



Date: _____

Series: God is Our Rescuer
Fall Year 2, Lesson 19

Stay Connected to Jesus

Primary Scripture: John 15:5-8, 16

Key Verse: John 15:16, “You didn’t choose me, but I chose you. I have appointed you to go, to produce fruit that will last, and to ask the Father in my name to give you whatever you ask for.”

How does this address a need in our kids' lives?

This section of scripture uses the metaphor of vine, branches, and fruit. God has chosen us so we would bear fruit. The key is that we would remain in Jesus Christ. We do that by faith. Kids today are intent on making a difference in their world. Sometimes they have the illusion that they can make a difference by themselves. God wants us to remain in Jesus Christ, and have him produce the fruit in our lives. Kids need to know their power source. They need to know they can produce fruit by staying connected in him.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: Our source for spiritual power comes from the victory of Jesus’ cross. Through his life, death, and resurrection he has made our lives to be the fruit of his love.

Jesus in us: Through faith in Jesus, we stay connected to his forgiving and life-giving power. He pledges that he will work in us and dwell with us, as we stay connected in him.

Jesus through us: We can bear fruit. Jesus produces this fruit. The fruit of our good works of love, when accompanied with the gospel, brings life to the people around us.

Stamp of Excellence:

Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the leader is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.



Worship

Invocation:

Let kids bring forward the worship symbols such as cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Attention Grabber:

Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.

Boys and girls, do you know what it means to be connected to someone? It means you are close to them. Some people shake hands to show they are connecting and they are friends. Let's shake hands with each other now.

Sometimes people even give hugs. Is there anyone here who would volunteer to come up and give me a hug? Do you remember when you used to give hugs to your mom or dad when you were a little kid? You would reach your arms up high and they would lift you up and give you a big, fat, juicy hug. It was a good feeling. You knew you were close. You were connected.

Back in Jesus' day when people prayed and worshiped they often lifted their hands up to God like this. (Demonstrate.) In worship today we are lifting our arms up to God, kind of like we did when we were a kid lifting our arms up to our mom or dad. When we worship we are telling God we love him, and we are ready to have him reach down and connect with us. Though we can't feel his hug, we know it is there. He gave us his son, Jesus, who reached his arms out wide for us on the cross. He invited us to be connected with him. So let's worship and think about reaching your arms to him and telling him how much we love him. He will be connected to us.

Songs of Worship:

Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!

Your choice of music.

The Power of the Cross:

Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.

Cover your face with your hands as in shame or hiding. Have the kids guess what feeling you are showing. Have the kids practice the same gesture.

When we are trying to do what God wants us to, we sometimes make mistakes. We do wrong things. We sin.

Give examples of sins kids commit.

When we sin, we want to hide or hope that God does not see us. We might feel ashamed or bad inside. God wants to take away our sin. He doesn't want us to hide but to pull our hands away from our face and lift them up to him. We do that when we tell him about the things we have done wrong and ask his forgiveness in Jesus' name. Then we choose to let Jesus live in our lives more fully as we obey him because he wants to connect with us.

Baptism Renewal or Response of Commitment:

Have prepared beforehand a branch that has been cut from a tree with dry and withered leaves. Another branch should be cut with leaves that are fresh and green. Use these two branches and a baptismal font to talk about how God makes a promise to us in baptism.

God says, "All the blessings of Jesus I give to you. I am connected with you. You are my child and I am your heavenly Father." Every time we remember this, it reminds us of how important it is to believe in Jesus and to try to live the way he wants us to live.

The green branch symbolizes this. When I put it in water, (put branch end in baptismal font) I am reminded of how the branch is alive as it has nourishment from the tree it was attached to. Water, just like the tree, keeps the branches alive. God wants us to stay connected in him and to be live branches. Look at this other branch, though.

Show the wilted branch.

What happened here? This branch was cut off. It did not have any water fed to it from the tree. See how dry and withered the leaves are. It is just like Christians who think once they are baptized that is all there is to being a Christian. They think they do not have to go to church anymore, read the Bible, or pray. Before long, their faith dries up, it wilts away, and it dies. But when we continue to remember how God gave us Jesus and trust in him, we stay connected to him like this green branch.

If possible, show a new plant that regenerated after it was broken off from its source plant and then was put in water until its roots could grow.

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want to help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.

Offering:

Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.

Have some real or plastic fruit in the offering plate. As the kids bring up their offering, show them that the offerings they bring are just like bearing fruit in their lives.

If you were a branch, every time you did something for God, it would be like bearing fruit. Each good thing you do for God, because you are connected with him, is like a delicious piece of fruit. That is what these offerings are; fruit from your life that show God how much you love him.



The Word

Learning Game:

Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.

“Fruit Connection”

The easiest way to designate teams for this game is boys against girls. Otherwise, you'll need colored vests or some other obvious identifier to distinguish between teams.

Have children spread throughout the room, with girls and boys mingling evenly. Put the boys and girls fruit baskets on opposite sides of the room. Explain the object of the game and the rules for the game.

The object of this game is for each team to pass a ball, which is called “fruit,” to their teammates who are spread around the room. They will continue to pass the ball until they get it into a bucket or fruit basket on the other side of the room.

Rules:

- 1) No long throws are allowed. Players must pass the ball to the closest legal receiver on their team. A legal player is one who is not blocked by the imaginary wall of the two opposing teammates who are sitting.
- 2) No one is allowed to move his feet during the game unless they drop the “fruit-ball,” they will be allowed to retrieve the ball and return to their original position before they pass the ball on.

Explain:

When I say “Connect,” the first person from each team will make only the first pass. Once the receiver has the ball the passer sits down. The receiver stays standing and waits until I say, “Connect” again. He then passes the “fruit” to another team member and sits down.

