

Without Him

UPPER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: Depending on God

Scripture: John 15:5

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

Dear God, help us remember that without you, we can do nothing, but if we put our faith and trust in you, all things are possible.

Now, let's talk about how we need God in our lives, just like we need certain things to make other things work. Imagine you have a kite. You want to fly it high in the sky. But without wind, your kite won't fly. It's just like that with us too. We need God's help, like the kite needs the wind, to lift us up and help us do great things. This is what we call Christian empowerment. It means God gives us the power to do things we can't do on our own.

Think about a little seed. It's so small, right? But when you plant it in the soil, give it water, and the sun shines on it, it starts to grow. It can even turn into a big tree! The seed can't grow without soil, water, and sun. We are like that seed. We need God's love, His teachings, and our faith in Him to grow strong and do amazing things. That's Christian empowerment too. God's love and our faith in Him help us grow and do things we never thought possible.

Sometimes, we might feel small or scared, like when you're standing at the edge of a high diving board, looking down into the pool. You think, "I can't jump. It's too high!" But then, you remember your mom or dad is in the pool, waiting to catch you. You trust them, so you jump, and you're okay! That's a bit like trusting in God. When we're scared or not sure, we can remember that God is always with us, ready to catch us. This trust in God gives us the power to jump into new things, to try, even when we're scared. That's Christian empowerment - trusting God to help us and catch us when we jump.

Now, let's imagine you have a big, heavy box you need to move. You push and push, but it won't budge. Then, along comes a friend, and together, you move the box easily. God is like that friend who comes to help us. When we have God on our side, things that seemed too hard before become possible. We can share our worries with God, pray for strength, and suddenly, we're not alone with our big, heavy box anymore. God is helping us move it. That's Christian empowerment - knowing that with God's help, we can tackle big challenges.

Remember the story of David and Goliath? David was just a young boy, not a big, strong soldier. But he had something more powerful than strength. He had faith in God. He knew that with God on his side, he could do anything, even defeat a giant! And he did. That's a perfect example of Christian empowerment. David's trust in God gave him the courage and power to do something amazing.

So, what can we learn from all these examples? We learn that with God, we're never alone, and we're never without help. Just like you need wind to fly a kite, or water and sun to grow a seed, we need God to help us do big things. And just like trusting someone to catch you when you jump or having a friend help you move a heavy box, God's support and love make the impossible possible.

Dear God, thank you for being our strength and our helper. Help us to remember that with you, we can do anything. Help us to trust in you, to grow in your love, and to know that with your empowerment, we are never alone. Amen.

So, kids, next time you feel like you can't do something, remember the kite, the seed, the diving board, and the heavy box. Remember David and Goliath. And most importantly, remember that with God's help, you can do anything. That's the power of Christian empowerment.

Bible 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

You Will Need:

- Green, brown, and various colors of construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- Markers or crayons

Get Ready:

- Cut the brown construction paper into strips for branches and the vine.
- Cut the green paper into leaf shapes, and other colors into fruit shapes.

Do This:

1. Have each child create their own vine and branches on a large piece of construction paper using the brown strips for the vine and branches. They should glue these down first.
2. Next, they can attach the green leaves and colorful fruit to their branches with glue, symbolizing the 'fruit' we bear when we remain in Jesus.
3. While they work, discuss what it means to 'remain in Jesus' and how we can bear fruit in our lives. Encourage them to write or draw on their artwork examples of good fruits (like kindness, patience, love) they can show in their daily lives.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- A large branch with several smaller branches attached (real or artificial)
- Several paper leaves (enough for each child to have multiple)
- Markers or crayons
- Tape or string
- Scissors
- A Bible

Get Ready:

- Write John 15:5 on a large poster board and display it where all the children can see.
- Prepare the large branch by ensuring it's stable enough to hang paper leaves from. If using a real branch, place it in a large vase or pot for stability.
- Cut out paper leaves and make a small hole in each leaf for the string or have tape ready to attach them to the branch.

