

Fifth Sunday of Easter

I am the true vine

INTRODUCTION

A branch cannot live and produce fruit unless it is nourished by the tree or plant to which it is attached. Today Jesus compares himself to a vine, and we are the branches which bear the fruit of his love.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles and sing the Candle Song.

SORRY

If Christ's spirit is living in us, then everyone will see the fruits of his presence: love, happiness, forgiveness, generosity, and honesty.

Heavenly father,
the fruits of your Holy Spirit
are not always obvious in our lives.
Prune away the parts of our lives
that stop us from growing strong
and fill us with your life and your love.

GLORIA

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 5.

GOSPEL (JOHN 15:1-8)

Jesus told his disciples, "I am the true vine and my father is the gardener who tends the vine. Any of my branches which don't bear fruit are cut away, and the branches which carry fruit are pruned by him so that the following year they will produce even more.

"Because you have listened to and understood my message, you will bear much fruit. A branch that is cut off the vine will wither and die without producing any fruit. If you stay close to me and carry my words in your heart, then you will bear much fruit and truly be my disciple."

DISCUSSION

A gardener's job is to make sure that the plants which he or she tends are healthy and strong. One

way they can do this is by pruning. This means cutting away any dead, damaged, or weak stems and branches of a plant or tree. It encourages new growth by making the other buds and shoots grow strong and healthy.

(If possible, either demonstrate pruning using some gardening shears and a potted shrub or twig, or show the children some pictures of the technique in a gardening book.)

Good pruning builds a strong framework of branches but also encourages good fruit production for many years. By careful pruning, the good gardener keeps his plants strong and healthy, and every year they produce more and more fruit.

In today's Gospel, who was the vine and who was the gardener? Jesus described himself as being like a vine, with us as the branches. God the Father was the gardener who did the necessary pruning.

Jesus used the story of the vine and branches to explain that we are all part of him. It is through Jesus that we have life, and through the work of his father that we flourish and grow strong. He prunes away the things in our lives that make us weak or stop us from growing strong in faith and love.

Jesus is living and working in our lives, in our thoughts, our actions, and our words. By being kind and loving, ready to forgive, and honest and generous, the fruits of his love are there for all to see.

ACTIVITY

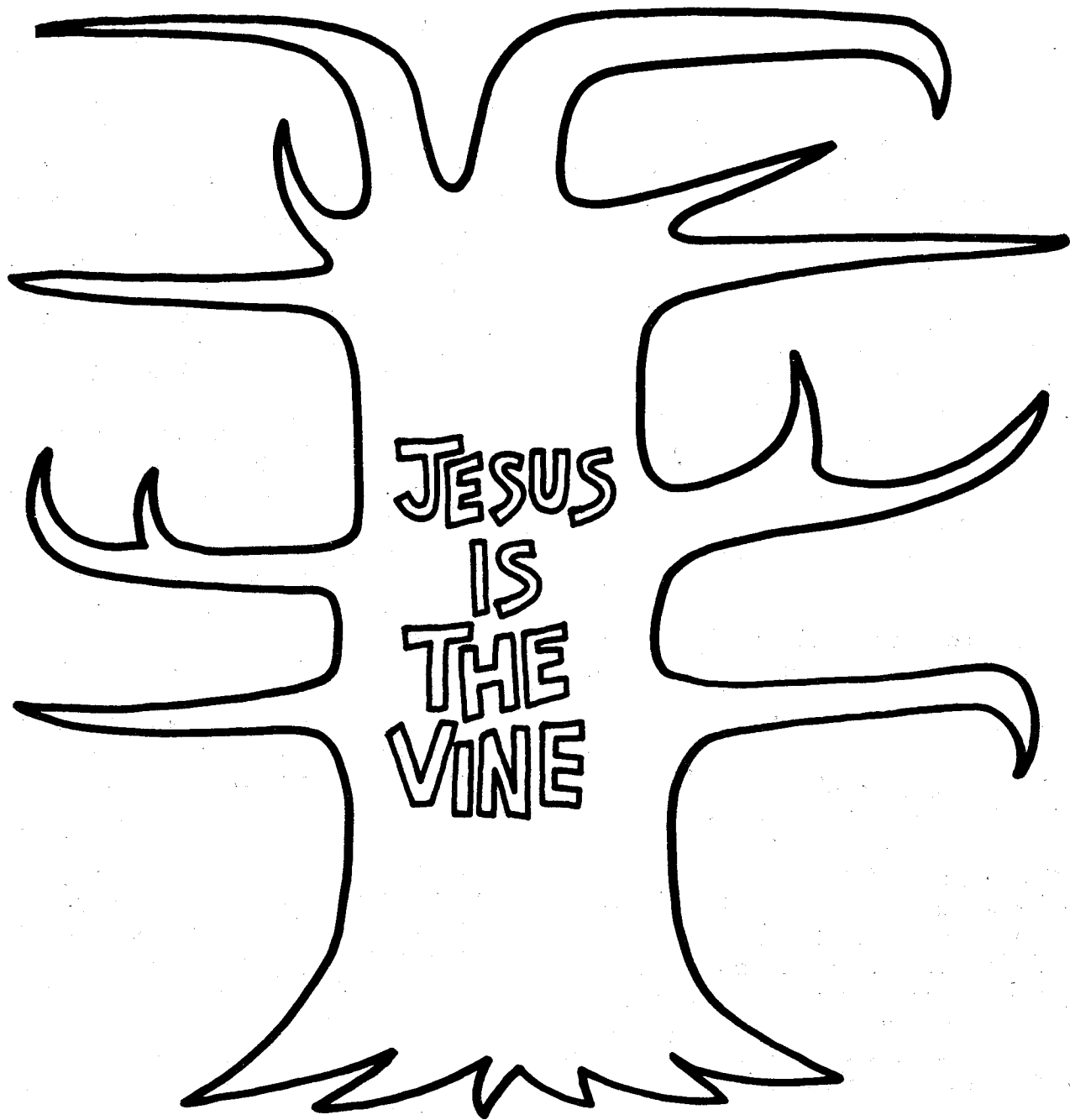
Use enlarged copies of the illustration for this activity, or draw a simple outline of a tree trunk on a large sheet of paper. Write "Jesus is the vine" on the trunk. Ask some of the children to stick on some small twigs into position using sticky tape. Add the caption "We are the branches." Ask the other children to color in large cutout fruits. Help them to label these with the fruits of God's love and to attach them to the branches.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, fill us with your life and love
so that we will produce much fruit
and a rich harvest for your sake.

WE ARE THE BRANCHES



JESUS
IS
THE
VINE

