

3-6 | September 20

Bible Story: The Vine and the Branches • *John 15:5-11*

Bottom Line: I can grow when I stay close to God.

Monthly Memory Verse: *"My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me."* • John 10:27 NIV

1. Opening Activity

What You Need:

- ☐ Offering container

What You Do:

During the Activity:

- Welcome kids by name with a high-five, fist bump, smile, or wave as they arrive.
- Invite any kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
- Ask kids to find a partner and stand facing each other about an arm's length apart.
- If there is an odd number of kids, form one group of three with one leader and two mirrors.
- Choose one child in each pair to be the leader and the other to be the mirror.
- Explain: "The leader will make slow, controlled motions. The mirror will watch carefully and copy each motion as closely as possible."
- Remind kids to keep their feet in their own space and avoid touching their partner.

Round One: Simple Motions

Invite leaders to do the following motions and for their mirrors to copy.

- Slowly raise one arm above your head.
- Touch your head, shoulders, and knees.
- Nod your head three times.
- Wave both hands from side to side.
- Reach up high, then bend down low.

- Make a happy, surprised, or silly face.
- Pretend to swim using slow arm motions.
- Draw a large circle in the air with one finger.
- Pat your head, then gently tap your shoulders.
- Tilt your head from one side to the other.
- Play for about 30 seconds, then call, "Switch!"
- Invite partners to trade roles and play again for about 30 seconds.

Round Two: Combined-Motion Challenge

Explain: "This time, leaders will make more challenging motions that use different parts of the body at the same time. Mirrors, watch carefully and try to match every movement!"

Invite leaders to do the following motions and for their mirrors to copy.

- Pat your head with one hand while rubbing your stomach with the other, then switch hands.
- Touch your right ear with your left hand while placing your right hand on your left knee, then switch sides.
- Raise your right arm while pointing your left foot to the side, then switch sides.
- Move one hand in a slow circle while moving the other hand straight up and down.
- Reach one arm forward and the other arm sideways, then switch positions without lowering either arm.
- Trace a triangle in the air with one hand while tracing a circle with the other.
- Make a fist with one hand while holding the other hand open, then switch both hands at the same time.
- Balance on one foot, touch the opposite knee, extend both arms to the sides, and slowly lower your foot.
- Play for about 30 seconds, then call, "Switch!"
- Invite partners to trade roles and play again for about 30 seconds.

Final Round: Motion Sequences

Challenge each leader to create a short sequence of three or four motions for their mirror to follow.

Leaders may use the following ideas or create their own sequence.

- Clap once, cross your arms over your chest, touch both shoulders, and point upward.
- Touch your right shoulder, left knee, left shoulder, and right knee in that order.
- Reach up high, bend halfway down, crouch low, and then reverse the sequence.
- Perform four slow robot motions, then repeat the motions in reverse order.
- Create a four-motion sequence, repeat it twice, and gradually increase the speed.
- Make two sharp movements followed by two smooth movements, then repeat the pattern.
- Hold a challenging frozen pose for three seconds, transition into a second pose, and then return to the first pose.
- Allow leaders about 30 seconds to create and perform their sequence.
- Call, "Switch!" and allow the mirrors to become the leaders for the final 30 seconds.

What You Say:

"You did a great job watching closely and following your leader! It was easier to copy the motions when you stayed close enough to see and paid careful attention. Today, we will hear how staying close to God helps us grow. Let's get ready to learn more!"

2. Video on Jellyfin

Lead the children in worship to the September worship song and then watch today's video lesson.

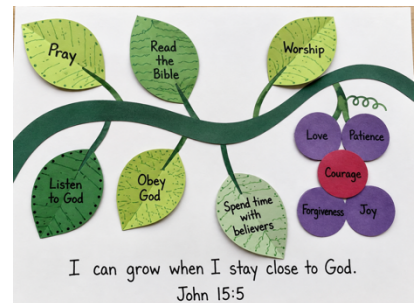
3. Prayer

“Let’s open up today with prayer. Dear Jesus, thank You for being our vine. Thank You for giving us everything we need to grow. Please help us to remember to stay close to You this week. We want to grow good fruit for You. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

4. Connected and Growing

What You Need:

- ☐ Bible marked at John 15:5-11, one for the teacher
- ☐ “Vine and Fruit” Activity Page printed on cardstock, one per child
- ☐ Leaf cutouts, at least five per child
- ☐ Pencils
- ☐ Crayons or markers
- ☐ Glue sticks



What You Do:

Before the Activity:

- Print the “Vine and Fruit” Activity Page on cardstock, one per child.
- Set out at least five leaf cutouts per child. Children may use more if enough are available.
- Create a sample that shows words written on the leaves and grapes, with the leaves glued around the vine.

During the Activity:

- Open the Bible to John 15:5-11 and remind the children that Jesus described Himself as the vine and His followers as the branches.
- Explain that a branch must stay connected to the vine in order to grow and produce fruit. In the same way, we grow when we stay close to God.
- Give each child a “Vine and Fruit” Activity Page and invite them to write their name on the back.
- Give each child at least five leaf cutouts.
- Ask the children to write one specific way they can stay close to God on each leaf. Examples include praying when they feel worried, reading the Bible before bed, worshipping God during the week, obeying God when it is difficult, talking with a trusted

Christian adult, learning about God at church, journaling thoughts and prayers, writing down scriptures in a notebook, memorizing a bible verse each week, pausing to listen to God, using a devotional to get closer to God, or creating a daily playlist of uplifting worship music.

