

The Way of the Wise

Jesus is the Firm Foundation

Pre-Session Warm Up

[Teacher, before class prepare an envelope with a slip of paper in it that says, “Matthew 7:24-27”. Tape it on the wall above the level the children can reach.]

Who would like to try to get that envelope for me? [When the child determines that the envelope is out of his reach, give him a basketball to stand on.] This doesn’t work very well, does it? The ball keeps moving around. I don’t think the ball is a very good thing to stand on. What might be a better thing to stand on?

[Teacher, help the children to understand the importance of a good foundation.]

Today we begin a study about the differences between foolishness and wisdom. And the place to begin that is by understanding how important it is that we build our lives upon a firm foundation.

Opening Prayer

Father, wise men listen to and obey You; foolish men do not listen to and obey Your words. Teach us how important it is for us to base all of the decisions we make in our lives on Your Word. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:11)

Lesson

[Teacher, ask the child to open the envelope and read the reference so that the class can look up the scripture.]

Matthew 7:24-27

“Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. ²⁵Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock. ²⁶But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. ²⁷When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.”

- How does the Bible describe the two kinds of men in the parable? (One was foolish and one was wise.)
- What foolish thing did the foolish man do? (He built a house with a bad foundation. The foolish man’s house may have been constructed well, but it was built on sand.)
- Where did the wise man build his house? (On a rock foundation.)
- What is the difference between a rock foundation and a sandy foundation? (Rock is stable, solid, firm, unchanging, not easily moved; sand is easily changed or washed away, unstable.)
- What happened to each house when the rain and waters came? (The house with the sandy foundation fell apart; the house with the rock foundation stood firm.)

[Teacher, show pictures of the two houses.]

- Why would a person build on a bad foundation? (He didn’t know how important a foundation is; he didn’t care about the foundation; he was in a hurry; he thought he knew how to build a house and didn’t care about the right way to build a house.)

A person who would build on a bad foundation is a foolish person; wise men don’t build on sandy foundations. Wise men build on rock foundations.

- What do you think happened to the two men? (the wise man was safe; the foolish man probably died.)
- In this story, who does the Bible say is the wise person? (Verse 24, The person who hears and obeys Jesus’ words.)

- So, what makes a person foolish? (Verse 26, Hearing the words of Jesus and disobeying them; not following Jesus. Both the wise and the foolish “hear” the words of Jesus but one obeys and one disobeys.)

This parable is the story of our lives. We are all either like the wise man or the foolish man. We are either building our lives on a bad foundation that is shaky and weak like the ball or the sand, or on a good foundation that is solid, firm and strong like the chair or the rock. Those with an unstable, weak or shaky foundation will be destroyed; those with a strong, solid foundation will live.

So, it’s important for each of us to have a firm foundation.

When Adam and Eve were first created, they had a perfect relationship with the living God. He was their Creator, Protector, and Provider—He gave them all they needed and told them to live in obedience to Him. He was their sure foundation. [Teacher, stand up on the chair.]

Then they sinned against God. They disobeyed God. They didn’t want to live in obedience to Him, so they rejected His rule over them and they lost their sure foundation. They did not listen to and obey God—they were foolish and instead of choosing God’s way, they chose the way of sin and selfishness and pride and disobedience.

Now every person is born in sin. Every person has turned away from God, the sure foundation.

[Teacher, show a box of sand to the children.]

Romans 5:12

When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.

Every person is born on a sandy foundation and will stay on that foundation unless he is rescued.

Romans 5:18-19

Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. ¹⁹Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous.

Just as sin came through one man, so rescue from sin and foolishness comes through one man—one man who obeyed God perfectly, one man who was without sin, one man who paid the price for the foolishness and disobedience and sin of undeserving sinners.

Jesus is God the Son and He died on the cross to take the punishment for sin and rescue man from his foolish, wicked heart and place him on a sure foundation. Through one man came sin, and through one man, Jesus, came salvation from sin.

[Teacher, show the Cross sign.]

