

Jesus Taught in Parables

Matthew 13; Mark 4

What did Jesus teach when He was on earth?

Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all scripture is about Him.

In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.
Matthew 5:16

Story Point:

People will have different responses to God's kingdom.



PREPARE HEARTS

- ☐ Welcome - Seed Search
- ☐ Starter Activity - Scooping Seeds



ACTIVATE HEARTS

- ☐ 9:20 - Bible Lesson in LG2
- ☐ Review and discuss the Bible Story
- ☐ Reflection and Prayer
- ☐ Questions from Kids Video



ENGAGE HEARTS

- ☐ Key Passage Activity - Freeze!
- ☐ Group Activity - Growing God's Word
- ☐ Group Activity - Name that Path

SHEPHERD GUIDE

Some people have natural green thumbs, but for most amateur gardeners, making plants grow takes skill and hard work. This is because the curse has placed many obstacles in the way of natural growth. The soil may be too tough, the heat too stifling, the shade too restrictive, or the water too scarce. What looks healthy one week, can quickly wilt the next. Growing something is harder than it looks.

Maybe that's part of what makes Jesus' parable about the sower and the seeds so relatable. In Jesus' day, farmers would scatter seed as they went through their field. Everyone listening to Jesus that day would have been familiar with this practice. In His parable, Jesus described four kinds of soil—four different heart conditions—with only one of them producing lasting fruit.

The seed, which Jesus says is the Word of God, lands in a variety of places, but not every setting leads to growth. The difference isn't the seed; it's the soil.

The good soil, Jesus says, represents those who "hear the word with an honest and good heart" and "hold on to it" (Luke 8:15). The Greek phrase for "hold on" means "to cling tightly, to keep secure." It's the picture of someone refusing to let go, even when life gets hard. That's the difference between hearing and holding.

Growth takes time, and good soil doesn't happen by accident. God softens it through repentance, waters it through His Spirit, and keeps it fertile through His Word.

As you prepare to lead kids this week, ask the Lord to till the soil of their hearts to make them receptive to His Word. May the seeds you plant through teaching them about Jesus produce a future multiplied harvest.

REMINDER: Our VIP meeting is from 8:30-8:40 in C1. Your supply bin will be in your classroom.

MAIN TAKEAWAYS: We want our kids to:

*KNOW that God is the one who helps their faith grow, who protects it and who keeps working on their hearts.

*BE open to God working on the soil of their hearts to make them receptive to His Word.

As children arrive - Welcome them by name and invite them to play with you and the other children.

Use this time to get to know your kids - ask them about their week, about their likes and dislikes and about their school, family and friends.

Ways to connect - Play a game from the closet, color or draw together, build with legos/blocks, etc.

When most kids have arrived for first service (by 9:05ish), ask them to clean up the toys and find a seat at one of the tables to begin the class.

**Pen Pal Kit!!*



PREPARE HEARTS

WELCOME

Seed Search

- Activity page
- Markers
- Pencils

OPENING QUESTIONS:

Tell me about a time you or someone you know planted a seed. What did it grow into?

Invite kids to complete the “Seed Search” activity page.

Everyone did a great job picking out the seeds that sprouted! In today’s story, we’ll learn how Jesus compared God’s kingdom to a man who planted seeds.



STARTER

Scooping Seeds

- Small empty cup
- Bin full of popcorn kernels or seeds

Group the kids into two teams.

Have the teams line up on one side of the room. Give each team a small, empty cup and a bucket full of popcorn kernels.

Place one empty bucket for each team on the opposite side of the room. The first kid in line will fill the cup with kernels, walk across the room, dump them in his or her team’s bucket, and run back.

They will then pass the cup to the next kid in line, who will repeat this. Spilled kernels must be added back to the bucket at the starting line. The first team to move all their kernels to the other bucket wins.

SAY: You had to be careful as you moved the popcorn kernels across the room! In today’s story, we’ll see the importance of being careful with our choices. Jesus taught that PEOPLE WILL HAVE DIFFERENT RESPONSES TO GOD’S KINGDOM.



ACTIVE MINDS

Taught by the Bible Teacher:

INTRODUCE THE BIBLE STORY

(Quick 1 minute review!)

