



# Faith Adventures for Children Together



*Committed to URC Children Together:  
enabling everyone to grow more like Jesus  
together in the home, church and beyond.*

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link:  
<https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>

## John 15: 5 - I am the vine

Theme: How to stay connected to God while growing in faith.

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### Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning?

#### John 15:5

Today we begin a new theme for the month of October: growing. This opening session focusses on a single verse in the Good News according to John – it’s an important verse because it opens up the idea of the benefits of growing in our faith of God while being connected to God – and hints at what may be missed out on if we aren’t.

Vines are an important feature of the agriculture of Israel and Palestine, just as they were in Jesus’ time – local people couldn’t always rely on Jesus turning water into wine for them as he did at Cana – so they grew vines to make their own wine. Battir (a valley region a few miles south west of Jerusalem - you can find it on a map between Hebron and Nablus) has been recognised by UNESCO as an Area of Outstanding Universal Value for its terraced hillsides covered in vineyards.

You can read the verses around verse 5 to help you gain context (the chapter starts with Jesus telling his followers he is the True Vine and that his Father is the gardener – pruning when necessary) but be careful about allowing the session to be sidetracked, stay focused on verse 5.

It is important to stay connected to (joined with) God because God will help us to grow and be productive. God sees our potential and will help us to develop that potential in ways that will benefit us and those we meet. Without that connection, we will struggle to meet our potential.



In the Gospel of John there are seven “I Am” statements by Jesus, “I am the True Vine” is the last of these. All of these sayings give us an insight into what Jesus, and God, are like. The others are: I Am The Bread Of Life ([John 6:35](#)), I Am The Light Of The World ([John 8:12](#)), I Am The Gate For The Sheep ([John 10:7](#)), I Am The Good Shepherd ([John 10:11](#)), I Am The Resurrection And The Life ([John 11:25](#)), I Am The Way The Truth And The Life ([John 14:6](#)).

When we talk about ‘being connected’ we need to be mindful of those children/young people who feel that they are isolated or only connected to a small number of people. They may feel that the idea of ‘connection’ is out of reach or unrealistic. We hope that this session, and the weeks following, will help to show that God enables us to grow but in the first place we need to be connected to God and, through God, be connected with others.

## Together

How do I help my group to come together and get started with the theme?

### Gathering prayer

#### Jesus, our friend

(use alternate index fingers to point and tap the middle of opposite palms)

#### Be with us today

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move up and down twice)

#### As we share together,

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move one forward and one back and alternate twice)

#### Pray together,

(hands together, palm against palm, as though praying)

#### Play together,

(hands to each side, palms up, make two small circles outwards)

#### And get to know you better,

(point up with one hand)

#### As children together in your family

(one hand out, palm down in front of you, move it sideways and up in three ‘steps’ as though to indicate children of three different heights)

#### AMEN

(Two thumbs up, and bring fists slowly together to meet in front of you)

OR

**Thank you, God, for bringing us together today.**

**Help us to grow closer to you in all we do.**

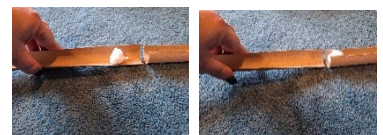
**Help us to speak and to listen, to learn and to grow together,**

**Adventuring together with you wherever we may go.**

**Amen**

### In-person game – Tube roll

Divide into groups or twos. Using a variety of tubes of some description, such as kitchen tubes cut in half lengthways, try to





navigate the ball along the tunnel to the end, the quickest without dropping the ball wins. If the ball drops start from the beginning. Each team needs the same number of tubes/tunnels to play.

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### Alternative game - Connecting Competition

Provide the group with as many different materials as possible, junk modelling, or just newspaper, or perhaps something like marshmallows and spaghetti.

Now in small teams the group race against each other to create the longest creation in a set time.

At the end of the time, the team must be able to hold it up (with team members along the length) without it breaking. This will reinforce the importance of good strong connections being key to good growth.

## Experience

For this story we recommend using the Easy read version

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john+15%3A+5&version=ERV>

### Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: In the Gap kids

<https://youtube.com/shorts/6WR-BuTRMO0?si=rRphXrNUICuBsQiS>

Over fives: PursueGODkids

<https://youtu.be/iEiEFtHEjk?si=a2OGARvY9HfDNet2>

### Songs to support the story

Under fives: Slugs and Bugs: I am the vine

<https://youtu.be/gZxdSIEoEdE?si=cOSU9tA7WK2qjAhC>

Five to eevens: New Vintage Kids God is the Vine

<https://youtu.be/gET4P4ZQsCQ?si=Rhi3O2yS7RZuAJlu>

## Explore

Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

### A new way to explore the passage

**This is a fun way to explore the Bible verse, so let go and be creative together.**

Give the children some time to decide which fruit they would like to be like and why. The reason needs to be a positive one and preferably one which has a positive effect on others. The reason and the fruit do not need to match (One person may chose strawberries because it's their favourite fruit but for the vine it will represent love). Then recreate the Bible verse in motion, like a little dance. Some people perhaps could be the vine (Or the vine could be a large picture and the children could come and stand along the vine instead) and others come dancing up one at a time and join the vine saying what fruit they are and why. You



could do this a couple of times, especially if the children have more than one fruit they would like to be.

