

THE GOSPEL OF

JOHN

STUDENT LESSON

Remember!
God Made You
and He Loves You
Very Much!

Open it

I used to work at Oberweis Dairy Store in North Aurora. I know, I know. Before you ask, it IS the one with the big factory behind it. Also, the cows are in there and chocolate milk comes from the brown ones. In all honesty, I just worked at the store part so I have no idea what happened in the factory. Anyway, what's the first thing that comes to your mind when you think of Oberweis? Ice cream? Chocolate milk? Shakes? Illinois State Senators? Those little cookie straws? Well, as you get older, the first thing that starts to pop up sooner and sooner in that list is the COST. When I worked there, we were always told to be especially nice to the guests because they practically had to pull out a loan every time they wanted a sundae for each of the kiddos. There was this one time where a guy and his family came in and ordered their ice cream like normal. EXCEPT! One of the new people messed up something on the order. Not a huge issue on our end, one to two minute fix tops. But, this customer must've had something to prove. All my fast food homies should probably know where this is going. He marches on up to the counter and starts shaking his fist around, "HEY! HEY! THIS IS COMPLETELY WRONG!" (This isn't an exact quote because it's not necessarily appropriate for a youth group lesson.) At this point, my manager was presented with two options: love or hate. Of course, it's more complicated than that, but they could've reciprocated his angry energy or with a completely opposite, understanding energy. He responded kindly and said, "I'm sorry to hear that you received the wrong items. Let me grab you a new one! Feel free to keep the accidental ice cream," stuff like that. The guy stood there, shocked. He most likely expected a retaliation (or a RETALIATION) but instead received a memorable experience where everyone left happy. Choosing to show God's love to this guy even though it could've been much easier to choose a fighting response is an example of producing fruits. As you'll learn this week, God wants us to show everyone love and produce lasting fruits. I pray you'll learn what "lasting fruit" is and how you can "produce" it in your life.

1. Describe a time you had to force yourself to show love rather than choose an easier hateful option.

Day 2 — Today's Theme: The Vine, the Gardener, and the Branch

Read John 15:1-4.

Jesus says here that He is the Grapevine, God the Father is the Gardener, and we are the branches. Think of a big ol' vineyard. Got it? Good. Okay, next picture a singular grapevine with hundreds of BILLIONS of branches on it. Pretty big plant, right? Well, not for THIS GUY! Enter: God the Gardener. His job is to go around and pluck all the dead branches off. How does God know if they are dead or alive? If the branches produce fruit, then they're alive. How do they produce fruit? What is fruit?? You'll find out on the next page! Today we'll focus just on the roles we see in the garden.

6. Relate all three parts of the metaphor to their real-world counterparts.

God	Gardener
Jesus	Grapevine
Us/Humankind	Branches

7. Why is it necessary for the Gardener to chop off the unfruitful branches? Think of the relationship between them in the chart.

8. Why do some branches not bear fruit? Why do some people not believe in God?

Day 3 — Today's Theme: Holy Fruitcake

Read John 15:5–8.

Fruit is a very common word used throughout the Bible. Personally, food is very important to me. Easily a top ten thing for sure. It's up there with water, shelter, and GOD HIMSELF! There are many necessary things in life. Jesus recognized the importance of food and used it as a symbol throughout His ministry to show how our faith in God and the blessings He gives us should be as valued and necessary to us, if not MORE necessary, than food, water, and shelter. In this Scripture, Jesus dives deeper into the analogy of the grapevine and the branches. By describing what separates those who remain in Him and those who are apart from Him. He says, "*Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.*"¹ So, what is this fruit He's describing? During Paul's post-Jesus' ascension church planting, in His letter to Galatia, he lists the fruit of the spirit; the best attributes of ourselves that the Lord blesses us with.² That very well could be the specific fruits that Jesus talks about here in John. No matter what, all of the fruits we see, physically and spiritually, come from Him.

I find it interesting how in previous miracles, the food Jesus talks about would come from Him. He would say that anyone who would partake of the **bread** of life and drink from the living **water** will never hunger or thirst again.³ But, this time, He's saying that the fruit will be produced by us. WOAHH, WOAHH, WOAHH, hold on though. Let's go back to the analogy. Think of that grapevine with its branches. Would those branches produce fruit if not for the grapevine providing them with the nutrients they need?

Before this verse, Jesus showed us how He's the great example. Through God the Father, Jesus received these miracles. We see Jesus praying over and blessing people and things, and those good things happen. Now, Jesus is basically saying it's our turn to produce fruit. Jesus has shown us it's possible through abiding in Him, the vine, and prayer.

9. What characterizes a Christian who is bearing fruit? What does a normal day look like for them? What are some ways you are bearing fruit?

10. What does it mean to remain in Him? What do you receive when you do?

11. What are some practical steps you can take to position yourself to remain connected to the Grapevine, Jesus, so that you, the branch, can bear fruit?

¹ John 15:5

² "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law." Galatians 5:22-23

³ John 6:35

Day 4 — Today's Theme: Go Commit Arson (In Minecraft)

Read John 15:9–13.

Jesus says here that “Anyone who does not remain in [Him] is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned.” If we as humans are to represent the individual branches of the grapevine, and the ones who “do not remain” in Him are to be thrown away, then... uh....

Surely God doesn't want us setting every person who isn't producing fruit on fire! Right? Well, the answer lies in the analogy. Who would be trimming the grapevine of its bad branches? The gardener! If the gardener is representing God and we're the branches connected to Jesus, the grapevine, then this represents a separation from God. When branches are separated from the vine they are tossed into a fire. This **could** be implying that those who do not produce fruit (or good works) would go to Hell. But, we know that the lack of good deeds isn't what keeps you out of Heaven. The other interpretation is that the non-fruit bearing branch wouldn't have been a believer in the first place, someone who has had evil intentions from the start, and thus did not produce fruit.⁴ Jesus could've been referencing Judas here as he recently left Him to set up a deal to capture Jesus. Judas was connected to Jesus, but did not bear fruit.

12. What are some ways you may be, like Judas, connected to Jesus but choosing not to bear fruit? Have you ever had an opportunity where you could've shown God's Love to another but didn't?

Say you notice someone at youth group who may not be doing or saying things that glorify God. Maybe they're making inappropriate jokes, talking about people behind their backs, or maybe just doing something that you know could get them or you into HUGE trouble. This person says they believe in God and Jesus' sacrifice and goes to church on Sundays sometimes, and always goes to Youth Group on Wednesdays. They're connected to Jesus, but they are not bearing fruit.

13. What are some ways you can help them to live their life for Christ in more ways? How can you show love to them while still sharing the truth about how they are acting?

⁴ <https://bible.org/seriespage/18-exegetical-commentary-john-15>

Note: This lesson was written by Micah Hett. www.villagebible.church/students