Lesson 12: Jesus Is the True Vine

Overview:

Key Focus: Stay close to Jesus on the vine and bear good fruit.

Bible Story: Jesus Talks about the Vine and Branches

Scriptures: John 15:1–17; Galatians 5:22–23

Memory Verse: John 15:5 (NKJV) I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

Prep:

Materials Needed:

- Desk lamp or small electric item
- Green yarn or string
- If possible, find and display pictures of grape vines and other vines with fruit.
- Hula hoop

Engage:

Set the unplugged desk lamp or small electric item in front of the group. Talk about what the item is designed to do and why it isn't working. Plug in the item. **Now my item works because it was plugged into the power source. Without being connected, it is worthless. When it is connected, then it is very useful. Today we will discover that we have to be connected to our power source so that we can be productive.**

Memory Verse Activity:
Display the verse and explain that Jesus is the vine and we are to be connected to Him. Create a long vine with many branches by taking a long piece of green yarn or string and setting it along the floor. Select a child to pick up the end of the yarn and become a branch by saying the memory verse. Have that child choose someone else to become the next branch on the vine. Continue until the entire group is a branch connected to the vine.

Memory Verse: John 15:5 (NKJV) I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

Bible Story:

Today's Bible lesson might sound like a gardening class. How many of you have a garden? Have the children raise their hands to respond. **What are some of the fruit or vegetables you grow?** Allow time for everyone to name the types of food they grow. **The Bible talks about a vine and its fruit. What are some fruits that grow on vines?** (Grapes, pumpkins, squash, melons) **What helps a plant grow fruits and vegetables?** (sunshine, water, and fertilizer) **What are some things a gardener does to help the plant?** (Possible answers: pull the weeds, water them, mix some fertilizer in the soil, spray to keep bugs off the plants) **Let's find out what the Bible will teach us about gardening.**

Read John 15:1–3. **Jesus tells us He is the True Vine and His Father is the Gardener. Who is Jesus' Father?** (God) **What does the Gardener do if a branch doesn't bear fruit?** (The Gardener takes away any branch that doesn't bear fruit.) **What does the Gardener do if a branch does bear fruit?** (The Gardener prunes it.) **Pruning is cutting bits off the branch. It might sound like a mistake to cut back on the branch, but pruning allows the plant to get more sun and energy to make more fruit. Jesus said His followers were already pruned because of Jesus' words or teachings. The disciples had been following and learning many things from Jesus. It is like they were plants being watered and fertilized by His teachings.** Read John 15:4–5. **The word "abide" means "to stay connected." The branches must stay connected to the vine or they will die. If I pull a branch off and hold it, will it grow its fruit while I hold it?** (No, it doesn't have any way to get water.) **The vine brings water and nourishment to the branches so each branch can stay healthy and make fruit. The branches need the vine to stay alive and to grow fruit. Whenever someone repeats something, it shows they were saying something important that needs to be remembered. Jesus makes sure we know who the vine is and who the branches are. Who is the Vine? (Jesus) Who are the branches?** (we are the branches.) **What is the only way to grow fruit?** (The branch must stay connected to the vine to grow fruit.)

Read John 15:6–8. **Jesus tells us that the branches that aren't growing fruit are cut off and thrown into the fire. Does Jesus want us to be cut off and thrown away?** (No.) **Jesus makes a promise to people who stay connected to Him. What is that promise?** (Jesus promises that we can ask what we want and it will be done.) **Jesus isn't a magical genie who grants our wishes. Jesus wants us to know what the Bible says and what He promises. Then we will know what things He wants for us and He will do it for us. God's Word says Jesus is the Healer, so when we ask for healing, we know that is something He agrees is good for us. He made many promises, but we need to learn what they are so we can ask for them! When we ask Jesus to do what He has already promised, we know He will keep His promise. Next, Jesus tells us that God is happy when we grow lots of good fruit. Why does God care whether or not we grow fruit**? (Possible answers: He created us to worship Him and help others know about Him; God wants us to grow the fruit of other people believing that Jesus paid for our sins.)