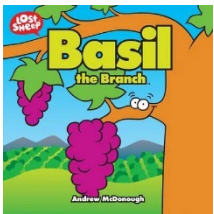
You could talk about how that fruit helps the other fruits and the whole vine. You could discuss what fruits are missing. Use the talking together and wondering questions at this stage.

The aim is to explore the different sort of fruit Jesus might have been talking about in the verse.

*I am the vine, and you are the branches. If you stay joined to me, and I to you, you will produce plenty of fruit. But separated from me you won't be able to do anything.*

### Modern parables

Jesus used stories to help people understand the things of God, even though they weren't necessarily overtly Christian stories. Lots of children's books can be used in a similar way as a conversation starter on the week's theme. Examples are shared here but you may think of others too.



This book explores the idea of needing to work with others to grow and flourish.

'Basil the branch' by Andrew McDonough

<https://youtu.be/0mihy2WN19M?si=doXYSx74iikTYP2->

### Talking together: How might we talk about the story together?

- What does it mean to grow as a person?
- What might you lose out on if you are separate from God?
- In what ways have we grown recently? Physically and as a person.

### Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder what it means to stay connected to God?
- I wonder what fruit Jesus is talking about?
- I wonder what's your favourite fruit?

### What's in the box (for under fives)

Use the special box or bag and sing "what's in the box/bag? What's in the box/bag? Let's see, let's see, what's in the box/bag" (to the tune of The Farmer's in the Dell). You could tap the top of the box twice after the word 'box'. Pull out the things one by one and then let the children play with them, talking about the theme or the story in simple terms.

This week's box could include:

- An image of a grape vine – Jesus said "I am the vine" as we grow with Jesus we are connected to him.
- A plant with shoots growing (spider plant or similar) – Look how this plant grows and how the new shoots are connected to the original plant. Jesus' love helps us grow and get all the good things we need just like the branches get good things from the plant.
- Paper strips to make into a paper chain – as we connect to God we grow as disciples
- A variety of fruits – the vine produces fruit, I wonder what fruit you would be?
- A heart – God loves us and wants us to be the best we can be by staying connected to him.
- Things that join together - Duplo, Sticklebricks etc - we can stick with Jesus and Jesus will stick with us.



- Some twigs – these twigs aren't attached to the plant so they aren't growing.
- Safety scissors or a picture of secateurs (or both) – sometimes trimming a plant a little bit helps it grow, but we have to be careful.
- Grapes (remember to cut these in half lengthways to avoid choking hazard) - grapes grow on a plant called a vine. If the branches are healthy then more grapes grow. They remind us of all the good things we can do because Jesus loves us.

## Express

Praying together: how can you involve the children actively in prayer?

### Vine prayers

This prayer activity is one of four, the aim is that each week there will be a different prayer focus and a different vine element to build up your vine. However these prayer activities are also designed to work on a stand alone basis.

Week one starts with creating a vine (creative activity) and then adding leaves with your prayers on.



- Cut large leaf shapes from either paper/ material/ crepe paper.
- Think individually, or as a group, of ways in which your church connects with your community. It might be a coffee morning, a toddler group or people from the congregation who work and volunteer in the community.
- Pray for these connections by writing your prayers on the leaf shapes. (*You may need to test different pens to make sure that the ink is clear enough and doesn't spread too much.*)
- Twist your prayer leaves onto the vine – use a little tape if needed.

*This week's paper vine can be used as the basis for creative prayers throughout the 'Growing' series. Different elements can be added each week to build your prayer vine.*

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### Spoken prayer

Dear Jesus

You help us to grow and to flourish

We want to grow and be like you

we want to connect to those around us  
and share your story.

When we become disconnected from you bring us close to you.

Amen

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### Responding together

Here are some suggested crafts and activities, and there is a colouring sheet at the end of this resource. You could also use small play toys and/or have a basket of resources available so children can choose their own way to respond. <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>

With an online group, plan whether to deliver any resources in advance or how you will encourage them to use what they've got to hand in their response.



However you do it, it is good for the adults to engage in the response too, and all chat together.

### Creating a vine

Make a vine. This is one suggested way, but you could use what ever resources you have to make a really big elaborate vine, perhaps in the church space if you are able or by creating a smaller version in the space where you meet.



Tightly twist crepe or tissue paper. You could twist several separate sections and secure them together, if you'd like to make a long vine.

