

Aim of lesson

To have the class consider how prepared they are for the sort of relationship that Jesus wants to have with them; one of total commitment, dependence and honesty.

Bible background

John 15; Galatians 5:22-23

Outline of lesson

You may like to bring a plant to the class to illustrate the dependence of the branches (or leaves) on the plant. Ask them what would happen to the leaf if broken off. Alternatively, you could ask the class about their own experiences of growing plants.

I am the vine

Read together John 15:1-8, reminding the class that Jesus spoke these words knowing that he would die the next day. They must have been about something he considered very important. In the workbooks, ask the class to label the picture of the vine, using the words of Jesus. They should include God, Jesus, disciples and those disciples who do not bear fruit.

Bring out the fact that Jesus is not just the stem or the trunk or root of the vine (although that is the best place to label it). He is the whole vine – that includes the branches and fruit. Ask the class for their views on what Jesus is teaching us about his relationship with his disciples and the way the disciples should consider each other. In discussion, bring out the point that Jesus considers his disciples to be a part of himself, he shares in their life. Each disciple should count the others as part of himself. They should react to the hurts, the good things and the sins of their brothers with the pain, joy or repentance they would feel for themselves.

The fruit of the spirit

Ask the class what they think the fruit is. Turn to Galatians 5:22,23 and put each of the 9 attributes of the fruit of the Spirit on the diagram. You may need to use more than one Bible version to make sure the class understand all nine. Ask if the class can learn what any of these attributes mean from the words and actions of the Lord Jesus in this last week of his life. Look up John 15:12-13, John 15:11 and 16:19-24, John 14:27 and John 15:18-21 in turn and discuss how they clarify the meaning of the first four parts of the fruits of the Spirit. If you have time, you could discuss how Jesus demonstrated the other five.

No branch can bear fruit by itself

Remind the class of John 15:4. The idea that we live in Jesus and he lives in us is repeatedly stated by Jesus and needs some thought to be understood. The two houses on the second page in the workbook are to help clarify this thought. Tell the class that the first house represents them; their lives, their minds, all that they do and think. How can Jesus come and live there? Discuss with the class the following: (You may wish to write these questions on cards beforehand and pass them around now.)

1. Can you invite Jesus into your life? Jesus can hear all your thoughts, so can you just tell him you want him to come in?
2. Will you ignore him all day while he is there? If you have a visitor at your house and you never speak to him, he might think he is not wanted. So could you share your thoughts, plans and worries with him?
3. What sort of language, people and ideas will Jesus have to keep company with in your mind? Will he feel "at home" or "out of place"?

The class may like to make brief notes inside their 'house'.

The second house represents Jesus. He invites us into his life, his mind, to share what he does and thinks. So just like the vine includes all the branches, this house is full of people, all those who follow Jesus. There is enough room for all. This is what he says in John 14:2. He was going to the cross to prepare the house, to lay the foundation. This house is also called the church, with Jesus as the cornerstone; it is called Jesus' body, with him as the head. See also Hebrews 3:6.

Discuss with the class the following:

1. Are you as interested in this 'house' as in your own?
2. Would you feel at home there?
3. Do you expect the other parts of this 'house' to be perfect? Would you fit in if they were?
4. Will you remember that it is precious because it is not our 'house' but his?

Digging deeper

The last supper

This section looks at the last supper as a whole and discusses what happened. The young people may not realise how much is recorded by John.

Relevance to our lives

The class may like to write a prayer during the week about spring-cleaning their 'house', making it a place where Jesus would feel at home.

Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for inviting us into your life. We want you always to be welcome in our lives.

Other suggestions for activities

1. If you are creating a chart of the 'I AM' sayings of Jesus, it should be concluded.

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2. The class could read "The Song of the Vineyard" in Isaiah 5:1-7 and make a poster illustrating the vineyard of Israel, with vines producing sour grapes of injustice and violence, etc., and the one true vine of Jesus producing the fruit of the Spirit.