Read John 15:9–10. **Jesus tells us to stay connected to His love. Jesus points out that He obeyed His Father. How did Jesus obey God the Father?** (Jesus came down to the earth as a baby, lived a sinless life, died for our sins, rose again three days later, and paid the price for sin so we can have a relationship with God and eternal life.) **If we are to be like Jesus, we need to obey God also. What are some ways that you obey God?** (Answers will vary**.)**

Last week Jesus gave His followers a commandment. What was that commandment? (He commanded us to love one another.) **The next few verses are a review of last week and then Jesus finishes up by reminding us one last time about the vine and its branches.** Read John 15:11–17. **How did Jesus show that He is our friend?** (Jesus showed love by dying for our sins so we can live forever with Him.) **How do we show that we are His friend?** (We are His friends if we follow His command to love others.) **What does Jesus want us to remember about fruit?** (Jesus chose us and wants us to stay connected to Him so we can bear fruit.)

Since Jesus is the vine and we are the branches, our fruit will look like Jesus and His fruit. A plant always has the same kind of fruit that the vine has. Just like grapes can't grow on an apple tree, we have the fruit that Jesus has. Let's discover some good fruits for us to grow. Read Galatians 5:22–23. **These verses list 9 fruit that the Holy Spirit will help us have when we are connected to Jesus. Let's think of ways that Jesus showed each fruit in His life. How did Jesus show love?** Invite volunteers to give examples of how Jesus showed each fruit in His life. Joy? Peace? Patience? Kindness? Goodness? Faithfulness? Gentleness? Self-control?

Which fruit is the easiest for you to show? Allow time for several responses. **Which fruit is the hardest for you to show?** Allow time for several responses.

Bible Story Questions:

- **Who is the Vine?** (Jesus)
- **Who is the Gardener?** (God)
- **Who are the branches?** (We are.)
- **What is our job as the branches?** (We are to stay connected and have good fruit.)
- **What happens if a branch doesn't bear fruit?** (The gardener prunes off the branches that don't bear fruit.)
- **What promise does Jesus make if we stay connected to His words?** (Jesus promised we could ask what we desire and He will do it.)
- **What are the nine good fruits we should have in our lives?** (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control)
- **What are some ways that you will connect and abide with Jesus this week?** (Answers will vary.)

Bible Story Activities:

Games:

- Have everyone stand in a long line side-by-side and hold hands. Depending on the size of your group, you may want to have two hula hoops and two lines. Designate the first person to pick up the hula hoop and without dropping hands, the child passes the hula hoop over his head and steps through the hula hoop so it passes to the next child. The object is to stay connected until the hula hoop passes through everyone and is dropped on the floor at the opposite end of the line. If you have two groups, the groups compete to be the fastest.

- Ideas for Working with Older Kids:
  Have the children work in pairs to develop a short scenario or skit to portray one of the nine Fruit of the Spirit to show they are connected to the True Vine. As they do their skits, the class votes on which fruit they saw portrayed.

Craft Ideas:

- Ideas for Working with Younger Kids:
  Take pieces of green yarn or string and have the children glue them on a piece of paper. Then, have the children draw nine fruit on the vine. Talk about each piece of fruit being one of the Fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22–23.

Worksheet:

Read all of the clues together and help children as needed. You may want the children to work together in pairs or threesomes. On the back of their papers, have them draw a vine with fruit such as grapes, pumpkins, squash, or watermelon. Encourage them to write some gardening tips and directions.

Affirmation/Declaration:
I'm sticking close to Jesus on His vine.
My fruit shows I'm on Jesus' vine.

Make Connections:

Biblical Worldview Connection:
At the time of creation, God set laws in motion that are still in effect. Plants will only produce the kind of fruit that matches the plant. Because we know what the Bible says about the vine and the branches, we want to stay close to Jesus and know what His Word says so we will grow good fruit. The world is confused and grows bad fruit because they aren't connected to the True Vine. Encourage the children to take their job seriously to grow good fruit so the world will know they are connected to Jesus.

Missions Connection:
Many cultures are agricultural and understand plants very well. Jesus taught using examples of things that were common so people would understand His spiritual point. Pray for missionaries to stay close to Jesus and grow fruit that others see and want in their own lives. Remind the children that they have a mission field wherever their feet go!

