

Early Word: John 15:1-8

Easter 5, Year B

By Beth Barnett

This is an intergenerational engagement for Early Word time, using John 15:1-8, to explore Connection and Community

You will need:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading John 15:1-8 • Box of Sultanas or raisins • Bunch of fresh grapes in a glass bowl • Bottle of Grape juice (or wine if appropriate in your context) • Large poster of Art Image for this week • Bark, brown and green wool
Time required:	5 minutes

Introduction

Our Bible reading today is about grapes.

First prepared volunteer calls out 'I've got some grapes!' and holds up a box of raisins/ sultanas.

Yes. They are some grapes – but they aren't the grapes the Bible reading is about. Maybe you can share them with some friends.

Second prepared volunteer calls out 'I've got some grapes!' and holds up a bunch of fresh grapes in a glass bowl.

Yes. They are some grapes – but they aren't the grapes the Bible reading is about. Maybe you can share them with some friends.

Third prepared volunteer calls out 'I've got some grapes!' and holds up a bottle of Grape Juice (or red wine if that's appropriate in your community, but think carefully about whether it is intergenerationally inclusive.)

Yes. They are some grapes – but they aren't the grapes the Bible reading is about.

Maybe you can share them with some friends.

Unlike the sultanas or the single bunch of grapes or the crushed grapes in the bottle, the grapes in the Bible reading – are all still connected together and growing together on the vine.

As we open the Bible today, we will take our cues from the image of the grapevine in Jesus' teaching. We will try to read in a way that shows how we are connected, and growing together. Of course, this doesn't mean we're all the same – vines have strong woody old branches. Vines have new soft flexible windy green shoots. Vines have clumps of grapes growing out on the edges. Vines have lots of large shady leaves to protect the fruit. Vines have underground roots that remain steady, feeding the vine from the soil. Not seen but very important.

Divide your group into four teams.

Vines – if you've been following Jesus for more than three decades

Branches – if you like reaching out to those who don't know God

Fruit – If you've come to know God In the last decade

Remain – if your family has been in this community for more than just your generation

Take a minute to find your words in the passage and practice.

I am the true **vine**,
and my Father is the **vine**-grower.

He removes every **branch** in me
that bears no **fruit**.

Every **branch** that bears **fruit**
he prunes to make it bear more **fruit**.

You have already been pruned
by the word that I have spoken to you.

Remain in me as I **remain** in you.

Just as the **branch**
cannot bear **fruit** by itself
unless it **remains** in the **vine**,

neither can you
unless you **remain** in me.

I am the **vine**,
you are the **branches**.

Those who **remain** in me
and I in them

bear much **fruit**,

because apart from me
you can do nothing.

Whoever does not **remain** in me



Intergen

www.intergen.org.au

is thrown away like a **branch** and withers;
such **branches** are gathered,
thrown into the fire, and burned.
If you **remain** in me,
and my words **remain** in you,
ask for whatever you wish,
and it will be done for you.
My Father is glorified by this,
that you bear much **fruit**
and become my disciples.

The story of God's people goes way, way back and goes on and on and on. Like a river that rolls on over the centuries or like a tree that has deep old roots and fresh strong branches and brand new budding fruit, God's people are made up of all ages – and we need each other to grow and be fruitful together.

Reflection

Show Art image

Invite participants to respond to the following questions

What catches your attention in the image?

How do the images of water, the two people and the tree connect together in the story of God's people?

Which part of the image could you turn into a prayer for someone today?



Intergen

www.intergen.org.au