

The Vineyard Workers

Lesson At-A-Glance

Scripture Reference
Matthew 20:1-16

Church Season
Pentecost

Lesson Focus
God has enough love for everyone.



Tear here for easy use!

Gather (10 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Arrival Time Kids take turns jumping rope and do an Activity Page.	Activity Pages 	Pencils, jump rope, timer or watch with a second hand, whiteboard, dry-erase marker
Circle Time Kids gather in a circle to greet each other, hear about the lectionary season, and consider why taking turns is fair.	Leaflet	Whiteboard, dry-erase marker
Prayer Time Kids pray inside a circle created by the jump rope.	None	Jump rope from Arrival Time

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
The Vineyard Workers Storytelling Leader or kid reads aloud from the Spark Story Bible and kids act out the story.	Spark Story Bibles	Paper, marker, masking tape
God Is Generous Kids read a rebus to review the Bible story.	Leaflets, Lesson Stickers	None
God Gives Me Enough Kids complete a picture survey about things they can share and draw one of their own ideas.	Leaflets	Pencils, markers

Lesson At-A-Glance

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Grapes for Everyone! Kids solve simple math equations in a Bible story review.	Leaflets	Pencils, whiteboard, dry-erase marker
Vineyards in Jesus' Time Kids find out some facts about vineyards in Jesus' time.	Leaflets	None
The E in Enough Kids show that everyone can work together to spread God's love.	None	Pizza puzzle (page 21), cardstock, scissors, markers, thin green yarn or string, single hole punch

Tear here for easy use!

Send (5 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Good-bye Time Kids select what they will do at home this week, say the lesson focus statement, and gather to say good-bye.	Leaflets	Pencils, scissors
Prayer Time Kids use a jump rope in the prayer.	Leaflets, Family Pages 	Jump rope from Arrival Time



Visit www.sparksundayschool.org for more Spark content! Watch a short Lesson Prep Video that will prepare you and give you confidence to explore this Bible story with the kids you are leading. You will also find four downloadable resources for this lesson: an Activity Page, a Family Page, and two additional in-class activities.

Gather (10 minutes)

Arrival Time

Set out copies of the Activity Page for this lesson and pencils on a table.

How many of you can jump rope for 10 seconds? For a minute? For five minutes?

Pause for responses. **How long do you think you can jump rope until you've had enough jumping?** Affirm responses. **We're going to take turns jumping rope. I'm going to give each of you 30 seconds. As soon as you've had your turn, write your name on the board.** Give each kid a turn to jump rope. Use a timer or the second hand on a watch to keep track of the time. Remind kids to write their names on the board so you can keep track of who has had a turn. Kids can cheer for one another and count the number of jumps.

Invite kids to do the Activity Page.

Spark Resources

Activity Pages



Supplies

Pencils
Jump rope
Timer or watch with a second hand
Whiteboard
Dry-erase marker

Circle Time

Invite the kids to stand in a circle facing out. Hold each other's hands up high. One at a time, turn 180 degrees to the left, crossing your arms so that you are facing into the circle, your right arm over your left. Each person says, **"My name is [name] and I'm in God's family!"** Invite the next kid to your left to turn in to the circle in the same manner. Go around the circle until everyone is facing in. If you do this each week, make sure the kids stand in a different order so that no one is last every week.

Gather kids to sit in a circle, in a small group on the floor, or at tables.

If the kids in your class tried the Faith on the Go! activities from last week's leaflet, be sure to invite kids to share what they did. Ask everyone how they showed love to someone or helped another person during the last week.

Hold up the leaflet, and point to the road to tree on the green background. **What color is the background of this square? (green) How many of you like to eat green grapes? Raise your hand. Keep your hands raised. I need some math helpers. If each of these people who likes green grapes wants to eat two grapes, how many grapes do we need to feed all of them?** Give kids time to figure it out. **Below the little symbol on our leaflet we find this word, "Pentecost."** Show kids where to find the word. **This word tells us we are in the church season of Pentecost. Are there enough Sundays in Pentecost for all of us? Pause. Yes! This year there are 22 Sundays in the Pentecost season. That's enough for all of us to learn about Jesus.**

I see lots of names on the whiteboard. Read them aloud and add names if some kids arrived late. **When I read your name again, tell me whether you got a turn to jump rope. I will put a check next to your name.** Pause to do this. Call on two

