
Forward

This book contains lessons from Jesus' parables. Your students will learn that Jesus used parables to illustrate truths about the kingdom of God using true-to-life stories. They will discover the keys to understanding Jesus' parables. They will be encouraged to listen and think about God's Word with their hearts. This is a deeper kind of listening; the kind that gives spiritual insight.

I have designed these lessons to enable you to teach the Bible expositionally. The idea is to have the kids read the passages in their own Bibles and the teacher explain the scriptures and give good practical applications that are age-appropriate. My goal is to ensure that children learn that God's Word is exciting and meaningful and that teachers teach sound doctrine!

Even though I've scripted the lessons, I don't expect teachers to read my lesson materials verbatim to the children as they teach. My lessons are meant to provide the details you need to get background information and some suggestions for child-oriented personal application. Once you know and understand the Bible lessons for yourself, you'll be ready to teach your class.

The two-column layout of this book is designed so that you can copy and cut the pages in half to fit into your Bible. When the children observe that you are teaching right out of the Bible, rather than from a

curriculum book, it validates God's Word and gives your teaching more authority.

You will discover that there is not always a Craft or Game idea suggested in each lesson. When I've had a good idea that really seems to support the lesson objectives, I've included it. But I have another handbook called *Tips and Tricks — Making Children's Bible Lessons Come to Life* that gives lots of suggestions for activities that will help reinforce your lesson and teach the memory verse. (This is available from my website:

<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com/>)

Use the Teaching Schedule to help you organize your teaching rotation.

I pray that you will use these lessons for God's glory by teaching the Bible as an entire plan by a systematic and connected study of the Word.

Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. (Mark 10:14)

Sheila Scroggins

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Teaching Schedule

Date	Teacher	Lesson	Memory Verse
		Sower and the Seed (Matthew 13:1-23)	<i>He who has ears to hear, let him hear!</i> (Matthew 13:9)
		Wheat and Tares (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43)	<i>Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits.</i> (Matthew 7:15 –16a)
		Various "Kingdom" Parables (Matthew 13)	<i>I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.</i> (Matthew 13:35b)
		Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)	<i>Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?</i> (Romans 2:4)
		Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)	<i>Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.</i> (Romans 13:10) <i>But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Highest. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.</i> (Luke 6:35)

The Sower and the Seed

(Matthew 13:1-23)

Introduction

How many of you have planted a garden? What are some different types of soils? Which are the best types of soil to grow seeds in? [Teacher, have some different types of soil that the children can observe.] Farmers find the thought of good soil exciting! Good soil makes them want to get their hands in it and begin planting something! But most soil doesn't start out ready to be planted. It may be hard, or full of weeds or rocks. Usually, soil needs some work before seeds are planted.

Jesus used this familiar experience to help us understand how to receive God's Word so that we will have a fruitful life. We need to prepare our hearts to receive the lessons God wants us to learn so that God's Word will go deep into every hidden place of our lives where it can help us change into the person God wants us to be.

Opening Prayer

Father, prepare our hearts this morning so that the seed of Your Word will take root and we may see and understand the truths that You want us to learn. We want to be open and responsive to the leading and guiding of Your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

He who has ears to hear, let him hear! (Matthew 13:9)

Lesson

What is a *parable*? (A parable is a story that has a lesson to it.) The Lord Jesus used parables to illustrate truths about the kingdom of God. This week we're going to take a look at one of the parables that Jesus taught, the one about the sower and the seed.

Matthew 13:3-4 – **Hard soil**

*He told many stories in the form of parables, such as this one: "Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seeds. (4) As he scattered them across his field, some seeds fell on a **footpath**, and the birds came and ate them.*

What does it mean that a sower went out to sow? To sow means to plant. Farmers in Jesus' day didn't have machines, so they had to do everything by hand. First, the farmer removed the rocks from his field. Then he plowed his field. Finally, he scattered the seed across his field by hand. When you scatter seed by hand, some seed always gets thrown in the wrong places and wasted.

In His story, Jesus tells about some seed that fell on the road beside the field. The road was hard so the seed just lay on top of the dirt. The birds came, picked it up, and ate it.

Matthew 13:5-6 – **Rocky soil**

*Other seeds fell on **shallow soil with underlying rock**. The seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. (6) But the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn't have deep roots, they died.*

Jesus tells of a second situation where some of the seed was scattered on top of rocks where there wasn't much dirt between the rocks. As soon as the rains came, they got watered and began to sprout. But soon the sun came out and they got sun burned. And, because they were not rooted in deep soil that could hold the moisture, they soon dried up and withered away.

Matthew 13:7 – **Thorny soil**

*Other seeds fell among **thorns** that grew up and choked out the tender plants.*

Jesus tells of a third situation where some of the seed was planted along the way where thorny bushes grew. The thorny bushes soon overtook the wheat seedlings, choking them to death.

Matthew 13:8 – **Fertile soil**

*Still other seeds fell on **fertile soil**, and they produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted!*

Jesus finished his story by telling of the fourth situation where seed got planted into the field properly where the birds couldn't come and pick it up and eat it; where it could get rooted in deep enough soil to get plenty of good nourishment and protection from the sun, and where it wasn't choked out by the thorny bushes.

Next, Jesus says....

Matthew 13:9

Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand."

What do you think Jesus was saying here? I think He was saying, "*Listen up, guys! I'm trying to make an important point.*" He was telling them to pay attention with their spiritual ears; that is, with their hearts. Jesus wanted the people to do a deeper kind of listening. The kind that gives spiritual insight and understanding.

When Jesus talked about the different soils, most people probably nodded their heads, thinking, "*Yes, that's true about farming!*" But they didn't understand why Jesus told the story.

So, Jesus tells them the meaning behind the story He just told about the sower and the seed to help them understand the deeper meaning of His story.

Matthew 13:18

"Now listen to the explanation of the parable about the farmer planting seeds:

[Teacher, using the *Keys To Understanding Jesus' Parables* worksheet on page 5; have the children write in the answers as you discuss the following:]

1. Who is the farmer in Jesus' story? That is, who is the one who scatters the seed? (The Lord is the farmer. He's the One spreading the Word of the kingdom.)
2. What is the seed? (God's Word, the truth about God's kingdom)

3. What is the field? Where is the seed getting sown? (In the hearts of people)
4. What are the different types of soils? (The four types of soil represent different responses people have to God's message of forgiveness of sin. People respond differently because they are in different states of openness. Some are *hard hearted*. Others are *shallow*. Others are distracted by the things of this world; that is they are "*worldly*". But, some are *receptive*.)
5. Who are the birds that came and ate the seed that fell on the wayside? (Satan, the wicked one who comes and snatches away the Word of God that was sown in someone's heart)

Compare People to the Soil Types

1. Hardhearted People

What kind of people are like the hard footpath?

Matthew 13:19

The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message about the Kingdom and don't understand it. Then the evil one comes and snatches away the seed that was planted in their hearts.

