

Sour Grapes

Bible” Sour Grapes (Parable of the vineyard workers) • *Matthew 20:1-15*

Bottom Line: Adjust your attitude.

Memory Verse: “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.
1 Thessalonians 5:18, NIV

Life App: Gratitude—letting others know you see how they’ve helped you.

Basic Truth: I need to make the wise choice.

Social: Setting the Tone for the Experience (9:00, 10:15, 11:30)

9:00 & 11:30

Expectation Envelopes

- Small brown paper bags with “gift”; 1 for each kid

10:15

Early Arriver

- No supplies needed

Bible: Communicating God’s Truth in Engaging Ways (9:15, 10:30, 11:45)

- Bible Presentation in Large Group

Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (9:40, 10:55, 12:10)

9:00 & 11:30

Find the Focus

- “Find the Focus Crowd Scenes” Activity Pages; 1 scene for each kid
- “Find the Focus Cameras” Activity Pages; 1 camera for each kid
- Crayons

10:15

Stomp the Grapes

- 11 prepared purple balloons; for every 22 kids
- 11 prepared green balloons; for every 22 kids

Prayer (9:50, 11:05, 12:20)

- Timer

Dismiss (10:00, 11:15, 12:30)

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Social: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (Small Groups, 15 minutes)

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today’s Bible Truth.

Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Pray especially for the kids who struggle with negative attitudes. Ask God to show them their chances to turn their attitudes around and find something to be grateful for. Pray that all kids would leave today knowing that they can always adjust their attitudes.

9:00 & 11:30

Expectation Envelopes

Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: Prepared bags with treats or prizes inside

What You Do:

- Hand out bags.
- Give kids hints as to what’s in their bag.
- Make the hints general but as different as possible. (For instance, for candy you could say, “It’s consumable, and it’s not meant to be eaten at certain times.”)
- Pro-tips:
 - You could start a swap where kids can trade bags. This could get competitive, so keep an eye on attitudes.
 - When you judge the time is right, guide them to open the bags all together to reveal the same prize.

What You Say:

“That was surprising to some of you! When did you guess that they all might be the same? *(For older kids)* How do you feel now about the way you acted when you were trading the envelopes?”

[Transition] Let’s head to Large Group to hear about some other people who were very surprised and upset when their expectations didn’t meet reality.”

10:15**Early Arriver Idea**

Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Greet kids as they arrive.
- Ask them if they've ever needed to be reminded to say thank you.
- When their parent or another adult reminded them, how did they say thank you? Quickly, sincerely, sullenly, etc.
- Encourage the group to say thank you with a few different attitudes:
 - As if they've just gotten the best birthday present of their lives
 - As if they've just gotten the worst birthday present of their lives
 - As if their younger sibling got the exact same present they did at Christmas
 - As if their parents are reminding them to thank the dentist
 - As if they're thanking someone who grabbed their lunch tray just as it was about to fall
 - As if they're thanking someone who helped clean up the mess when the lunch tray splattered on the ground
 - As if they're thanking a toddler who handed them her own blankie
 - As if they're thanking a teenage sibling who handed them his own dirty laundry

What You Say:

"Wow, thank you can sound very different from what you expect when it is delivered with different meaning. Let's head to Large Group to hear about some people who were very surprised and upset when their expectations didn't meet reality."

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

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Bible: Communicating God’s Truth in Engaging Ways (Large Group, 35 minutes)

GETTING READY

1. Opener/Closer

What You Need:

- Host
- 6 volunteers for the game

2. Bible Truth

What You Need:

- Historyteller
- Bible
- Table
- Prop box containing:
 - Several bunches of grapes on the stem
 - 2-3 serving bowls
 - Small Raisinets[®] packages (enough for the kids you will bring on stage)
 - Black washable marker
 - Latex gloves

3. Worship

What You Need:

- Power Praise Team

Music and Sound Effects (SFX):

- “Happy Day”
- “Unshakable”
- “Your Love Never Fails”

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Bible: Communicating God’s Truth in Engaging Ways (Large Group, 35 minutes)

Engage kids’ hearts through a dynamic and interactive Bible Truth, worship, and prayer experience in a Large Group setting.

