

Jesus Chooses Us – We Will Respond

Lesson # 13 of 27

Scripture/Memory Verse

“You did not choose me, but I chose you.” John 15:16 (NIV)

Lesson Goal & Objectives

Goal

- The goal of this session is to present the participants with the idea that they are invited to respond to Jesus’ invitation to follow Him – that their walk as followers of Jesus is a response to all that God has done in the world and in their lives. This goal will be achieved through examining the Scriptures that extend this invitation and through discussion with the instructor.

Objectives

(Each participant should have a Bible or printed portion of the Scripture story they can read, actually understand and take with them.)

- Each participant will listen to a story that describes how Christianity is less a religion and more a relationship with a person – the person of Jesus.
- Each participant will listen to Jesus invite someone to follow him. Then the participants will be asked if they think this invitation applies to them.

Introduction and Background for the Teacher

This lesson serves as a turning point. The first 12 lessons have laid out the Christian story. The next 14 lessons will then help the participants understand what it means to be a part of the Church; how to read their Bible; the meaning of Sacraments, Creeds and more. However, before you go down that road with the participants, this lesson seeks to **pause** and have the participants consider their faith for themselves.

This is especially important for at least two reasons: First, the goal of Confirmation is to have people respond to all that God has done for them in sending His Son Jesus into the world. Therefore, this curriculum has specifically designed a point when participants are encouraged to consider and discuss their opportunity to respond. Second, it is easy for participants to get “overloaded with religious information” without personally “owning” the relationship described.

While this curriculum seeks to present sound teaching and information, it is important to draw the distinction between **religion** and **relationship**.

There are many definitions of what a religion is – each definition can have its own limitations. One of the better ones is from The **Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry** (CARM) which defines religion as:

"An organized system of belief that generally seeks to understand purpose, meaning, goals, and methods of spiritual things. These spiritual things can be God, people in relation to God, salvation, after life, purpose of life, order of the cosmos, etc."

Confirmation is not about indoctrinating people to “an organized system of beliefs”, but rather to allow them to confirm their Baptismal Vows publicly and personally and to receive the laying on of hands from the Bishop. It is an opportunity for them to say “Yes” to having a **relationship** with the Person of Jesus.

You, as the teacher, might share with your class the ways(s) in which you have responded to Jesus’ invitation – teaching this class would certainly be a testimony. Since you have spent twelve sessions with the participants, you will have established a degree of trust with them, and so they will welcome your story.

The Scripture that you will use is John 15, the vine and branches, to communicate the idea of being in a connected relationship.

You may need to spend some time with the participants helping them understand what a vine/branch is – don’t assume they know.

Materials Needed for Lesson

- Green and brown construction paper
- DVD “The Muppet Movie” (optional)
- Paper & Pens
- Grapes

Opening Prayer (5 min.)

Here is a prayer from the Book of Common Prayer, page 254 for Confirmation: Grant, Almighty God, that we, who have been redeemed from the old life of sin by our baptism into the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ, may be renewed in your Holy Spirit, and live in righteousness and true holiness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. AMEN.
(The students may also offer their own prayers)

Review of the Previous Lesson (5min.)

Review the last lesson about how Jesus saved us:

- *Recall: occasions in your life in which you have missed the mark. Did you write down anything?*
- *Reflect: on ways in which you have tried to make up for your mistakes in which you have tried to prove to God, to other people or to yourself*

that you are a good person, worthy of respect and affirmation.

- *Consider: we are not forgiven and accepted by God for what we have done or not done – but because of what Jesus has done. What did Jesus do for you?*
- *Pray: thank Jesus for what he did for you, and put your trust in his death as the guarantee of your forgiveness.*

Introductory Activity (5-10 Min.)

*(These ideas are intended to ensure a lively and exciting atmosphere for the beginning of this lesson. It is fine for each parish to approach this differently if you wish to make use of your own games or other materials. It is best **not** to eliminate doing any activity at all.)*

Choose ONE of the following activities:

- Have green and brown construction paper and make a HUGE set of vines and branches.
OR
- Show a video clip from movie “The Muppet Movie” (1979) – there is a vignette where they are “tasting wine” – it will allow you to talk about vines, branches and grapes!
OR
- Give the students some time to find pictures of “vines and branches” on the computer.

Lesson (20-25 min.)

Offer a bunch of grapes to the participants – they can eat them whenever they want.
(Always check for allergies, first)

Read from the Gospel of St. John chapter 15: verses 1 - 17

Discuss with the participants what they just read:

- Concerning verse 4: Ask them where the grapes came from. Could the grapes have appeared without “remaining in the branch?” How does Jesus’ point also refer to us?
- What will it look like if we “bear fruit”?
- Who does the choosing – and what does it mean to be “chosen?”

Reflection (10-15 min.)

Give the students a small bunch of grapes (*previously checking concerning allergies*) and ask them, as they eat, to consider Jesus as the Vine and they themselves as the branches.

Take-home Activity (5 min.)

*(It is recommended that you make use of this take-home activity to re-enforce the learning experience. You **may** eliminate this exercise if **necessary**. You may also substitute another activity if you find that to be more helpful. You should briefly review this lesson and review the take-home activity at the beginning of the next learning session).*

Briefly and simply explain to the students what a “journal entry” is. *(They may very well have already done such projects in school)*
Instruct the students to write a “journal entry” concerning how they have responded to Jesus’ call to them.

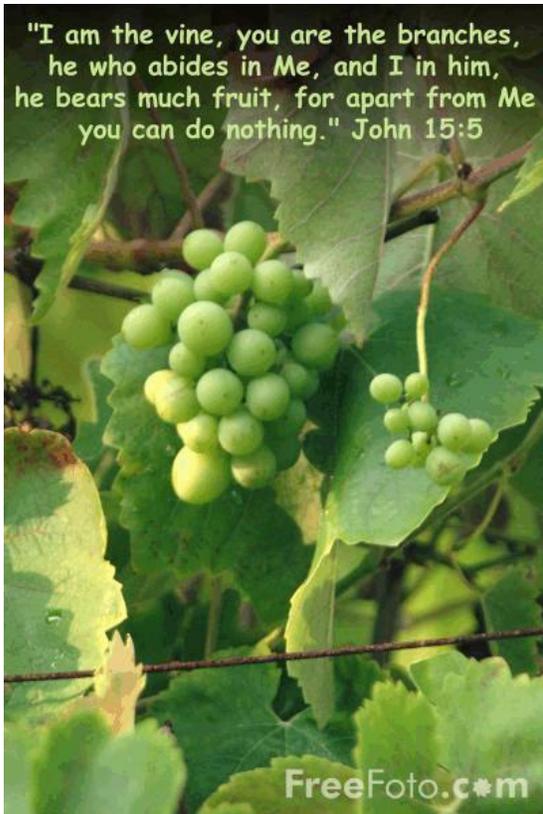
Closing Prayer (5 min.)

Open a prayer in your own words briefly thanking God for His love for us. Encourage the students to add their own concerns and thanksgivings.

Scripture References

_ John 15:1-17

Optional Photo for use with the class.



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<http://www.freefoto.com/preview/05-27-56?ffid=05-27-56&k=I+am+the+vine>

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