

**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, compare that with a real plant, and make a commitment to Jesus.

#### 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, one per label: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. You'll need at least 1 label per child.
- Also write "being good" on a few slips of paper.



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



### DEEPER BIBLE

Kids play Tug of War and discuss the tug of temptation.

#### Supplies

- Bibles
- rope for playing 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.



### HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Kids run a relay while trying to make long paper-clip vines.

#### Supplies

- 10- to 15-foot length of sturdy twine
- jumbo paper clips (about 50 per person)
- grocery bags (1 for every 3 people)

#### Easy Prep

- Divide the total amount of paper clips as evenly as possible into the grocery bags.

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



## LOW-ENERGY GAME

Kids stay connected as they pass on a rope loop.

### Supplies

- 2 jump-ropes
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

### Easy Prep

- For each rope, securely tie the ends together to form a loop.



## CRAFT

Kids make funky trees with loving leaves.

### Supplies

- chenille wires in a variety of colors (10 per child)
- paper
- scissors
- crayons
- glue sticks
- paper clips
- “Tree of Love Instructions” handout (download [here](#))

### Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



## LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Kids hold on to the “vine” as they pray.

### Supplies

- hula hoops\* (1 for every 6 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 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’re going to learn that Jesus is the vine, so we grow in his love. That might sound confusing, but as we learn more you’ll understand what we mean when we say Jesus is the vine. One thing that grows on vines or branches is fruit.**

### Share

- Tell kids which fruit *you’d* be if you could be any fruit, and explain why.
- Have kids form pairs. Ask kids to share which fruit *they’d* be and why.
- After partners have discussed, ask two or three kids to share with the whole group.

### Summarize

Open a Bible to John 15, and say: **It’s funny to think of ourselves as fruit! But the Bible says that Jesus is the vine and we’re the branches that produce fruit. What does that even mean? Let’s find out what the Bible says! The Bible isn’t an ordinary book; it’s God’s special book. The Bible is one way God shows us his heart and how we can grow in his love. God is here right now, ready to talk to you. Let’s hear what he has to say as we pray.**

Pray, praising Jesus for helping us grow in his 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, one per label: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. You'll need at least 1 label per child.
- Also write "being good" on a few slips of paper.



## Staple Fruit on Trees

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 something 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 pizza or money?**

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 grows 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. 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 on to 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.**



## 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 paper towels 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

- Bibles
- rope for playing 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.

## Set It Up

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 separated from Jesus is when it seems like temptation is winning in our lives. Listen to these verses, and see if you can relate to how the writer, Paul, felt.**

Read Romans 7:14-25.

Say: **Paul felt pulled back and forth. Let's see what that's like.**

Have kids play a few games of Tug of War.

## Dig Deeper

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.**

Have a couple of kids 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 our desires. 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—everything that you're trying to balance in your life. Pause for about 10 seconds.**

Say: **Now let your breath out and imagine yourself giving those burdens 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.**



## Branching Out

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### Supplies

- 10- to 15-foot length of sturdy twine
- jumbo paper clips (about 50 per person)
- grocery bags (1 for every 3 people)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

### Easy Prep

- Divide the total amount of paper clips as evenly as possible into the grocery bags.

### 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](#).

### Make Branches

Say: **Today we're learning that Jesus is the vine, and as we stay connected to him, we grow in his love. Jesus was giving us an example of something we can see to explain what happens when we stay connected to him. Let's play a fun game that'll help us understand this even more!**

- With the help of an adult or teen helper, stand at one end of the room and hold the ends of the twine so it's taut between the two of you, just above waist level.
- Have everyone else form teams of three. Give each team a bag of paper clips, and have teams line up across the room from the twine "vine."
- Teammates will take turns running one paper clip at a time to the vine. The first person will hook the paper clip directly to the twine, and the other teammates will then hook additional paper clips to the previous paper clips to make a "branch" grow.
- Teams will try to be the first to make their branch grow to the ground.
- Reset the paper clips, mix up teams, and play as many rounds as time allows.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play.