Spark Resources

Leaflet

Supplies

Whiteboard
Dry-erase marker

Tear here for easy use!

volunteers to role-play one kid jumping rope for an extended time and the other kid waiting and waiting for a turn. **How did it feel to wait for your turn?** Affirm responses. **How did it feel when someone got more jumps than you?** Pause for responses. **How many jumps are enough if you're jumping rope?** Affirm responses. **Today our Bible story is a story Jesus tells to teach us about God's love. Jesus teaches that God has enough love for everyone.**

Prayer Time

Make a circle on the floor with the jump rope from Arrival Time. **What shape did I make?** (a circle) **Where does a circle begin?** (Circles have no beginnings or endings.) **Hmmm. . . how do you think a circle can remind us of God's love?** (God's love doesn't have a beginning or an ending either. It goes on and on and on forever.) **Let's all step inside this circle. Listen to my prayer.**

**Loving God,
You chose all of us
To be in the circle of your love.
Thanks for sharing your love
With all of us.
Thanks for giving us
So much love
That we have plenty to share.
Amen.**

Have everyone silently step out of the circle and set the jump rope aside.

Spark Resources
None

Supplies
Jump rope from Arrival Time

Tear here for easy use!

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

The Vineyard Workers Storytelling

Today's Bible story is called The Vineyard Workers. Jesus told this story to teach about God's love. But what's a vineyard? Accept responses. **A vineyard is a place where lots and lots of grape vines grow. And what grows on grape vines?** Pause. **Grapes! During Jesus' time grapes were a major crop. Vineyard farmers grew grapes for eating and for making juice and wine.**

Pass out the Spark Story Bibles and invite everyone to find The Vineyard Workers on pages 298-299. Wait until all kids have found the story, assisting those who may need help. Encourage kids to follow along as you read or ask for a volunteer to read out loud.

Let's act out the story together. First of all, what kinds of things did the vineyard workers do while they were working? (trimmed the vines, pulled the weeds, picked bugs off the grapes) **Let's practice doing all of these actions. Everybody stand up!**

Spark Resources
Spark Story Bibles

Supplies
Paper
Marker
Masking tape

Trim the vines! Bend over and make a cutting motion by moving your wrist.

Pull the weeds! Pretend to forcefully yank weeds out of the ground.

Pick off the bugs! Bend down and use your thumb and pointer finger to pretend to pick off little bugs.

Practice these actions until the kids are familiar with them. Draw a bunch of grapes on a piece of paper. Add the word VINEYARD. Tape the sign on a wall in your class area. **Now we're ready to retell the story. I'm going to be the farmer and you're all going to be my workers. All of the workers will sit at the table. When I call out your name I will give you one of the jobs to do. Then you will go over to my vineyard and get to work.** Point out the vineyard sign.

Begin by asking two or three kids to work for you. **It's a beautiful morning. I need some workers for my vineyard. Will you work in my vineyard?** Name two or three kids and give them the jobs you want them to do. **I will pay you one day's pay.** Send the kids off to the vineyard. **The sun is hot. It's noon. I think I need more workers in my vineyard.** Choose a few more kids to work. **The day is almost done, but I need more workers.** Send the remaining kids to the vineyard to work. Pause. **Your work is done. Come back to the table and I will pay you.** Give all kids a high five. **The farmer paid all of the workers the same amount of money. The first workers were angry! They had worked in the field all day in the hot, hot sun. The workers who only worked a couple of hours got paid the same amount, just like I gave all of you a high five, even though you worked different amounts of time.**

Have a brief conversation about the story. Ask the kids these questions:

1. Why did the first workers think they should get more money? *(They worked longer.)*

2. What did the farmer tell the first workers when they got angry? *(He gave them what he promised to give them.)*

3. God wants us to be generous. Let's imagine that I'm holding a big bunch of grapes. My bunch of grapes has twenty grapes in it. And I want to be generous. If I gave you two grapes and kept 18 for myself would I be generous? Affirm responses. **How many grapes would I have to give away to show that I am generous?** Affirm responses, but lead kids to see that you would have to give away most of your grapes if you were generous.

God Is Generous

If kids are not already seated at a table, move to one for this activity. Give each kid a leaflet.