9:20 – 9:35

K – 4th Grade in LG2

BIBLE STORY:

Jesus Taught in Parables

Bibles, Powerpoint slides

Quick Review of where we are in the Big Story of the Bible and Big Picture Question:

What did Jesus teach when He was here on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all scripture is about Him.

Open your Bible to Matthew 13 and/or Mark 4.

STORYTELLING OPTIONS / TIPS:

Show Seeds: Consider providing some small seeds to help the kids visualize the parable. Allow the kids to pass around the seeds as you read through the story.

Agricultural society: Explain that the people Jesus told these parables to lived in an agricultural society, which means they relied on farming for their food and income. Jesus told stories using concepts they would connect with.

Use hand signals: Challenge the kids to listen for statements about God's kingdom. Encourage them to give a thumbs up any time they hear how we should respond to God's kingdom, and give a thumbs down when they hear how we should not respond.

Jesus traveled from town to town, telling people the good news about God's kingdom. Everywhere He went, crowds gathered to listen. One day, Jesus was sitting by the Sea of Galilee. So many people gathered around Him that He got into a boat, sat down, and taught while the crowd stood on the shore.

Jesus often taught using parables—short stories with a special meaning—to help people understand what God's kingdom is like. This time, He told a story about a man planting seeds.

"Listen!" Jesus began. "A sower went out to plant seeds in his field. As he scattered them, some seeds fell on a hard path. Birds swooped down and ate the seeds.

"Other seeds fell on rocky ground where there wasn't much dirt. They sprouted quickly, but the soil was too shallow for roots to grow. When the sun got hot, the plants dried up and died.

"Some seeds fell among thorny ground. The thorns grew up and choked the plants so they couldn't grow strong.

"But some seeds fell on good soil. These seeds grew into healthy plants and made more grain than the farmer had planted—many times more!"

Later, Jesus' disciples asked Him, "Why do You tell stories like this instead of just saying things plainly?"

Jesus replied, "Not everyone is ready to understand the truth about God's kingdom. I speak in parables so that those who are ready will understand, but others will not—just as the prophet Isaiah said long ago. But you, My disciples, are blessed. God has opened your eyes and ears so you can understand."

Then Jesus explained the story. He said, "The seeds on the path are like people who hear the truth but don't understand it. The evil one snatches away what was planted in their hearts.

"The seeds on rocky ground are like people who hear the truth and are happy to believe at first, but when it becomes hard to follow God's Word, they quickly give up.

“The seeds among the thorns are like people who hear the truth, but their hearts are crowded with worries and the love of money. They do not give God’s Word room to grow in their hearts.

“But the seeds in the good soil are like people who hear the truth and welcome it. They understand the gospel and let it change their lives. They grow in faith and share the good news with others—producing much more than was planted!”

CHRIST CONNECTION

Not everyone who hears about Jesus believes in Him. Some people don’t understand the gospel, and some people care more about the things of this world than they do God’s kingdom. But people who believe in Jesus and follow Him will grow to be like Him and will share His good news so others can believe, too.



REVIEW AND DISCUSS

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Allow time to have the children think and process – however this works best for your class. We want our kids to feel known and heard!

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In small groups (or as a large group), use the coloring page (on the other side of the worksheet) and have children color while you talk through these questions.

What was different each time the man scattered the seeds? [Allow responses.] Though the seeds were all the same they landed in different soil, which changed how they would grow. Jesus explained that the good news of the gospel never changes. However, the condition of our hearts determines whether or not the gospel will grow and change us.

Who did Jesus compare the birds in the parable to? [Allow responses.] The devil seeks to take away the seeds of God’s kingdom by planting confusion in our hearts. When we refuse to repent and turn to Jesus, our hearts become hard to the truth of the gospel.

Is following Jesus always easy? [Allow responses.] Jesus uses the example of the second seed to remind the crowd that living in obedience to God’s Word is challenging. Which is why we must build our lives on God’s Word, just as a plant grows from roots. Jesus explained that there are also people who care about the things of this world more than God’s kingdom. We can trust that God is in complete control of our lives. He promises to save and continue growing those who repent of their sin and put their faith in Him.

