

# The Pruning Of Trees

## LOWER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

**Theme:** If we want to bear Jesus' fruit, we must abide in Him. Fifth Sunday of Easter

**Scripture:** John 15

**Memory Verse:** I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:5)

## The Children's Sermon

Today we're going to talk about something really cool that Jesus said. Imagine you're in a beautiful garden. There are flowers, fruits, and all sorts of plants. In this garden, there's a gardener who takes care of everything. Jesus tells us that God is like that gardener. And we are like the plants in His garden. This story is about "Pruning for Fruitfulness."

Now, pruning might sound a bit scary. It's when the gardener cuts parts off the plants. But why would the gardener do that? It's because cutting off the parts that aren't healthy or are taking too much energy helps the plant grow even better. It can make more flowers or fruits. So, when we talk about "Pruning for Fruitfulness," we mean God helps us grow better by sometimes taking away things that aren't good for us.

Sometimes, we might not understand why God is pruning us. We might think, "Why is this happening?" But remember, just like the gardener knows what's best for the plants, God knows what's best for us. Jesus tells us, "You did not choose me. I chose you to go and bear much fruit. The kind of fruit that lasts forever."

Now, let's imagine what it means to be fruitful. Being fruitful isn't just about growing fruits or flowers. For us, it means doing good things, like being kind, helping others, and spreading happiness. Every time we do something good, it's like we're growing a beautiful flower or a tasty fruit in God's garden.

But sometimes, to help us grow these beautiful things, God needs to prune us. That might mean changing something in our lives, like learning to share better or being more patient. Even though it might be hard, it's all part of "Pruning for Fruitfulness." It's how we grow into the best versions of ourselves.

You know, plants don't grow beautiful flowers or fruits overnight. It takes time and care. The same goes for us. Growing into kind, loving, and fruitful people takes time. We might make mistakes, but that's okay. God, the gardener, is always there to help us get back on track.

Let's think about the fruits we can grow in our lives. Love, kindness, joy, peace, and patience are just a few. Every day, we have the chance to grow these fruits by the choices we make. When we choose to be kind, to share, and to listen, we're growing beautiful fruits that make the world a better place.

Sometimes, when God is pruning us, it might feel lonely or sad. But remember, just like a plant needs water and sunlight, we need God's love and our friends and family to help us grow. We're never alone in the garden. We have each other, and we have God, who loves us very much.

Now, let's imagine our garden filled with all the beautiful fruits and flowers we've grown by being kind, patient, and loving. It's a colorful, happy place where everyone is

welcome. This is the garden God wants us to grow together, a garden of "Pruning for Fruitfulness."

Before we finish, let's pray once more. Dear God, thank you for loving us and taking care of us. Help us to understand when you're pruning us and to remember it's because you want us to grow beautiful fruits. Help us to be patient, kind, and loving, so our garden is full of joy and happiness. Amen.

So, next time you see a gardener pruning a plant, remember how God prunes us for fruitfulness. And every day, let's try to grow a little more love, kindness, and joy in our garden.

## Bible Memory Verse

**John 15:5 'I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.'**

You Will Need:

- Colored construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Markers or crayons

Get Ready:

- Cut the construction paper into shapes: green for leaves, brown for branches, and a large piece for the vine.
- Write the memory verse on the large piece of vine-shaped paper.

Do This:

1. Explain the memory verse to the children, emphasizing how we need to stay close to Jesus like branches to a vine.
2. Have the children decorate their branch with leaves using markers or crayons, then glue their branch onto the vine paper.
3. Encourage them to place their finished vine and branches artwork somewhere they will see it daily to remember to stay close to Jesus.

## Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- A large branch with several smaller branches attached (real or crafted from materials like brown paper or cardboard)
- Paper leaves (green construction paper cut into leaf shapes, enough for each child to have several)
- Markers or crayons
- Tape or glue
- A basket of fruit (real or plastic)
- Bible

Get Ready:

1. Prepare the large branch by ensuring it's stable enough to attach paper leaves to. If using a real branch, place it in a large vase or pot for stability.
2. Write or print John 15:5 on each leaf. If the children are able, leave some leaves blank for them to write the verse themselves.
3. Set up a reading area with the Bible open to John 15.

