

Sunday Gospel Background

In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus compares himself to a vine and us, his followers, to the branches. All of the branches of a vine live from the nutrients that its roots find in the soil and its trunk brings to the branches. The Church has spread like a vine. From its roots in Jesus' life, Death, and Resurrection in Palestine, Jesus' followers have become witnesses who have taken his message throughout the world.

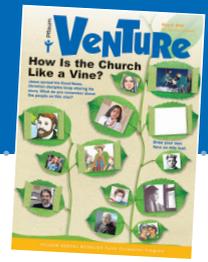
Share Experiences

Check off the boxes as you complete each part of the lesson.

- Pray together** Have your child find Psalm 128 in the Bible. (See uscbb.org/bible if you do not have a Bible at home.) Take turns reading the verses aloud. Conclude by leading your child in a short, spontaneous prayer thanking God for the "olive plant(s)" in your family.
- Cover Activity • How Is the Church Like a Vine? (page 1)** This cover recalls many of Jesus' followers your child has read about this past year. **Top row:** Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini, boys from Saint Gregory's doing the Works of Mercy. **Second row:** Saint Francis Xavier, Miranda who practices Aikido. **Third row:** girl at Saint Theresa's who participated in Mary's Meals fund-raiser, Saint Juan Diego, Father Augustus Tolton. **Fourth row:** Brother Guy Consolmagno, director of the Vatican Observatory; Mat Vido; Rosa Parks. **Bottom row:** Saint André of Montreal and Saints Perpetua and Felicity. Invite your child to name and tell one thing about a person or group in the collage. Then have your child finish the collage by adding his or her own picture.
- Article • Setting a Record for God (pages 2-3)** A lot of plans changed in 2020 due to the coronavirus. For example, Sister Stephanie Baliga had planned to run the Chicago Marathon; instead, she still ran a marathon, but it was on a treadmill. Sister Stephanie has learned to accept changes and even embrace how they can lead her to a better place. Take turns reading aloud the article together.
- Discuss the Think questions on page 3.** **Answers:** 1. Sister Stephanie suffered a career-ending injury in college; more recently, the time she spent at the mission prevented her from training. 2. When she broke her foot in college, her friends invited her to go on a retreat. Last year, a friend encouraged her to broadcast her run over Zoom; another friend set up the cameras. 3. Sister Stephanie said that she soon saw God's plan for her. She thought that she would run a marathon for God's glory; however, her treadmill marathon gained attention for the mission and raised a lot of money to support their work. Share your own experiences together. Emphasize that things can seem unfair in the moment, but time can reveal how disappointment can lead to better things.

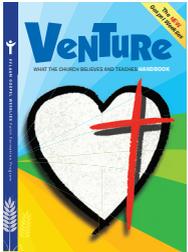
Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- Sunday Gospel • Jesus Is the Vine, We Are the Branches (page 4)** If you have a plant or tree in your home or close by, spend some time examining it together. Have your child trace the ends of the leaves or branches back to where they join the stem or trunk. Ask what your child remembers from science about how plants absorb nutrients and moisture from the earth and use them to extend their growth. You might also want to talk about how babies grow. A baby is connected to its mother by the umbilical cord. When the baby emerges, it is dependent on others to feed it. If a child becomes separated from nurture and love, it cannot survive. Even as older children and adults, we won't thrive if we separate from the love and care of others. Proclaim the Gospel.
- Discuss the Think questions on page 4.** **Answers:** 1. We are all connected to Jesus; we have a duty to go out and spread his Good News 2. Families usually share common ancestors; however, many families are created by marriage or adoption and are also



very strong. We share traditions, memories, stories. A family name and heritage also contribute to a feeling of belonging. 3. The Church unites all of us in our belief in Christ, our common vine; parishes and believers throughout the world are its branches. 4. Open-ended; you might share one of your own experiences about making a tough decision that led to better things. 5. She changes her plans so that she can serve God and people in need at the mission and in her neighborhood. She remains open to how God is working in her life; in this way, she bears fruit.

- Connecting Gospel and Doctrine • Christians Share Jesus' Life (page 4)** Read aloud the doctrine related to this Sunday's Gospel and the metaphor of the vine and branches.
- Discuss the Think questions on page 4.** These are discussion-based questions, with no "right" answer. Possible responses include: 1. They are witnesses for Jesus in their words and their actions. Any of the saints are good examples, but also remind your child of the kids you've read about this year—the boys who did the Works of Mercy, the class that raised money to build a kitchen. 2. Open-ended; we need to spread Jesus' message everywhere in the world!



- Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 30. Together, read the "What is Virtue" section that begins at the bottom of the page and extends to page 31. Explain that people who are "healthy vines" are those who also live the virtues. Turn to the cover of this week's *Venture* lesson. Ask your child to name the virtues the people on the cover show us.

Once you have completed this section of the lesson, close the handbook and return to *Venture* page 5.

- Catholic Faith Word • Virtue (page 5)** Read aloud the definition to reinforce your child's understanding of this week's doctrine lesson.
- Our Catholic Faith • Jesus Uses Nature to Teach (page 5)** Galilee, where Jesus grew up, has a broad valley filled with beautiful crops of grain and grapes, and bushes and trees with many kinds of fruit. It was natural for Jesus to use images from nature in his teaching (e.g., Jesus as a grain of wheat or the vineyard images from last fall). To help your child draw the image and respond to the two items at the bottom of the page, you might ask about your child's favorite experiences of nature.

Live the Gospel

- Catholic Leaders • Cardinal Wilton Gregory (page 6)** Wilton Gregory was installed Archbishop of Washington in 2019, and Pope Francis elevated him to cardinal in November 2020. Read aloud this biography and background feature on the role of cardinals in the Church.
- Closing Prayer • Prayer Cards (pages 7-8)** Invite your child to choose one of the prayers to pray aloud together. Then have your child cut out the cards and post them in places where they'll be seen around the house—on a nightstand, taped to a bathroom mirror, posted on the fridge or on a desk. Encourage your child to pray them every day.



Parent Resources

For weekly videos, assessments, and more, scan this code or go to pflaumweeklies.com/family
Visit www.usccb.org/bible/readings to read this Sunday's Scripture.