

Look Closer: The Fruitful Vine

There are many places in the Word where the growth and development of a human being is compared to the growth and development of plants and trees. Today's activity leads students to reflect on their daily choices in light of this comparison.

Supplies Needed for Each Student

- copies of *The Fruitful Vine* and *Fruitful Vine Activity* (see following pages)
- pencils or pens
- *Optional*: Students may prefer to create a poster or advertisement in groups instead of producing individual projects. If you choose this option you will need larger pieces of paper or poster board for the activity. Alternatively, students may draw on a blackboard or large pad of paper.
- *Optional*: Students may make up a short series of skits to bring the message home.



Activity

1. Distribute *The Fruitful Vine* pages and read them aloud with the group. Discuss.
2. Distribute *Fruitful Vine Activity* pages and pencils or pens. *Optional*: Distribute large paper or poster board.
3. Ask students to choose a behavior they would like to change (in themselves, in others, or on a global scale) or an activity they would like to master. Some examples are given on the chart. A few additional “starter” ideas are listed below in case your group struggles to come up with things.
4. Students will either write or draw the stages of the behavior or activity from root idea to mastery in the boxes of the chart. Invite a variety of kinds of responses: cartoons, stick figures, written descriptions, etc.
5. *Optional*: If you choose to do a group project, students may want to formulate this as an advertisement, pointing out the advantages of the choice they are making and selling the idea to others.
6. *Optional*: Divide students into small groups to make up skits to illustrate the point. Or have each student develop a short acting sequence, which the class will observe to see if they can guess what the student intended.

Additional Starter Ideas:

Getting rid of a teasing habit.

Making a habit of reading the Word.

Improving study skills.

Learning to ride a horse.

Learning how to play the guitar.

Improving your basketball game.

The Fruitful Vine

There are many places in the Word where the development of a human being is compared with the development of a tree or vine. Psalm 1 says that a godly person “shall be like a tree...that brings forth its fruit in its season.”

The following passage from the Heavenly Doctrine explains this comparison:

Like a tree, a person who is being born again begins from a seed, which is why in the Word ‘seed’ means truth obtained from good. Also, like a tree, he brings forth leaves, then blossoms, and finally fruit; for a person brings forth the kind of things that belong to intelligence, which again in the Word are meant by ‘leaves’, then the kind of things that belong to wisdom, which are meant by ‘blossoms’, and finally the kind of things that are matters of life—forms of the good of love and charity expressed in action, which in the Word are meant by ‘fruits’. Such is the likeness that exists between a fruitful tree and a person who is being regenerated (see *Arcana Coelestia* 5115:2).

The following table explains how each part of a plant relates to a person’s life.

Plant Parts	Spiritual meaning	Example in a person’s life
Roots	The first root of a person’s life is selfish. This needs to be removed, and a new one planted in its place. The first root can be removed when a person realizes that the evils of selfishness hurt his soul (see <i>Life</i> 93). Spiritual seed is rooted when the good of charity warms it: first it pushes its roots within itself, and afterwards sends it forth (see <i>Arcana Coelestia</i> 880).	A person who likes to talk a lot recognizes that it is selfish to monopolize a conversation. She tries to notice when this is happening and to stop talking too much.
Wood/Stem	Good deeds worthy of merit that proceed from the Lord (<i>Arcana Coelestia</i> 9472).	She tries to ask other people about things they are interested in during conversations.
Leaves	The kind of things that belong to (spiritual) intelligence. Things of faith (<i>Arcana Coelestia</i> 5116).	She notices when people look left out and invites them to join in conversations.
Flowers	A state of interior gladness and beauty when a person is trying to put spiritual intelligence and wisdom into practice in life—that is, to produce fruits (see <i>Arcana Coelestia</i> 5116:5).	She enjoys what others have to say, preferring to listen rather than to speak.
Fruit	Charity and its works are the fruits of love to the Lord (<i>Arcana Coelestia</i> 3427). Unless charity is in an action...it cannot be called a work of charity, or a fruit of faith (<i>Arcana Coelestia</i> 161).	She reaches out to others, listening to what they say so that she can be genuinely useful to them through helpful words or actions.
Seeds	Fruit which is of love has seed, by which it multiplies itself (<i>Arcana Coelestia</i> 43).	She notices a changes in herself and starts to apply similar changes to other aspects of her life.

Fruitful Vine Activity

1 Roots:

Behavior You Want to Change or Activity You Want to Start

*e.g. identify a habit you want to change and what will
replace it, or choose an activity to learn such as a sport,
musical instrument, etc.*

2 Stem and Leaves:

Steps You Will Take or Skills You Will Develop

e.g. acquire skills to make the changes you want

3 Flowers:

Delight in growth

e.g. enjoyment in progress

4 Fruit:

New Behavior Established or Success in Learning

e.g. new habits formed, mastery of your goal