

# 'I Am' the True Vine

The group will each need pen/pencil & paper, plus a Bible. Also a marker pen and flipchart sheet for the group.

- Why do gardeners prune their trees? Make sure you get answers like: to keep the garden tidy, to allow the tree to grow the strongest branches, to cut out diseased bits, etc. Make a list of the answers on the flip-chart page.
- What would happen to a garden where there was no pruning or weeding done?
- But its all such hard work....why would anyone want to go to all that trouble? Make a list of reasons why people work hard on gardening. (Make sure the list ends up with things like: to get fruit/vegetables growing, to make it look nice, to be able to enjoy an attractive garden, etc).
- What happens to you if you eat a load of prunes?!!! They *clear out* your insides! Its a different way of illustrating the point that pruning is to clear the rubbish!
- Read together John 15: 1 to 17. Jesus says He is like a vine (or tree, perhaps).
- Get two or three people in the group to try to summarise the passage in no more than 30 words.
- What happens to a branch that gets cut off from a tree? What is Jesus trying to say will happen to a Christian who gets 'cut off' from Him?
- How do we make sure that we don't get 'cut off'? (look at verses 4 & 5).
- In verse 5 it says that someone who remains in Jesus will bear much fruit. What do you think this means?
- Make a list of things we need to do to be sure that we 'remain in Jesus'. After a while of doing this make sure they are getting some of their answers from the passage by referring to verses 10 - 12, 17.
- Get each person to look at the other people in the group for a whole minute. Then read verse 17 again. How can we do this? How can we show that we are doing it?
- In a vine or tree the life gets to the branches through then sap which flows in the tree. This passage tells us that our life comes from Jesus, and that the sap is God's love which flows into us and must flow out of us to others. If it does, we bear fruit. What happens if it doesn't? (verse 6).
- Re-read the whole passage together slowly, thinking about what you have been talking about regarding how we remain in Jesus.
- If possible, get the group to confess times when they haven't shown love, or when they have done things that are against God's will. Then spend some minutes praying about what you have been discussing and for each other.