Jesus knew that some of the people listening to His messages really didn't want to change. When they heard God's Word, their *hard-heartedness* would keep them from remembering what Jesus had said.

2. Shallow People

What kind of people are like the shallow rocky soil?

Matthew 13:20-21

The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. (21) But since they don't have deep roots,

they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word.

They are like some people who are very happy to hear what Jesus has to say in His Word and they think to themselves, "I'm going to live like Jesus says." But when other people make fun of them or put them down for trying to follow Jesus, they give up and do things the way they used to do before.

3. Worldly People

What kind of people are like the soil with thorns or weeds in it?

Matthew 13:22

The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who hear God's word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life and the lure of wealth, so no fruit is produced.

What are the thorns? (The cares and worries of this world; the desires of our flesh; materialism)

They are like some people who at first decide to obey God's Word. But then they become so worried about taking care of themselves (making money and buying material things) that they no longer follow God's Word.

The person who hears the Good News about Jesus, but who is unwilling to give up worldly ways, is the one whose heart is full of thorns. Soon the love of things will choke out the truth about God's love and forgiveness and His gift of eternal life.

4. Fruitful People

What kind of people are like the good soil?

Matthew 13:23

The seed that fell on good soil represents those who truly hear and understand God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!"

They are people who hear God's Word and obey it.

Notice that when the word of truth is sown into good soil, it bears fruit and it produces more fruit. What kind of a "crop" do these good-soil type people produce? This describes a person who comes to know the truth about Jesus and shows others how to live by God's Word as well. And, then those people go and tell still more people about God's wonderful gift of forgiveness of sin and salvation.

We can choose whether or not to pay attention to God's Word. Some of you might listen to God's Word when you're at church on Sundays, but then don't think about it at all during the week. Some of you might say you want to obey God's Word, but then never read it or try to understand what it says. People who are like good soil know the value of God's Word and it helps them live in a godly way. They want to spend time reading and thinking about God's Word and asking His help in understanding and obeying it.

How has God's Word taken root in your life? What kind of soil is your heart?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Father, we want our hearts to be fertile soil where the truth about Your plan of salvation can take root and grow. We want much fruit to come from our lives. Please help us to always be interested and excited about the deeper things of life. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

CRAFT CORNER:

Using the pattern on page 6, have the children make *Seeds of Kindness Seed Packets*. Or, let the children plant seeds in different types of soil.

GAME CENTER

Use the following questions in a game of your choice:

Review questions:

1. What kind of people are like the hard footpath? (People who are hard hearted and don't want to listen to God's plan of salvation.)
2. In order not to be like the "*hard footpath*," what might a person do? (Make a plan to remember what was learned from God's Word. Pray and ask God to help you do what His Word says.)
3. What kind of people are like the "*shallow rocky soil*"? (They start out doing well, but give up and do things the way they used to do before.)
4. How can a person avoid being like "*shallow rocky soil*"? (Take time to think about and pray about what you read from God's Word. Pray, asking God to help you remember what His Word says.)
5. What kind of people are like the "*thorny soil*"? (Worldly people who are more concerned with the cares of this world than about God's plan for their lives.)
6. What are some things in our lives that are like thorny weeds — things we worry about so much that we forget to obey and love God? (Money, peer pressure)
7. What excuses do people use as reasons for not knowing and following God's Word? (Too busy, not interested, don't believe it.)
8. What would a person need to do to stop being like "*thorny soil*"? (Spend time reading and doing the things that are in God's Word.)
9. What kind of people are like the good "*fertile soil*"? (People who have tender hearts towards the things of God.)
10. What could a person do to be like good "*fertile soil*"? (Spend regular time reading God's Word and listening to teaching about God's Word. Plan ways to do what you learn in God's Word. Pray for God to help you be good soil.)
11. How can a person show they value God's Word? (Read it and try to put it into practice in their lives.)
12. What are some things you have already done to be like the good soil? What are some other things you can do?
13. How can you help someone else be like the good soil? (Share God's Word)
14. What is the result of being the good fertile soil Jesus was talking about? (Fruit-bearing)
15. Which of the ways of being like good soil can you be this week?

[For more lessons for children, visit
<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>]

Keys to Understanding Jesus' Parables

Jesus told many stories using everyday things to help us discover truth about His Kingdom. Here is the key to understanding Jesus' parables:

1. Who is the farmer? _____

2. What is the seed? _____

3. What is the field? _____

4. What are the 4 types of soils:

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

d) _____

5. Who are the birds? _____

6. What are the thorns? _____

Seeds of Kindness Seed Packet

HELP OTHERS	TELL THE TRUTH
LET OTHERS GO FIRST	BE KIND TO BROTHERS AND SISTERS
DO NOT BEG FOR THINGS	WORK HARD; DO NOT WASTE TIME
DO NOT BE GREEDY FOR MONEY	LISTEN WITH INTEREST TO OTHERS' PROBLEMS
FORGIVE OTHERS WHEN THEY ARE WRONG	PRAY FOR OTHERS
SAY "EXCUSE ME" WHEN NEEDED	DON'T BRAG OR SHOW OFF
LISTEN CAREFULLY TO OTHERS	ALWAYS BE THANKFUL

1. Color the seed packet.
2. Cut out the packet and the kindness strips.
3. Fold the strips in half.
4. Glue the tabs on the packet to form a pocket. (Leave the top one open.)
5. Put the folded strips in the packet to give to a friend.

"Lettuce" be forgiving.

"Squash" hate.

"Turnip" with a smile.

Planting Instructions:

Sow in humble, caring hearts.

Plant continually. Scatter kindness everywhere.

Water daily with fresh supply of

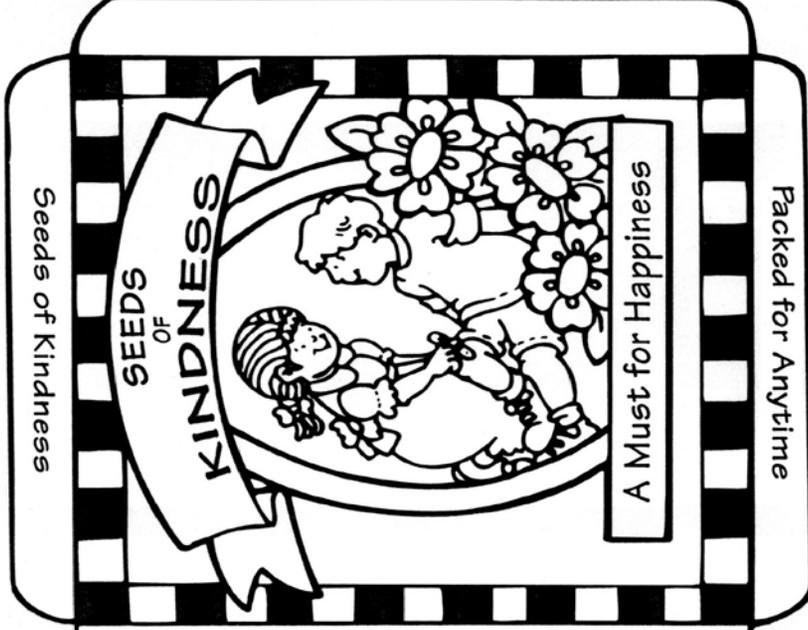
Bible reading.