Additional Questions:

- Which type of soil do you want to be like and why?
- How can we prepare good soil in our hearts?
- What might be some “weeds” or “rocks” in our lives that need to be removed?
- How can we share God’s message with others?

Blank paper, Bible
Story coloring
page, colored
pencils/crayons



Reflection and Prayer

Have children use a blank sheet of paper. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions. Or, just talk about it together.

- **What does this story teach me about God?**

God wants people to know and understand spiritual truths, but not everyone will respond in faith. For those who are willing to hear and learn, God makes His truth clear. God is generous in the sharing of His Word. It is for all people, though not all will have the hearts to receive it.

- **What does this story teach me about myself?**

Pray together: *God, we thank You that even though the things of this world will pass away, Your Word lasts forever. We know that the Bible is true and has no error because it comes from You. In it, You show us who You are and how much You love us. We could never do enough to earn Your love, but we know we do not need to because You have proven how much You love us by giving us Jesus, who lived, died, and rose again from the grave to set us free from sin and welcome us into Your kingdom.*



Questions from Kids Video

USB on TV

Show the “Unit 25, Session 1” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

- How do I encourage my friends to believe in Jesus?
- Have you responded to the good news of the gospel?



ENGAGE HEARTS

Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Matthew 5:16

Key Passage Activity:

Freeze!

- Key Passage Poster

SAY: Jesus reminded people that God’s Word is unlike the things of this world. His Word is true and will last forever! Let’s learn more about this in our new key passage.

Invite the kids to gather and form a circle. Encourage the kids to move and dance around the circle clockwise.

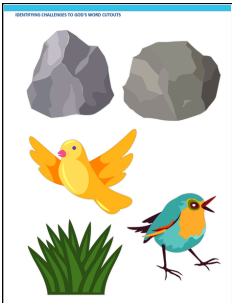
When you shout Freeze! the kids must stand still where they are and repeat the key passage after you.

If anyone moves, they must sit down outside of the circle and continue reciting it aloud each time with the group. Once the key passage has been repeated, the kids can start moving again. Play until you have recited the key passage aloud several times together.



Growing God's Word

- Cutouts of birds, weeds, stones
- Cutouts of gardening-related objects



Explain to the children that just like in the Parable of the Sower, there are things in our lives that can act like the birds, weeds, and stones, making it hard for God's word to grow in us.

- Invite the children to think of things that might distract them, challenge their faith, or prevent them from understanding and living by God's word.
 - As they share their ideas, write them down on the back of the cutouts of birds, weeds and stones. (ex. "too much TV" "worries" or "not listening")

After writing down the challenges, gather the cutouts and talk about how knowing these challenges helps us to be aware and prepared to protect our faith and the growth of God's word within us.

Then, talk about how we can grow God's Word in our hearts.

Discuss how just as plants need water, sunlight, and care to grow, our faith and understanding of God's word also need nurturing.

- Ask the children to think of ways we can grow God's word in our lives and in the lives of those around us.
 - As they share their ideas, write them down on the backs of the gardening-related cutouts. Ideas might include:
 - Prayer, Reading the Bible, Attending church or Sunday School, showing kindness to others....

Discuss how we can practically apply these nurturing actions in our daily lives. For example:

- Praying/Talking to God when we get up in the morning and when we go to bed at night, praying before meals.
- Seeing God in everyday moments
- Thanking God in everyday moments
- Listening to Bible verse songs
- Helping others and putting their needs above your own
- Serving others
- Being kind to our brothers and sisters
- Listening to our parents



Name that Path

- None

Line the kids up shoulder to shoulder on one side of the room. Explain that they will be taking a journey and must choose between three different paths: the hard path (take small steps and stomp your feet), the rocky path (move from side to side), and the thorny path (crawl on hands and knees).

When you say, Go, the kids must cross the room using one of the three actions as they travel. Once the kids make it to the opposite side of the room, they may choose a different action to travel back. The first kid to make it across the room and back wins.

SAY: This game reminds us that people will have different responses to God's kingdom. Jesus shared that everyone must choose to say yes or say no to God's kingdom. Those who repent of their sin and trust in Jesus as Lord will live forever in God's kingdom!