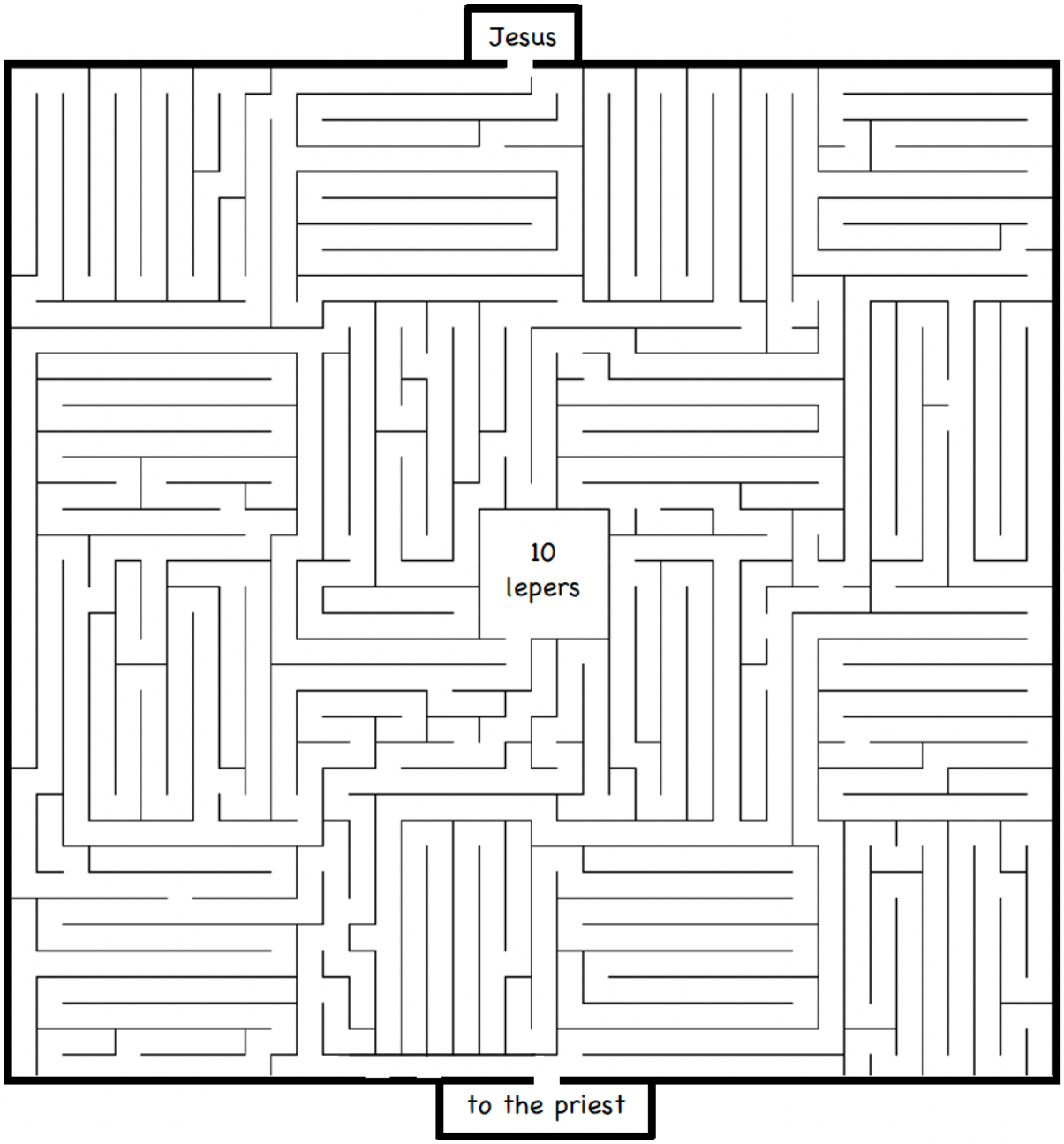
Family Connection:
Watch a gardening how-to video about growing vine plants that bear fruit. If possible, visit a garden store and look at different vine plants. You might want to get a vine plant or seeds and give your child an opportunity to learn about gardening. Throughout the week, point out the good fruit you see in your child and thank your child for staying close to the True Vine.

Prayer Points:
Encourage the children to pray for each other. Point out that praying for others is part of showing they are connected to Jesus, the True Vine. Have helpers guide pairs of children to ask what they can pray for the other child and then pray to God the Father and in the powerful name of Jesus.

