

K-2 | 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, make 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 that the leader will make slow, controlled motions while the mirror copies each motion as closely as possible. Remind kids to keep their feet in their own space and avoid touching their partner.
- Give leaders these example motions: 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; or tilt your head from one side to the other.

Challenge: use combined motions (ex. Pat your head and rub your stomach)

- Play the first round for about 30 seconds, then call, "Switch!" and invite partners to trade roles.
- Play a second round for about 30 seconds.

- For the final round, challenge each leader to create a short sequence of three motions for their mirror to follow. Leaders may combine motions from the example list or create their own.

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 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. Standing Sheep Verse

What You Need:

- ☐ Bible marked at John 10:27, one for the teacher
- ☐ “Standing Sheep Verse” Activity Page printed on white cardstock, one sheep per child
- ☐ Crayons or markers
- ☐ Scissors

What You Do:

Before the Activity:

- Print the “Standing Sheep Verse” Activity Page on white cardstock. Each page includes two sheep.
- Make one completed sample.

- Pre-cut the sheep for any children who may need extra support.
- Mark John 10:27 in the teacher Bible.

During the Activity:

- Open the Bible to John 10:27. Show the children where the verse is found. Explain that John is the book, 10 is the chapter, and 27 is the verse.
- Read the Memory Verse aloud: “My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me.”
- Invite the children to repeat the verse after you in short phrases: “My sheep listen to my voice.” “I know them,” “and they follow me.”
- Repeat the verse two more times using motions. Point to your ears for “listen,” point to yourself for “I,” and walk two fingers across your palm for “follow.”
- Give each child one sheep and set out the crayons or markers.
- Invite the children to decorate both sides of their sheep while repeating the verse together.
- Help the children cut around the dashed outside line.
- Show the children how to fold the cardstock along the solid center line so the sheep stands like a tent.
- Collect the scissors before inviting the children to stand their sheep on the table.

After the Activity:

- Invite the children to place their sheep in front of them and say the Memory Verse together one final time.

What You Say:

“Your sheep look wonderful! Our Memory Verse says, **‘My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me.’** Jesus is our Shepherd, and we are His sheep. We learn to recognize His voice by reading the Bible and remembering what He says. Listening to Jesus and following Him helps us stay close to God. **I can grow when I stay close to God.** Take your sheep home and let it remind you to listen to Jesus and follow Him.”

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 six 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 room between them to move safely.
- Explain that they will play a listening game similar to "Red Light, Green Light."
- Tell the children to listen to each statement all the way to the end.
- When they hear "GROW," they may take one careful step toward the finish line.
- When they hear "DON'T GROW," they must freeze and stay in their spot.
- Remind the children to walk carefully and take only one step at a time. No running or jumping is allowed.
- If someone moves after hearing "DON'T GROW," have them return to their previous spot. No one is eliminated.

Round One: Listen for the Words

Read the statements slowly, emphasizing "GROW" and "DON'T GROW."

- "Reading or listening to the Bible helps us stay close to God and GROW!"
- "Ignoring what God says means we DON'T GROW!"
- "Talking to God in prayer helps us stay close to God and GROW!"
- "Being mean to someone means we DON'T GROW!"
- "Singing worship songs to God helps us stay close to God and GROW!"
- "Thinking only about ourselves means we DON'T GROW!"
- "Listening to what Jesus teaches helps us stay close to God and GROW!"
- "Choosing not to forgive someone means we DON'T GROW!"

Round Two: Make the Call

Ask the children to return to the starting line.

Explain that you will no longer say "GROW" or "DON'T GROW." The children must listen to each choice and decide which answer is correct.

After each statement, have the children call out "GROW!" and take one careful step forward, or call out "DON'T GROW!" and remain in place.

- "Asking God to help you." (Grow!)
- "Refusing to share with someone." (Don't grow!)
- "Listening during the Bible Story." (Grow!)

- “Saying something unkind to another person.” (Don’t grow!)
- “Encouraging someone who feels sad.” (Grow!)
- “Ignoring someone who needs help.” (Don’t grow!)
- “Following what Jesus teaches us.” (Grow!)
- “Telling a lie to avoid getting in trouble.” (Don’t grow!)
- “Thanking God for what He has given you.” (Grow!)
- Continue playing until everyone reaches the finish line. If some children arrive early, invite them to quietly cheer for the others.

After the Activity:

- Invite the children to sit down.
- Open the Bible to John 15:5 and read the verse aloud. See below for the “What You Say” section.

What You Say:

“You had to listen carefully to know when to move forward and when to stay in your spot. 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 needs to stay connected to the vine to grow fruit. In the same way, we need to stay close to Jesus. We grow when we listen to Him, read the Bible, pray, worship, and follow what He says. Remember, **I can grow when I stay close to God.**”