

LESSON 17

The Wise & Foolish Builders

MATTHEW 7:21-27



BIBLE TRUTH

OUR LOVE FOR GOD IS SHOWN BY THE FRUIT OF OUR LIVES,
ESPECIALLY WHEN THE WINDS OF TRIALS BLOW

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Matthew 7:15–29 from the Scriptures or read story 95, “The Wise & Foolish Builders,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Guess Them by Their Fruit

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ two blindfolds
- ✓ an opaque bag containing a selection of ten different fruits (banana, apple, pear, orange, lemon, lime, and four other more exotic fruits)
- ✓ a prize for the winning team

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN

I Won’t Squirt You

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ squirt bottle filled with water
- ✓ towel

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 17—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

Sand and Rock

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ one-half inch wooden dowel cut into four eight-inch pieces
- ✓ two six- to eight-inch square disposable plastic containers
- ✓ a small amount of cement mix, enough to fill one of the containers
- ✓ enough sand to fill the second container

TOTAL 75 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

You can know what’s in a person’s heart by the behavior of their life—The Lord told Samuel that “man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7). It is easy to say you believe in God, but it is much more difficult to obey the Lord with your life. In this passage, Jesus warns that there will be those who will come into the church claiming to speak for God, and yet inwardly be wolves (Matthew 7:15)—they won’t really love God and in fact will be bent on destruction. We shouldn’t be fooled by those whose lives don’t match their words. This principle applies to us all: our behavior, especially how we act in private when no one is looking, is a good indicator of what and whom we really love.

Words alone are worthless—This passage teaches us the sober truth that people are Christians not just because they call themselves Christians (Matthew 7:23). Just because a person calls Jesus Lord doesn’t mean that God has changed his or her heart. James said it like this: “You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!” (James 2:19). We know that demons will not go to heaven, yet they know who Jesus is and even declare it publicly (Mark 1:23–24). Our good words and good deeds are not enough; we must believe and completely entrust our lives to Jesus. Believing in Jesus’ atoning death on the cross is the only way to salvation. “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

The wise builder builds upon the rock—Jesus gave a picture to help us see the difference between actually trusting him and only saying we trust in him. Christ is the Rock in the parable. If we really trust Jesus, our lives are pictured by a man building his house on a rock. Jesus must be what motivates us; he alone must be the foundation for what we say and what we do. If we say and do the right things publicly, but inside do not trust Jesus, our lives are pictured by the man who builds his house on the sand. Notice that both houses have to endure storms. God will send trials to test the foundation of our faith. James 1:3 and 1 Peter 1:6–7 explain that God uses the stormy trials of life to test our faith.

Where Is the Gospel?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Jesus Christ is the Rock. The sure foundation upon which we build our lives is Jesus himself. No other foundation will do. That Rock—Jesus—is the basis of our claim to forgiveness and life everlasting. The ultimate trial will come for all men when they must stand before a holy God at the last judgment. There will be no hope for those who have not built on the Rock. Psalm 1 tells us that the wicked will not be able to stand in the judgment, but will be blown away like chaff (Psalm 1:4–6) and perish in the fires of hell.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Matthew 7:15–29 from the Scriptures or read story 95, “The Wise & Foolish Builders,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Guess Them by Their Fruit

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ two blindfolds
- ✓ an opaque bag containing a selection of ten different fruits (banana, apple, pear, orange, lemon, lime, and four other more exotic fruits)
- ✓ a prize for the winning team

This is a fun exercise to use as an introduction to the idea that you can recognize a person by the fruit of their lives. In this case, we recognize a tree by the kind of fruit that it bears.

Keep the fruit hidden and then ask for four volunteers. Divide them into two teams. Send one team out of the room while the other plays the game. Then bring back the second team for their turn. (Make sure you arrange to have them go into another class where they won't be able to peek.)

Blindfold the first team and sit them in full view of the class. Pull out the first piece of fruit and show the class. Select one team member to go first. Each may only use their index fingers to touch the fruit, which you lay on a table in front of them. They have thirty seconds to guess each piece of fruit. Take turns until they have guessed all ten. Hide the fruit and repeat the game with the second team.

After both teams have guessed, review the results and declare a winner. Award prizes and go on with your lesson.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION **10 MIN**

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 **10 MIN**

I Won't Squirt You

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ spray bottle filled with water
- ✓ towel

Ask the class for a volunteer. Your adult helper should excitedly raise his or her hand and shout, "Pick me!" Choose the adult volunteer and just as he comes up to you, pull out the spray bottle. Follow this basic script.

TEACHER: *(pulling out the spray bottle)* Thanks for volunteering.

HELPER: You're not going to squirt me, are you?!

TEACHER: No, don't worry. I am not going to squirt you.

HELPER: Are you sure?

TEACHER: Listen to my words. Read my lips. I am not going to squirt you. Now I want you to read about building your house on the rock in Matthew 7:24–25.

- HELPER:** OK, I can do that. *(The helper proceeds to read the passage and just as he reads the word “rain” the teacher should squirt him right in the face.)* Hey, why did you squirt me?!
- TEACHER:** I didn’t squirt you, the bottle did.
- HELPER:** Very funny. You pulled the trigger!
- TEACHER:** Oh, come on, I won’t squirt you. Now just read the Bible passage.
- HELPER:** *(Starts to read and as soon as he says “floods came” the teacher should squirt him again.)*
Hey, why did you squirt me.
- TEACHER:** I’m telling you it wasn’t me; it was the squirt bottle.

Continue with the skit, repeating the same pattern of reading and squirting a few more times until finally the helper quits.

Hand a towel to the helper. Use this skit to help the children see that our actions speak louder than our words. If we say we love God but our actions (fruits) don’t match, then we know that we are living a lie. Use this to explain Matthew 7:21.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 17—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **Whose house was built on the stronger foundation?**
(The house built on the rock had the stronger foundation.)
- **What does it mean to build your house on the rock?**
(The rock represents Jesus’ teachings—his words. Jesus himself is called the Word [John 1:14]. Ultimately we need to build our lives on a firm foundation and trust in Jesus Christ. You can give the children a clue by pointing out the crosses in the picture.)

■ **What does it mean to build your house on the sand?**

(The sand represents all the other things we can place our trust in, e.g., money, our own strength, our education, our talents.)

CLOSING PRAYER **5 MIN**

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON **15 MIN**

Sand and Rock

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ one-half inch wooden dowel cut into four eight-inch pieces
- ✓ two six- to eight-inch square disposable plastic containers
- ✓ a small amount of cement mix, enough to fill one of the containers
- ✓ enough sand to fill the second container

Prior to class, mix the cement and pour it into the first container. Insert two of the dowels like pilings into the cement, standing straight up on end. Allow it to harden completely. Bring to class the cemented dowels along with the second bowl filled with the sand and the remaining two dowels.

Read Matthew 7:24–27 to the class and then set out the dowels pushed into the container of sand. Have a volunteer pretend to be the wind and see how difficult it is to push over the dowels in the sand (with their hand). Then bring out the dowel in the cement (rock) and see if that same volunteer can move it.

Pass around the cemented dowels for the class to touch. Draw them out about which material would make a better foundation and why.

Then ask them what the rock represents in the story. (The rock represents Jesus and his Word.)

End by encouraging the class to build their lives on Jesus, and review the gospel with them.

