Preschool–Grade 6

I Am the Vine

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Stay close to Jesus. A branch that abides in the vine bears much fruit, but without Jesus we can do nothing.
Bible passage: John 15:1–8. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." *John 15:5 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a flashlight and its batteries, a potted plant and one leaf cut from it the day before, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: take the batteries out of the flashlight. Cut a leaf from the plant the day before. Write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: What's Missing? (5–10 minutes)

Hold up the flashlight and ask a volunteer to turn it on. Nothing happens! Let the class guess what's missing. Put the batteries in, and it shines. Then ask the class to name other things that can do nothing without what they need: a car without fuel, a lamp without power, a fish without water. Write their ideas on the board. Say: "Today Jesus tells us what we can do without Him."

2. Bible story: Abide in Me (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to John 15. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

Who is talking? Jesus was teaching His **disciples** (followers and learners) in John 13–16. He had washed their feet (John 13:5). In John 15 He gave them a picture of a vine.

The true vine. Look up John 15:1–2. Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the **husbandman**" (the farmer who takes care of the vine). A branch that bears fruit, "he **purgeth** it" (cleans and trims it), "that it may bring forth more fruit." **Look up 15:3.** "Now ye are **clean** through the word which I have spoken unto you."

Abide. Show the plant and the cut leaf. Ask: *Which one is still growing? Why?* **Look up 15:4.** "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit **of itself** (by itself), except it **abide** (stay joined) in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me."

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Much fruit. Look up 15:5. "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same **bringeth forth** (grows) much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." Say: "Like the flashlight without batteries, without Jesus we can do nothing."

His words in us. Look up 15:7. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Say: "Notice the 'if.' This promise is for people who stay close to Jesus and keep His words."

So shall ye be my disciples. Look up 15:8. "Herein is my Father **glorified** (honored, shown to be great), that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Why do you think Jesus used a vine and branches to teach His disciples (15:5)?
2. What are some ways a kid can abide in Jesus every day (15:4, 15:7)?
3. Jesus said "without me ye can do nothing" (15:5). What does that mean for your school day or your home?
4. What kind of "fruit" do you think people can see in someone who stays close to Jesus?
5. Why does Jesus put an "if" in front of His promise about asking (15:7)?

Recall questions

1. Who did Jesus say the husbandman is? *("My Father is the husbandman," John 15:1)*
2. How were the disciples made clean? *(Through the word Jesus had spoken unto them, 15:3)*
3. How is the Father glorified? *(That ye bear much fruit, 15:8)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **ye** means you, **abideth** means stays joined, **the same** means that person, and **bringeth forth much fruit** means grows lots of fruit. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jesus wants us joined to Him like branches on the vine. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **baptized into Jesus Christ** (Romans 6:3), buried with Him all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: abide in Jesus every day: read a few verses of the Bible and pray before school. Watch for one piece of good "fruit" you can show someone.

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. John 15:1: What kind of vine did Jesus say He is? *(The true vine)*
2. John 15:1: Who is the husbandman? *(My Father)*
3. John 15:2: Why does he purge a branch that bears fruit? *(That it may bring forth more fruit)*
4. John 15:3: Ye are clean through what? *(The word which I have spoken unto you)*
5. John 15:4: What can't a branch do of itself? *(Bear fruit)*
6. John 15:5: What can we do without Him? *(Nothing)*
7. John 15:7: What must abide in you? *(My words)*
8. John 15:8: What shall ye be? *(My disciples)*

7. Prayer

"Dear Jesus, thank You that You are the true vine. Help us abide in You, keep Your words in our hearts and bear much fruit. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us. In Jesus' name, amen."

Teacher note: this lesson leaves out John 15:6, the branch that is cast forth, withered and burned. If a child asks, read it as written and say simply that Jesus wants every branch to stay in Him. Explain "Father" and "husbandman" only as the Bible words they are; don't add a picture of the Father.

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