

We Are...Branches

- All Pre-Class
- Arrange tables and chairs.
 - Pray for tonight's class.
 - Have music playing.
 - Take attendance.

7:00-7:20

REVIEW

Choose an activity or activities from the following ideas:

- Review previous lessons.
 - Ask questions regarding the last few lessons using the "We Are... Review Questions" and "Jesus is...A through Z Review Questions" (in KPH binder). Reward correct answers with Starbursts, etc.
 - Play "baseball" with the review questions. Have the entire class play as one team, trying to beat a score of 20 runs (their record), or divide them into two teams and see which team can score the most runs. An incorrect answer equals an out. After three outs, it's the other team's turn to "bat" (or if playing with the entire class as one team, clear the bases of "runners" after three outs). Make sure each team gets an equal number of "at bats." Have another teacher keep track of outs and points on the marker board.
 - Play musical chairs. When the music stops, ask the player without a chair a review question. If the student answers correctly, he or she gets to stay in the game.
 - Divide the group into pairs. Give each pair one of the "mini posters" with adjectives and titles of Jesus (i.e., the "A" sheet or the "B" sheet, etc.; in KPH binder). Have each team work together to memorize every adjective or title on their sheet. Then have them come up front and recite them to the class.
 - Have a student come to the front of the class and pick a letter (A-Z) out of a bag and then try to remember all the adjectives/titles that go with that letter.
 - Play A-M or N-Z "BINGO" with adjectives/titles.
- Review other previously memorized items. Use cardboard chart and cards with books of the Bible, as well as other props.
 - "One God," "Sin and Repentance," etc., verses that students have been working on.
 - Sing verses set to song
 - Books of the Old and New Testaments
 - Divisions of Old and New Testaments

All 7:20-7:40

BIBLE MEMORY WORK

Divide the class into four groups: two each for 5- to 7-year-olds and 8- to 10-year-olds, one teacher with each group. (To cut down on noise and confusion, two groups may leave the room to practice verses in the hallway, stairwell, or another classroom.)

Students will work on memorizing doctrinal verses. Each student will have his/her own list or booklet to work from, containing a chart for teachers to initial as students quote the verses one at a time, two at a time, etc. (Teachers: Please read instructions on the bottom Bible memory work charts or in the front of the booklets.)

Coloring pages with the 10 Commandments or other Bible verses are available (in the KPH binder) to help occupy visitors or younger/distracted students while their classmates are working on verses.

- Remind students that there will be prizes for those who pass with a score of 80 percent or better.
- Remind students that during Bible Memory Work time, everyone must be working, not distracting others. They should help each other learn the verses. It's fun working together!

7:40-7:45

RULES & PRAYER

- Review "Power Hour Promises" with the students, reminding them of proper behavior during class.
- Pray together, thanking God for your time together and praying that each person will understand and obey God's Word and grow into a strong Christian.

7:45-8:05

BIBLE LESSON

Teacher Prep: Read John 15:1-17. Pray for anointing.

Items Needed: "We Are..." display board; vine or other plant, preferably one that is bearing fruit (e.g., cherry tomatoes); Bible; "Branches" Visual.

Introduction

During the first part of the year we learned about Jesus' titles and adjectives from A through Z. Refer to the "Jesus is...A through Z" board.

Now we are learning about some of the things that the Bible says we Christians are. Refer to the "We Are..." display board. All of these things are metaphors (comparisons) that describe a little bit of what we are to Jesus and to others.

Listen to John 15:5 for another metaphor describing Christians. This is Jesus talking:

Read John 15:5 from your Bible.

- What are we? (*branches*)
- What is Jesus? (*the vine*)

Jesus said that if we abide in Him (or remain attached to Him) we will grow fruit. But without Him we can do nothing.

Show the plant. Break off one of the branches.

- Will this branch be able to grow any more _____ (whatever fruit the plant produces)? (*no*)

Lesson

- Why can't the branch grow any more fruit once it is pulled off the plant? (*it can't get the nutrients [food] and water it needs, which must go through the roots, up the stem, and into the branches*)

Not only can the branch not produce fruit if it is detached from the plant, but also it will soon die!

