

Ready-to-use craft

"I am the true vine"

Jesus' speech in John 15:1-17 about being the true vine is full of imagery and has so many themes to explore creatively. Based on this passage, these crafts look specifically at ideas of 'branches', 'fruit' and 'remaining in' Jesus.

+ GROWING SALT CRYSTAL TREES



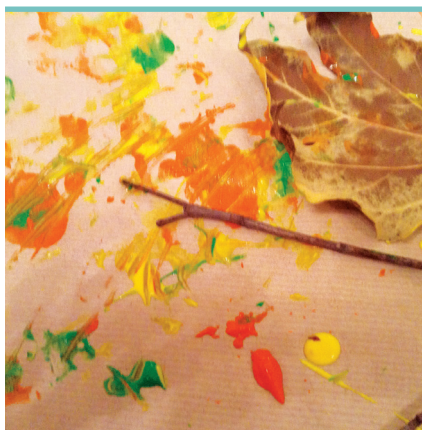
You will need: salt; pipe cleaners or string; a pencil; boiling water; a long, thin container; a warm place

This is definitely a craft to do at home as it takes several days, if not a week, to get the full effect. I love the way the crystals cling to the string or pipe cleaner, and it's a great illustration of needing to stay close to Jesus (or the string) for growth to happen!

Pour half a cup of salt into a container and then pour in some boiling water so the container is about a quarter to a third full. Mix the salt and water together. The salt will not fully dissolve, but that's fine.

Tie a pipe cleaner or piece of string to the middle of a pencil and place the pencil over the top of the container so it dangles the string into the water. Place the container in a warm place and wait. Day by day, you will be able to watch the salt crystals grow on the string. This provides a good opportunity to chat about ways of 'clinging' to Jesus so that our Christian fruit can grow.

+ BRANCH AND LEAF COMMUNITY PAINTING



You will need: dry twigs and small branches; dry leaves; paint; a long strip of paper; clean-up and cover-up equipment

Again, this craft helps children connect with the image of branches and fruit. This time they are encouraged to paint with leaves and twigs, giving plenty of space to open up conversations around the themes of the passage. It's great to do this craft as a whole group on a long strip of paper because it helps to emphasise the idea of a community of branches at work.

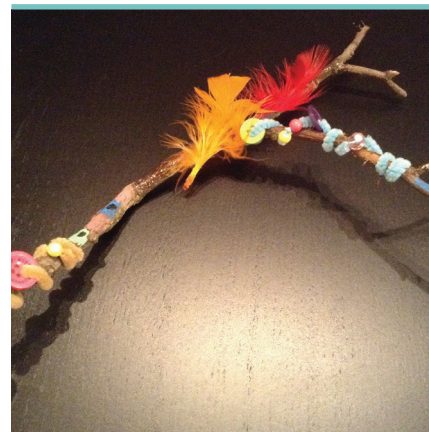
Lay the strip of paper on the floor, or on a long table, and place small blobs of paint all the way along it. Ask the children to choose their own way of turning the paint blobs into an artwork, using the twigs and leaves as paintbrushes. This may get messy, so have plenty of water ready for handwashing!

+ COLANDER BRANCH SCULPTURE



You will need: a few metal or plastic colanders (ones with holes rather than slits work best); pipe cleaners; coloured buttons

+ PERSONALITY BRANCHES



You will need: dry branches or big twigs; coloured wool; buttons; pipe cleaners; beads; paint; feathers; PVA glue; glitter; coloured nail varnish

This craft helps children think about their own part as a branch connected to Jesus' vine. What are they like as disciples? What does their fruit look like?

Ask children to choose a twig and use the assembled materials to decorate it in a way that expresses their relationship with Jesus and what they are like as people.

What would they like others to see about their journey with Jesus? Be prepared for some incredibly deep responses and leave time for children to share what they have done if they would like to.

This craft concentrates on the idea of remaining in Jesus and being branches connected to him as the pipe cleaners are woven in and become part of the structure.

Encourage children to experiment with making 'branches' by attaching and weaving pipe cleaners in and out of the colanders. They might want to decorate their pipe cleaners with buttons as a sign of 'fruit'. As they are creating, use the opportunity to open up a conversation about branches and what it means to be connected to a vine or tree (or Jesus!)

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