Keep a sunny disposition.

Continually hoe out unkind thoughts.

Seeds of kindness yields contentment and happiness.

Pests: anger, hate, pride, selfishness and indifference



The Wheat and the Tares

(Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43)

Introduction

Who remembers what a parable is? It's a true-to-life short story that is designed to teach a truth. Jesus taught in parables because He wanted His followers to learn to listen with their spiritual ears; that is, with their hearts. This is a deeper kind of listening; the kind that gives spiritual insight and understanding.

Today we're going to learn a parable about the wheat and the tares.

Opening Prayer

Father, we want to learn as much as we can about Your kingdom. We love You and want to please You in everything we do. Open our spiritual ears this morning so that we might listen with our hearts. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Memory Verse

*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits.
(Matthew 7:15-16a)*

Lesson

Parables teach us about God and His kingdom. They explain what the kingdom is really like. Do you know where the kingdom of God is? Is it someplace far off? No, it's right here among us. It's not another geographic location, it's a spiritual realm where God rules and where we share in His eternal life. We join God's kingdom when we trust in Jesus as our Savior.

Matthew 13:24-25

Here is another story Jesus told: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field. (25) But that night as the

workers slept, his enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat, then slipped away.

Tares are a type of weed that looks just like wheat.

Matthew 13:26-30

When the crop began to grow and produce grain, the weeds also grew. (27) "The farmer's workers went to him and said, 'Sir, the field where you planted that good seed is full of weeds! Where did they come from?' (28) "An enemy has done this!" the farmer exclaimed. "Should we pull out the weeds?" they asked. (29) "No," he replied, 'you'll uproot the wheat if you do. (30) Let both grow together until the harvest. Then I will tell the harvesters to sort out the weeds, tie them into bundles, and burn them, and to put the wheat in the barn.'"

When Jesus told these stories to His disciples, they were wondering why He was telling them stories about farming.

Let's read Jesus' explanation of this parable...

Matthew 13:36-43

*Then, leaving the crowds outside, Jesus went into the house. His disciples said, "Please explain to us the story of the weeds in the field." (37) Jesus replied, "The **Son of Man is the farmer** who plants the good seed. (38) The field is the world, and the **good seed represents the people of the Kingdom**. The **weeds are the people who belong to the evil one**. (39) The enemy who planted the weeds among the wheat is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world, and the harvesters are the angels. (40) "Just as the weeds are sorted out and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the world. (41) The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will remove from his Kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. (42) And the angels will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (43) Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father's Kingdom. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!"*

[Teacher, use the following discussion questions to help the children dig out the spiritual lessons in this parable...]

- In this parable, Who is the farmer? (The Lord, vs 37)
- What are the "good seeds"? (They are the true believers, vs 38.)
- What are the "weeds"? (They are the unbelievers, vs 38.)

As I told you earlier, tares are a certain type of weed that looks almost the same as wheat. While they are growing, you can barely tell the difference between wheat and tares until it's time to harvest them and they start to bear fruit. The tares do not develop heads like wheat does. You can grind the wheat heads into flour and make bread. And, as you know, bread brings nourishment and life to people. Tares are actually poisonous. If you eat tares it makes you sleepy, nauseous, and can cause you to go into convulsions, and even cause both man and animals to die.

What does this tell you about the kingdom of God? In this world there are people who are true believers and some that look just like true believers, but they're not. It's almost impossible for us to tell them apart sometimes, isn't it? But, those who believe become more Christ like as they mature. They bring spiritual nourishment to others by telling them the truth about God's wonderful plan of salvation. Unbelievers can bring spiritual death to people by their false teachings about God's kingdom.

When did the enemy sow the tares in among the wheat? (While men slept, vs 25.)

What spiritual lesson can you learn from this fact? (If you are spiritually asleep, people who look just like Christians can come into your life.) What does it mean to be spiritually asleep? (To be ignorant of the Word of God, the truth about the kingdom of God)

What happens when unbelievers are allowed to flourish in our churches? (If you don't know the Word of God, if you don't know the truth about God's plan of salvation, false teachers can lead you to believe lies about God's kingdom. They can deceive you into thinking wrong things about the Lord.)

You need to be spiritually awake or you'll find yourself spiritually dead. Know what God's Word says!

- What did the weeds do in last week's parable? (They choked out the truth about God.)

- Why didn't the owner want the servants to pick the weeds? (Vs. 28-29 tells us that He's going to have the angels determine who's a good seed and who's a tare. Because we can't see into other people's hearts, we can't be positive who's a true believer. Only God can judge a man's heart rightly.)
- Why did the sower want to wait to separate the wheat from the tares until everything was gathered in at harvest time? (He wants all men to have every opportunity to turn to the truth about Him.)
- What's going to happen to the tares, the "good seed look-a-likes", at harvest time? (They will be cast into the furnace of fire where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.)
- What does it say about the good seed, the true believers? (They will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.)
- What are the spiritual lessons we can learn from this parable?
 - Some people who look like true believers may not be.
 - Only good seed produces good fruit in their lives.
 - It's not up to us to judge other people's hearts, God will do that.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, we want to be good seed. We want to be the kind of people that bring life to others. Help us to bend our hearts towards You, Lord, so that our lives bear fruit unto You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

CRAFT CORNER

GAME CENTER

Have the children work on the *Getting Rid of Weeds* worksheet or send it home as a “take home” paper.

Or, use the following questions in another game of your choice:

Review questions:

1. What is a parable? (A true-to-life short story designed to teach a truth)
2. Why did Jesus teach in parables? (Jesus wanted His followers to learn to listen with their spiritual ears; that is with their hearts.)
3. What is a tare? (A type of weed that looks just like wheat)
4. Who does the “farmer” represent in this story? (The Son of Man; the Lord, vs 37.)
5. What does the “field” represent? (The world, vs 38.)
6. What do the good seeds stand for? (The people of the kingdom; believers, like you and me — we’re the good seed, vs 38.)
7. What do the “weeds” represent in this story? (The people who belong to the evil one; unbelievers, vs 38, and also, those who offend the Lord and practice lawlessness, vs 41.)
8. Who was the enemy who sowed the weeds into the field, or world? (The devil, vs 39)
9. What is the “harvest”? (The end of the world, when Jesus comes back, vs 39.)
10. Who are the “harvesters”? (Angels, vs 39.)
11. At the end of the world, what do the harvesters do with the weeds? (They are gathered and burned in the fire, vs 40.)
12. What’s it like in the fiery furnace where the weeds get thrown? (There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, vs 42.)
13. What happens to the good seed; “the righteous”? (They will shine like the sun in their Father’s kingdom, vs 43.)
14. What spiritual truth did you learn from this parable? (Some people who look like true believers may not be; only good seed produce fruit in their lives; it’s not up to us to judge other people’s hearts, God will do that.)

