



The Vine and the Branches

John 15:1-6

Running time: Approximately 6 minutes

Setting: This series (Units 5 & 6) is set in a barn area of an outdoor camp. The set is designed to look like the interior of a barn, which is the set for Ranger Reggie's talk show, Critter Kingdom. There's a door to enter, a fireplace with stuffed animal heads over the mantle, and a ramp (or steps) to invite children up to participate in object lessons. Orville (a bird on a zip line) slides down and lands in a box containing a plastic egg. The Bible is kept in a crate that lights up; music plays when opened. There are different openings, trapdoors and windows from which the animal of the day can fall and characters and puppets can pop up.

Characters: Ranger Reggie is the Head Bible Counselor at Camp Venture. He is a former explorer and animal seeker, like the "Crocodile Hunter". (For added humor, pronounce all "R"s and "L"s as a "W".) Safari Sam is a survivalist and lover of nature. He is very excitable and has a lisp. Orville is a klutzy carrier pigeon (silent toy bird attached to a zip line) that delivers messages.

Plot: Ranger Reggie and Safari have volunteers act out the Parable of the Vine and the Branches. We learn that if we remain with Jesus we will bear spiritual fruit.

Costumes: Pith helmet, camouflage shorts, camp shirt, vest, mustache and eyeglasses. Tan shirt, khaki shorts, explorers helmet, boots.

Props: Toy bird on a zip line, plastic egg with note inside, bear stuffed animal, vine, brown tunic, two green tunics, 2 bunches of plastic

grapes, two cords, scissors, Bible. Note: Each episode introduces a different creature. These may be ten separate puppets, stuffed animals, or one basic sock puppet to represent the 10 following creatures: Falcon (Lesson 23), Earthworm (Lesson 24), Bear (Lesson 25), Ant (Lesson 26), Turkey (Lesson 27), Seagull (Lesson 28), Ostrich (Lesson 29), Pigeon (Lesson 30), Piglet (Lesson 31), Donkey (Lesson 32).

Sound effects (SFX):

1. Intro/Outro music suggestions: "I Like to Move It, Move It" from Madagascar
2. Lion Roar
3. Bible Crate: "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" or other jungle song clip. Music plays when crate is opened during each episode to reveal the Bible

Visual effects (VFX):

1. Video Intro featuring Ranger Reggie is available at ResourceWell.org
2. "Critter Kingdom" slide
3. A crate holds the Bible. When opened, light shines out and music plays
4. Slide of large grape vine.
5. Scripture Slide: **Jesus said, Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. John 15:4**
6. Camper's Code slide:

**I will love God with all my heart.
I will love my neighbor as myself.
I will be a light wherever I go!**

Adaptations:

1. Sound Effects: instead of using recorded effects, have children make the sounds
2. Voiceovers: may be spoken off stage
3. This illustration is also available in storybook form located at ResourceWell.org

Critter Kingdom
Unit 5, Lesson 25
The Vine and the Branches
John 15:1-6

Voiceover (VFX: short video intro)

You are about to join us on an adventure. My name is Ranger Reggie, intrepid explorer, former marine, bible-lover and friend to animals everywhere. I've traveled the four corners of the globe, climbed mountains, forged rivers and faced countless dangers to bring you the world's most interesting creatures...this is Critter Kingdom! (SFX: "I Like to Move It, Move It")

Sam

Hello, boys and girls! Welcome back to Critter Kingdom! (SFX: Lion's Roar) **It's me, Ranger Reggie's best friend and co-host, Safari Sam! Can you say that with me? Safari Sam! Not Safari Sam, Safari Sam! Try it again! Safari Sam! Close enough. Let me introduce your good friend and the host of Critter Kingdom,** (SFX: Lion's Roar) **Ranger Reggie!**

Reggie

Hi, Campers! Hi, Safari Sam! Let's start off by standing and reciting our Camper's Code together! Raise your right hand.

All

(VFX: Campers Code Slide)

**I will love God with all my heart,
I will love my neighbor as myself,
I will be a light wherever I go!**

Sam

Have a seat. Ranger Reggie, we were wondering if you could tell us, what is today's Creature Feature?

