

Upfront Bible 8b

Jesus is a friend who connects us to God's Love

John 15: The Vine

This presentation of the Bible takes more of the form of a flash mob, than an actual drama. It works in two parts.

Part One

A couple of presenters simply read the text from John 15. They share the reading between them, and present it in a lively, and dialogical style, moving around the gathering space as they speak.

While this is happening, a 'vine' of people gradually 'grows'. Your team should be prepared to one by one form a vine shape in various directions, by putting their hands on each other's shoulders, or linking arms, or holding a piece of rope or a stick between them, to keep the vine connected. Eventually your entire group becomes a vine, inviting audience members as well to link into the vine. (Do a test run of this idea as a team building activity sometime.)

Make some simple vine costumes. Eg: wrap strips of green crepe paper around each person on their limbs and torso like fronds of a vine. Stick crepe paper leaves on each person. Make some bunches of purple balloon grapes using half blown up balloons tied together.

John 15:1 Jesus said to his disciples:

I am the true vine, and my Father (God) is the gardener.

But he trims clean every branch that does produce fruit, so that it will produce even more fruit.

⁴Stay joined to me, and I will stay joined to you. Just as a branch cannot produce fruit unless it stays joined to the vine, you cannot produce fruit unless you stay joined to me.

⁵I am the vine, and you are the branches. If you stay joined to me, and I stay joined to you, then you will produce lots of fruit.

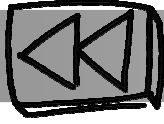
⁷Stay joined to me and let my teachings become part of you.

Then you can pray for whatever you want, and your prayer will be answered.

⁸When you become fruitful followers of mine, my Father (God) will be honored. ⁹I have loved you, just as my Father (God) has loved me.

¹¹I have told you this to make you as completely happy as I am. ¹²Now I tell you to love each other, as I have loved you. I speak to you as my friends, and I have told you everything that my Father (God) has told me.

¹⁶You did not choose me. I chose you and sent you out to produce fruit. ¹⁷So I command you to love each other.



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Part Two

Once your flash mob vine is formed, the two readers shift into 'interview gear' and improvise a 'vox pop' interview with various team members along the vine.

Sample Script –

Introduction:

Jesus was an amazing person from God and he had a habit of using everyday things to help people think about how God wants us to live. For example he said this ... he is like a vine, and people who are his friends are like branches, that can produce fruit. It is very interesting idea: creative, though a little weird. We thought we would go right to the experts to work out what this is about, so today we are here in a vineyard with a lot of vines to see what we can find out.

(moving towards a 'vine-person')

Ah, here's an intelligent vine. Excuse me, can you tell me what is good about being a vine?

(moves to another a 'vine-person')

And you, over there, you are all covered in these purple round squishy things- what is that about? *(You get to make yummy fruit!)*

Now I'll just follow along and find another separate branch....

(moving along from person to person ...)

So, you're actually, connected, and so are you... Yep, connected, connected, even right over here. Hang on -- isn't there anyone left on their own?

(asking someone else)

Right, I see. Everyone is part of the same vine.
I must say, you are all looking very healthy and strong, growing well.

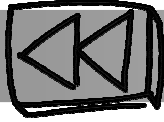
Which of you branches feeds all the others and makes them grow?

(Take an answer)

What? The vine makes you grow! It feeds you, keeps you strong. Wow, that's a pretty good set up.

But one more question. What if one of you did try and strike out on your own -- separate from the vine? What would happen then?

(Take an answer)



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Really? The branch wouldn't grow? It wouldn't make fruit? It would wither away?
Man, that's extreme. I hope none of you get voted off the vine!

Does that ever happen? Does the vine every say "Whoa, that's enough! There are too many branches."?

(Take an answer)

No? The vine just keeps on growing.

Hmmm, now I think about it, a vine isn't like a club you can join and leave. If you are part of the vine, you really, really belong.

Jesus says "I call you my friends." I guess he wants us to know that we really, really belong – to one another, and to God.

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