

# **PARABLES OF JESUS**

**by Christine Walton**

**supplementary worksheets by Michelle Griffith**

**Grades 1-2**

**Year 2**

**Quarter 2**



**Grades 1-2**  
**Year 2**  
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**Overview**

This quarter uses many parables of Jesus. Each lesson will consist of a Bible story and discussion and a craft, activity, or worksheet to reinforce what is being taught. Optional stories are suggested in the lesson. Of course, God's Word must be central to each lesson, but feel free to adapt other parts to your individual situation. It goes without saying that prayer must be an integral part of Sunday School, both as the teachers and others pray for the individual students and class as a whole at home, and through prayer by the students in class itself. Even non-Christians (and almost certainly some in your class will not know Jesus Christ) are commanded to pray. At least a short time of prayer should be included in every lesson, even though this will not be indicated in the teacher's instructions. The following explains the elements included in each lesson:

**Lesson Aim**

Main ideas taught in the Bible story that should be emphasized by the teacher.

**Memory Verse**

Verse to be memorized by the student. It should be repeated several times during the lesson at different moments to help the child remember it (see Memory Games). This quarter the verses will be **Matthew 7:24-27** and **Luke 15:3-10**.

**Lesson Background**

Background ideas are given to help the teacher in telling the story.

*Knowledge Objectives* - Facts with which the student should be familiar by the end of class.

*Behavioral Objectives* - Character qualities, attitudes, and actions related to the Bible story that the child should be encouraged to practice. Only God can change the sinful child's heart, but we can present God's standards so that the unbeliever may see his need of Christ and the Christian may grow in grace.

## **Lesson Procedure**

### **BIBLE STORY**

In most cases, the first and second grader should be able to understand the story when read straight from the Bible if a modern translation such as the New International Version is used. Because of this a Bible story, as such, is not usually given. It is recommended that, in most cases, the teacher first give an introduction. Then she should read expressively the passage from the Bible, making appropriate comments to aid understanding. Good readers, using the same version of the Bible as the teacher, may be encouraged to follow along in their Bibles. In most cases, however, the children's reading ability is such that this is a hindrance to understanding rather than a help, since it requires so much effort for them to figure out the words that they lose the continuity of the story. After the Scripture is read the teacher should paraphrase the story in her own words and ask factual and discussion-type questions to facilitate the students' understanding.

### **SONGS**

Songs are suggested that may be sung sometime during the lesson or in an opening session if desired. It is not necessary to sing all the songs listed. Many hymns may be difficult for beginning readers, so it may be good to concentrate on two or three hymns and a few choruses per quarter. Hymns listed for several lessons would be good choices.

### **WORKSHEET**

Some lessons include worksheets to reinforce concepts taught.

### **CRAFT AND/OR ACTIVITY**

To reinforce lessons taught. Materials needed are underlined. The availability of pencils and crayons is assumed and the word "cut" will be underlined if scissors are needed.

## **Home Helps**

A paper to be sent home with lesson summary and suggested activities to reinforce the lesson at home.

**NOTE:** Any writing done by the teacher for activities or memory work should be neatly printed for easier reading by your beginning readers. Do not use all capitals or cursive writing.



**Grades 1-2**  
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**Additional Resources**

The following may be a helpful supplement to the lessons in Year II, Quarter 2.

