



Small Group Study Guide for May 2, 2021

Our Savior Lutheran Church and School

Theme: Artificial plants may look nice for a time, but they don't bear fruit or help us live. When we are connected to the true vine (Jesus), we are connected to the source of life. When we abide in Christ, we bear fruit in the lives of others as Jesus courses through our veins.

Getting Started: (sharing with each other)

1. Share your favorite fruits or vegetables, and how you like them prepared, and also your least favorite fruit or vegetable.
2. Share your favorite kind of yardwork or gardening that you like to do, and also your least favorite kind of yardwork or gardening.

In the Word: Read John 15:1-8

3. Spend some time quietly reading over this passage in your head and meditating and reflecting on it. Set a time for five minutes and have each person simply read and meditate on this passage several times over.
4. Jesus is the vine and we are the branches, and if we remain in Him, we bear much fruit. Share with others what words or phrases of this passage resonated with you the most as you read them.
5. There are a number of Old Testament passages where the people of Israel was described as a vine, such as in Psalm 80, and would have been a familiar image of Israel in Jesus' day. But here, Jesus says that He is the true (real, genuine) vine. He is the true Israel. The Pharisees and religious leaders thought they would find true life in the traditions of their elders and the birthrights of their forefathers. How do Jesus' words to the religious leaders in **John 5:39-40** compare with Jesus' words in John 15, and the source of true life?
6. Mark or underline in your Bible how many times the word "word" shows up in John 15:1-8. How many times is that?

Putting it all Together (what we should believe or do as disciples)

7. For Jesus to dwell/abide/remain in us (a personal indwelling of Jesus in our hearts), is the same thing as His word to dwell/abide/remain in us. His word is spoken to us and declares us clean and forgiven. In the same way, for us to dwell/abide/remain in Jesus is the same thing as to dwell/abide/remain in His word. What does it look like for disciples of Jesus to “remain in Him,” that is, to dwell/abide/remain in God’s Word?

8. God prunes us and carefully tends to us so that we can bear even more abundant fruit. Dead branches and fruitless stalks are trimmed away and discarded. The goal is fruitful branches. If we are the branches, what is the fruit that God wants us to bear as we stay connected to the true vine? (Cf. Galatians 6:22-25)

9. Today, we may decorate our homes (and church!) with artificial plants. They may look good for a time, and it takes no effort to care for them. That works well for decorations. But what do real, genuine vines do that fake or artificial plants can never do?

10. Sometimes we might feel like parts of our life are artificial. We want them to look good, and we don’t want to have to do any work or put any effort into it. Thankfully, God doesn’t treat us that way. He puts in the work, the time, and the effort to carefully tend to us as living branches, so that we grow and bear abundant fruit. Where have you seen God putting work or effort into your life, tending to you, pruning you, or carefully helping you grow?

11. Where do you see living branches (disciples of Jesus) bearing much fruit, to the glory of God the Father?

Prayer: Thank God for the ways He gently cares for us, tends to us, prunes us, and keeps us connected to the True Vine. Ask God to help us grow in the new life we have in Christ, watered by baptism, fed and nourished by the Lord’s Supper, and growing in the Spirit to bear abundant fruit. Ask that God would be glorified in our lives, in good times and in bad, so that others will see the goodness of God in us.

Next Week: We continue this section of Jesus’ teaching in John 15 where He continues with the illustration of the branches, and calls the disciples His friends. You are a friend of God!