### Talk About It

Ask: • **What made your branches grow in our game?**

• **What things help you grow in your relationship with Jesus?**

Say: **Jesus is the vine, and connecting to him is all about an awesome friendship full of love. Jesus loves you; when you love Jesus back you're connected to him, and you'll grow in his love.**



## LOW-ENERGY GAME

Stay Connected

[10 min]

### Supplies

- 2 jump-ropes
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

### Easy Prep

- For each rope, securely tie the ends together to form a loop.

### 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](#).



### Hold Hands and Pass the Rope Loop

Say: **In today's Bible story Jesus gave us helpful examples of why it's important to connect to him. Jesus is the vine, and like the branches of a vine we'll live and grow best when we stay connected to the vine—Jesus. Let's play a game about staying connected!**

- Have kids form two circles, one for boys and one for girls, and hold hands.
- Have two people in each circle disconnect for a moment and loop a rope over their arms, then hold hands again.
- Kids will pass the rope loop around the circle *without* letting go of each other. The circle must stay connected while everyone passes the rope loop.
- The more slack the rope is, the more challenging it'll be to pass it along, but that's part of the fun!
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play.

### Talk About It

Ask: • **What are ways you helped each other stay connected as you passed the rope?**

• **What are ways people in your life have helped you connect with Jesus?** Share an example of a way someone has helped you stay connected to Jesus, such as continually guiding you to pray as you went through a challenge or reminding you that Jesus loves you.

Say: **It's great that we can remind and help each other stay connected to Jesus. Jesus is the vine, and our connection to him helps us grow in his love.**



## Supplies

- chenille wires in a variety of colors (10 per child)
- paper
- scissors
- crayons
- glue sticks
- paper clips
- “Tree of Love Instructions” handout (download [here](#))

## Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



## Make Wire Trees

Show kids the sample craft you made. Set out the supplies to share, and have kids follow the instructions on the “Tree of Love” Instructions” handout to make trees of love.

- Get 10 chenille wires of different colors, and hold them so the ends line up.
- About 2 inches from the bottom of the wires, twist them so they all stay together.

Twist for about 1 or 2 inches to make a tree trunk.

- Bend the bottoms of the chenille wires out so your tree can stand up.
- Bend the tops of the chenille wires like branches, twisting them in fun curls.
- To make the “leaves” for your trees, cut out about 10 pairs of small pieces of white paper. (You’ll cut out two pieces together so they can be glued back to back later on.) You could make squares, heart shapes, or leaf shapes.
- On each paper shape, draw a heart, write a way you want to grow in Jesus’ love, or write the name of someone you want to show love to. Then write the same thing on the matching paper.
- Bend several paper clips into “S” shapes.
- Glue the paper clips between two of your paper pieces so that one hook sticks out.
- Hook the papers onto your tree.

## Talk About It

Ask: • **Using your tree, show what it means that Jesus is the vine and we’re the branches.**

- What kinds of things grow on trees?
- What kinds of things grow in our lives as we grow in Jesus' love?

Say: Jesus is the vine, so we grow in his love. Just like apple trees don't *try* to grow apples, we don't have to *try* to be more loving. We just need to stick with Jesus, and he'll grow us into more loving people!

Have kids take their trees of love home and show their friends and families that Jesus is the vine and we're the branches.



### **Supplies**

- hula hoops\* (1 for every 6 kids)

### **Hold On**

Say: **Jesus is the vine, so we grow in his love.** Earlier we held on to hula hoops and imagined what it was like to stay attached to Jesus. Let's do that again.

- Have each child hold on to a hula hoop.
- As they hold on, kids can pray silently that they would remain in Jesus' love.
- Then have kids pray for the other kids holding on to their hoop that they would produce good fruit.

### **Wrap Up**

Pray: **Jesus, thank you that our power to be loving comes from you! Help us remain in you and grow in your love. Instead of trying really hard in our own strength, help us stay connected to the vine. In your name, amen.**

Thank kids for coming, and encourage them to come back next week.