



SESSION FOUR:



Good-Bye to the Bents

STUDENT HANDOUT

Key Verse

“I am the true vine; my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that does not bear fruit. And he trims and cleans every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce even more fruit.”

John 15:1–2



TELL YOUR STORY:

Christmas Tree Traditions

Take turns choosing from the following questions to describe your Christmas tree traditions to your partner.

- Does your family usually have a Christmas tree every year or do you sometimes go without a tree?
- Does your family put up a fresh tree or an artificial tree? If you put up fresh tree, where do you get it? Do you have any family traditions for finding your tree?
- How big is your tree? Too big for the room it goes in, just about right, or small enough to sit on a table? Where do you put your tree?
- What are your family traditions for decorating the tree?
- What is on the top of your tree? What is your favorite ornament on the tree? Why do you like it?
- When do you usually put up and take down your tree each year?
- What is your favorite part of having a Christmas tree?



STUDY GOD'S STORY:

Pruned, Decorated, Placed

God Prunes Us

"I am the true vine; my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that does not bear fruit. And he trims and cleans every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce even more fruit."

John 15:1–2

God Decorates Us

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Galatians 5:22–23 NKJV

God Places Us

You made my whole being;
you formed me in my mother's body.
I praise you because you made me in an amazing and
wonderful way.

What you have done is wonderful. . . .

All the days planned for me
were written in your book
before I was one day old.

Psalms 139:13–14, 16 NCV

As you think about yourself right now, what is the main way you are experiencing God in your life? Place a check mark next to the statement that best describes your response, and fill in the blank to describe what kind of work God is doing in your life.

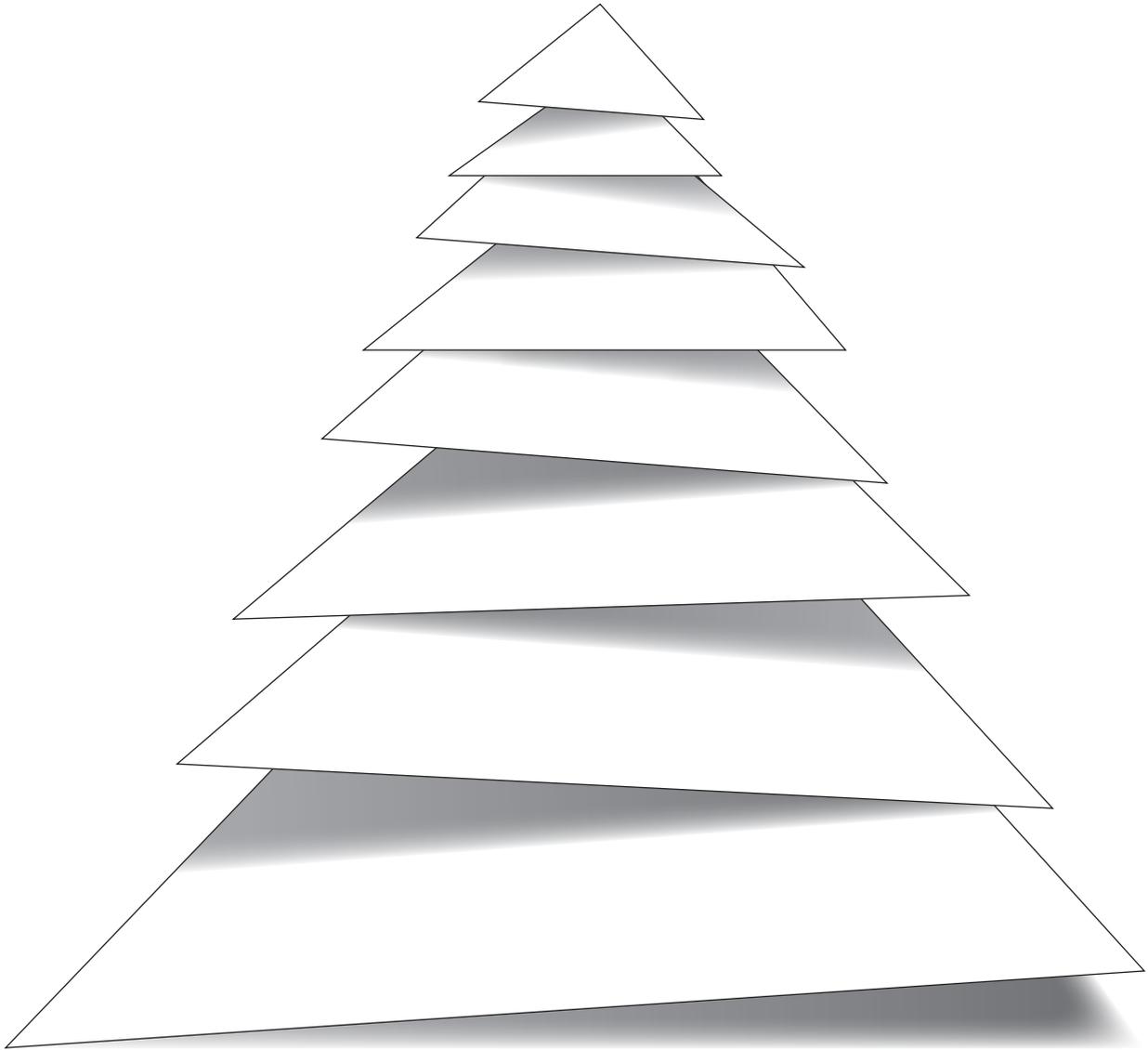
- I am being PRUNED. God is working on my character, helping me get rid of bad habits and behaviors. I notice him working on _____ (describe what God is working on cutting out of your life).
- I am being DECORATED. God is helping me grow in the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (circle the one he’s growing in you currently)—by _____ (describe the circumstance God is using to help you grow fruit).
- I am being PLACED. God has a purpose for me right where I am. He has placed me here to love people and make a difference by _____ (describe how God is using who you are to bless others).

CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE: Based on the option you chose, find a Bible verse from one of these passages that applies to what God is doing in your life:

- I am being pruned: Choose one verse from Ephesians 4:25–32
- I am being decorated: Choose one verse from James 1:2–5
- I am being placed: Choose one verse from 1 Corinthians 13

Now, turn to the next page and write your verse on the tree. You could give your verse a title, such as “God is pruning my bad language,” or “I am being decorated with self-control.” Then, add decorations to your tree, cut it out, and loop a string through the hole at the top. Hang your tree ornament at home to remind you of God’s purpose for you, and your willingness to have him work on you in this area.

CHRISTMAS FOCUS: Read chapters 10–12 in *Because of Bethlehem*.





“O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL”

O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him,
Born the King of Angels!

O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation
Sing, all ye citizens of Heav'n above.
Glory to God
Glory in the highest!

O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

We'll praise your name forever
We'll praise your name forever
We'll praise your name forever
Christ the Lord.

For you alone are worthy
For you alone are worthy
For you alone are worthy
Christ the Lord.