



August/September 2001

Synopsis: Three storytellers work together in this highly energetic retelling of Jesus' parable of the Vine and the Gardener in John 15.

Topics: Growth, Maturity, Discipline, Jesus

Time Requirements: 3 minutes

Characters:

1: The leader of the three, sets the pace.

2&3: React to each other and to 1, and help tell the story.

Props: Pruning Shears



The Gardener's Choice

Stage Setup:

3 1 2

Audience

User's Guide



Discussion Point:

Have you ever pruned back an overgrown bush or hedge? How do you know where to stop?

*Author's note:
Scene opens on all three actors who quickly grab attention with their synchronized story. They need to keep a very snappy pace and maintain good eye contact with the audience.*

Script

0 minutes

1: I am the Vine.

2: said Jesus

3: And you are the branches.

1: Vine

3: Branches

1: Vine

3: Branches

2: What more do you need?

1: I am the Vine

2: said Jesus

3: And my father is the Gardener.

2: Well, that makes sense I guess. You got your



Discussion Point:

Does it surprise you that God cuts both the good and the bad branches? Why not just let the good ones grow?



*Author's note:
With its rapid-fire delivery, this script suggests a sort of playfulness by the actors that can come out in a variety of ways.*

*1) Physically: synchronized movement, leaning on each other, giving each other high 5's, etc.
2) Vocaly: unusual voices that express the right image (for instance a light, airy voice for "Green" a, deep raspy voice for "Thick" and a strong, vital voice for "Healthy."*

Play with it until you find the right combination.



SCRIPTURE LINK:

AMOS 8:1-3

THIS IS WHAT THE SOVEREIGN LORD SHOWED ME: A BASKET OF RIPE FRUIT. "WHAT DO YOU SEE, AMOS?" HE ASKED. "A BASKET OF RIPE FRUIT," I ANSWERED. THEN THE LORD SAID TO ME, "THE TIME IS RIPE FOR MY PEOPLE ISRAEL; I WILL SPARE THEM NO LONGER."

1: Vine

2: And you got your

3: Branches

2: And you got your Gardener.

1: So that's it. Vine

2: Branches.

3: Gardener.

1: Now if you only had the vine and the branches, well the whole thing could just get completely out of control.

2: You ever plant a pumpkin patch and see how those vines grow?

3: They take over, I tell ya. They take right over.

1: That's right. They suck the nourishment right out of the vine, and they just- bam, go for it.

3: Which is where the gardener comes in.

2: Now the gardener is what keeps the branches under control.

1: And this is how he works.

2: It's very complicated here, so pay attention, Ok?

1: See, there's more than one kind of branch.

3: No! Really?

1: Yeah. See on the one hand you got your branches that bear fruit, right?

1 minute

2: We're with ya.

1: But... are ya ready? See you also got the branches that- well, how can I say it? They just don't bear fruit.

3: Yeah, they're just all branch. No fruit.

2: You can look all the way up and down it and there just ain't no fruit to be found.

3: Nice branches.

1: Green.

2: Thick.

1: Healthy.

2: But no fruit. Not so much as a bud.

3: Fruitless.

1: Unfruited.

2: Non-fruitable.

3: Persona non-fruity.

1: Now where were we?

3: The Gardener.

1: Yes, the Gardener. Now ya see, the Gardener, he looks at the branches. He inspects 'em.

2: Studies 'em.

3: Puts 'em under the scope.

1: And this is where his smarts really come in. This is where he shines.

2: See, he looks at the branches, and he can tell which ones have fruit.

1: And which ones don't.

3: And that's important.

1: Very important.

2: Extremely, extremely important.

1: Because what he does with the branch, depends entirely on whether it has fruit, or... does not have fruit.

2 minutes

3: You see, the bad branches...

2: The worthless branches...

3: The branches that look good, but have no fruit...

1: Those, get this, he cuts.

2: Ooh.

3: Ouch.

1: Cuts 'em right off. Whereas, the good branches... the branches with fruit... Those he cuts.

2: What'd you say?



SCRIPTURE LINK: MATTHEW 21:19

SEEING A FIG TREE BY THE ROAD, HE WENT UP TO IT BUT FOUND NOTHING ON IT EXCEPT LEAVES. THEN HE SAID TO IT, "MAY YOU NEVER BEAR FRUIT AGAIN!" IMMEDIATELY THE TREE WITHERED.



Discussion Point:

What's the real life equivalent of good and bad branches? How do you know the difference? What's "fruit" in your life? Are you bearing any of it?

Blocking: 1 pulls out the pruning shears for simulated pruning.



SCRIPTURE LINK: MATTHEW 7:16

BY THEIR FRUIT YOU WILL RECOGNIZE THEM. DO PEOPLE PICK GRAPES FROM THORNBUSHES, OR FIGS FROM THISTLES?

3: I think you slipped up there. You said he cuts the good branches.

1: I know what I said!

3: I think you meant to say he cuts the bad branches.

1: I already said that.

3: So what about the good ones?

2: Yeah, what does he do with the good ones?
Fertilizes 'em?

1: He cuts em.

2: What?

1: I'm tellin' ya, it says in the Book that he cuts the good ones too.

3: What's up with that?

2: Yeah, what's the point? Might as well be a bad branch.

1: Well if you'd let me finish... there's different kinds of cutting.

2: Oh well that clears it right up.

1: You got your cutting **off...**

3: Which is what the bad branches get.

1: That's right. And you got your cutting **back.**

2: Which is what the good branches get?

3 minutes

1: Exactly.

3: Well that does clear it up. Because there's a big difference between being cut off, and being cut back.

2: Yeah, except for one thing.

1: What's that?

2: Either way... it hurts.

Lights Out

Author's note: Up 'til now the 3 have been united as one voice. Now all the fun stops, confusion enters, and the pace becomes stiff and awkward.



Discussion Point:

Have you ever been pruned? What happened? Did it make you healthier?



Musical Idea:

Try "Every Season" by Nichole Nordeman off her This Mystery CD (Sparrow, 2000). It's a ballad about how God grows and shapes us into his image.

Date Performed: _____

Actors Used: _____



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