Without Jesus, we are like that detached branch. Listen to what Jesus said in verse 6.

Read John 15:6 from your Bible.

- A detached branch withers, and then what is it used for? (*firewood*)

**I want to be a growing, fruit-producing branch, not firewood!
So I must stay attached to Jesus.**

To find out how to stay attached to Jesus, listen to what He says in the next verse.

Read John 15:7 from your Bible.

- **How do we stay attached to Jesus?** (*by having His Words remain in us and by asking [praying]*)

To stay attached to Jesus, we read, study, and listen to preaching and teaching of God's Word. We pray, talking to Jesus and asking Him things and listening to what He says.

We must also keep God's commandments: not just hear God's Word but DO it. Listen to verses 10-12 for one of Jesus' most important commandments.

Read John 15:10-12 from your Bible.

- **What does Jesus command us to do in these verses?** (*love each other, as He has loved us*)

Love is the first fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit are listed in Galatians 5:22-23:

Read Galatians 5:22-23 from your Bible or have a student quote.

- **What are the nine fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23?** (*love, joy, peace, longsuffering [patience], gentleness, goodness, faith [faithfulness], meekness, and temperance [self-control]*)

We can only have true love, joy, peace, etc., when we are attached to Jesus. If we break away from Him and try to grow these fruit on our own, it won't work.

Life Application

Show "Branches" visual.

- **Could these grapes grow on a branch that was not attached to the vine?** (*no*)

These look like healthy branches that are producing a lot of fruit. But if a gardener notices that the branches on his vines do not look healthy, he might have to do something kind of painful. Listen to what Jesus says in John 15:2.

Read John 15:2 from your Bible.

- What does the gardener do to every branch that DOESN'T grow fruit? (*He takes it away [cuts it off]*)

I don't want to be cut off from Jesus! (If I do become detached, He can reattach [graft] me, but in the meantime, I am withering and dying and not growing fruit.)

- What does the gardener do to every branch that DOES grow fruit? (*He purges [prunes or trims] it so it will grow even more fruit*)

Sometimes God has to cut some things out of our lives because He is trying to help us grow more fruit. He might take away some music or books or movies or activities or "friends" that are causing us to not have the love, joy, peace, etc., that He wants us to grow.

Have a student attach the "Branches" visual to the "We Are..." display board.

Remember:

- We cannot grow the fruit of the Spirit unless we are attached to Jesus.
- We stay attached to Jesus by learning and obeying His Word and by praying.

Let's pray right now and ask Jesus to help us stay attached to Him. Let's ask Him to help us grow more fruit of the Spirit.

Lead the kids in prayer—response to lesson.

8:05-8:15

BIBLE SKILLS

Use the "Books of the Bible" display board to point things out as you ask these questions:

- How many books are in the New Testament? (27 [3 letters in the word "New" x 9 letters in the word "Testament" = 27])
- What are the first four books of the New Testament called? (the Gospels)
- What does Gospel mean? (the "good news" about the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ)

Hand out Bibles. Remind students to handle Bibles carefully and to help younger students find verses.

Find the Gospel of John, chapter 15. Look over verses 2-6 and count how many times you see the word "branch" or "branches." (Write "branch" and "branches" on the marker board so the students will know exactly what they are looking for.)

- How many times do the words "branch" or "branches" appear in John 15:2-6? (5)

In John 15, Jesus talks a lot about us being branches. Let's read verse 5 together. (Have students read John 15:5 in unison.)

Without Jesus, we can do (or grow) nothing. We must stay attached to Him.

Choose a couple of students to carefully collect the Bibles.

8:15-8:30

ACTIVITY/SNACK

Supplies: Grapes, melons, and/or other fruit that grows on vines
Plates and/or paper towels or napkins
Grape or other fruit juice (cups as needed)

Show fruit and juice: We wouldn't have this yummy fruit to eat and juice to drink if some branches hadn't stayed attached to some vines. Fruit is meant to be eaten, to give strength and enjoyment to the eater. The fruit of the Spirit that you grow in your life is meant to bless and help others.

Serve the fruit and juice. Have the kids say a prayer of thanks for their snack before they eat it.