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Getting Rid of Weeds

God, the Master Gardener, carefully considers our uniqueness and wants us to produce good fruit. He begins with a tiny seed. The seed is the Word of God.

Challenge:

Pluck the unnecessary weeds from some of the scrambled words below. Rearrange the remaining letters of all words and use them to complete Jesus' explanation of the Parable of the Sower. (Some words don't have "weeds" in them.)



- | | | |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. esahr | 9. tsohr | 17. halwte |
| 2. enauntrsd | 10. edbtwuloeser | 18. ffiinuruuf |
| 3. wwseoendns | 11. oiuenspcret | 19. wfeeledsl |
| 4. edse | 12. yscluwqediek | 20. lsio |
| 5. ckwreoeysd | 13. owh | 21. drdewcposseue |
| 6. seamwend | 14. stwoeherdns | 22. gjylndei |
| 7. vrseicee | 15. dwdreowse | 23. yiexwdstes |
| 8. otwdoesre | 16. erdwweoisres | 24. wwdhtaese |

Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone (1) _____ the message about the kingdom and does not (2) _____ it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was (3) _____ in his heart. This is the (4) _____ sown along the path. The one who received the seed that fell on (5) _____ places is the (6) _____ who hears the word and at once (7) _____ it with joy. But since he has no (8) _____, he lasts only a (9) _____ time. When (10) _____ or (11) _____ comes because of the word, he (12) _____ falls away. The one (13) _____ received the seed that fell among the (14) _____ is the man who hears the (15) _____, but the (16) _____ of this life and the deceitfulness of (17) _____ choke it, making it (18) _____. But the one who received the seed that (19) _____ on good (20) _____ is the man who hears the word and understands it. He (21) _____ a crop, (22) _____ a hundred, (23) _____ or thirty times (24) _____ was sown.



Matthew 13:18-23

Various “Kingdom” Parables

(Matthew 13)

Introduction

What’s the kingdom of heaven like? Do you know where the kingdom of God is? Is it someplace far off? No, it’s right here among us. It’s not another geographic location, it’s a spiritual realm where God rules and where we share in His eternal life. We join God’s kingdom when we trust in Jesus as our Savior. Jesus’ kingdom is in the hearts and lives of His followers.

Opening Prayer

Jesus, You were anxious for your true followers to know more about Your ways. We, too, want to come to a deeper understanding of how You want us to behave, Father, so that we can spread the Good News about You to everyone we meet. Please give us new insight into Your ways this morning. Give us a supernatural ability to understand the deeper things of You, Lord. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. (Matthew 13:35b)

Lesson

Today we’re going to look at several small parables of Jesus. Who remembers what a parable is? (It’s a true-to-life short story that is designed to teach a truth. See Matthew 13:34-35.)

Jesus taught in parables because He wanted His followers to learn to listen with their spiritual ears; that is, with their hearts. This is a deeper kind of listening; the kind that gives spiritual insight and understanding.

Jesus wanted people to know what the kingdom of heaven is like, so he compared it to things that they understood from their everyday lives. Keep in mind that when we talk of the kingdom of heaven, we’re talking about the general overall rule of God over this world.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

Matthew 13:31-32 (see also, Luke 19:18-19)

Here is another illustration Jesus used: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed planted in a field. (32) It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of garden plants; it grows into a tree, and birds come and make nests in its branches.”

The mustard seed was the smallest seed a farmer used. Some people believe that Jesus used this parable to show that the kingdom of heaven (that is, the influence of God over the world) has small beginnings but will grow and produce great results — providing great blessings to all who come into the family of God.

Size doesn’t mean it’s healthy. A normal mustard plant is only the size of a small bush. Just because it’s grown into the size of a tree, doesn’t mean that it’s better. In the same way, if a church becomes huge in number, it is not a sign that it is healthy. If the pastors get away from teaching the people from the Word of God they can infect people with lies about God’s kingdom.

Some people believe that this parable tells of how bad people can come into the kingdom of heaven. In other places in the Bible *birds* are a type of evil. In the parable of the Sower and the Seed, the birds came in and snatched up the seed that was scattered on the hard footpath. These birds were a type of Satan.

Jesus tells this parable right after he told the parable of the Wheat and the Tares that we studied last week. In that parable the tares (weeds) grew up in the field with the wheat and no one could really tell the difference until the time of the harvest.

This parable tells how as the kingdom of heaven grows here on earth. There are going to be people coming into our lives that say they are Christians and look like true believers, but are really not. Those are the “birds” that come in and *make nests in its branches*.

The Parable of the Leaven

Matthew 13:33 (see also, Luke 13:20-21)

Jesus also used this illustration: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like the yeast a woman used in making bread. Even though she put only a little yeast in three measures of flour, it permeated every part of the dough.”

Who knows what leaven is? *Leaven* is a substance that you put into bread dough to make it rise. It produces a gas that makes the dough puff up.

In other Bible passages, yeast is used as a symbol of sin because it puffs up, just as pride puffs us up and makes us proud. Although yeast looks like a minor ingredient, it seeps into the whole loaf. This parable explains what happens when evil or sin is present within the church. If you leave the sin in the church, it will affect the whole body of believers in a bad way. You can’t even leave one small speck.

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

Matthew 13:44

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field.

What is the “field” in this parable? (The world) The kingdom of heaven is the family of believers in this world.

Who is the man? (Jesus) What did he do? Why does it say he sold all that he had to buy the field?

Philippians 2:5-7

You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. (6) Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. (7) Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form,

Jesus “sold” all that he had by coming down out of Heaven to be born as a baby human. He temporarily gave up his position in glory to humble Himself as a man! And, He “bought” the field.

1 John 2:2

He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.

Do you see what it cost Him? He went through a torturous death on the cross to pay for our sins. He took the punishment we deserve so that our debt to God the Father for our sins was fully paid and we can now come into Heaven when we die.

The parable says he bought the field. The “field” is a type of the world. That means that the Lord purchased the whole earth. He died for all sin. He did that in order to get the true believers, the treasure hidden in the field.

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price

Matthew 13:45-46

“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. (46) When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it!

Who is the “merchant”? (Jesus) Who is the “pearl” of great value? (The church.) God loves us with an everlasting love! What did Jesus do? He gave up his position at the right hand of God and allowed Himself to be sacrificed on our behalf.

The pearl is the only jewel that is a product of a living organism. All other jewels (diamonds, topazes, and so on) are minerals mined out of stone. Pearls grow inside of oysters. The oyster, like the field in the other parables, is a symbol of the world. They grow as a result of an irritation when a piece of sand gets inside of its shell.