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### Grafting plants

When Jesus talked about the vine he said that God is the gardener, and we are grafted onto Jesus as the vine. This is an opportunity to do some simple gardening together and perhaps learn about the 'grafting' processes from a gardener.

If you have a gardener in your church/community, consider inviting them along to the session to help show how things grow and show how gardeners graft onto plants. Ensure that the gardener provides the opportunity for children to get involved and not simply watch.

This is also an opportunity to do some potting and gardening together. Do you have a piece of ground outside the church that you could plant up to make a lovely mini garden? If you don't have any area to plant, the group could paint and plant some pots to go outside the church.

You may have time for each child to make a smaller potted plant to take home and continue caring for over the coming weeks.

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### Everyday with Jesus – Walking the Way

What could we do this week to carry on what we've learned? Maybe members of the group could come up with a suggestion. If not, get them to choose from these two challenges:

- One of the best ways to stay connected to God and to grow in faith is to pray, to chat to God. To help get in the habit of doing this it's good to try doing it at the same time each day, at dinner time, or before bed, maybe when brushing your teeth. You do not need to use special words to talk to God, you could start by telling God about any wonderful things that are happening in your life and some things which are worrying you.
  - Talk to someone older or younger than you and ask them to tell you something you might not already know about Jesus.
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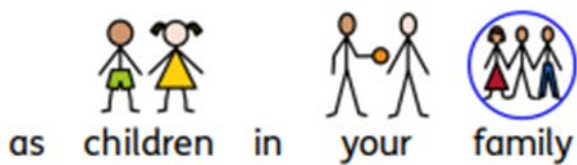
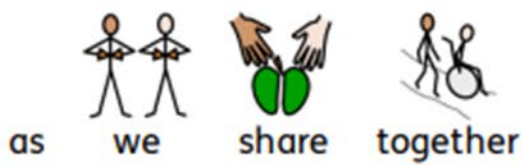


We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of **Jesus as the vine** with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing **[lorrainewebb@urc.org.uk](mailto:lorrainewebb@urc.org.uk)**

Why not have a look at next week's resource on **Corinthians**





Right middle finger touches centre of other palm, repeat with left hand



Alternate hands back and forth





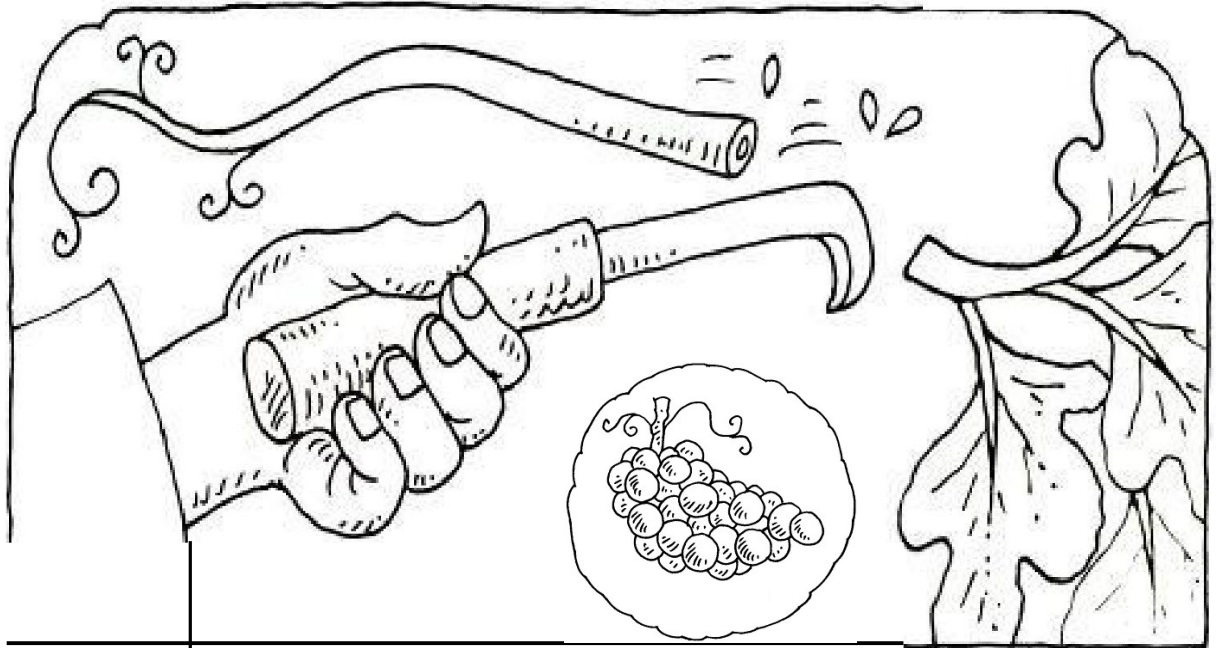


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