

Message for All Ages...

Scripture Text:

John 15:1-5a

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. 2 He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes[a] to make it bear more fruit. 3 You have already been cleansed[b] by the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.

John 17:17-23

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

20 "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us,[a] so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

For this children's message, you will need

** a very large see-through container. It could be a pyrex (no smaller than 9x13) or a large mixing bowl or a big Tupperware container or a glass table centerpiece filled about halfway up with water.*

** a variety of small items (a few pebbles, a bouncy ball, a paper clip, a feather or leaf, a small stick, etc. Include items that will sink as well as items that will float.)*

"Hello young friends!

Today we are going to do a science experiment on waves and ripples. What do you know about waves and ripples?

(Some may be able to speak of being at the ocean or seeing ripples when the wind blows across a lake or when they are in the bathtub. The older ones / more scientific ones may be able to talk about sound waves or waves of light. Be ready to affirm every response.)

Some questions that may help get them talking:

Have you ever seen a wave? (not the hand kind) Where were you?

What do you think causes waves and ripples in water?

Experiment Time:

“Let’s try to see some ripples right here in church. Come and gather around this bowl / dish. I’m going to give each of you a ripple-maker (or if that is not realistic because you have too many kids, just give out a predetermined number of items.) Hand out the ripple makers to the children.

“I am going to ask you, Charlie, to start our experiment by dropping your ripple maker into the bowl. I want the rest of you to watch very carefully when Charlie drops his ripple-maker into the bowl and count the ripples.”

“Go ahead, Charlie.” Pause. **“How many ripples did Charlie’s pebble make?”** Take numbers. Every answer is correct. Be astounded at the many different numbers and the big effect of Charlie’s little pebble. Go on to the next child and repeat. If the item sinks, you may choose to leave it in the bowl. If the item floats, go ahead and remove it before the next child drops their item in.

“What if our bowl was the size of this room? Would we have the same number of ripples?” They will likely tell you that there will be more. This will be useful later when you talk about the impact of a small ripple-maker on the whole world.

Once half of the items have been dropped in the bowl, share the scripture with the children and ask them, **“Do you think people can have a ripple effect?”**

Prod them with samples:

What if one person is kind to a stranger? Might that stranger behave differently that day?

What if one person takes care of someone who is hurting? Might that make the person heal faster?

What if you say give someone a compliment? Might that make a person feel better about themselves?

While you speak this next part, ask the kids who have not yet dropped their ripple maker into the bowl to go ahead and drop it in and watch how far the ripples go.

“Jesus asks us to make ripples. This scripture passage is about how love, holiness, truth, and prayer ripples out from the center and impact others in ways we can’t imagine. Jesus loves us. We love ourselves. We love each other. And those who we love, love others. Jesus says that this makes us all one. Why? Because how many ripple-makers does it take to make 10 (use a number here that the children counted earlier) ripples? “That’s right – one. Because we are all one in Christ. Christ is in us. We are all joined as one by being part of this family of faith.

**I in you and
you in me and
them in us and**

ALL of this is because God sends us out to make ripples in the world. God is the center and God places Godself in each of us and asks us to impact the world around us in holy, loving, truthful, prayer-filled ways.

Do you think you can do this? I do. In fact, I'm sure of it because you already are! Let's all gather and put our fingertips in the water while we pray.

Gracious and loving God, you ask us make waves in our world. Help us to know that even the smallest thing, when we do it in faith and love, will ripple outward into your world and make things better. Help us to trust our ripple-makers and to trust that you are carrying those ripples out into creation to change lives. In Christ's name, Amen.