An interesting thing to know is that according to the law God gave to Moses, oysters were unclean and the people were forbidden to eat

them. Yet, pearls grow inside of an oyster. In the same way, true believers act as an irritation to the people of the world. As we make a stand for doing things God’s way—as we let the Holy Spirit guide our thoughts, words, and actions—we make a positive influence on the people of the world around us. And, as we interact with unbelievers, we grow spiritually, like a pearl.

The Parable of the Dragnet

Matthew 13:47-50

“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a fishing net that was thrown into the water and caught fish of every kind. (48) When the net was full, they dragged it up onto the shore, sat down, and sorted the good fish into crates, but threw the bad ones away. (49) That is the way it will be at the end of the world. The angels will come and separate the wicked people from the righteous, (50) throwing the wicked into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

A *dragnet* is a fishing net. Modern day commercial fishermen still use dragnets to catch fish. They throw a big net over the side of a boat and drag it along for a way, then when they pull it back up into the boat it is filled with all sorts of fish, some that are marketable and some that aren’t. They keep the valuable ones and throw the rest back into the sea.

This parable has the same meaning as the parable of the Wheat and the Tares we discussed last week. Just as the sea contains both good and bad fish, it is not until the fishermen pull in the harvest that they can save the good and throw back the bad.

In this life, we are like one of the fish. We’re to swim around in this world telling others about the Good News of God’s plan of salvation. Our job is to obey God and tell others about His grace and goodness, but we cannot judge who is part of the kingdom of heaven and who is not. This sorting will be done at the last judgment by the angels who are much more qualified than we.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for giving us all these parables that tell us about Your kingdom. We know that the kingdom of heaven is right inside of our own hearts. As we learn about Your ways it helps us with our attitudes. We want every thought that we have, every word that we speak, and everything that we do to be pleasing to you, Lord. Help us to remember the lessons we’ve learned. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Learning Centers

Craft Corner

Game Center

Wheat and Tare Game: Divide the children into two teams: boys against girls, for example. For every correct answer to one of the following questions, a child can pick up a playing card with a picture of wheat on the front. On the backs of some of the cards, write the word “Zonk” and on the rest of the cards, write point values. The “Zonk” cards are the “birds” and are worth nothing. Keep track of each team’s points.

Or, use the following questions in another game of your choice:

1. What is a parable? (It’s a true-to-life short story that is designed to teach a spiritual truth.)
2. Why did Jesus teach in parables? (He wanted His followers to learn to listen with their spiritual ears; that is, with their hearts.)
3. What is the kingdom of heaven? (The rule of God over the world)
4. Tell me the parable of the mustard seed in your own words.

5. How is the kingdom of heaven like a mustard seed? (It starts out small, but produces great blessing to many.)
6. What do the birds represent? (Evil or Satan)
7. What is leaven? (It's a substance you put into bread dough to make it puff up; yeast.)
8. In the Bible, what is yeast often a type of? (It's a symbol of evil.)
9. How is the kingdom of heaven like leaven? (If you let sin into the church it will affect the whole body of believers in a bad way.)
10. Why is the kingdom of heaven like treasure hidden in a field? (Of all the people in the world, the true believers are precious to the Lord.)
11. Why does it say he sold all that he had to buy the field? (Jesus gave up His position at the right hand of God and allowed Himself to be sacrificed on the cross to die for the sins of the whole world.)
12. Who is the "pearl of great value"? (Us, the church)
13. What interesting fact can you tell me about pearls? (The pearl is the only jewel that is a product of a living organism. Pearls grow inside of an oyster. They grow as a result of an irritation when a piece of sand gets inside of its shell.)
14. How is a pearl like us? (We grow in an unclean organism, the world. We are an irritation to worldly people around us. But, as we interact with the world, we grow spiritually.)
15. What is a dragnet? (A fishing net)
16. Tell me the parable of the dragnet in your own words.
17. Who will separate the wicked from among the just? (The angels)
18. What will happen to the wicked? (They will be cast into the furnace of fire where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.)

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<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>]



The Prodigal Son

(Luke 15:11-32)

Introduction

[Teacher, perform the following skit with a puppet or in a role-play:]

"I'm going to run away from home! I hate living here. I'm always getting bossed around. My mom is always making me clean my room, do my homework, and wash the dishes. Every day it's the same old routine. I have to get up at 7 a.m., go to bed at a 9 p.m. even when I'm not even tired — I wish I could do the things I want to, when I want to do them!"

Have you ever felt like running away because you were tired of living at home? Perhaps you've lain in your bed at night thinking of what it would be like living somewhere else. It's very easy to become dissatisfied with what you have when you constantly think about the things you don't have rather than remembering all the good things you do have.

Perhaps that's what happened to the guy in a story Jesus told. Things looked a lot better anywhere else.

Opening Prayer

Father, this morning we will again learn one of Jesus' parables. I pray that You will give us the spiritual understanding that we need to see beneath the surface of this story so that we might understand the deeper spiritual truths that You want us to learn about Your kingdom. Open the eyes and ears of our heart, I pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Memory Verse

Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? (Romans 2:4)

Lesson

The Pharisees and scribes were the arrogant and self-righteous religious leaders of Jesus' day. They thought it was terrible that Jesus showed kindness toward sinners. They thought they were better than most people because they strictly kept the *Ten Commandments* and all the rest of the rules. They thought that God shouldn't forgive people that they considered horrible sinners. It made them angry and resentful to hear Jesus teach that God wanted sinners to come to Heaven. So, Jesus confronted them with a parable to show them God's love for the lost sinner.

Remember a parable is a true-to-life story that teaches a truth about God's kingdom.

Luke 15:11-12

Then He said: A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me." So he divided to them his livelihood.

The oldest son always inherited two portions of the father's estate while the other brothers got only a single portion. Usually the sons would not have received their father's inheritance until after the father died.

How good this father was to his younger son! He was willing to give his hard-earned savings to his son even though the son didn't deserve to have it until after his father's death.

In a far greater way than you could ever imagine, God loves you and me. He is very good to us and has given us many things to enjoy! Can you think of some of the things God has given you? (He's given us good health, a loving mother and father, a warm bed, enough food to eat, etc.)

[Teacher, lead the children into a discussion.]

The Bible says that God is "*abounding [overflowing] in goodness*" (Exodus 34:6). As our Creator, God has filled the earth with His goodness (Psalm 33:5).

Why is He so good to you? Is it because you deserve it or because you have earned it in some special way? No, God loves you because that is just the way He is. "God is love" (1 John 4:8), and you are His treasured creation.

The love of the father in our story is a picture of God's love for us: He willingly lets us enjoy all that belongs to Him. When the younger son asked for his portion early, it showed that he was self-centered and had no respect for his father.

Luke 15:13

And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.

The word *prodigal* means wasteful. Someone who lives a prodigal life is one who spends or gives lavishly and foolishly.

