



ROOTED: WEEK 1

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ROOTED

WEEK 1: FIRMLY PLANTED

BIBLE: Psalm 1:1-3; Psalm 1:1-3; Ecclesiastes 3:11; Romans 1:19-20; 2 Peter 1:3; Romans 10:9-10

BOTTOM LINE: When you are planted in God's Word, He will produce growth in your life.

SUPPLIES

Opening Game (In-Person)

- 2 handfuls of seeds (or any small items—buttons, pom-poms, paper clips, popcorn kernels)—the same number for each handful would be good.
- 2 containers (buckets/bowls/hats/cups)

Opening Game (Online Version)

- 1 handful of small items (popcorn kernels, buttons, paper clips, chocolate chips)
- A container (bowl/bucket/cup/hat—something for the small items to fall into)

INTRODUCTION

SAY: Welcome, students!

We are starting our new series: Rooted!

Picture a very large apple tree.

What are the different parts of the apple tree?

Allow for answers. (Seed, Roots, Trunk, Branches, Leaves, Apples)

In the next few weeks, we will compare our spiritual lives to an apple tree.

Seeds are the beginning point of any tree's life, so let's play a game with some seeds as we begin this series!

OPENING GAME (IN-PERSON VERSION): SEED PLANTING CHALLENGE

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

I need two volunteers to come up and try to plant some seeds into these containers.

Leader, choose two volunteers from the students raising their hands.

Have the students stand socially-distanced.

Volunteers, please place the hand you write with straight out in front of you, so it's even with your shoulder.

Place a container just below each volunteer's outstretched hand.

Hand each volunteer the same number of seeds (or whatever small items you have to work with)—enough to be a handful.

The object of this game is to get as many seeds planted into your container as you can.

One of you will empty your hand and dump all the seeds at one time into your container, and the other person will drop seeds one at a time into their container.

When all the seeds are out of your hands, we will count how many seeds got into each container.

Tell the student volunteers which one will empty his/her handful and which student will drop seeds one at a time.

When all the seeds have been dropped, have each student count his/her own seeds.

Why do you think the (handful dropper/one-at-a-time-dropper) had more seeds in his/her container?

Allow for answers.

OPENING GAME (ONLINE VERSION): SEED PLANTING CHALLENGE

Go grab a handful of small items like popcorn kernels, sunflower seeds, chocolate chips, paper clips, or whatever you have handy, and a container to drop the “seeds” into—like a bowl, cup, or hat. Whatever you have will work.

Give the students time to collect their supplies.

Now we are going to have a seed planting comparison challenge.

The first time you do this challenge, you will drop all the seeds at one time into your container by opening your hand over the container.

You must stand up, hold your arm straight out from your shoulder and place the container on the ground just below your hand.

When I say go, you will empty your hand by opening it and seeing how many of the seeds fall into the container.

Allow students time to get set up correctly.

GO!

Allow a few seconds for the students to empty their hands into their containers.

Ok, now count how many of your “seeds” dropped into your container.

Allow time for the students to count their seeds, then tell you how many landed in their container.

Whatever the largest number of “seeds” is reported in the first challenge is how many seeds you’ll have them count out to hold in their hands for the next challenge.

Well done!

Our next challenge is for you to count out (*whatever the largest dumped amount was in the first challenge*) seeds to hold in your hand.

Be flexible with the number of seeds you ask the students to count out—some may not have that many.

When you have that many seeds counted out, give me a thumbs up.

When everyone has given you a thumbs up, continue the game.

This time your challenge is to drop the seeds one at a time into your container.

Your arm must be extended, and your hand must be over the container like last time, but you’ll only drop one seed at a time.

If a seed bounces out of the container, that seed doesn’t count.

When you have dropped all your seeds, count them and let me know you’re done by telling me how many seeds made it into your container.

GO!

Allow students ample time to drop each of their seeds.

This challenge should take a little while longer than the first challenge.

What was the difference between the first and second challenges?

Allow for answers.

Which seed planting method worked best and why?

Allow for answers.

Please collect all your “seeds” into your container and set them to the side...unless you can eat them, then go ahead and eat them!

TEACH

Say: There are different ways to sow seeds for different plants.

Seeds can be tossed all around everywhere—which is great for planting wildflowers.

Or, they can be meticulously planted one, or a few seeds, at a time—spaced out from other seeds like watermelons.

Apple trees in an apple orchard grow best and strongest when they are spaced about 6-25 feet apart¹, but they must be planted near each other together to be pollinated.

This is so similar to us, spiritually.