**Lesson 2** - *Tony's Treasure Hunt*, Holly and John Peterson, Scholastic Books, 1966.



**Grades 1-2  
Year 2  
Quarter 2**

**Songs**

<u>LESSON</u>	<u>SONG</u>	<u>TRINITY HYMNAL</u>
1	The Wise Man Built (Matthew 7:24-27)	
1,4	Unless the Lord Build (Psalm 127:1)	
1	Lead Me to the Rock (Psalm 61:1-3)	
1	My Hope is Built (The Solid Rock)	521
1	The Church's One Foundation	347
1	Christ is Made the Sure Foundation	342
1	How Firm a Foundation	94
2	Psalm 19:7-11	
2,4	Jesus, Priceless Treasure	656
3	We Plough the Fields and Scatter	714
3,6,8,9	Come Ye Sinners	472
4	The Kingdom of God is Not Meat or Drink (Romans 14:17)	
4	Except the Lord Build (Psalm 127:1)	
4,7,9,13	Not What My Hands Have Done	461
5	Jesus, What a Friend for Sinners	498
5	Bring Them In	445
5	There Were Ninety and Nine	187
5,6,9	Jesus Sinners Doth Receive	473
5	Gracious Savior, Tender Shepherd	416
5	I Was a Wandering Sheep	464
5	Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us	599
5	Ah, Holy Jesus	248
6,9	Marvelous Grace of Our Loving Lord	465
6	Love Divine	529
6,10,11	O God of Mercy	433
7	Obey My Voice (Jeremiah 7:23)	
7,9	I Will Sing of the Mercies (Psalm 89:1)	
7,10	King of Kings and Lord of Lords	
7	Jesus Thy Blood and Righteousness	520
8	Let God Arise (Psalm 68:1)	
8,12	The Lord Will Come	367
8,12	O Quickly Come	322
8,12	Great God What Do I See and Hear	321
9	The Steadfast Love of the Lord (Lamentations 3:22-23)	
9	O God We Praise Thee	105
9	Come My Soul	628
9	The Tender Love a Father Has	93
10,11	We Give Thee But Thine Own	432
11,12	Jesus Bids Us Shine	592
12	Give Me Oil	
12	Rejoice All Ye Believers	320
12	Wake, Awake	317

13 Beloved, Let Us Love One Another (I John 4:7-8)  
13 This is My Commandment (John 15:12)  
13 A New Commandment (John 13:34)  
13 Micah 6:8

**Grades 1-2**  
**Year 2**  
**Quarter 2**

**Bible Baseball**

**Singles (easy)**

On what did the foolish man build his house? (sand)

On what did the wise man build his house? (rock)

What happened to the foolish man's house when the rains came? (It fell down)

Name two soils in the Parable of the Sower.

What happened to the seed that fell on good soil in the Parable of the Sower?

In the Parable of the Rich Fool, what did the rich man plan to do? (Build bigger barns)

In the Parable of the Lost Sheep, what did the shepherd do when he found the lost sheep?

Why did the king throw a man who had come to his son's wedding feast outside? (he had no wedding clothes)

What grew up with wheat in a farmer's field? (weeds)

What did the farmer have done with the weeds in the Parable of the Wheat and Weeds?

In the Parable of the Prodigal Son, what job did the younger son get? (feeding pigs)

How did the Prodigal Son's father treat him when he returned home?

Name one thing the Prodigal's father gave him. (robe, ring, sandals, calf)

What is grown in a vineyard?

When a landowner sent his servants to collect his fruit, what did the tenants do to them?

In the Parable of the Evil Tenants, whom did the landowner finally send to collect what was due him and what did the tenants do to him?

In the Parable of the Talents, what did the man with one talent do with his money?

What were some wise and foolish women waiting for?

What did the foolish women neglect to take with them?

Who was one person who passed by the man who had been attacked by robbers and did not help him?

Name one thing the Samaritan did to help the man who had been attacked by robbers.

## Bible Baseball

### Doubles (average)

What is the rock in the Parable of the Two Houses? (Jesus)

What did a man find in a field in one of Jesus' parables?

What did the man do when he found a treasure in a field?

What did the pearl merchant do when he found a pearl of great value?

Name three soils in the Parable of the Sower.

What is the seed in the Parable of the Sower? (God's Word)

Whom does the farmer represent in the Parable of the Sower?

What happened to the seed that fell on the path in the Parable of the Sower?

What do the thorns represent in the Parable of the Sower? (riches and worry)

Why was the Rich Fool foolish?

In the Parable of the Lost Sheep, how many sheep were in the shepherd's flock? (100)

Who is the lost sheep like in Jesus' parable?

Who is the shepherd like in Jesus' parable? (Jesus)

In the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard, which group of men was paid the most?

Whom did the king get to come to his son's wedding feast when the originally-invited guests refused to come?

What do the wheat and weeds represent in the Parable of the Wheat and Weeds? (Christians and non-Christians who pretend to be Christians)

Who does the enemy represent in the Parable of the Wheat and Weeds? (Satan)

In the Parable of the Prodigal Son, what did the younger son do in a distant country?

Who was unhappy about the Prodigal Son's return home? (his brother)

Name two things the Prodigal's father gave him. (robe, ring, sandals, calf)

How many talents did a man give three of his servants?

How much did the man with five talents and the man with two talents give their master when he returned home?

What did the man do with the servant who had not used his talents wisely?

