

Who Is Your Support – Discussion and Reflection Questions

This reflection will help youth consider where they find support. Are the people and things which hold them up part of the healthy vine of Jesus?

Have a small stick a foot or more in length and a larger branch. If possible, use the main branch of a vine, but any branch will do. Also have a heavy bunch of grapes. Put a loop of string around the grapes to allow for hanging.

(Try this out on your own beforehand to ensure that you have appropriately sized props and tape which is not too sticky.)

Have the youth use some regular cellophane tape to attach the stick to the larger branch. Here are the rules:

- The stick must be perpendicular to the branch.
- Only the last two inches of the stick can have tape on it.
- They cannot use more than six inches tape. (More or less – make this appropriate for the size of the branch.)

After they get the tape attached, using the string on the grapes, have them hang the bunch of grapes on the other end of the stick, about an inch from the end.

If you have provided them with flimsy enough materials, the stick should not stay attached to the vine. Or the stick should not be sturdy enough to support the grapes. Or both. Discuss the results.

- Why couldn't the twig support the fruit?
- Why didn't the stick stay attached to the branch?
- What would have to change to make this work?

Read the gospel:

[John 15:1-8](#) (Jesus is the vine and we are the branches) – the Gospel Reading for the [5th Sunday of Easter – Year B](#)

Jesus said to his disciples: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit.

You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you.

Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.

Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned.

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.”

[John 15:1-8](#)

In this gospel, Jesus is reminding us that we need him. A grape vine is very strong and sturdy. The vine can be several inches in diameter. It supports all of the branches and the grapes. Without a strong, sturdy vine, the branches would break off and the clusters of grapes would fall to the ground. Once on the ground, it doesn't take them long to be so full of bugs that they go bad.

Jesus tells us that he is the vine and we are the branches. If we are to bear fruit, we must be firmly attached to him. If we do not rely on Jesus to be our support, we cannot hope to be strong enough to bear the weight of the challenges in our lives, especially the challenges to discipleship.

So we need to be strongly attached to Jesus. If we are, then he will support us and help us.

- What are some things we can do to strengthen our relationship with Jesus? (prayer, read Bible, etc.)
- What are some things which are pulling us down? (difficult friendship, stress of school, etc)
- What sort of fruit might we bear when we rely on Jesus? (new friends, better relationships with family, strength, courage, etc)

This week your challenge is to spend ten minutes with Jesus each day. You can spend it in prayer, or reading your Bible, or journaling, or some other method. But put aside those ten minutes to let your relationship with Jesus grow stronger. Then rely on the Lord throughout the day whenever you feel you need his support.