



You will need...

- A vine (or similar plant) with multiple healthy branches
A branch cut off from the plant, clearly dead

OR pictures of a vine with healthy branches and of a dead branch

The story

This term in our children's slots we are answering the question "What is church?"

Today we are finding out that church is branches of a vine. Jesus said in John chapter 15 verse 5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

Here is my vine. Are you ready for your lesson in how things grow? *[Show healthy vine]* Do you see the big stalk that comes up the middle? That is where all the life comes. That's where water comes from the roots and all the goodness flows to the branches. That's what makes this plant stay alive. Jesus says that's what he is like, the big bit in the middle - the vine. He says that a good church is like branches that come off it.

Did you hear him say "apart from me you can do nothing"? *[Show dead branch]* The branch that is not attached is going to die. It can't live. It is obvious that it is never going to grow fruit. I could stand here for years and this will never grow any fruit.

A church that is not all about Jesus Christ, a church that doesn't love him and trust him and talk to one another about him and teach other people about him is like a branch that will only ever die. That is so sad. But a church that stays close to Jesus Christ is like a branch that will grow fruit. If we stick with Jesus, he (not us), he will bear much fruit. If we keep close to Jesus then he will grow us into a church that bears much fruit. We will be a church that makes great decisions, a church that prays, a church that keeps trusting Jesus even when it's hard, a church that grows by telling others about Jesus, and church that loves one another even when it hurts. A church full of people who bit by bit by bit grow to look more like Jesus is a fruitful church. Just like the branches of a healthy, fruitful vine.

Can you imagine how good it would be to be in a church where Jesus is always number 1? Where Jesus is making us grow to be more like him? The very best thing anyone could ever say



about any church is that it is a fruitful church – one that sticks with Jesus Christ and is growing to be more like him.

I'm going to pray and thank God that he is doing that amongst us.
Let's pray together.

Dear Father, we thank you that you don't ask us to do impossible things. You just ask us as a church to stick close to Jesus Christ. Please help us to keep on loving him, speaking about him, pushing one another closer to him, praying we may grow more like him, and understanding who he is and what he has done. Father, please help us never to grow tired of this. Please grow fruit in us so that we will be more like Jesus. Father make that our hearts desire, make that what gets us excited and thrilled. Please would we be a church that points others to Jesus Christ.
Amen.