't be able to grow any more apples.**

**But we don't grow apples, so let's see what kind of fruit we can grow when we remain attached to Jesus because Jesus is the vine.**

### **Hold On Tight**

Have kids gather around the hula hoops, each holding onto the hoop with one hand.

Say: **Imagine your hula hoop is Jesus, and you're the branches. As you hold on to Jesus, you produce something the Bible calls the fruit of the Spirit.**

Walk around and stick at least one prepared label to each child, saying the word on it as you do.

Say: **Now sometimes people try to be good all on their own without remaining connected to Jesus.** Have a few kids disconnect from the hula hoop, and place a slip of paper that says "being good" on each of those kids. The papers will fall to the floor.

Say: **Jesus said that apart from him, we can't do anything. We need the power of the vine flowing through us—the branches—to produce good fruit. We've been learning about all the good things God does and all the good things God does through us. But it has to be God working through us! If we just try our hardest to be good people, it won't work. But when we remain in Jesus, we produce a lot of fruit!**

Read John 15:8-12.

Say: **An apple tree makes apples. An orange tree makes oranges. A pear tree makes pears. It's just what happens! In the same way, since Jesus is love and Jesus is the vine, his branches produce love!**

### **Make a Commitment**

Say: **Jesus is the vine, so we grow in his love. Let's put our names on the tree as a sign that we're committed to staying connected to Jesus. Remember, this is just a symbol; it's a paper tree! But it will show what you feel in your heart: that you want to be a branch that bears good fruit and grows in Jesus' love.**

Have kids write their names in marker directly on the branches of the paper tree.

Pray: **Jesus, thank you that you are the vine. You have the power that can flow through us to produce good fruit. Help us remain in you and grow in your love. In your name, amen.**



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?** Kids 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.**



## OBJECT LESSON

### Water Vines

[10 min]

### Supplies

- small, clear cups (6 for every 4 kids)
- water
- food coloring
- spoons (1 for every 4 kids)
- super-absorbent paper towels
- scissors

### Easy Prep

- Cut each paper towel into 4 long strips.
- Test the experiment to make sure your paper towels are absorbent enough to work within the time frame.

### Set Up Cups

Say: **Jesus is the vine. When we stay connected to him, his love will flow through our lives. Let's create a different kind of vine out of paper towels and see how water can flow through them.**

- Form groups of four, and give each group six small, clear cups.
- Have one group member (the Filler) fill one cup three-quarters of the way full of water.
- Have another group member (the Colorer) add four drops of food coloring to the water.
- Have another group member (the Stirrer) use a spoon to stir the food coloring into the water.
- Have another group member (the Setter-Upper) turn over one cup and place the cup with water on top so it sits above the others. Then place one cup on either side of the tall cup.



### Add Paper Towels

Say: **Let's say that the tall cup of water represents Jesus. He's the source, and when we stay connected to him, he gives us new life and lots of love!**

- Give each group four paper-towel strips. Have each child in the group fold a paper-towel strip into fourths lengthwise.
- Have the Filler slowly lower his or her folded paper-towel strip into the water in the tall cup, leaving just the end dry so his or her fingers don't get wet. Then that child should drape the paper towel out of the tall cup and into one of the cups beside it. Have kids make sure that one end of the paper towel is in the water and the other end is in the empty cup.
- Have the Colorer repeat the process, connecting his or her paper towel to the other cup.



### Connect Two More Cups

Say: **Our paper towels are rooted in the water now. Let's watch and see what happens.**

Ask: • **While we're waiting, let's think about this: How can we show that we're rooted in a friendship with Jesus?**

Say: **When we're rooted in Jesus, we *want* to spend time talking to him and reading about him in the Bible. We *want* to come to church and hang out with other Christian friends who love Jesus, too. It's not about trying to be better; it's about wanting to be closer to Jesus!**

- After about three minutes, water will have gathered in the other two cups.
- Have groups each place the remaining two cups beside the cups that have just filled up.
- Have the Stirrer and the Setter-Upper dunk their paper towels in the second set of cups and then connect them to the empty cups on either side.



### Talk About It

Say: **We've created water vines. Paper towels connect each cup so water can flow out. But it all starts with this tall cup—Jesus! Apart from the vine, the other cups stay empty!**

Ask: • **How are we like the middle cups?**

• **How are the outside cups like the fruit that Jesus was talking about?**

Say: **Jesus is the vine. When we're connected to Jesus, his love flows from our lives and we show love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, and faithfulness to others. We can't do it on our own. We need to soak in and grow in Jesus' love, and he'll do the rest!**



### 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?** Kids 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!**