Name _____

Lesson 6: Jesus Is Healer

Use blue to help the 9 lepers find their way to the priest. Use red to help the Samaritan leper go from the priest to thank Jesus.

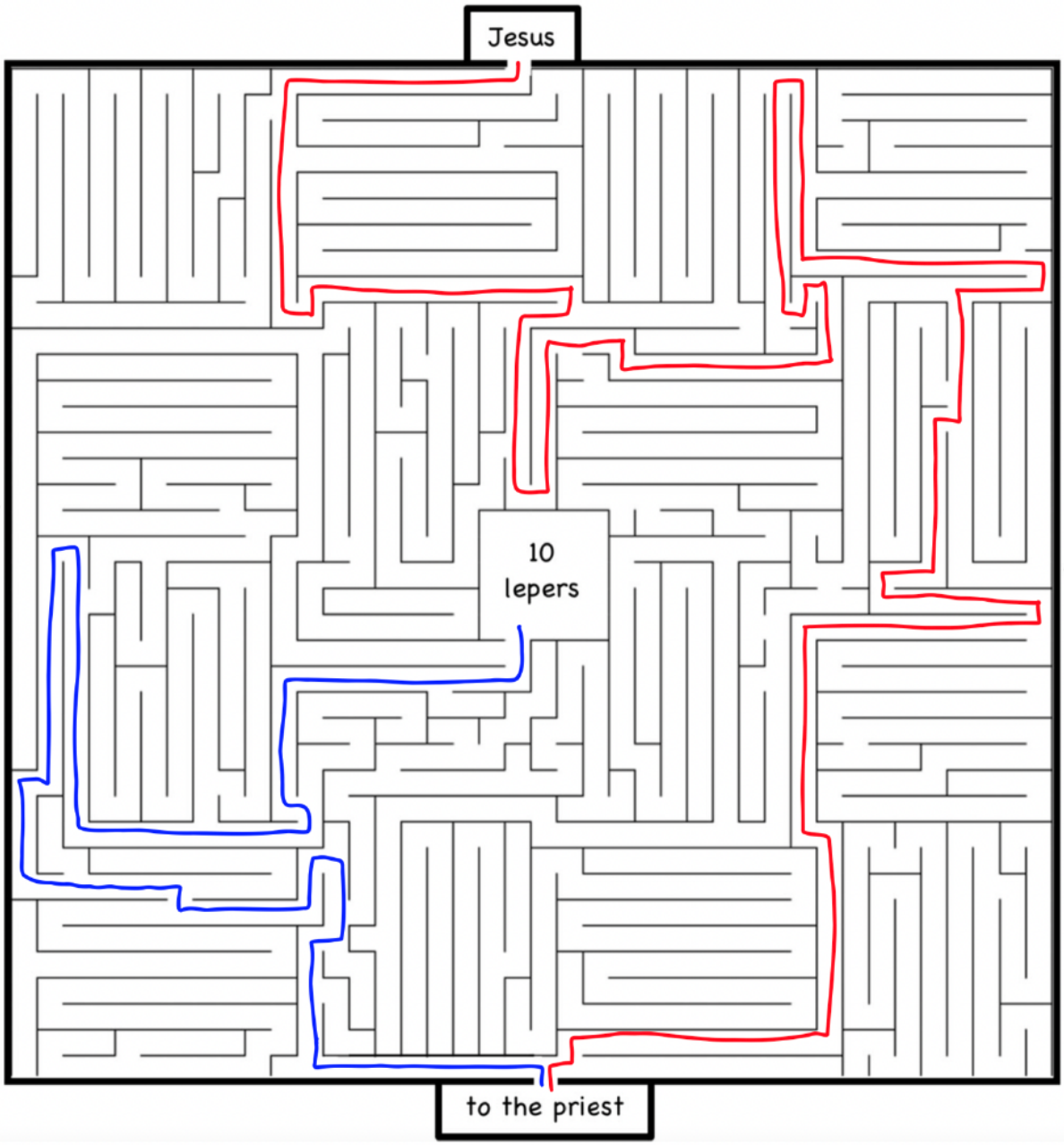


BONUS: *On the back of this page, draw a thank you card from the healed Samaritan to Jesus.*

ANSWERS

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