The son had disregarded his father's love and care and decided to go his own way. How foolish! God's Word says that you and I are much like that son. God has been very good to us: He has provided for our needs and given us many things to enjoy. Yet we, too, go our own way (Isaiah 53:6) and waste what the Father has given us.

We often do things that displease God. Can you think of ways we displease God? (We speak rudely to our brothers & sisters, talk back to our mothers, get cocky at school with our teachers, etc.) [Teacher, lead the children into a discussion.] You do those things because you were born with a sinful heart that is constantly persuading you to do wrong despite God's goodness to you.

Your sin keeps you far away from God, and eventually it will lead you to the horrible consequence of being separated from Him forever. Your only hope is to believe on the Lord Jesus as your Savior from sin.

But often you and I are much like this son — foolishly going our own way, disregarding God's goodness and love. Soon the son would have to suffer the consequences of following his own sinful heart.

Luke 15:14-15

But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

According to the law God gave to Moses, pigs were unclean animals and the people were forbidden to eat pork (Leviticus 11:7,8). Jews would not even touch pigs. For a Jew to stoop to feeding pigs was a great humiliation.

Luke 15:16

And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.

He was starving and would have eaten the pig food if it had been offered to him. But, for this young man to eat food that the pigs had touched was the lowest possible thing the listeners of this story could imagine. The prodigal son had truly sunk to the depths of society.

Luke 15:17

But when he came to himself, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!"

The younger son, like many who are rebellious and immature, wanted to be free to live as he pleased, and he had to hit bottom before he came to his senses. It often takes great sorrow and tragedy to cause people to look to the only One who can help them.

Luke 15:18-19

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.""

The son realized his sin against God and his father. Recognizing that you have sinned is the first step towards making peace with God. Jesus was trying to show the Pharisees that there was hope

for them if they would only grieve and agonize over their sins like the guy in this story.

Luke 15:20

And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

In this story, the father watched and waited. He was ready to greet his son if he returned. In the same way, God's love is constant and patient and welcoming. He will not force us to come to Him. God waits patiently for us to turn from our sins, come to Him, and ask Him for forgiveness.

Luke 15:21-24

And the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father said to his servants, "Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." And they began to be merry.

The son had left out of selfishness, just like we do when we willfully disobey God. But, God's great love reaches out and finds us sinners no matter why or how we got lost.

Luke 15:25

Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.

The older brother represents the Pharisees who were listening to Jesus tell this story. They were so busy finding fault with Jesus' allowing "undeserving sinners" to be part of His kingdom, they failed to enjoy their own rich inheritance.

It was hard for the older brother to accept his younger brother when he returned, and it is just as difficult for us to accept it when a

notoriously sinful person comes to Christ. Our tendency is to hold that person in suspicion. Instead, we should rejoice like the angels in Heaven when a unbeliever repents and turns to God. Like the Father, we should accept repentant sinners wholeheartedly and give them the support and encouragement that they need to grow in Christ.

Luke 15:26-28

So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, "Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf." But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him.

The older brother's attitude was just as self-righteous as the attitudes of the Pharisees' to whom Jesus was telling this story.

Luke 15:29-30

So he answered and said to his father, "Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him."

In the story of the prodigal son, the father's response is contrasted with the older brother's. The father forgave because he was filled with love. The older brother refused to forgive because he was bitter about the injustice of it all. His resentment rendered him just as lost to the father's love as the younger brother had been.

Don't let anything keep you from forgiving others.

Luke 15:31

And he said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours.

The father encouraged him to rejoice on behalf of his younger brother. He said, "All that I have is yours." The father wasn't going to

take the older son's inheritance away from him. He still had the double portion that was his by birth right, even though the younger son had already spent his single portion. The father was just glad the son had come home where he belonged.

Luke 15:32

It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found."

In Jesus' story, the older brother represented the Pharisees, who were angry and resentful that sinners were being welcomed into God's kingdom. After all, the Pharisees must have thought, "we have done so much for God".

How easy it is for us to resent God's gracious forgiveness of others whom we consider to be far worse sinners than ourselves. But when our self-righteousness gets in the way of rejoicing when others come to Jesus, we are no better than the Pharisees.

Jesus does not tell us how this older brother responded after his father's appeal. It was up to the Pharisees to finish the story by making a decision for or against God's love in Christ.

God is longing to forgive your sins and give you everlasting life.

Closing Prayer

Father, I know that You are longing to forgive us our sins and to give us everlasting life. I pray that we would be like the younger son, and come to You with repentant hearts. Help us not to be resentful of others that receive Your love and forgiveness. We want to rejoice with You and the angels when the lost come into Your kingdom. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Have the children work on *The Lost Son* worksheet or send it home as a "take home" paper.

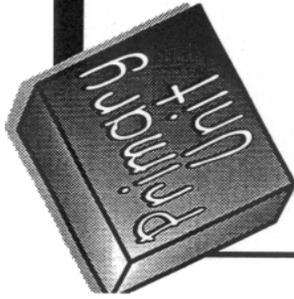
Or, use the following questions in another game of your choice:

Review questions:

1. Who were the Pharisees and the scribes? (The arrogant and self-righteous religious leaders of Jesus' day)
2. Why did they think it was terrible that Jesus showed kindness towards sinners? (They thought they were better than most people)
3. This is the Parable of the Prodigal Son. What does the word *prodigal* mean? (The word *prodigal* means wasteful. Someone who lives a prodigal life is one who spends or gives lavishly and foolishly.)
4. Can you tell me in your own words the Parable of the Prodigal Son?
5. Who does the father represent? (God, the Father)
6. Who does the younger son represent? (Us)
7. The son disregarded his father's love and care, decided to go his own way. What is that a picture of? (We, too, go our own way and waste what the Father has given us.)

8. What is the love of the father in the parable a picture of? (God's love for us. He willing lets us enjoy all that belongs to Him.)
9. What are some ways we displease God? (Speak rudely to our brothers and sisters, talk back to our mothers, get cocky at school with our teachers, etc.)
10. Why do you do things that displease God? (We were born with a sinful heart that is constantly persuading us to do wrong despite God's goodness to us.)
11. Why is feeding pigs the lowest possible thing for the listeners of this story to imagine? (According to the law God gave to Moses, pigs were unclean animals and the people were forbidden to eat pork.)
12. What did the prodigal son finally realize once he came to his senses? (He realized his sin against God and his father.)
13. Why did Jesus tell this story to the Pharisees and scribes? (He wanted them to realize that they were sinners and needed to ask the Father for forgiveness.)
14. Where was the father when the son finally came home? (He was watching and waiting for him and ready to greet him.)
15. Tell me about the older brother? Who did he represent in this story? (The arrogant and self-righteous Pharisees and scribes who were listening to Jesus tell this story.)
16. Why was the older brother so full of hate and bitterness and resentment? (His father was throwing a "welcome home" party for his little brother and he didn't think it was fair. He had stayed home and done all the right things--worked hard for his father, never did any prodigal living like his younger brother had.)
17. Why did the father throw that party for the younger son? (Because he had been lost, but now he was back home where he ought to be)
18. Have you ever been resentful when someone else got something you felt you deserved?