SFX: *Play high-energy music as kids enter.*

Host enters doing the “pageant wave” to the audience.

Opener

HOST: “*Gracias, grazie, merci, danke.* Does anyone know what I’m saying? Yes, thank you! I’m saying thank you. Two simple words that are pretty easy to say. And saying thank you is just one of the many ways we can show gratitude.

CG: *Gratitude Slide*

“Gratitude is letting others know you see how they’ve helped you. Showing gratitude can be easy when someone goes out of their way to do something nice for you. But other times, seeing all the ways you can be thankful can be hard. We all have days when it seems like nothing is going our way or no one is on our side. When we have days like that, it’s super important to look around and refocus on the good things.

“That gives me an idea! Who thinks they can make the grumpiest face ever?! I need three people who can make a SUPER grumpy face. Let’s see your grumpiest faces. *(Pause for response.)* Wow! Those are grumpy!

Choose three kids with the grumpiest faces to come up to the stage.

(To volunteers) “You three had the grumpiest faces EVER! But I have a challenge for you. Do you think you can keep your grumpy face even while someone is trying to make you smile and laugh? *(Pause for response.)* Oh, you do, do you? Well, we might have to find out for ourselves.

(To the rest of the kids) “The rest of you out there, who thinks they have what it takes to make these three kids smile and laugh? Show me your funniest, silliest faces! *(Pause for response.)* Those are great!

Choose three kids with the silliest faces to come to the stage. Pair each of them up with one of the grumpy-faced kids.

(To volunteers) “All right, you have a big job ahead of you! These three will stand here and be grumpy. Your job is to get them to happy again. You can’t touch them, but you can dance around, tell funny jokes, make funny faces, or do whatever else you think it will take to get them to refocus on the positive and smile or laugh. Think you can do it? Any questions? Great! The first person to get their grumpy person to smile and laugh wins! On your marks, get set, go!

Optional SFX: Upbeat music

During the game, comment on the action, and try to get the kids in the audience cheering for who they think will win. When someone finally laughs . . .

“Well, that was fun! You guys were great at trying to cheer up those grumpy-faced kids. Thanks for doing that this morning!

Dismiss kids to their seats.

“No matter how much you might want to be grumpy, when you refocus on what’s great, you can’t help but smile and thank God for how awesome He is. We all have so much to be thankful for, like Bible Time. Please welcome [Historyteller’s Name].”

Historyteller enters with a prop box as Host sets up the table before exiting.

SETTING UP THE BIBLE TRUTH

HISTORYTELLER: “We’ve been talking about gratitude. And like we’ve been saying, most of the time we can find all sorts of ways to put gratitude into practice. It can be as simple as a high-five or as NOT simple as throwing a big huge party with balloons and a rocking playlist.

Take the bowl and the grapes out of the prop box and set them on the table.

“But what happens during those times when it’s not so easy to be grateful? Maybe you didn’t get the toy you wanted for your birthday, your dad cooked your least favorite meal, or something happened that feels totally unfair. What then? How can we find a way to have gratitude? That’s a tough question, huh? But it’s also a good question! And when you have questions like this, the first place you should look is the Bible.

“The Bible is full of wisdom that God wanted us to know in order to make wise choices about how we should follow Him. And when we dig into what the Bible says about gratitude, we come across a parable that Jesus told that’s recorded for us in the book of Matthew, chapter 20. *(Open Bible.)* And this parable Jesus told has to do with grapes! Let’s check it out together!”

OWNER NEEDS HELP

HIPARABLETELLER: “There once was a man who owned a large vineyard. He went out early one morning to hire workers to work in his vineyard. He told the workers he would pay them the typical rate for a day’s work. We don’t know exactly what that was, but for today, let’s pretend he promised them each a pack of Raisinets. Raisins . . . dried grapes . . . get it? But bonus: CHOCOLATE! Anyway, back to the parable.

