

THIS IS JESUS

UNIT ONE: THE MESSIAH NAMED JESUS PART 2: HE IS

Lesson 3: He Is The Vine

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN: That God is the provider of all spiritual life and growth.

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO DO WITH WHAT THEY'VE LEARNED: To abide in Jesus and examine the ways that God has been pruning them.

SCRIPTURE FOCUS: John 15:1-11; Galatians 5:22-24

KEY TAKEAWAY: Jesus is the source of life and the reason for the spiritual fruits we bear.

OVERVIEW:

In this lesson, students will interact with John 15:1-11, when Jesus uses the image of the vine and branches to make it clear that we are not meant to produce spiritual fruit on our own. Students often feel the pressure to “be better” or “do more,” but this passage reminds us that fruitfulness isn’t about effort; it’s about abiding in Jesus. When we are rooted in Jesus, His life flows through us. As a testimony, we bear fruit, as branches that are connected to the Vine.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO:

Each *This Is Jesus* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These short videos are designed to help you grasp the lesson’s main point as you prepare to teach.



BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you’ll be studying. *The Details* give you background info for each book. *The Setting* informs you of what’s happening in and around the passage. *The Main Point* gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “CONTEXT”?** In every YM360 Bible Study lesson, you’ll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By “context,” we mean, at the very least, helping students know *who* wrote the book, *when* it was written, and *why* it was written.
- **WHAT’S THE BIG DEAL?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don’t get a “big picture” understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God’s plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the *Bible Background* to help summarize the context.

THE DETAILS

John

- *Author:* The Gospel of John was written by John the Apostle, son of Zebedee. A fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus, John also penned the Book of Revelation, as well as the three letters in the New Testament that bear his name.
- *Time frame:* The Gospel of John was probably written between 85 and 95 A.D. John most likely wrote his gospel in Ephesus before he was exiled to Patmos.
- *Purpose:* John's stated purpose for writing this book can be found in John 20:30-31, "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

THE SETTING

In John's Gospel, we find a record of Jesus' Last Supper with His disciples (John 13-15). During that evening, He taught them many things, most of which only John recorded. Jesus had just told the disciples the troubles He and they would soon experience. He knew He was about to be arrested and crucified, so we must carefully consider His words. They were among the last that He spoke to His disciples during His earthly ministry. This conversation took place as Jesus and His disciples were moving from the house (where they had the Passover meal) to the garden.

THE MAIN POINT

The person who abides in Jesus will also have God's words abiding in them. The imagery of the branch found in John 15 is very powerful. As Christians, we should view ourselves as branches that must remain connected to the Vine (Jesus) to grow.

LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains three elements: an introductory activity called *The Lead In*; the Bible Study section called *The Main Event*; and an application-focused segment called *The Last Word*.

THE LEAD IN

- *Goal:* To introduce the idea of being connected to the Vine (Jesus).
- *Set-Up:* Make sure to bring a large bunch of seedless grapes.

FIRST, welcome students and make sure that they are sitting in such a way that everyone will be able to see you easily. (This will be important throughout the lesson as well, but particularly for this Lead In Activity.) **Say something like:**

- **Jesus often used object lessons to teach His disciples. Perhaps as they walked out to the Mount of Olives, Jesus and His disciples took some grapes from a nearby vine and ate them.**

THEN, take a grape and pass the bunch, inviting students to take and eat it themselves. **Ask students:**

- **How would you describe grapes? What are they good for?**
 - *Answers:* They are sweet, refreshing, and nutritious. (Plus, if you dust them in sugar and put them in the freezer, they make a great snack!)

Say something like:

- **Today, we will be talking about how Jesus compared all of us to these grapes. More specifically, the branches that carry the grapes... but for the sake of this example, let's combine the two.**

NEXT, ask students:

- **We tend to eat grapes that come directly from the vine. Why don't we eat the ones that rot off the vine and fall to the ground?**
 - *Answers will vary.* Help students understand that unless a grape has been properly turned into a raisin, you don't want to eat one that has been lying around apart from the vine.

FINALLY, **say something like:**

- **Just like a grape is best served directly from the vine, we are at our best when we are connected to the Vine. Apart from the Vine, we are no better than rotting fruit on the ground, or a branch that can't produce anything. Today, we will be talking about who the Vine is and why it is vital for us to be connected to Him.**

Make sure there are no questions, and then transition to The Main Event.

THE MAIN EVENT

- *Goal:* To identify ourselves as the branches, God the Son as the Vine, and God the Father as the Vinedresser.
- *Set-Up:* Make sure students have a Bible or Bible App.

FIRST, ask students to turn to John 15. If helpful, briefly give context from the Bible Background section. Read John 15:1. **Say something like:**

- **Before we go any further into the passage, I want to take a moment and point out this opening statement.**

Jesus says to His disciples that He is the true vine. This is the title of our lesson! He is the vine. But Jesus also talks about the Vinedresser, God the Father. We won't get too far into how this helps us better understand the Trinity, but it is important to note the unique roles of God the Father and God the Son. Let's read on and find out what the Vinedresser does.

THEN, read or have a student read John 15:2. **Ask:**

- **What does this verse tell us about God the Father?**
 - *Answer:* He either removes or prunes the branches connected to Jesus.