[For more lessons for children, visit
<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>]



The Lost Son

Read Luke 15:11–32. Then complete the sentences or mark the statements true or false.

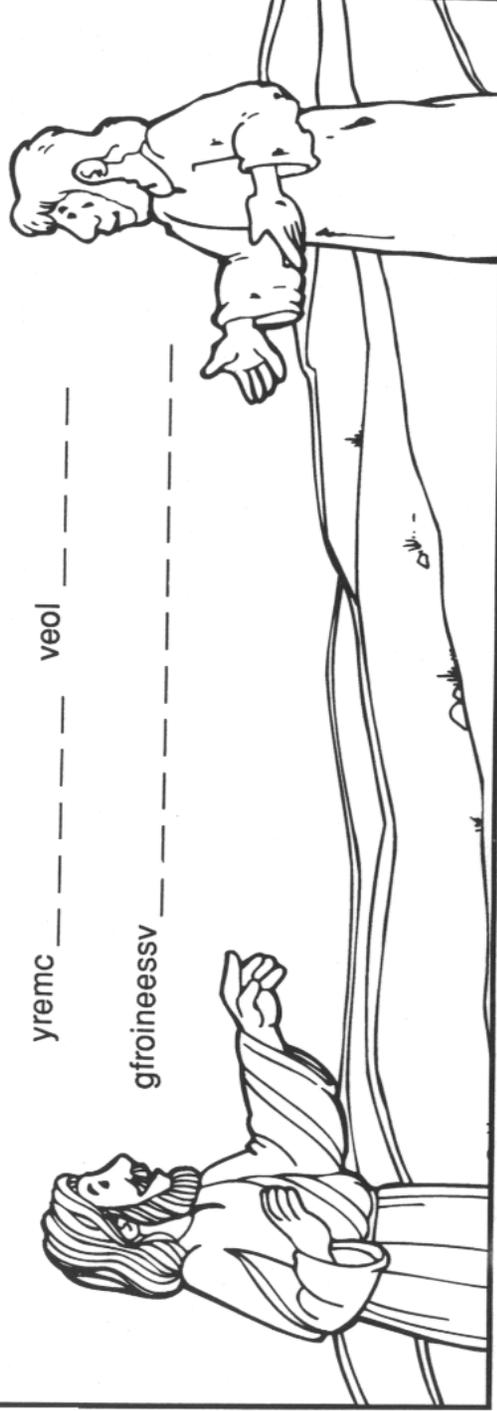
1. There was a man with two sons. The _____. (a) younger (b) older son asked for his inheritance.
2. The son spent the inheritance very _____. (a) wisely (b) foolishly
3. The son got a job feeding _____. (a) horses (b) cows (c) pigs
4. **True or False** It was a very good job and the son had a lot to eat.
5. The son finally came to his senses and realized that his father's _____. (a) hired (b) top men had more food than he did.
6. **True or False** The son decided he would say to his father, "I have sinned against you and I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men."
7. When his father saw his son from far away, he _____. (a) walked slowly (b) ran to him and _____. (a) yelled at (b) kissed him.
8. His father did not give him _____. (a) a robe (b) a ring (c) sandals (d) a bag of money.
9. The older son was very _____. (a) angry (b) happy that his father was giving his brother a celebration.
10. **True or False** The father said to the older boy, "My son, you are always with me and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again."

In this parable "the father" represents God. What are some of the qualities of God shown by this parable? Unscramble the words.

yremc _____

veol _____

gfroineessv _____



The Good Samaritan

(Luke 10:25-37; Luke 6:27-36; and Matthew 5:43-44)

Introduction

In Matthew 19:19 Jesus said, "*Honor your father and your mother*", and, "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*"

Who are our neighbors? [Teacher, allow time for responses.] Are the kids here in this class our neighbors? Are the sick and the unwanted our neighbors? What about old people? What about the poor and homeless?

Today we're going to learn about a day a lawyer came and asked Jesus, "*Who is my neighbor?*"

Opening Prayer

Father, we want to be the kind of people You want us to be. We pray this morning that You will give us the power of the Holy Spirit to understand the lesson You have for us today. Then help us to apply the lesson to our lives. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Memory Verse

Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (Romans 13:10)

And/or

But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Highest. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. (Luke 6:35)

Lesson

One day a lawyer came and asked Jesus a tricky question.

Luke 10:25

One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: "Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?"

The Jews in Jesus' day believed that a person must obey the *Ten Commandments* perfectly in order to go to Heaven after they die. They thought that they could earn eternal life by doing good works.

Jesus came to earth to tell people that it is impossible to earn eternal life. The good things we do don't make us right in the sight of a holy God. You can't do enough good things to make up for the sin in your life. Jesus wanted people to understand that they needed a Savior and that He came to be our Savior.

When the scribes and Pharisees heard Jesus teach about God's kingdom, His teachings were so radically different than anything they'd ever heard before, they thought He was being wicked.

Because the religious leaders were jealous of Jesus' popularity with the people, they would try to trick Jesus into saying something contrary to the Word of God. Their hope was to bring Him before the high priest and have Him punished.

This lawyer in our story this morning was an expert in explaining God's laws. He, of all people, knew God's laws very well. So, when he asked Jesus, "*What shall I do to inherit eternal life?*" he was just testing Jesus to see what He would say.

Luke 10:26

Jesus replied, "What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?"

Jesus answered the lawyer by asking him another question.

Luke 10:27

The man answered, "'You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.' And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

The lawyer answered Jesus' question by summing up the *Ten Commandments*. The first four commandments tell us to love God. (Don't have any other gods, don't have any idols, don't take God's

name in vain, and keep the Sabbath holy.) The last six commandments tell us to love others. (Honor your parents, don't murder, don't commit adultery, don't steal, don't lie, and don't covet.)

The whole law is summed up with, "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart ... and your neighbor as yourself.*"

When it says to *love your neighbor as yourself*, what does it mean? Just as you love and care for your own needs, you are to love others. When you're hungry, you get yourself something to eat. If a friend of yours came over you wouldn't get yourself something to eat and not give anything to your friend, would you? You wouldn't make a houseguest go sleep out in the back yard while you went and slept in a nice warm comfortable cozy place. In the same way you take care of yourself, so you are to treat your neighbors.

Luke 10:28

"Right!" Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live!"

Jesus knew that it is impossible to do this. No one in his own strength could ever love God or his neighbor with all of his heart, soul, strength and mind. And, the lawyer was probably feeling very uneasy at this point, knowing that he didn't love God with all his being and his neighbor as himself. So he asks Jesus to define the term "*neighbor*."