Do this:

1. Begin with a discussion on John 15:5, explaining the importance of staying connected to Jesus, like branches to a vine. Ask the children why they think a branch needs to stay attached to the vine (to receive nutrients and grow).
2. Hand out several paper leaves to each child and ask them to write or draw on each leaf something that represents their connection to Jesus or ways they can stay connected to Him (e.g., prayer, reading the Bible, helping others).
3. Once they have finished, help them attach their leaves to the large branch using tape or string. As they attach each leaf, encourage them to share what they wrote or drew and why it's important for staying connected to Jesus.
4. Conclude the activity with a group prayer, asking God to help each child stay connected to Him, grow in their faith, and bear good fruit in their lives, just like the branches on the vine.

Snack Activity: Vine & Branches Fruit Snack

You'll Need:

- Grapes (green or red)
- Pretzel sticks
- Cream cheese or peanut butter (as edible 'glue')
- A knife (for adult use only)
- Small plates

Get Ready: Wash the grapes and dry them. An adult should slice some grapes in half lengthwise to serve as 'leaves.'

Do this:

1. Place a pretzel stick on your plate; this will serve as the 'branch.' Use a small spoon or butter knife to spread a bit of cream cheese or peanut butter at one end of the pretzel stick.
2. Attach grapes along the pretzel stick to represent the 'fruit' growing from the vine. Use the halved grapes to place at the ends or along the sides as leaves.
3. As you create your vine and branches, discuss John 15:5. Explain how just like the branches need the vine to produce fruit, we need to stay connected to Jesus to bear spiritual fruit in our lives. This activity is a delicious reminder of our need to depend on God.

Game Activity: Vine and Branches Tag

You'll Need:

- A large open space (preferably outdoors)
- Boundary markers (cones, ropes, or chalk)
- A 'vine' rope (about 20 feet long)
- 'Fruit' tokens (could be anything from bean bags to small balls)

Get Ready: Use the boundary markers to define the play area, making sure there's enough space for running and tagging. Place the 'vine' rope in a visible and central part of the play area and scatter the 'fruit' tokens at various distances from the vine.

Do this:

1. Explain John 15:5 to the children, emphasizing the importance of staying connected to Jesus, the vine, to bear fruit. Share that in this game, the vine rope represents Jesus, and the fruits are the good deeds we can do through Him.
2. Designate one child to be 'It' or the 'Gardener'. The Gardener's role is to tag other players, representing branches, to remind them to stay close to the vine (Jesus).

3. When the game starts, players (branches) must stay within a certain distance from the vine to collect fruit tokens. If they venture too far (get tagged by the Gardener), they must return to the vine, say a verse from John 15 (could be verse 5 or any other they remember), and perform a simple task (like a kind gesture or a word of encouragement) to rejoin the game and continue collecting fruits.
4. The game ends when all fruits have been collected or after a set time. Celebrate the fruits collected and discuss how staying connected to Jesus helps us bear fruit in our lives.

Craft Activity: Vine and Branches: Living Connected to God

You'll Need:

- Green and brown construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Markers or crayons
- String or yarn

Get Ready: Cut the brown construction paper into strips to make 'branches' and the green paper into leaf shapes. Prepare a sample vine with branches and leaves to show as an example.

Do this:

1. Read John 15:5 together and discuss what it means to remain in Jesus like a branch is connected to the vine.

2. Use the brown strips to form a vine on a large piece of construction paper, gluing them down to create the main vine and branches.
3. Write 'I am the vine; you are the branches' on the vine. Then, on each green leaf, write different ways we can stay connected to God (praying, reading the Bible, helping others, etc.) and attach them to the branches.
4. Hang the completed vine and branches in your classroom or at home as a reminder to stay connected to God.

Prayer Activity: Branches of Faith

You'll Need:

- A large branch with multiple smaller branches attached
- Paper leaves (green construction paper cut into leaf shapes) enough for each child to have several
- Markers or pens
- Tape

Get Ready: Attach the large branch securely to a wall or suspend it from the ceiling where children can easily reach it. Prepare the paper leaves by cutting them out ahead of time.

Do this:

1. Start with a discussion about John 15:5, explaining how Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. Emphasize the importance of depending on God for everything in our lives.
2. Give each child several paper leaves and ask them to write or draw different ways they can depend on God or areas in their lives where they need His help.

3. Have each child come up and tape their leaves onto the branch, creating a visual representation of how we are all connected to God and depend on Him. Conclude with a group prayer, asking God to help everyone remember to stay connected to Him like the branches to the vine.