### 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 kids 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!**



## CRAFT

### Measuring Love

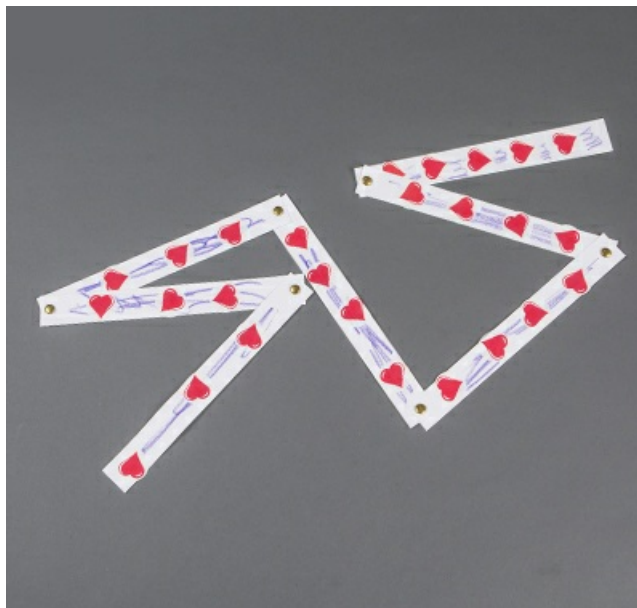
[20 min]

#### 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 about 8 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 about eight strips of card stock.
- Set out crayons, and have kids color their card stock.
- Give each child several heart stickers, and have kids put them on their pieces of card stock. As kids add hearts, encourage them to share specific ways Jesus can help them grow in love.
- Help kids punch a hole on both ends of each strip.
- Help kids put paper fasteners through the holes to attach the strips together.
- Kids can fold up their measuring tapes by hinging them on the paper fasteners.

#### Talk About It

Ask: • **Why would you want to have more hearts on your measuring tape?**

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!**



## Supplies

- Bibles
- rope to play Tug of War
- painter's tape
- bandanna or piece of cloth

## Easy Prep

- Use painter's tape to mark a line across your room.
- Tie knots in the rope. Tie the bandanna or piece of cloth around the center of the rope.

## Tip

- Make sure kids don't wrap the rope around their wrists to play Tug of War, as this can result in injury. Instead, tie knots so the kids have something to hold on to.

## Talk About It

Read John 15:5.

Say: **We're learning that Jesus is the vine. Jesus said that we're the branches and we need to stay attached to him, the vine. But what does that mean? How do we stay attached to the vine? Let's dig in to that.**

## Play Tug of War

Say: **One thing that can make us feel like we're separate from Jesus is when we're having trouble saying "no" to things we know are wrong. Listen to these verses, and see if you've felt what Paul is going through.**

Read Romans 7:14-25.

Say: **Paul felt pulled back and forth. We might say he was tempted to do wrong things. Let's see what that's like.**

Have kids play a few games of Tug of War.

Ask: • **How can temptation and sin feel like Tug of War?**

• **How does Tug of War remind you of the verses we just read?**

Say: **The Bible verses we read show just how frustrating it feels when we *want* to do the right thing but we feel tugged over to the wrong side. The good news is, unlike Tug of War, the game isn't over when we're tugged to do something wrong. Even when we do wrong things, Jesus is always there to pull us back to the right side. None of us will be perfect, but as we remain close to Jesus, he can help us make fewer wrong choices. Even when we *do* make the wrong choice, that doesn't mean we've fallen off the vine. We're still attached to Jesus because we love him.**

**So if sin doesn't break us away from the vine, what do we need to do to remain attached?**

**The good news is, it's not hard! We just need to take time to be still and let God take control of our lives. Listen to this.**

Read Psalm 46:1 and Matthew 11:28.

Say: **Remaining in Jesus doesn't have to feel like a battle—it can feel like resting! But it does mean letting Jesus take our worries, our fears, and the things we want. The more we give our lives to him, the more we can find rest in him and remain in his perfect peace.**

**Let's try that now. Hold your breath and think of everything that's worrying you or making you feel stressed right now. Pause for about 10 seconds.**

Say: **Now let your breath out and imagine yourself giving that stress to Jesus. Pause for kids to exhale.**

Say: **Now breathe easy and find rest in him. Take a moment to be still and know that he is God. Pause for about a minute.**

Pray: **Jesus, thank you that you invite us to remain attached to you. Help us find rest in you and let go of the things we're trying to control in our lives, recognizing instead that you are God and you've got our problems under control. Help us remain in you. In your name, amen.**

Say: **When we take time to rest in Jesus, we remember what faith is all about: trusting that he's in control. Faith is what keeps us connected to the vine. And when we're connected to the vine, we'll find that love and all sorts of other good things flow out of us.**

---

**The Heart of God, Lesson 1: Jesus Is the Vine . Design and base content copyright © Group Publishing, Inc. Licensed for use with 1-20 students. Permission to reproduce granted for local church use only.**