Welcome to Annual Conference in a Box! The theme of Annual Conference 2021 is Abide in me...and know that I AM God. The activities in this packet will help kids discover what it means to abide in Jesus and bear fruit. They can take flat bishop on adventures that encourage abiding and bearing the fruit of the Spirit. Be sure to post pictures with flat bishop on the Great Plains Conference Facebook page! Use the hashtag #GPAC2021 so everyone can follow the fun!

Candance Miller
AC Childcare Director

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**What is annual conference?**

Annual Conference is a once-a-year meeting of clergy (pastors) and lay persons (church members) to worship, fellowship, and perform business of the conference.

Our conference is the Great Plains Conference. It is made up of United Methodist Churches in Kansas and Nebraska.

**What is a bishop?**

Bishops are spiritual leaders of conferences. They guide churches by selecting pastors, giving them direction for serving others, challenging them to love others, and encouraging them to make a difference in the world.

The bishop leads annual conference.

**Meet our bishop!**

Ruben Saenz Jr. is a native of south Texas and lifelong United Methodist. He was elected as the Great Plains bishop in 2016.

Bishop Saenz is a former high school teacher, high school football coach, and businessperson.

He enjoys drawing and painting, endurance cycling and hi-intensity interval training, fishing and golfing, and coffee from different regions of the world, visiting new places, meeting new people, and watching NFL football.

Bishop Saenz is married to Mayé. They have four adult children and nine grandchildren.
What words did you hear repeated in the passage?

Who is the True Vine?
Who are the branches?
What does it mean to remain?

Some versions of the Bible say to abide in or stay connected to Jesus. They all mean the same thing, to stay close to Jesus. Look out your window. Do you see a branch that has fallen from a tree? What happens to a branch if it is removed from a tree? It withers up and dies, just like a branch not connected to the grapevine. When a branch stays connected to the grapevine, it can bear fruit. This means that Jesus makes the fruit grow in us and we just carry or support it by obeying him.

We are like branches that stay connected to the vine. What are some ways that we can stay connected to or remain in Jesus, the True Vine? When we pray, read our Bible, attend church, love others, and obey God we stay close to Jesus. Then we become like branches that bear fruit!

When a branch bears good fruit, the fruit is proof the branch is connected to the vine. Have you grown any grapes lately? The fruit we bear is called the fruit of the Spirit.

> But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself.
> Galatians 5:22-23 NIRV

These fruit are seen and heard in our words and actions. When we stay connected to Jesus, we show and feel more love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control to ourselves and others.

When we do not remain in Jesus, we do not bear good fruit. What are the opposites of each fruit of the Spirit? These are the words and actions that come from our lives apart from Jesus.

The fruit we bear shows we are connected to Jesus. Jesus is the vine. You are the branch. Stay connected to Him to bear good fruit.

How are you staying connected to Jesus? What kind of fruit is Jesus growing in your life?
**Scratch and Sniff Painting**

**Supplies:** bowl, 1-2 T. water, packet of grape Kool-Aid, paint brush, sheet of paper, brown and green marker/crayon

Add one or two tablespoons of water to a packet of grape Kool-Aid. Stir to make the paint.

Paint grapes on your paper.

When the grapes are dry use the markers to draw a vine, branches and leaves.

Scratch and sniff the grapes. Mmmmm.

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**Branch Charades**

**Supplies:** colorful paper cut into 9 fruit shapes, pencil, basket or bag for paper fruit

Directions:
Write one fruit of the Spirit on each piece of paper fruit. Place the paper fruit in the basket or bag. Choose a fruit, and think of a situation where you might bear this fruit. Act it out and see if someone in your family can guess what is being acted out and which fruit of the Spirit it represents.

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**Memory Verse**

Look up John 15:5 in your Bible. Write it on a sheet of paper with a pencil. Read the verse out loud. Then, erase one word and read it out loud again. Continue doing this until all the words have been erased and you have memorized the verse. Share the verse with someone.

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**Create a Parable**

The story of the vine and branches is a parable. A parable is a story used to teach a lesson.

In Bible times, there were many farmers, shepherds, and vineyard workers. Jesus told parables about seeds, sheep, and vines because it helped people living in Bible times understand what he was saying.

If Jesus was in your neighborhood, or at your school, what might He use in His parables? (School, farming, fishing, sports, etc.)

Create a parable to help teach others that we can do nothing unless we remain close to Jesus.

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**Prayer**

Say, write, or draw a prayer thanking God for always being with you. Ask God to help you remain in Him.
Flat Bishop

This is flat bishop. Cut him out and take him along on the adventures below. Have mom or dad take a picture and post it on the Great Plains Conference Facebook page to share with others. #GPAC2021

Enjoy these adventures with flat bishop!

1. Build a tent, climb inside, and read flat bishop your favorite story from the Bible. Tell him what you like about this story.

2. Surprise someone in your family and do something nice for them. When you are finished, leave a note telling that person how much you love them.

3. Go outside. Listen and look for God. Show flat bishop your favorite thing about being outside.

4. Turn on your favorite worship song. Then sing and dance!

5. Act out the parable you made earlier. Have flat bishop help you!

6. Enjoy a snack of grapes and pretzels with flat bishop. As you eat the grapes, pay attention to their sweet flavor. Think about how sweet the fruit you bear is to others. Ask someone in your family what fruit of the Spirit they see in you.

7. Write a letter to yourself about what you learned from the parable of the vine and branches. Be sure to include something that you want to remember. Put the letter in an envelope and give it to your parents. Have them mail it to you in 6 months.

8. Create your own adventure with flat bishop!