

Tips and Tricks:

The sermon notes are designed to be used as a guide for discussion. Don't feel like you have to use every question. Some questions will take a while to work through and others will be over in a few seconds.

1. Don't teach the lesson. The sermon was just preached. Just ask the questions and let everyone else talk.
2. Let other people ask questions. It's OK to go "off topic" for a while. Sometimes those conversations are more interesting anyway!
3. Have fun. Don't forget to laugh and crack up. Relationships, not curriculum, are the heartbeat of our ministry. Remember: We have to build a relational bridge strong enough to hold the truth!

Agenda for Group Time

1. Ice Breaker - Lighthearted ice breaker question (10 minutes)
2. Discussion - Bible study, sharing and application. (25 Minutes)
3. Prayer - Pray together (5 minutes)
4. Planning - Remember to talk about what's coming up.

Break the Ice!

Have you ever felt like you were technically "in" somewhere (a team, a group, a workplace) but not fully connected? What made the difference?

Talk it Over

Read **John 15:1-6** together as a group. What words or phrases are repeated in this passage? Why do you think that matters?

The True Vine

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser." (John 15:1)
Jesus calls Himself the *true* vine.

Question: Why is that word "true" important? What was Israel supposed to be, and how does Jesus fulfill that role perfectly?

Question: What does this image teach us about where spiritual life actually comes from?

- My effort
- My church involvement
- My family background
- Jesus Himself
- Your Worldview
- Politics
- Other: _____

Appearance vs. Connection

Jesus says there are branches that appear to be “in” but do not bear fruit.

Question: What are some ways someone might look spiritually alive for a season but not actually be connected to Christ?

- Using Christian language
- Attending church regularly
- Serving or volunteering
- Agreeing with Christian beliefs
- Other: _____

Question: Why is it dangerous to confuse proximity to Christianity with true connection to Christ?

Two Kinds of Branches

“Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away...” (John 15:2)

Question: According to this passage, what is the difference between the two kinds of branches?

Question: What kind of “fruit” do you think Jesus is talking about?

- Love
- Obedience
- Repentance
- The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23)
- Persevering faith
- Other: _____

Apart From Me You Can Do Nothing

“I am the vine; you are the branches... apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)

Question: What does Jesus mean by *nothing*?

Where are you most tempted to rely on your own strength instead of depending on Christ?

- Work
- Parenting
- Marriage
- Church leadership
- Personal morality
- Other: _____

Lost Is the Beginning

You cannot cling to the Vine until you know you are a branch.

Question: Why is admitting spiritual need so hard for us?

Question: How does recognizing that we are “lost” actually position us to receive life?

Work It Out

One practical way I want to “abide” in Christ this week (to intentionally depend on Him rather than myself) is:

Question:

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- Other: _____