



SESSION **4**

# True vine



### MEETING AIM

To discover what Jesus meant when he said: "I am the true vine."



### BIBLE PASSAGE

John 15:1-17



### BACKGROUND

Our young people may not be gardeners, but the image of Jesus as a vine and us as the branches is a simple one to imagine. This session might bring out some things the young people feel need to be 'pruned' from their lives and they might have painful decisions to make. Be sensitive and supportive as you talk about things that might need to go in order to remain close to Jesus.

## + GATHERING TIME



**You will need: refreshments; a comfortable place to sit and chat**

One of the themes on Remembrance Day is to remember those who laid down their lives for their country. Invite the young people to share any stories they know (many schools cover this in their curriculum). Be sensitive, but encourage those with relatives who have fought in a war to share stories.

It would also be worth looking for a story you can share. This could be from your own family history, or by looking online.

Alternatively, and depending on the time you have and where you meet, is there someone in your church who could come and share? This is a great way of getting different generations in the church to interact. (You may want to refer back to a Remembrance Day service from November).

## + GROW YOUR OWN



**You will need: tomato seeds; pots; compost; stickers and pens; water source; clean-up equipment**

Give everyone a pot and encourage them to fill it with some compost. Share out the tomato seeds and show the group how to plant them in their pots. Everyone should write their name on a sticker and stick it to their pot. Water the pots. You can either keep the pots

where you meet or let the young people take them home to see if any of the plants grow.

By keeping at least one pot where you meet, you can see how big your communal tomato plant can grow.

## + BIBLE EXPLORATION



**You will need: Bibles; hat stand or similar (optional); bunches of grapes**

Explain that the aim is to find out how the 'vine' is used as a metaphor and analogy in the Old Testament. It is far more than just a plant. Give pairs or small groups of young people one of these passages: Jeremiah 2 (especially verse 21), Psalm 80 (particularly verses 8-18) and Hosea 10.

After they have read, noted and discussed, bring the groups together and let them feed back what they have found. What did the vine represent in the Old Testament?

Gather the young people together and construct a 'vine' together. Get two or three young people to be the trunk, standing with their arms around each other in a close circle. Ask four people to hold hands with one of those forming the trunk. These form the base of the branches of your vine. Others then hold hands with the branches to create longer branches. If you have a small group, use a hat stand or similar as the trunk and get your branches to hold on to part of that.

Read out John 15:1-4. As you do so, you, another leader or a young person should 'cut off' a couple of the branches at the trunk to represent the branches that bear no fruit. They should then cut the last person off the other branches to represent pruning. Give the final person in the remaining branches a bunch of grapes to hold in their empty hand.

Ask the group what they think Jesus is talking about here. What do the different branches represent? What about the fruit? Which part of the vine represent the people Jesus is talking to?

Read out the rest of the passage and get the group's initial reaction as to what they have heard. What stands out to them in what Jesus says? How do the people remain part of the vine?

## + CHATTING TOGETHER



Chat about the story using these questions, encouraging everyone to join in if they want to:

- Are you connected to the vine?
- How deep are your roots? Are you in the right plant pot? Are you watered regularly?
- How can you 'remain in the vine' in your life? How easy is it to stay connected to Jesus?
- What might be stopping you from being fruitful? Do you need God to prune something from your life?

## + CREATIVE RESPONSE



**You will need: a large sheet of paper (lining paper); felt-tip pens; A4 paper; Blu-Tack**

Before the session, draw the branches of a large vine on a large piece of paper. Hang the drawing on the wall.

Ask everyone to draw an image that represents them. It doesn't need to look like them and could just be something that represents them; perhaps an activity they take part in or enjoy.

Ask the young people to think about which part of the vine they could be. As they are thinking about this, read the Bible passage slowly.

Get the group to stick their images to the vine. Explain that we can all be part of the vine, remaining in and with Jesus. The sign that we are part of the vine is that we bear good fruit.

Finish this activity by reading Galatians 5:22-23, where Paul talks about the fruit of the Spirit. Suggest that this list of 'fruit' is a good sign that they are growing strong in the true vine.

## + PRAYER



Although the Christian doctrine of the Trinity isn't explicitly used in the Bible, its implicit nature can be found in today's passage. Use this Trinitarian-style prayer to close your session:

*Our Father, you are the gardener. Look after us.*

*Dear Jesus, you are the vine.*

*Keep us close to you.*

*Holy Spirit, you nourish us.*

*Help us bear fruit and do good.*

*Father, Son and Holy Spirit,*

*Amen*

**DARREN HILL**

tells stories at [thecreativeminimalist.com](http://thecreativeminimalist.com).