“Let’s see. I need a couple of workers to come help me with these grapes.”

Bring two kids up and show them the pack of Raisinets. Mark their hand with a “6,” and show them what to do. If you’re using grapes, you can have them pick the grapes off the stems and put them in a bowl. (You can have them use gloves if you’d like, but beware of latex allergies.) Walk around and encourage the kids as they work. NOTE: If you don’t have a lot of kids, you can bring one kid up each time instead of two.

OWNER GETS MORE HELP

HISTORYTELLER: “The workers did their thing, and some time passed. Around 9:00 in the morning, the owner realized he needed more help. He went out again and found some more people standing around looking for work. He invited them to come work in his vineyard as well, and he promised to pay them what was fair. I need two more of you to come up and help out.

Bring up two more kids, mark their hands with a “9,” and have them also separate the grapes from the stems. Walk around and encourage the kids as they work.

“A few hours passed by, and there was still a ton of work to finish. The owner went out again at noon to find more workers. He saw even more people standing around, so he invited them to come work for him, and he again promised fair pay. That means I need two more of you!

Bring up two more kids, mark their hand with a “12,” and have them also separate the grapes from the stems. Walk around and encourage the kids as they work.

“Again, a few more hours passed, and AGAIN the owner went out again at 3:00 in the afternoon. He noticed people were still waiting around to be hired. He hired a few more and brought them back to the vineyard.

Bring up two more kids, mark their hand with a “3,” and have them also separate the grapes from the stems. Walk around and encourage the kids as they work.

“The work day was about over. It was already 5:00, but the vineyard owner wanted more workers. He returned to town one final time. He discovered folks still hanging out because apparently nobody had hired them to work that day. But that was about to change. The vineyard owner welcomed them to come work in his vineyard for the little bit of time that was left in the day.”

Bring up two more kids, mark their hand with a “5,” and have them also separate the grapes from the stems.

PAYDAY

HISTORYTELLER: “For the final hour of the work day, everyone pitched in. As the last baskets of grapes were brought up, the owner called to his manager. He told him to call up the workers, starting with the group that was most recently hired, and begin paying them. The manager pulled out his cashbox and lined up the workers. He began with the ones who had picked grapes for only an hour. *(To volunteers)* All right, workers, let’s line up!

Historyteller helps kids line up in the order of the time that’s written on their hands: 5, 3, 12, 9, 6.

“If you have a five on your hand, you are part of the group that just got started. Come here, and I’ll give you your wages, then you can have a seat.

Hand a pack of Raisinets to each kid from the last group.

”At the other end of the line, the workers who began at dawn were doing some quick math. If the people who JUST got started got so much money, how much more would they be getting?

“The manager continued handing out pay packets to the workers who started at 3:00. That means if you have a three on your hands, it’s your turn to get paid, and then you can return to your seats.

Hand a pack of Raisinets to each kid from the 3:00 group.

“Then he paid the group from the 12:00 shift. If you have a 12 on your hand, come on over.

Hand a pack of Raisinets to each kid from the noon group.

“And now those workers from 9:00 in the morning. Check your hand for a nine and come on over.

Hand a pack of Raisinets to each kid from the 9:00 group.

“By the time the workers who started at 6:00 a.m. reached the front of the line, they were getting worried. They had been promised a fair wage, but it didn’t look like things were going to be fair. So far, the workers who had only worked for one hour had made the same as the workers who had been there for nine hours! But surely things would be different for those workers who had been working since sunrise, right?

“Okay, you heard me. If you have a six on your hand, your payday has arrived! Come over and receive your fair wage before you take your seat.

Hand a pack of Raisinets to each kid from the 6:00 group.