1 Corinthians 3:11

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ.

- Does that mean that now everyone is on a sure foundation?

The sure foundation of Jesus’ payment for our sin is available to all, but many choose sin and foolishness instead of Jesus. Many trust in themselves, their good looks, their athletic ability, their money, or their talents instead of trusting in Jesus. Many continue in their sinful ways, loving sin and loving what is wrong instead of loving Jesus. Foolish people “turn away” from Jesus.

Wise people “grab onto” Jesus. Only those who turn away from their sin and grab onto Jesus have a sure foundation. Only the wise man who builds his life on the Word of God, who listens to and obeys God’s Word, and looks to Jesus for the power to turn away from sin and what is wrong, will be rescued from the sandy foundation.

Storms in Life:

- What are the storms that come into everyone’s life?
- What happens to people when “storms” in life hit?
- What kinds of “storms” do kids have?
- What different ways do kids react to those storms?
- How does your foundation hurt you or help you in the hard times?
- What does it mean to have Jesus as your foundation?
- How can you tell if Jesus is your foundation?

Closing Prayer

Father, there are so many foundations that people can build their lives on—money, good looks, athletic ability, popularity, and so forth. But any other foundation other than Jesus is like sand—it will easily crumble. Please help us to stand firmly on Your Word. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Choose Your Way —

On pieces of construction paper, make game squares using the words under each of the following categories, putting each word on a separate paper:

People	Places	Objects
Baby	Classroom	CD
Boy	Home	Milkshake
Dad	Park	Necklace
Girl	School hallway	Phone
Mom	Soccer field	Soccer ball
Pastor	Store	Sock
Teacher	Play yard	TV

1. Lay the game squares on the floor, placing each word in a category its own row: a row of people, a row of places, and a row of objects.
2. Volunteer walks or hops across the papers, stepping on one paper from each category. Then using the words he stepped on, the student makes up a story in which he or she might handle the situation God’s way. For example, if the child stepped on “Boy,” “Park,” and “Ball” he might say, “A boy at the park kicks a soccer ball and it hits an old man.” Have the class discuss how they might feel in that situation and what that boy should do.

Or, use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. How does the Bible describe the two kinds of men in the parable? (One was foolish and one was wise.)
2. What foolish thing did the foolish man do? (He built a house with a bad foundation. The foolish man’s house may have been constructed as well as the wise man’s house, but it was built on sand.)

3. Where did the wise man build his house? (On a rock foundation.)
4. What is the difference between a rock foundation and a sandy foundation? (Rock is stable, solid, firm, unchanging, not easily moves; sand is easily changed or washed away, unstable.)
5. What happened to each house when the rain and waters came? (The house with the sandy foundation fell apart; the house with the rock foundation stood firm.)
6. Why would a person build on a bad foundation? (He didn't know how important a foundation is; he didn't care about the foundation; he was in a hurry; he thought he knew how to build a house and didn't care about the right way to build a house.)
7. What do you think happened to the two men? (the wise man was safe; the foolish man probably died.)
8. In this story, who does the Bible say is the wise person? (Verse 24) (The person who hears and obeys Jesus' words.)
9. So, what makes a person foolish? (Verse 26.) (Hearing the words of Jesus and disobeying them; not following Jesus. Both the wise and the foolish "hear" the words of Jesus but one obeys and one disobeys.)
10. What are some foundations people build their lives on? (Money, good looks, athletic ability, popularity, and so forth.)
11. Why are all foundations, other than Jesus, like a sand foundation? (They easily crumble.)
12. Why is a good foundation important?
13. What are the storms that come into everyone's life?
14. What happens to people when "storms" in life hit?
15. What kinds of "storms" do kids have?
16. What different ways do kids react to those storms?
17. How does your foundation hurt you or help you in the hard times?
18. Do you believe that everyone starts out on sandy soil? Why? (The Bible says that all men are sinners.)
19. What does it mean to have Jesus as your foundation?
20. Is Jesus your foundation?
21. How can you tell if Jesus is your foundation?