Do this:

1. Start by gathering the children around the branch. Explain that the branch represents Jesus, and we are like the smaller branches. To bear fruit, we must stay connected to Him, just like the branches need to stay connected to the tree.
2. Read John 15:1-5 aloud from the Bible. Emphasize verse 5, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."
3. Hand out the paper leaves and markers/crayons. Ask the children to decorate their leaves with things they can do to stay close to Jesus (e.g., praying, reading the Bible, helping others). For younger children or those who need help with writing, assist them in writing their ideas on the leaves.
4. Once the leaves are decorated, help the children tape or glue their leaves onto the branch. As they attach each leaf, encourage them to say one thing they wrote on their leaf.
5. Conclude by showing the basket of fruit. Explain that just like the fruit in the basket, when we stay close to Jesus, we can produce good things in our lives and the lives of others. Encourage them to think of the fruits of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control) and how they can show these in their daily lives.
6. Close with a short prayer, asking God to help each child and teacher stay connected to Jesus, the true vine, and bear much fruit in their lives.

## Snack Activity: Fruitful Vine Snack

You'll Need:

- Green grapes
- Pretzel sticks
- Cream cheese or peanut butter (as edible 'glue')

- A plate

Get Ready: Wash the green grapes and dry them. Make sure you have enough space on a table for the kids to make their snack.

Do this:

1. Explain to the kids that in John 15, Jesus talks about being the vine and we are the branches. To bear fruit, we must stay connected to Him, just like branches need to stay connected to the vine.
2. Have the children use the pretzel sticks to make a 'vine' shape on their plates. They can break the pretzel sticks if they need shorter pieces.
3. Use a little cream cheese or peanut butter to 'glue' grapes along the pretzel vine, representing the fruit. While they do this, remind them that just like the vine bears fruit, we can bear good things in our lives like kindness, patience, and love when we stay connected to Jesus.

## Game Activity: Vine and Branches Tag

You'll Need:

- A large open space (either outdoors or a large room)
- Several green ribbons or pieces of fabric
- Music player (optional)

Get Ready: Before the game, explain to the children that in John 15, Jesus says He is the vine and we are the branches. To bear fruit, we must stay connected to Him, just like branches need to stay connected to the vine. Tell them that in this game, they will try to stay connected to 'Jesus' (a designated child or teacher) to bear fruit (represented by green ribbons).

Do this:

1. Choose one child to be 'Jesus,' the vine. This child holds the green ribbons. The rest of the children are the branches.
2. When the music starts (or on a given signal if not using music), the branches run around the play area while 'Jesus' tries to tag them.
3. When a branch is tagged, they take a green ribbon from 'Jesus' and tie it around their wrist, symbolizing that they are now bearing fruit because they've stayed close to Jesus.
4. The game continues until all branches have been tagged and are bearing fruit. Then, gather the children and discuss how staying connected to Jesus in our lives helps us bear good fruit, just like in the game.

## Craft Activity: Vine and Branches Friendship

### Bracelets

You'll Need:

- Green yarn or embroidery thread
- Beads in various colors (representing different fruits of the Spirit)
- Scissors
- Tape

Get Ready: Cut a piece of green yarn or embroidery thread about 24 inches long for each child. This will represent the vine. Choose beads that represent love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Do this:

1. Tape one end of the yarn to a table or a book to keep it steady. Explain that this vine (the yarn) represents Jesus, and we are like the branches. To bear fruit, we must stay connected to Him.
2. Thread the beads onto the yarn, one by one. As you add each bead, talk about the different fruits of the Spirit that Jesus helps us grow when we stay connected to Him. Each bead represents a different fruit.
3. Tie the ends together to make a bracelet. Remind the children that just like the bracelet wraps around their wrist, we should always keep Jesus' teachings close to us.

## Prayer Activity: Fruitful Vines

You'll Need:

- A large poster of a grapevine (or materials to draw one)
- Sticky notes in the shape of leaves or grapes
- Markers

Get Ready: Draw a large grapevine on a poster board, making sure to include branches but leaving the grapes off. Hang the poster in a place where all the children can reach.

Do this:

1. Start by reading John 15:4-5 to the children, explaining that Jesus wants us to be close to Him like branches are to a vine, so we can bear fruit.
2. Give each child a sticky note and a marker. Ask them to think of one way they can stay close to Jesus or show His love to others this week (e.g., being kind to a sibling, helping a friend, praying every day).
3. Have each child come up and stick their 'fruit' (sticky note) on the vine. As they do, lead them in a short prayer, asking God to help them stay close to Jesus and bear His fruit in their lives.