**

BIBLE STUDY – LEADER’S GUIDE (70 min)

***Scripture Passage: John 15:1-25 (pages 47.6-49.2)***

5 min Community and Vision – *Lead an activity that helps your group get to know one another. Then tell the group* ***your vision*** *for why you are meeting and what you want to see God do.*

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2 min Pray – *Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your study.*

3 min Read – *Read the text individually and out loud together.*

2 min Context – “What comes immediately before and after this passage? What parts of this passage might be influenced by history or culture?” *Identify the context together.*

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| Jesus had already been teaching in the upper room, but now they are en route to the garden where he will be betrayed.  - OT understanding of Israel as the vineyard the Lord had planted: God expected good grapes, but Israel produced only bad, so the vineyard had to be destroyed (Is. 5:1-8)  - spring pruning: removing tips of shoots that are growing too fast, removing large parts of growing shoots to prevent the whole thing from being caught in the wind and snapped off, removing flowers or grape clusters or new suckers so that they don't tap the strength of the growing branches  - autumn pruning (after the harvest): removing unwanted branches that had produced fruit in the past but would not in the next season, cutting back good branches to increase productivity next season |

5 min Observe – “Let’s look closely at the passage and gather the facts by marking what we see. Be like a **curious investigator**. Note characters, relationships, locations, time, actions, repeated words, comparisons, contrasts, cause and effect. Make sections and label them.”

15 min Share – “Let’s share our observations out loud. If you see something, say something. Be careful not to draw conclusions yet.” *Start in pairs or go in a circle, if they need a warmup.*

25 min Interpret – “Let’s get curious and ask questions that will help us discuss what the author wanted the original readers to understand. Good questions come from key observations.”

*Collect their questions and then arrange them in the order of the text.*

*Add 1-2 key questions you prepared ahead of time, if necessary.*

*Decide which 4-5 are most significant, and use the passage to answer those together.*

“While answering, let’s listen and make **space for one another** as we share. We will keep the **text at the center** and avoid using any resource the original readers would not have had. Let’s keep each other on track by saying, **‘Help us see that in the text.’**”

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| What is it about the images of vine/branch/fruit/abiding that Jesus is highlighting to explain the relationships among himself, the Father, and the disciples?  What does it mean for the disciples to bear fruit, and why is Jesus so concerned with it?  How does Jesus define his friendship with the disciples, and how might this have shaped their understanding of who they were as his followers? |

3 min Summarize – “If you could communicate the main point of this passage in just one sentence, what would it be? What core message is the author communicating to the original audience?” *After some group discussion, share the brief summary and core message you prepared.*

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| Jesus desires inseparable intimacy with his followers. Through that connection, the vine and the branches together will bear fruit that will last. **Jesus wants to work through his followers to bring new life everywhere he sends them.** |

8 min Apply – “Let’s apply the core message to our own lives by answering this question.”

*Prepare an application question beforehand. Use these examples to help you get started.*

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| What prevents vibrancy in your personal prayer life with Jesus - Lack of time spent? Lack of desire? Disobedience? Self-sufficiency?  What is the abiding vs. striving climate of your community? How is Jesus inviting you to change? |

*Allow a quiet moment and then share all together or just in pairs. Model vulnerability.*

2 min Pray – *Close in prayer together or in pairs.*

3 May 2019 – download this resource from tinyurl.com/leadbiblestudy