Reggie

You know what? We are going to tell today's parable from the Bible and see if you can guess today's Creature Feature!

Sam

That sounds like a swell idea! Let's call Orville and see if he can tell us today's secret parable. Let's all say, "Hey Orville, come on down!" Ready? "Hey Orville, come on down!" (Orville slides down and lands in box with egg)

Reggie (Unfold note inside egg.)

We'll crack this egg open and see that today's parable is...the Vine and the Branches.

Sam

I'm excited to share that one! Let me get the Bibles out right now! (SFX: "The Lion Sleeps Tonight") (VFX: Bible crate opens and light shines out.) (Search through Bible.) **Here it is: The Parable of the Vine and the Branches.**

Reggie (Put on gardening gloves.)

In this story Jesus stands for the Vine and God is the Gardener.

Sam

Are you saying Jesus was a little vine like this?

Reggie (Hold up thin vine.)

Oh no! Not a little vine. The type of vines that grapes grow on are very large vine like a tree. They look like this. (VFX: Photo of large grape vine)

Sam

That's a big vine! And are those the branches? Those are like tree branches.

Reggie

And that's what we get to be. We are the branches!

Sam

We are? Why are we the branches?

Reggie

Well, it's a parable, you know, a picture story to help us understand how our friendship with Jesus is supposed to work. Here, why don't I get some volunteers to help us see the picture more clearly?

(Choose one boy and two girls.)

Sam (Dress boy in vine tunic.)

You will be the vine, so try on this vine tunic.

Reggie (Dress girls in branch tunics.)

And you two lovely ladies will be the branches, so you'll wear these branch tunics.

Sam

You three look spectacular! (to boy) As the 'vine', you hold a cord in each hand. (to girls) Each of you 'branches' grab the other end of the cords.

Reggie (Cut cords in half with scissors.)

The Bible says that Jesus is the Vine, we are the branches and God is the Gardener. He cuts off every branch that doesn't bear fruit.

Sam

He cuts off the branches?! Why would he do that?

Reggie

Because He wants them to bear fruit. He even prunes the branches that do bear fruit.

Sam

What does prune mean?

Reggie

Prune means to take off parts of the branches that slow down their growth.

Sam

God trims the ones that bear fruit?

Reggie

That's right, when you cut back healthy branches, they bear even more fruit!

Sam

So pruning is a good thing. But, no one wants to be cut off completely from the vine.

Reggie

Oh no, we'd better get you branches reconnected. (Girls reconnect to boy by holding end of halved cords remaining in boy's hands.) (VFX: Scripture slide) **Jesus said, "Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me." John 15:4** (Sam puts bunch of grapes in each girl's empty hand.)

Sam

Let's have a big round of applause for our fruit-filled volunteers! (Collect props and tunics. Volunteers return to seats.) **They did a swell job, Ranger Reggie and I think I can guess today's Creature Feature! Let me get it out!** (SFX: "I Like to Move It, Move It" Opens trunk to reveal bear puppet.) **Today's Creature Feature is the Bear!**

Reggie

The Bear? What does a bear have to do with vines and branches?

Sam

Well, you said if we stay connected to Jesus we will bear fruit!

Reggie

Safari Sam! That's not what bear fruit means. It doesn't mean a grizzly bear! To bear fruit means to grow fruit. It stands for spiritual fruit.

Sam

Spiritual fruit? What's that? Like godly grapes and holy guacamole?

Reggie

No, no! Spiritual fruit are the wonderful things Jesus does through each of us. When we stay close to Him, our actions and attitudes build God's kingdom!

Sam

Are you sure it doesn't mean a grizzly bear? Rawr!

Reggie

No! Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing." Just like the kids showed us, if you remain with Jesus you will bear fruit!

Sam

And without Him?

Reggie

We are fruitless!

Sam

I think I get it! Stay with Jesus and we help God's Kingdom grow!

Reggie

Absolutely! With Christ in you, you will bear fruit!

Reggie

(VFX: Critter Kingdom slide) (SFX: Outro music)

Well, Camp Rangers, looks like we're out of time for today's Critter Kingdom. I'd like to thank my co-host Safari Sam and our guest creature, the bear. See you next time rangers!