

Facilitator:

1. Open with Prayer
2. Welcome any newcomers
3. Give a 5-minute review of Peppy's sermon

Facilitator:

Please don't feel you have to cover every question. They become increasingly deeper and more thoughtful toward the end. It may help to highlight questions you want to be sure to cover, depending on the dynamics of your group and the time available. Try to keep your discussion to an hour and a half at the most.

Announcements:

A great opportunity to support The Oaks Christian School is coming up! The OCS annual Silent Auction is coming up on Saturday, Nov. 12 at 6 p.m. Admission is \$5 and gets you five food tickets to be used for concessions inside (hot dogs, drinks, popcorn, etc.) while you enjoy the fun, family-friendly, carnival-themed auction.

Also, if you come out early (5pm), KidsRoad is hosting a family fellowship on the yard next to the gym. We'd love for families to come out and decorate a pumpkin together, enjoy some tasty fall treats, hear a devotion shared by the preschool and children's directors on "Cultivating Thankfulness in Your Kids," and just play with other families! After the time of fellowship, we will offer additional kids activities for parents wanting to go shop the silent auction. If you register online at crossroads-summerville.org and bring a Thanksgiving canned food side item, KidsRoad will supply a pumpkin for your family to decorate!

CONNECT Group study questions for November 6, 2016

Title: Stay Connected

Read John 15:1-8 *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the*

vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”

For the Children

Question: Have you ever picked a flower for your mom and tried to keep it alive? What happened over time?

What happens to a branch when it is cut off from a tree?

Why? (Hint: What does it need in order to live?)

What kind of fruit grows on a branch connected to an apple tree?

What about on a branch connected to an orange tree? (**Facilitator:** Use this to help build understanding that a branch should bear fruit like the tree to which it's connected.)

When we stay connected to Jesus, He makes us more like Him.

What is Jesus like? What are ways we can stay connected to Him?

For the Group

Facilitator: Connect Groups with or without children should begin this session with the children's questions (above) for a clear understanding of the word picture Jesus uses in his lesson on staying connected to the True Vine.

Question: Jesus states that he is the “True Vine,” which seems to imply that there are other vines that are not “true.”

How can we know the vine to which we are connected is the True Vine among so many look-alikes?

Question: God the Father is the gardener in Jesus' word picture.

Describe the relationship the gardener has with his vine. **Facilitator:** God, as gardener, does everything to ensure his vineyard bears fruit, and the vine in his vineyard submits to the gardener's cultivation, believing he does what's best.

Question: Jesus' relationship with his disciples is like his relationship with his church, and like the original twelve disciples, his church contains "deadwood" that needs to be cut off and disposed of. Judas Iscariot had the choice to not be deadwood in God's vineyard, but chose otherwise.

How can we know if we are, or are not, deadwood in his church?

What steps do we take to ensure that we are not deadwood in his church? **Facilitator:** Stress the importance of staying connected in faith to God through prayer and through obedience to his commands.

Question: Those who are connected to Jesus, the True Vine, are branches that bear fruit.

What does it mean to "bear fruit?"

How do you bear more fruit?

Share with the group your experience when God chose to "prune" you. And describe the "fruit" you bore as a result of his pruning.

Question: Things in life that keep us from being productive, fruit-bearing branches are often good, but we let them take God's place and choke off our connection to the True Vine.

Brainstorm with the group things in life that can be cut back or even cut off to make you more productive as a branch connected to the True Vine?