The first page of our leaflet is called "God's Story." It's always about the Bible story we read each week.

We just acted out the story, so let's remember what happened. Look at the first page of our leaflet. We're going to read the story together. I'm going to read the words and you're going to name the pictures. Raise your left hand and place it on the left side of your leaflet. What's the first little picture you see? (*sun*) And the sun is for which word? (*day*) Now let's name the other pictures: farmer, workers, and grapes. Ready? Let's begin. The rebus picture words are shown in italics below. Pause to let kids name each picture. If you have strong readers, read the story again, this time with the kids reading the words and you naming the pictures.

One day, a farmer hired workers to take care of his grapes. The farmer hired more workers during the day. At the end of the day, the farmer paid all the workers the same amount. Jesus said that God is generous like the farmer.

Something from our story is missing from the picture on this page. Can you guess what it is? (*the coins*) Hand out large stickers to kids. Pause to give kids time to place their large stickers.

Let's look at the bottom of this page and read about where we can find this story in the Bible. Today's Bible story, The Vineyard Workers, is from the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew wrote about Jesus and the stories Jesus told. Some of these stories are called *parables*. Parables teach us about God.

Give kids the three word stickers. **Now look at the bottom of the third page in your leaflet. It has the same words that we just read, but it's missing some important words. Use the word stickers to fill in the blanks. Which word do you think goes where? (*Matthew, teach, God*)** After attaching the stickers, read the statements together.

If you are interested in teaching your kids a Bible Memory Verse from this story, use this one. Teach it to them by inviting them to echo what you say, one phrase at a time.

So the last will be first, and the first will be last. Matthew 20:16

God Gives Me Enough

Invite kids to open to the second page of their leaflets. **This page is called "My Story." On this page you can write or draw things about you!**

God has enough love to share with everyone. God gave us enough of these things that we can share with others. We see some smiles, and hugs, and artwork, and someone singing a song. Do you have enough of all those? God is generous. We can be generous, too.

Spark Resources
Leaflets
Lesson Stickers

Supplies
None

Tear here for easy use!

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
Pencils
Markers

Let's work together to do this page. Each of you can color in the little box beside the words that name things that you can share. Raise your hand if you can share a smile. Give kids time to respond. **Now show me your biggest smile!** Pause to let kids do this. **You all just shared a big, bright smile with me! Color in the little box beside smiles.** Pause to let kids draw. **Has anyone ever smiled at you?** Make a point of smiling broadly at each kid. **We'll draw a square around the things that other people have shared with us. And I just shared a smile with you, so you can draw a square around smiles, too.** Pause to let kids draw. Continue in the same way talking about sharing hugs, artwork, songs, stories about Jesus, and helping others.

We've talked about lots of ways we can share. Now think of one more special way you can share. Draw your idea inside the frame. Give kids time to draw, then invite them to share their drawings with the class.

Activate Faith (15 Minutes)

Grapes for Everyone!

Let's look at the third page of the leaflet. This page is the "Try It!" page. It has a puzzle or another fun activity to help us better understand the Bible story.

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Jesus said: Some workers worked all day. Others worked only a few hours. But the farmer gave everyone the same amount of money. God is like the farmer. God has enough love for everyone. And we're going to make sure that each one of these kids in our leaflets gets enough grapes.

Supplies
Pencils
Whiteboard
Dry-erase marker

Let's do the first math problem together. Invite a volunteer to come to the board and write $2 + 8$ on the board. Give kids time to copy the answer inside this first cluster of grapes. Continue solving problems, inviting different kids to come to the board. (Solution from left to right: 10, 9, 8, 9, 10, 10, 8, and 5) **Now look carefully at all of your answers. Three of the numbers are the same. Which number appears three times? (ten) Yes! Ten grapes. Draw a line from each cluster of ten grapes to each of the kids in the picture, so that everyone gets enough. Ten grapes are enough for these three kids on our leaflet. If you were eating grapes, how many grapes would be enough for you?** Affirm responses and share yours.

Vineyards in Jesus' Time

Turn to the back page of your leaflets. This page is called "It's Real." It has interesting facts about the Bible, Bible times, Bible stories, and our world today.