- Invite the children to write one way they would like God to help them grow inside each of the three grapes. Examples include becoming more patient, loving, courageous, forgiving, honest, joyful, or generous.
- Encourage the children to color the vine and the three grapes. Remind them to color lightly around any words they wrote inside the grapes so the words remain easy to read.
- Have the children arrange their leaf cutouts around the vine. Encourage them to place one edge of each leaf against the vine before gluing it in place.
- Invite the children to add patterns, shading, or other artistic details to personalize their artwork without covering the Bottom Line.

After the Activity:

- Invite children who are comfortable sharing to read one of their leaves and one of their grapes to the group.
- Set the finished artwork aside until it is time for the children to take it home, then collect the remaining supplies.

What You Say:

“Jesus told His followers that He is like a vine and we are like the branches. A branch cannot grow or produce fruit when it is separated from the vine. It needs to stay connected.

“The leaves on your artwork show ways you can stay close to God. We can pray, learn from the Bible, worship, obey God, and spend time with people who help us follow Him.

“The three grapes show ways you want God to help you grow. When you stay close to God, He can help you become more loving, patient, courageous, forgiving, honest, and more like Jesus.

“Take your artwork home and place it somewhere you will see it. Let it remind you that **I can grow when I stay close to God.**”

5. Grow, Don't Grow

What You Need:

- ☐ Bible marked at John 15:5, one for the teacher
- ☐ Painter's tape

What You Do:

Before the Activity:

- Mark John 15:5 in the teacher Bible.
- Use painter's tape to make a starting line and a finish line approximately seven to eight steps apart.
- Clear the space between the two lines so the children can move safely.

During the Activity:

- Ask the children to stand side by side behind the starting line with enough space to move safely.
- Explain that you will read different situations. They must decide whether each choice would help someone stay close to God and grow.
- After reading each situation, allow three seconds for the children to think.
- Say, "Lock in your answer!" The children must decide what they will do without copying someone else.
- Say, "Show your choice!" If the situation helps someone grow, the children take one careful step forward. If it does not help someone grow, they stay in place.
- Reveal the correct answer after everyone has responded.
- If someone steps forward on a "Don't Grow" situation, have them return to their previous spot. If someone stays on a "Grow" situation, they remain where they are and miss that opportunity to move forward.
- Occasionally invite one or two children to explain why they chose to step forward or stay.
- Remind the children that no one is eliminated and running is not allowed.

Round One: Grow or Don't Grow

- "You read a Bible passage and think about one way you can follow what it says." (Grow!)
- "You pretend to pray so other people will think you are spiritual." (Don't grow!)
- "You honestly tell God that you are upset and ask Him to help you." (Grow!)
- "You know Jesus teaches us to forgive, but you keep trying to hurt someone back." (Don't grow!)
- "You listen to the words of a worship song and think about what you are singing to God." (Grow!)
- "You ignore the Bible lesson and distract the people around you." (Don't grow!)

Round Two: Think Deeper

- Tell the children that some of the next situations may sound good at first, so they must listen to the entire statement before making their choice.
- "A friend asks why you believe in God. You do not know how to answer, so you ask a trusted leader to help you learn more." (Grow!)

- “You quickly read a Bible passage just to finish it without thinking about what it means.” (Don’t grow!)
- “You make a wrong choice, admit what you did, ask for forgiveness, and try to make it right.” (Grow!)
- “You plan to spend time praying, but you keep allowing other activities to distract you.” (Don’t grow!)
- “You disagree with a friend, but you listen respectfully and choose to respond with kindness.” (Grow!)
- “You hear that the Bible Story is one you already know, so you decide you do not need to listen.” (Don’t grow!)
- “You do not feel like praying, but you honestly tell God how you feel and spend time talking with Him.” (Grow!)
- “Your mind begins to wander during the Bible lesson, and you choose not to try to refocus.” (Don’t grow!)
- “You ask thoughtful questions when you do not understand something in the Bible.” (Grow!)
- “You hear something helpful about following God but never think about how you could practice it.” (Don’t grow!)
- Continue until all the situations have been read. Children who reach the finish line may remain there and encourage the rest of the group.
- Invite everyone to take any remaining steps together so the entire group finishes the game at the finish line.

After the Activity:

- Invite the children to sit down.
- Open the Bible to John 15:5 and read the verse aloud.

What You Say:

“Some of those situations required you to slow down, listen carefully, and think before making your choice. Staying close to God is more than simply hearing a Bible Story, saying a prayer, or singing a worship song. We grow when we pay attention, think about what God is teaching us, and put it into practice. Jesus said, ‘I am the vine. You are the branches. If you remain joined to me, and I to you, you will bear a lot of fruit. You can’t do anything without me.’ A branch must remain connected to the vine to grow fruit. In the same way, we stay close to Jesus by listening to Him, reading the Bible, praying, worshiping, and following what He teaches us. Remember, **I can grow when I stay close to God.**”