

Staying Connected

The Vine, Branches, and Fruit

Hunger No More

Have you ever spent a whole day without eating? What happened? Did you hear your tummy grumble or begin to feel cranky? According to survival guidelines, humans can only go about 3 days without water (and a little longer without food). Our bodies are made up of 60-70% of water, and we need to drink lots of water to stay healthy!

There's a story in the Bible that talks about why we need to stay connected to Jesus to live a healthy and fruitful life.

Let's read the parable (short story) of the True Vine in **John 15:1-17!** (*Pro-tip: Divide the passage to read and discuss throughout the week*)

Pop Quiz: The Vine and Branches

- Who is characterized as the True Vine? (**Jesus**)
What does the True Vine do? (**Nurtures the branches so that they can bear fruit**)
- Who is characterized as the Gardener? (**God**)
What does the Gardener do? (**Tends to the Vine, lifts the branches to the Vine, and prunes the branches**)
- Who are characterized as the branches? (**Believers /Followers of Jesus**)
What do the branches do? (**Produce fruit to glorify God and love one another**)



Activity: Nature Walk

Instructions

Take a walk around the neighborhood or the park together and observe the plants. Pick a flower and place it in a cup of water. Throughout the week see how the flower is holding up. How many days does it look pretty? How many days until it starts to wilt and die? (*Optional: Take a picture of the flower before it is picked, during the wilting process, and before it is thrown away. Talk about your observations.*)

Ask

- What did the flower look like before it was picked? Was it healthy, brightly colored, etc.?
- What happened to the flower throughout the week? Did it begin to wilt or lose its color?
- When did the flower look most healthy and beautiful?

Application

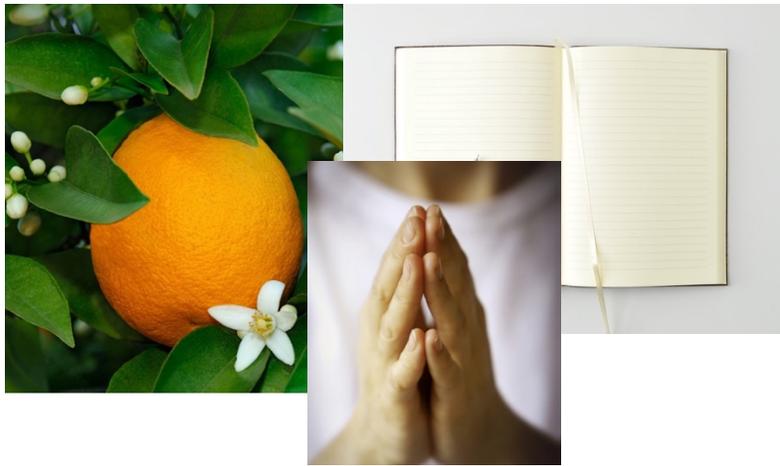
Just like flowers need to be connected to their roots to get nutrients, we need to stay connected to Jesus. What does it mean to be connected to Jesus? It means we read the Word of God (Bible) and talk to the Holy Spirit (pray).

When we are not connected to Jesus, we will constantly be searching for something to get our nutrients (energy, life, validation) from.

Even Jesus spent time with His Father by memorizing the Word and talking with Him in the secret place. Sometime this week, check out passages that show Jesus going into the secret place. (*Pro-tip: Read from a children's bible for better understanding for your child.*)

Suggested Passages

- Matthew 14:15-23 (After the feeding of the 5,000)
- Luke 11:1-4 (Before the Lord's Prayer)



Producing Fruit

What does a fruit tree do when it has proper nutrients? It produces fruit! When we are connected by reading the Bible and praying, Jesus promises that we will produce good fruit. What kind of fruit do humans produce? Although Jesus doesn't say so in his parable, He is talking about spiritual fruit. We produce these fruits because we have the Holy Spirit inside of us.

Paul in the book of Galatians writes a letter to his friends about this topic. He lists a few examples of good spiritual fruits that followers of Jesus will start to produce if they are connected.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”

Galatians 5:22a (CSB)

Discussion: Evaluating our Fruits

- Do you read your Bible and talk to God by praying? **(For older kids, encourage them to start spending alone time with God. For younger kids, have secret place time together in the mornings, before bed, etc. *We want to make spending time in the secret place a daily and enjoyable time alone with God.*)**
- What are some fruits of the spirit that you can see in yourself? Are there any that you want to improve on? **(Ask God about them during prayer time.)**

Activity: We are the Branches Craft

Supplies

- Glue or strong tape
- Coloring utensils (markers, crayons, colored pencils or even paint)
- Scissors
- Sturdy piece of paper like cardstock, a paper plate, or blank canvas (for the background)
- Sticks from outside (small and thin enough to be glued and held on paper)
- Leaves from outside or construction/computer paper (to make leaves and fruit shapes)
- *Optional: cotton balls (to make fruit)*

Instructions

Start by reviewing the parable of the True Vine in John 15:1-17 if it's later in the week. *(Pro-tip: read the passage while the kids work on the craft.)*

Gather craft supplies around the house/outside and set up an area to get a little messy! Start by decorating the background with coloring utensils (clouds, grass, etc.) Next glue the sticks on the page, forming branches. Glue leaves to the branches from ones you collected or from paper shapes. Add fruit shapes to your vine. *Optional: color the cotton balls as fruit and glue them around the branches and leaves. And if you're using paint, use fingerprints to make fruit shapes on your vine. (See sample on the next page)*

Prayer, Secret Place Time, and Family Journal (Guide for Parents)

God speaks to us in many ways, but the most common is through prayer. Prayer is not just a monologue to God, rather, it's a conversation between you two! When you ask Him a question, *wait* and *listen* for Him to answer. If you are struggling to hear His voice, have faith that He will speak! He is faithful to respond and wants to talk to you 😊

Before leading your prayer times this week, take a moment to ask God what He is speaking to you through these passages or the message from this Sunday. Write down what you hear and lead the family to do the same in your family's journal.

Have a blessed week to come! We can't wait to hear your testimonies!

We Are the Branches

You can use these images to create your vine, branches, and fruit.