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Our story today happened in a vineyard. What grows in a vineyard? (grapes) Are there still vineyards today? (yes) Let's find out some facts about vineyards in Jesus' time. In Jesus' time, farmers:

Supplies
None

- hired guards to watch over their vineyards so their grapes wouldn't be stolen.
- built walls to protect their vineyards.
- built watchtowers where family members stayed to watch over the grapes.

Let's look at the photos of vineyards today. What things do you think are the same as they were in Jesus' time? Affirm responses. **Farmers still grow grapes to eat. Farmers still care for their grapes while they grow. Farmers still hire people to work in their vineyards. What things are different?** Affirm responses. **Do you think they had machines to pick grapes during Jesus' time?** (*no*) **Which of these pictures shows one way to harvest grapes like they may have done in Jesus' time?** (*hand-cutting the grapes*)

The E in Enough

Before class make a copy of the pizza puzzle on page 21 on cardstock and cut apart the pizza, making one piece for each kid. If you have more than 16 kids in your class, make two copies of the puzzle.

We're going to play a game. But first I need to hide some things. Everyone stand up, move to the wall, and turn so you are facing the wall. No peeking! Hide the pizza puzzle pieces in your class area. Make the hiding places fairly difficult, so the kids really have to look. **Before we begin the game, listen to my instructions. Everyone turn around and face me. I've hidden pieces of a pizza puzzle—everyone gets a piece. When I say, "pizza," everyone will find one piece of pizza. Then bring your piece to the table and sit down. Ready? Pizza!** After everyone is seated at the table and all pieces have been found say: **Use a marker to write your name on the back of your pizza piece.** Give kids time to write. **Now let's see if we can put our pizza together. Mmmm. This pizza looks good. And it also has a good message written on it. Let's read it together: God has enough love for everyone. And when we all work together to spread God's love, great things can happen—like solving a puzzle!**

We have one more thing to do. Let's work together to take the puzzle apart and find our own pieces. Give kids time to do this. **Use markers to color your piece. When you're done coloring, I'm going to punch a hole in your piece and make a green loop—green to remind us of the grapevines in today's Bible story. Then, take your puzzle piece home and hang it in your bedroom to remind you that God has enough love for everyone and one way we share God's love is with our friends in Sunday school!** Give kids time to color. When each kid finishes the piece, punch a hole, thread a 12-inch (31 cm) length of yarn through the hole, and knot the ends together.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Pizza puzzle (page 21)
Cardstock
Scissors
Markers
Thin green yarn or string
Single hole punch

Tear here for easy use!



Send (5 Minutes)

Good-bye Time

Thank you for coming to class today! We learned that God has enough love for everyone. I wonder if you learned enough about vineyards and workers and God today. Can each one of you tell me one thing you learned in class today? Give each kid a turn to respond.

Direct attention to the back of the Faith on the Go! slip on the bottom of the back page of the leaflet, and have the kids fill in the blanks with the name of someone they want to give this slip to, their own name, and today's date. Encourage them to mark one or more of the ideas or add their own. Have kids cut the slip off on the line, ready to give to someone else.

After class, give this slip to someone you want to do the activity with. It's like a coupon for time with you. Next week, we can tell each other what we did to share God's love and remember our Bible story!

It's time for our closing circle. Give kids time to stand with you in a circle facing in. Ask everyone to cross their arms, right over left, and hold hands with the person beside them. Squeeze your right hand, and then invite the kids to squeeze their right hands one at a time. (You will be going clockwise.) Say, **"God gives** (name each kid as their hands are squeezed) **a squeeze and a hug today!"** Then shout together, **"God has enough love for everyone!"** Lift your arms up together, turn 180 degrees to the right, and now you will all be holding hands in a circle facing out.

Prayer Time

Stretch out the jump rope into a straight line on the floor. **Let's all line up on this side of the jump rope.** Gather with kids on one side of the jump rope. **At the end of our prayer, each one of you will take a turn jumping over to the other side of the rope and saying, "Amen!" Repeat each prayer line after me.**

**Generous God,
Thanks for the story
About the vineyard workers.
Thanks for teaching us
How to be generous.**

One by one, kids jump over the jump rope and say **Amen.**

Be sure to send leaflets, pizza puzzle door hangers, and Family Pages home with kids.

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
Pencils
Scissors

Spark Resources
Leaflets
Family Pages



Supplies
Jump rope from Arrival Time

Tear here for easy use!