Luke 10:29

The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

As a Jew, the lawyer probably believed that his neighbor was only his fellow Jew. So, Jesus used a parable to show the lawyer what God's love is like. Remember a parable is a true-to-life story about common, everyday things that teaches a spiritual truth about God.

Luke 10:30-31

Jesus replied with a story: "A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of

*his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road. (31) "By chance a **priest** came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by.*

Surely a priest, who served God and lead others in the worship of God would care about his "*neighbor*." But he didn't. He glanced at the injured man and passed by, choosing not to dirty himself.

Luke 10:32

*A **Temple assistant** walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side*

The Levites were servants at the temple, assisting the priests in God's work. They spent their lives teaching people about God's law. Surely this Temple assistant would have known the law. But he, too, refused to help his neighbor. He stopped and looked at the victim and then passed by.

Luke 10:33-34

*"Then a despised **Samaritan** came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. (34) Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him.*

The Jews and the Samaritans had been enemies for years. The Jews despised Samaritans. The lawyer listening to Jesus tell this story would never have considered a Samaritan his neighbor. Yet it was a Samaritan, who usually would not help a Jew, who showed himself a "*neighbor*" to the wounded Jew!

Luke 10:35

The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, "Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here."

The Samaritan paid all costs, left money, and promised more!

Luke 10:36-37

“Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?” Jesus asked. (37) The man replied, “The one who showed him mercy.” Then Jesus said, “Yes, now go and do the same.”

It was probably hard for the lawyer to admit that the Samaritan was the hero in Jesus’ story. Yet the Samaritan was a wonderful example of what it means to be a true neighbor. He showed kindness to a man who probably hated him. The Bible says we should love our enemies [Teacher, review today’s memory verse.]

Sometimes it’s even hard to show love to our friends. It may require sharing, giving in to their way, or letting them be first. It’s even harder to reach out and love our enemies. It takes God’s love to be kind to someone who has been mean to us. You can’t do it in your own strength, you must ask Jesus into your heart and then you can call upon the Holy Spirit to give you the power you need.

We need to ask God to help us notice people who are in need. Look for practical ways to be of help each day. [Teacher, lead the children in a discussion using the following questions.]

- How can we help the sick or the old or the poor? (Visit the sick, send cards, be a friend, say a kind word, or invite them to church.)
- How can we be good neighbors to people who live on the other side of the world? (Support mission work, write letters, and pray)

Regardless of who they are, God will give you the power to love them.

So, who is your neighbor? Anyone you can help is your neighbor — any friend or enemy in trouble. Showing love and kindness shows that you truly love God. God loves every person, no matter what church he goes to, or if he’s been mean to you, or if his skin is a different color. God wants us to do good to all.

Closing Prayer

Father, we usually know what is right. We pray that you will empower us to do what we know we should do. Help us to always be loving and kind to everyone, no matter which church they go to or what color their skin is. We want to be Good Samaritans, helping people in need, no matter what the cost is to us personally. Amen.

Special Note to the Teacher

Confronting the needs of others brings out various attitudes in us. Jesus used the story of the good, but despised, Samaritan to make clear what attitude was acceptable to Him. If we are honest, we often will find ourselves in the place of the expert in the law, needing to learn again who our neighbor is. Note these different attitudes toward the wounded man:

To the...	The wounded man was...
• expert in the law	...a subject to discuss
• robbers	...someone to use and exploit
• religious men	...a problem to be avoided
• innkeeper	...a customer to serve for a fee
• Samaritan	...a human being worth being cared for and loved

To Jesus, all of them and all of us were worth dying for.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Using the pattern on pages 27 and 28, have the children make a Good Samaritan booklet.

Game Center

Use the following questions in a game of your choice:

Review questions:

1. How did the Jews in Jesus' day believe that a person got eternal life? (By obeying the *Ten Commandments* perfectly and doing good works)
2. Why did the scribes and Pharisees think that Jesus was wicked? (His teachings were so radically different than anything they'd ever heard before.)
3. What did Jesus teach the people that made the scribes and Pharisees so angry? (That you couldn't keep the *Ten Commandments* perfectly; that's why you need a Savior)
4. If a lawyer is an expert in explaining God's laws, why did he ask Jesus what to do to inherit eternal life? (He was trying to trick Jesus into saying something contrary to the Word of God.)
5. Why did the religious leaders of Jesus day try to trick Him into saying something contrary to the Word of God? (They wanted to bring Him before the high priest and have Him punished.)
6. Tell the parable of the Good Samaritan in your own words.
7. Which of the three was the "*neighbor*" to the guy who fell among the thieves? (The Samaritan)
8. When Jesus said to *love your neighbor as yourself*, what was he saying? (Just as you love and care for your own needs, you are to love others.)
9. How can we help the sick or the old or the poor? (Visit the sick, send cards, be a friend, say a kind word, or invite them to church.)

10. How can we be good neighbors to people who live on the other side of the world? (Support mission work, write letters, and pray)
11. It's impossible to love God with your whole being and your neighbor as yourself. So, what must you do? (Ask Jesus into your heart and call upon the Holy Spirit to give you the power you need to be loving.)

[For more lessons for children, visit
<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>]



Once a man was taking a trip when he was attacked by robbers and left half dead.

3



A Samaritan stopped and helped the man as Jesus wants us to help people.

9

“Love your neighbor as yourself.” Luke 10:27c

The Good Samaritan

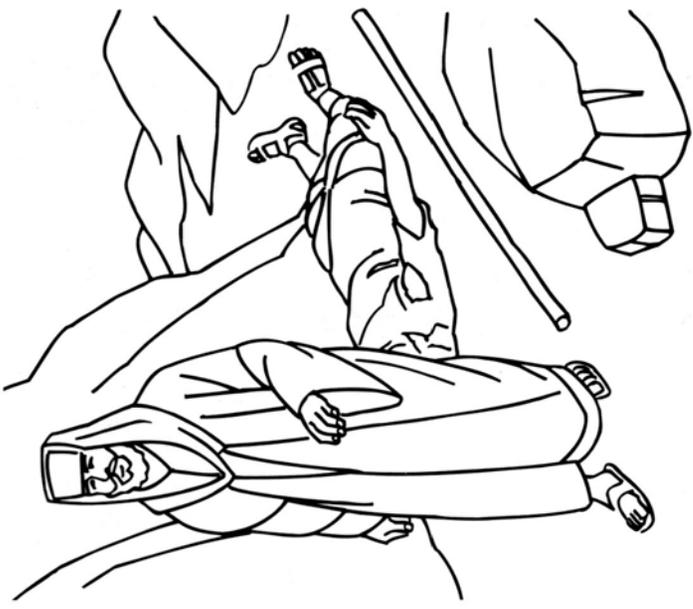
8

1



Another religious leader passed by the hurt man without stopping to help.

5



A religious leader saw the injured man, but he did not stop to help.

4

This book was made by

2

Draw a picture of how you have been a Good Samaritan by helping someone.

7