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 to 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
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?