Preschool–Grade 6

I Am the Vine

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Fruit comes from staying joined to Jesus, not from trying harder on our own. Without Him we can do nothing.
Bible passage: John 15:1–8. Students read it out loud themselves.
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)* and "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." *John 15:8 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a potted plant and one stem cut from it the day before, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read John 13:1–5 and John 15:1–11. Cut a stem from the plant the day before. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses.

1. Opening game: On My Own? (5–10 minutes)

Read each statement and let students vote with a thumb up (agree), thumb down (disagree) or sideways (not sure): 1) If I try hard enough, I can be a good person on my own. 2) I can stay close to Jesus without praying or reading the Bible. 3) People can tell who follows Jesus by how they live. 4) Going to church once a week is enough to stay close to Jesus. After each, ask: *Why do you think that?* Say: "Today Jesus tells His disciples where good fruit really comes from."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Set the scene: Jesus was with His disciples. He had washed their feet (John 13:5), and He taught them in John 13–16. **Read out loud: John 15:1–8.** Students take turns, a verse each. Old words in this passage:

- **true vine** (15:1): the real vine; **husbandman**: the farmer who takes care of the vine
- **beareth** (15:2): grows; **taketh away**: removes; **purgeth**: cleans and trims, so it grows more
- **clean** (15:3): made clean; **through the word**: by the words Jesus spoke
- **abide** (15:4): stay, live in, keep on being joined; **of itself**: by itself; **no more can ye**: neither can you
- **bringeth forth** (15:5): grows, produces; **cast forth** (15:6): thrown out; **withered**: dried up
- **ask what ye will** (15:7): ask for what you want; **herein** (15:8): in this; **glorified**: honored, shown to be great
- **disciples** (15:8): followers and learners of Jesus

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Look closer. Point out these details with the class:

- **The branch doesn't make fruit; it holds on.** "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself" (15:4). Fruit comes from the life of the vine flowing through it. Show the cut stem next to the plant.
- **Fruitful branches get trimmed.** Even the branch that bears fruit is purged, "that it may bring forth more fruit" (15:2). God keeps working in His branches so they grow more.
- **Clean through the word.** "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (15:3). Jesus' words do something in us.
- **A serious warning.** A branch that does not abide is cast forth and withered (15:6). Jesus said it plainly because He wants every branch to stay in Him.
- **The "if" in the promise.** "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will" (15:7). It is a promise for people who stay close to Him and keep His words.
- **Fruit you can see.** The Bible names "the fruit of the Spirit": "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22–23, KJV). Fruit shows that we are His disciples (John 15:8).

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. What is the difference between trying to make fruit and staying joined to the vine (15:4)?
2. Jesus said "without me ye can do nothing" (15:5). Where are you most tempted to do life without Him?
3. What could "purging" (15:2) look like in a preteen's life?
4. How do Jesus' words "abide" in someone (15:7)? What helps them stay?
5. Look at the fruit of the Spirit list. Which fruit do you want God to grow in you this year?
6. "So shall ye be my disciples" (15:8). How would people at your school know you follow Jesus?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words: **ye** means you, **abideth** means stays joined, **bringeth forth** means grows, **herein** means in this, and **glorified** means honored, shown to be great.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say John 15:5 this week; keep working on John 15:8 next week too.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Jesus wants us joined to Him. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are baptized into Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3), buried with Him by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, 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.

6. Activity: Abide Plan (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. Where do I try to "bear fruit of myself," without Jesus (15:4)?
2. One way I will abide in Jesus every day this week (prayer, His words, obeying Him).
3. One fruit of the Spirit I am asking God to grow in me, and a short prayer for it.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: read John 15:1–11 every morning this week, and pray it back to God.

7. Prayer

"Dear Jesus, You are the true vine. We can do nothing without You. Help us abide in You, keep Your words and bear much fruit, so that everyone can see we are Your disciples. In Jesus' name, amen."

Teacher note: read John 15:6 as written and don't add to it; keep the focus on Jesus' call, "Abide in me." "My Father is the husbandman" (15:1) is taught in the Bible's own words with no picture or extra explanation. Teach 15:7 with its "if."

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