

Teen Devotion

Year B – Easter 5

Resurrection Reality



One truth shared: Jesus wants us to stay connected to him as branches to the vine.

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

John 15:1-8

Dear Teen, Stay Connected

Something was off. Cody could tell that something wasn't right, but he didn't know what it was. School seemed to be going OK. His grades were fairly stable. There was no friend drama going on—at least at this time. He hadn't fought with his parents in a while. He even had a somewhat tolerable job with some chill coworkers. So how could Cody have all these good things going and still not feel right?

It was hard for Cody to explain. He got decent grades and made good money at work, but he still felt like he had nothing. Even though things were good with friends and family, he still felt alone. Even though he had so much going for him and filling up his time, he still felt empty and hollow on the inside. He didn't know what it was, but something was definitely off.

Then one day Cody discovered something. He was digging around in his closet for a pack of batteries for a remote control when he found something in the back corner of the closet. It was a picture frame. He pulled it out and blew off the dust. Suddenly he had his answer. He knew what was wrong.

Inside the picture frame was Cody's baptism certificate from when he was little. For years it had hung on his wall as a reminder of that special moment when he was made a child of God. But when Cody redecorated his room, he put it off to the side so it wouldn't break. It had been sitting there in his closet for over a year. Cody started to recognize that just as he had forgotten about this important reminder of the past, he had been forgetting about his relationship with Jesus.

Cody had so many things going on that he rarely found time to pray or read the Bible. He was so tired on the weekends that sleep became a priority over worship. His friends at school always wanted to do things so he rarely hung out with the teen group from church anymore. It was almost as if Cody's faith life had been hiding in the closet with his baptism certificate. And that's what was wrong.

Jesus reminds us today how important it is to stay connected to him. He is the vine, and we are the branches. When we are connected to him, we are fed and nourished with his love and forgiveness, his strength, and his comfort. When we are connected to him, Jesus says that we will bear much fruit. But apart from him, no matter how many good worldly things we have going on, we can do nothing.

Cody was reminded that he needed to strengthen his connection to Jesus, the vine. How about you? How strong is your connection? How much are you being fed? How much fruit are you bearing? Today might be a good day for you to do some reflection. Jesus, the vine, graciously wants to feed and nourish you as a branch that grows and bears much fruit. Take some time to think today about how you can better stay connected to Jesus. Think about some plans you can make to help you do that. Make it a priority. Then wait and watch how you will grow and flourish when you stay connected!

Prayer: Jesus, I am so thankful to be connected to you. You are my everything. But there are so many things in this world that want to cut me off from you. Feed me with your Word and sacraments. Strengthen my faith. Help me always remain connected to you. Amen.

Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

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Dear Teen, Stay Connected

Starting the Discussion: *This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

Anyone have any horror stories with gardening or growing something? A science project gone wrong? A new garden in the back yard that was an epic fail? A replanted tree that blew over in the wind? Share if you have any funny family fails with gardening, then share what you think went wrong.

Connecting: *This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they've looked at it.*

- Using gardening or farming terms, explain more fully why it is so true that Jesus is the vine and we are the branches.
- Describe what you think it looks like if you are a healthy Christian “branch.”
- Describe what you think it looks like if you are an *unhealthy* Christian “branch.”

Digging In: *Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- In the devotion today, Cody let a lot of good things become god things. Explain.
- Identify common things in teen life that can be threats to your connection to Jesus, even if they are good things.
- If you had to pick one, what do you think is the most dangerous threat to your connection to Jesus? Why?
- Identify examples from the Bible of people who clearly had a strong connection to the Lord and people who clearly were becoming disconnected to the Lord.
- Share real, specific ways Christians can strengthen their connection to Jesus, the vine (and not just generic answers like, “Go to church.”)

Conclusion: *Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the “connecting question” above.*

Try to have each teen in the group share out loud how they would finish this sentence: “I plan to stay more connected to Jesus by