NEXT, explain to students that you will now take a closer look at what all of this means for us. Read or have a student read John 15:3-6. **Say something like:**

- **Jesus used the relationship of a vine, its branches, and the fruit it produces to show the differences between a life that is lived with Jesus and one that is lived without. We see in this passage that God is the One at work to produce fruit in us. We do not produce it ourselves. Jesus, as the vine, is the source of all life, growth, and nourishment. A branch on the vine has this life through no effort of its own. It produces fruit through the vine's nourishment.**

Explain that it is God who prunes the branches. He gives life and growth, and He cuts and trims. The result is fruit, not because the branch is trying hard to produce it, but simply because it abides in the vine. It is a continual part of the vine. The life of Jesus flows through us as we abide in Him. We produce fruit not by our own efforts, but because Jesus produces it in us. **Ask:**

- **Does anyone have a good example of what it looks like to abide in Jesus, or in other words, to live as a follower of Jesus?**
 - *Answers will vary.* (Help students think about ways that they might display the fruits of the Spirit, for example.)

THEN, read or have a student read John 15:7-11. **Say something like:**

- **Bearing fruit shows we belong to God. Scripture tells us that all who abide, or live their lives, in Jesus *will* bear fruit. Anyone who bears no fruit is not abiding. It is important, however, that we do not confuse the cause and the result. The fruit is evidence of salvation, not the cause.**

Ask students:

- **So, if a branch is not producing fruit, it is removed. A dead branch is harmful, as it can spread disease or prevent the growth of other branches. Dead branches can fall away on their own and damage the healthy branches around them. It makes sense that God would remove these branches. But pruning also involves a type of removal. Why does God prune the healthy branches?**
 - *Answers will vary.*

NEXT, explain to students that the process of pruning is as ancient as farming and gardening itself. It does involve removing unwanted or dangerous parts (even healthy branches can have bad leaves sometimes). But pruning isn't the complete removal of a branch. Instead, it's an intentional cutting away that makes the branch stronger and even more fruitful. **Say something like:**

- **Pruning isn't just about taking away our wilted parts; it's also about reshaping and managing our good growth so that we can continue to grow good fruit and be healthy long term. Let's think of an example where pruning good growth in the moment might be beneficial long term. If you are bearing fruit, that is great,**

right? But what happens if one of the fruits on your branch gets much bigger than the others? Let's say that you are really fruitful when it comes to showing kindness to others. Kindness is one of the spiritual fruits that we bear when we follow Jesus. But there are a lot of other fruits we are called to bear! Let's say your kindness fruit gets so big that it starts blocking sunlight and air to all of the other great fruits, like joy, faithfulness, or even being patient. This one fruit, albeit a great one, might become so heavy on the branch that it prevents you from growing into a fully developed follower of Jesus.

Ask students:

- Let's say that the Vinedresser decides to prune away that one fruit so that the others can grow a little more. Does that mean that you are no longer kind?
 - *Answer:* Not at all! It might just mean that your life becomes more balanced, and more (healthier) kindness grows in place.

THEN, say something like:

- Unpleasant as it may seem at the time, only when these areas are pruned can we continue to grow. Most of the pruning done by God may scare us. You might think "Please... Please don't snip that beautiful leaf over there. It's the best leaf I've ever produced." But remember, nothing that we produce actually comes from us. It may be that those beautiful leaves or perfect fruit are being removed to make way for even more. Or, it could be that you are being pruned in a way that challenges you so that the fruit you thought you couldn't produce is actually the very one that God has made way for.

Explain that sometimes it's tempting to think we can produce good fruit in our own strength, but at those times, He will remind us of our dependence on Him. We look to Jesus in faith to produce fruit in us just as we looked to Him in faith to save us.

FINALLY, ask students to reflect on how they have experienced God's pruning in their own lives. Try to share an example from your own life where it was difficult to understand at first until you saw the growth that God was bringing in your life.

Make sure there are no questions, and transition into the Last Word.

Allow for questions, and then transition into The Last Word.

THE LAST WORD

- *Goal:* To help students think about what it looks like to bear fruit when they abide in Jesus.
- *Set-Up:* Make sure students have a Bible or Bible App.

FIRST, ask students to turn to Galatians 5. Briefly explain that this passage will put words to the type of fruit we bear when we abide in Jesus.

THEN, read or have a student read Galatians 5:22-24. Ask students:

- The first fruit of the Spirit is love. How do you know when someone loves you?
 - *Answers will vary.*
- What about joy? What is something that shows you another person has joy in their life?
 - *Answers will vary.*

Continue by asking students to share examples for the remaining fruit: Peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Once you have finished defining the fruit, ask:

- **Do you think all of the examples we gave are good ways to display who Jesus is, even if we don't get a chance to share the Gospel while we are doing them?**

- o *Answer:* They should be, as long as students didn't give strange examples.

FINALLY, encourage students to examine their own fruit. Is their branch carrying daily examples of love or joy? What about faithfulness? Self-control? Briefly explain to students that if they are lacking in fruit, it may be time to examine if they are abiding in Jesus. If they feel like some fruit is less developed, it may be time for the Vinedresser to cut some things out of our lives.

Allow Time For Any Closing Thoughts Or Questions From Your Students. Before Leaving, Close With A Prayer.

- Don't forget to remind students about their devotions this week. If you're posting them on Social Media or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.