When two adjacent teammates have sat down, an imaginary wall forms between them that the *other* team cannot penetrate or pass the “fruit” over. The opposing team will have to pass around it. You may throw the fruit-ball back to players who are seated if they are on your team.

Start the “fruit-ball” on the opposite side of the room from where the fruit “basket-goals” are located.

When finished with the game have the kids come together to discuss the point of it.

We must stay connected to Jesus, and he will use us to help others. In other words, he will use us to bear fruit. Sometimes we are blocked in trying to stay connected with him. We are blocked if we do not take time to worship him, pray, read the Bible, or witness.

Bible Reading:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

Read John 15:4-10. Have the kids stand up and sit down every time they hear the word “remain” read from an NIV translation or the phrase “live in me” for Gods Word to the Nation translation. They will be surprised how many times Jesus tells us to remain in him, live in him, or to stay connected to him so that we can bear fruit.

To illustrate the Bible reading, use a cardboard box decorated to look like a vine with branches.

To make this prop, draw a vine on the front of a large cardboard box. Perhaps green construction paper could be used for leaves. The vine itself could be painted on or fashioned out of brown paper. Crumpled paper sacks may even work for a vine. Cut the back out of the box so that you will be able to insert candy through the “branches.” Use your own imagination and resources.

To make the branches, cut small circular holes the diameter of a garden hose or flexible tubing at various parts of the vine. Insert short sections of garden hose or flexible tubing into the holes. (Novelty store whistling tubes work well for this.) Fashion these tubes in such a way that they look like branches, and tape the leaves on these tubes. The tubes could be wrapped in brown paper or fabric.

One tube needs to be left open at both ends and protruding downward from inside the box. This would allow a piece of candy to roll down into someone’s hand. Fasten this dispensing tube securely to the box.

Explain what Jesus meant when he referred to himself as the vine and us as the branches. For example:

Jesus chose us to be his branches because he loves us. We could not be his branches and produce fruit unless we were connected to him. This is true of our lives.

Spiritual fruit is the showing of love we have for other people because God loves us. Because of God's love we do things to help others and tell them about Jesus. By doing this, other people come to know Jesus, too. This is fruit that lasts forever. The only way we can produce the fruit that lasts forever is by staying connected with God.

Demonstrate how the tube-like branches connect to the vine.

How are we connected to Jesus, the vine? (*We are connected when we trust him.*)

Lead the children to trust in Jesus. For those who have never trusted him as their Savior, say:

Praying to Jesus is a way we connect to him. Reading the Bible is a way he connects to us. Baptism is a connection with Jesus. When we are connected to him, fruit comes out of our lives. This is what Jesus meant when he said, "Remain in me." To remain in Jesus means to stay connected to him.

Invite a child forward to put his hand under the open end of the tube while saying, **"I'm staying connected to Jesus."** Out will come the candy. Invite other kids to join in the same process.

If you have a helper:

Behind the prop a helper will slide pieces of candy into the *dispensing tube* so the branch will produce fruit when "connected to the vine." Several fruit-candy options might fit the imagery of different kinds of fruit. Suggestions are Mike and Ikes, Starbursts, or Skittles. Have the secret person behind the cardboard box with the candy ready before the presentation begins.

If you're working alone:

Fasten one or more pre-opened packages of candy to the inside of the box so you can dispense candy down the *dispensing tube* and into a volunteer's hand at the appropriate time.

Conclude with a review of what it means to remain in Jesus and have a connection with him. Talk about what God might want us to do differently than we did before. Talk about examples of fruit in our lives. After the kids have received their fruit candy, they can offer suggestions on the different kinds of fruit in their lives.

Optional if time allows:

Invite two kids forward and give them fictional names. Give one a wilted branch and the other a healthy, "living" branch. Explain that on the outside these "kids" might look a lot alike. On the inside, one person's wilted branch represents how he is not connected to Jesus and the other person has a live branch because this person is connected to

Jesus. Set up the following story, and then have kids suggest how our connected and un-connected volunteers might respond differently to the situation.

There is a person at school that no one likes. Everyone makes fun of him. At recess when everyone is making fun of this person, what would be the different ways these two people would show their fruit of love? Remember the one who is *not* connected to Jesus might look good on the outside, but on the inside is spiritually dead.

If you have more time, do the same thing with one or more situations like the following:

- People at school do not know the true meaning of Christmas.
- A friend did not get an important part in a play, etc.

Help kids realize that if they stay connected to Jesus, they can bear fruit that lasts.



Witness

Witness and Tell:

Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.

Prayer:

Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.

Blessing:

Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.

Song of Sending:

Choose one song. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.

Safety and Security: Safety and security procedures are important for each church to carefully define and implement according to their unique needs. The security, safety, illness and accident procedures described in this curriculum are provided for example purposes only and may not be appropriate, applicable or adequate for every situation. Each church is responsible for determining whether any security, safety, illness and accident procedures contained in the curriculum are appropriate, applicable or adequate for its unique situation. The activities described in this curriculum require adult supervision and may not be suitable for each child and each situation. Each church is responsible for ensuring that adequate adult supervision is provided for all activities and for determining whether an activity is appropriate for each child and each situation. Kids Kount Publishing disclaims all liability for the implementation of any procedures or the performance of any activities described in this curriculum.

Supplies:

Power of the Cross:

- two branches – one freshly cut and one cut about a week earlier
- baptismal font
- a new plant that regenerated after it was broken off from its source plant and then was put in water until its roots could grow

Offering:

- plastic fruit
- offering plate

Learning Game:

- two balls
- two buckets or fruit baskets

Bible Reading:

- a large cardboard box, decorated on the front so it looks like a vine (see lesson)
- fruit-flavored candy like Mike and Ikes, Starbursts, or Skittles (enough for all the kids)