In the next few weeks, we will be talking about how our spiritual life is much like an apple tree.

Psalm 1:1-3 says, *Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers.*

² *But they delight in the law of the LORD, meditating on it day and night.*

³ *They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.*

Just like trees must be planted and cannot plant themselves, God plants the idea of eternal life and our need for salvation in our hearts before we can accept the truth and be saved from our sin eternally.

God plants seeds of salvation very meticulously and purposefully.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 says...

Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time.

He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God’s work from beginning to end.

Romans 1:19-20 says...

They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them.

²⁰ For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky.

Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

When we accept those truths and the gift of life, the seed for salvation begins to sprout, take root, grow up into a seedling, and then a tree, and then, if it is healthy and strong, begins to bear fruit.

2 Peter 1:3 says...

By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life.

We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence.

We don't start our relationship with God as a full-grown tree that simply produces good fruit.

Our salvation starts as a seed planted by God, and we NEED God for salvation.

God *gives* us salvation.

We accept His gift, and then we become more and more like Him, growing stronger and healthier the more we rely on His provision and resources for us.

God is the gardener.

He plants every seed, He waters us (teaches us through His Holy Spirit by His Word), and gives us "Son-shine" (access to Him through Jesus' sacrificial gift of life, which means we can talk to God through prayer) to grow into what He created us to be.

As we make use of the resources He gives us, we grow roots that steady and prepare us to stand tall and strong no matter the winds and storms that blow around us.

If we continue to grow in Him, God will make us fruit-bearing trees that will bring Him glory and attention.

Our fruit will benefit others, and God will plant the seeds of salvation in others' hearts from the fruit we bear.

Today is a great time to ask yourself if you have accepted the gift of salvation and the hope of eternal life God has planted in your heart.

If you have not accepted the gift of salvation, today is the day to say thank you to God for that gift and start a healthy growing relationship with Him.

Let's take a moment for those who have not yet made the decision to accept God's gift of salvation.

Romans 10:9-10 says, *"If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

¹⁰ For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved."

Praying is sharing thoughts to God—both aloud and silently in your mind.

I am going to pray and, if you have never prayed this prayer, all you need to do is think these thoughts to God after I say them aloud in prayer.

If you *have* prayed the prayer to accept God's gift of salvation, pray that everyone else hearing this lesson will accept God's gift of salvation, too.

Dear God, Thank You for sending Jesus to pay for my sins through His death.

Thank You for raising Him from the dead to show He was victorious over death.

Thank You that life with You in charge is better than life with me in charge.

*Thank You for saving me from eternal separation from You and for eternal life with You!
In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

If you just prayed that prayer for the first time, *please* tell your small group leader or another adult follower of Jesus that you trust.

We want to celebrate with you and help you take your next steps toward building a closer relationship with Jesus!

One of the ways we grow in our relationship with God (that we will talk about more next week) is to spend time in God's Word.

God's Word is the soil we are planted in so that we can grow deep roots and grow spiritually healthy.

God's Word is also the water that gives us the nourishment we need to grow strong.

When we are planted in God's Word—soil and water—He will produce growth in our lives.

Think about what happens to branches of apple blossoms when they are cut off the tree and put into a vase.

They stop growing and are actually dying from the time they are separated from their nourishment source.

When we stop reading the Bible and listening to its lessons, it is like we are being cut off from our nourishment source.

When you are planted in God's Word, He will produce growth in your life.

Let's pray for each other and thank God for His gift of salvation.

Close in prayer.

In the next few weeks, we will talk about what it looks like for the seed of our salvation to grow roots, grow healthy and strong, and then bear fruit.

This is a great time for us to split into small groups.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is something that stood out to you from this lesson?
2. What is something new you learned today, or something you were reminded of about God in this lesson?
3. What is something that resonated with you about your spiritual life being like an apple tree?
4. What does it mean to you that salvation—the beginning of your relationship with God—is like a seed?
5. If you made the decision to accept God's gift of salvation today, please consider sharing that with us so we can celebrate you right now!
6. If you have already made the decision to accept the gift of salvation, why are you glad you made that decision?
7. Who are different people God has used in your life to help you understand the truth about salvation?

8. Think of someone in your life who does not yet understand the truth about salvation, then take a moment and pray for that person.
9. Please share any questions you have about today's lesson.
10. How can we pray for you today?

¹No author or dated available, extension.umaine.edu, Accessed January 6, 2021, <https://extension.umaine.edu/fruit/growing-fruit-trees-in-maine/spacing/#:~:text=In%20regions%20with%20cold%20winters,given%20an%20additional%205%20feet.>