“And that’s what the vineyard owner did. But listen to what they said *(read Matthew 20:12)*: “*These people who were hired last worked only one hour,” they said. “You have paid them the same as us. We have done most of the work and have been in the hot sun all day” (NirV).*

“The workers that had been out there since first thing in the morning were NOT happy at all. How could it be fair that they would make the same amount as people who had only worked one hour?! They stomped over to the vineyard owner and demanded more money.”

WRAPPING UP THE BIBLE TRUTH

HISTORYTELLER: “Listen to what the owner replied. *(Open your Bible and read Matthew 20:13-15)* The owner answered one of them. “Friend,” he said, “I’m being fair to you. Didn’t you agree to work for the usual day’s pay? Take your money and go. I want to give the one I hired last the same pay I gave you. Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Do you feel cheated because I gave so freely to the others?” (NirV).

“Jesus finished His parable and looked directly at His closest friends. Here’s what He said *(read Matthew 10:16)*: “So those who are last will be first. And those who are first will be last” (NirV).

“The parable Jesus told that day made it clear: God gives freely to everyone. Rather than focusing on what you don’t have, choose to look at what you DO have. To put it even more simply, . . .

CG: Bottom Line Slide

[Bottom Line] “. . . **adjust your attitude.** And when you do, you’ll see that there’s always something to be thankful for. Let’s ask God to help us have gratitude even when we think things aren’t fair.”

Pray

HISTORYTELLER: “Dear God, it’s one thing to say that we always have a reason to be grateful, but that can be REALLY hard when we feel like life isn’t fair. Please help us adjust our attitudes when we’re tempted to be grumpy or mad about what someone else has. Help us to remember all that we have to be thankful for and to adjust our attitude to recognize all the ways that others—and You—have helped us. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.”

“If you have an offering with you today, bring that on up.”

“Now, up on your feet and give some mad respect to our Power Praise team!”

Power Praise team enters as Historyteller exits.

Worship

SFX: “Happy Day”

SFX: “Unshakable”

SFX: “Your Love Never Fails”

Host enters as Power Praise team exits.

Closer

HOST: “In Jesus’ parable of the vineyard workers, the workers who were hired first were angry. They weren’t angry because they didn’t get what they were promised. They were angry because they felt like someone else was getting treated better than they were. They were looking at what other people had

instead of refocusing and looking at what they had themselves.

“Have you ever done that? Have you ever been jealous because you thought someone received a better present than you? Have you ever thought it was unfair that someone else got the starring role in the school play when you only got to be in the chorus? Or maybe you wanted what someone else had so much that it made you feel miserable. We’ve probably all felt this way at one time or another. This is a problem, but the solution is simple. Our memory verse tells us that we need to learn to just give thanks. All of the time, in all situations; give thanks. Let’s read it together.”

CG: Memory Verse Slide

“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. *1 Thessalonians 5:18, NIV.*”

“I know I said it’s simple, but the truth is that it takes work to be thankful in all circumstances. We have to train our attitudes to be different. To be more consistently grateful. Our Bottom Line tells us.

CG: Bottom Line Slide

[Bottom Line] “Adjust your attitude. Say that with me!”

HOST and KIDS: [Bottom Line] “Adjust your attitude.”

HOST: “God can help you refocus on what you have and what you’ve been given, and He’ll help you be grateful for that. Don’t worry yourself with what others have. If this isn’t easy for you, pray about it. Ask God to help you be grateful and to not get upset when you don’t have everything you want. And if all else fails, come to The Hideout and recruit us to make you laugh. Let’s head to Small Group and find other ways we can adjust our attitudes with God’s help. Have a great time, and we’ll see you next week in The Hideout!”

Dismiss children to their Small Groups.

CG: Small Group Slide

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Basic Truth: I need to make the wise choice.

Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (10 minutes)

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible Truth applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

9:00 & 11:30

Find the Focus

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: “Find the Focus Crowd Scenes” and “Find the Focus Cameras” Activity Pages, map pencils

What You Do:

- Hand out the “Find the Focus Crowd Scenes” and the “Find the Focus Cameras.”
- Encourage kids to move the viewfinder screen of the cameras around on the paper until they find something happening that shows gratitude. Older kids can also find a scene in which they could find a way to show gratitude.
- Let each kid share what they’ve found.
- If time allows, let them color the scenes.

What You Say:

“There is a lot going on in these scenes! People are doing things everywhere. They’re giving gifts, dropping ice cream, carrying laundry, and going to school. Some things happening here seem great, like people helping each other and showing gratitude. Some things happening here seem not so great, and it might be harder to find a reason to have gratitude. But if you **[Bottom Line] adjust your attitude**, you can find all kinds of things to be grateful for.

[Make it Personal] (Share a time when it was hard to focus on what you had because things seemed unfair or when you could have shown gratitude but a bad attitude got in the way.) What are some ways that you can **[Bottom Line] adjust your attitude?** (Pause for answers.) Yep, you can refocus and think of all the things you’ve been given and all the people who care for you. You can do something kind for someone else, or you can pray and ask God to help you. When you’re not focused on what’s unfair, you learn to **[Bottom Line] adjust your attitude** and see the opportunities for gratitude everywhere.”

10:15**Stomp the Grapes****[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]***Made to Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body***What You Need:** Prepared purple and green balloons**What You Do:**

- Divide your group into two “harvester” teams: purple and green.
- Instruct teams to tie their team’s color of balloons to their ankles
- On “Go,” kids must try to stomp the “grapes” on the other team’s ankles, while keeping their own grapes whole.
- After all the grapes have been stomped, let each team “harvest” their verse strips from the balloons and put them in order.

What You Say:

“I don’t know if that was the exact job of the workers in our Bible Truth, but it sure was fun! This verse reminds us to give thanks to God—to show gratitude—no matter what happens. Reading this verse can help you when you need to **[Bottom Line] adjust your attitude**. Because we believe in Jesus, we always have something to be grateful for: Jesus rescued us!”

Discussion Questions

- The Bible Truth was a parable about what God is like. Read it again in Matthew 20:1-16. Do you think this parable shows God as fair?
- Why is it important to be fair? Is it more important to be kind? Or is that same?
- What about God? Would you rather have a God who is fair, or God who is kind? Why?
- What if God is kind to someone you don’t like or who has hurt you? What if you’ve been the one who hurt someone?
- What link is there between our attitude of gratitude and our knowledge of God’s kindness?

All Service Times**Pray and Dismiss (10 minutes)****[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]***Made to Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application***What You Need:** Timer**What You Do:**

- **Challenge** the group to take turns seeing how many times they can say “thank you” in 10 seconds. Keep a tally to see who wins.
- **Ask** them why saying thank you or having a grateful attitude matters.
 - How would things be different if we never said *thank you* to God or to others?
- **Remind** them that a lack of gratitude is a signal that we’re focused on the wrong thing.
 - Like the vineyard guys who felt they deserved more than they got, it’s easy to complain that others have it better.
 - Maybe they do, but that’s not the point.
 - God wants to help us be grateful—all the time, for everything.
- **Challenge** them to see how many times they can thank God each day this week.
- **Tell** them that if they feel like griping or complaining, the best fix is to start thanking God for all that He is and all that He’s done.
- **Close by inviting** everyone to get their gratitude on by praying sentence prayers that thank God for one or two things.
- **Send** kids off with the following prayer:

Dear God, we know that You want us to give thanks no matter what. That’s not easy. Sometimes we even forget to be thankful when things are going great. Please forgive us for complaining and comparing and forgetting to give You thanks. Help us to trust and even thank You when life is crazy or frustrating or we just don’t understand why stuff happens the way it does. Thank You for loving us and always being with us, and thank You for the undeserved gifts You give us—not because WE are good but because YOU are. This week, when something seems unfair, help us adjust our attitudes and be grateful that You are always in control. In your name we pray, Amen.

Parent Cue