How many wise and how many foolish women were there in Jesus' parable? (five wise and five foolish)

When the bridegroom was a long time coming, what did the wise and foolish women do?

What did the wise women tell the foolish women to do when the bridegroom was coming? (purchase oil)

Why were the foolish women not able to go into the wedding banquet?

Who were two people who passed by the man who had been beaten by robbers and did not help him?

Name two things the Samaritan did to help the man who had been attacked by robbers.

## Bible Baseball

### Triples (difficult)

What do the treasure and the pearl represent in Jesus' parable?

Name four soils in the Parable of the Sower.

What do the birds represent in the Parable of the Sower?

What does the rocky soil represent in the Parable of the Sower?

Who thought that in life one should "eat, drink, and be merry?" (the Rich Fool or the Prodigal Son)

In the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard, how much did the owner offer to pay the first workers he hired? (a denarius)

At what time did the vineyard owner first go out to hire workers?

Name three things the Prodigal's father gave him. (robe, ring, sandals, calf)

A landowner planted a vineyard, built a wall around it, and put two things in it. What were they? (winepress and watchtower)

Jesus quoted part of a psalm after he told the Parable of the Tenants; either tell the name of the psalm or what the passage talked about. (Psalm 118:22-23)

About how much is a talent worth? (\$1000)

Name one of the questions an expert in the law asked Jesus before he told the Parable of the Good Samaritan. (What must I do to inherit eternal life? Who is my neighbor?)

Name one of the commandments the law expert quoted to Jesus. (Love the Lord, love your neighbor)

Explain what either a Levite or a Samaritan is.

Name three things the Samaritan did to help the man who had been attacked by robbers.

## **Bible Baseball**

### **Home Runs (super tough)**

Name the four soils in the Parable of the Sower and what they represent.

Jesus told the Parable of the Rich Fool to someone who wanted Jesus to do something for him. What did this man want? (For Jesus to tell the man's brother to divide the inheritance with him)

At what times did the vineyard owner go out to hire workers?

Name four things the Prodigal's father gave him. (robe, ring, sandals, calf)

A landowner planted a vineyard, built a wall around it, and put two things in it. What were they? (winepress and watchtower)

Jesus quoted part of a psalm after He told the Parable of the Tenants; tell which psalm and what the passage talked about. (Psalm 118:22-23)

At what time did the cry ring out, "Here's the bridegroom!" (midnight)

Name two questions an expert in the law asked Jesus before He told the parable of the Good Samaritan. (What must I do to inherit eternal life? Who is my neighbor?)

Name two commandments the law expert quoted to Jesus. (Love the Lord, love your neighbor)

Explain what a Levite and a Samaritan are.

Name four things the Samaritan did to help the man who had been attacked by robbers.

How much did the Samaritan pay the innkeeper? (2 denarii or 2 silver coins)



# **A FIRM FOUNDATION**

**Matthew 7:24-27**

## **Lesson Aim**

To help students know that we should build our lives on the Rock, Jesus Christ, and to teach them what a parable is.

## **Memory Verse**

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 15:3-10; this week, Matthew 7:24** - “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”

## **Lesson Background**

This quarter we will study many parables of Jesus. A parable has been called “an earthly story with a heavenly meaning,” and this captures its essence in a nutshell. A parable, a type of extended metaphor or simile, differs from a fable in its spiritual purpose and realism (e.g., it would not use talking animals, but rather common things with which people would be familiar). Nor is a parable an allegory where there is a one-to-one correspondence, “a blending . . . of the thing signifying and the thing signified” (quotation and other information on parables from R. C. Trench, *Notes on the Parables of Our Lord*, Baker, 1975.); an allegory gives interpretation in itself, transferring the properties of one to the other. Jesus’ parables are not mere illustrations, but strike home so deeply because of a harmony between the natural and spiritual; for example, human marriage is a reflection of the relationship between Christ and His Church, not the other way around.

In interpreting parables, we must not ignore spiritual truth readily evident (as did one commentator who denied that the Prodigal Son’s father pictures God) nor over-spiritualize as did Augustine, who said that

the Good Samaritan represented Christ, the man he helped Adam, the thieves the devil and his angels, the inn the Church, and the innkeeper the Apostle Paul! Unlike an allegory, every detail in a parable should not be seen as having spiritual significance. We need to find and concentrate on the central truth it is presenting, compare Scripture with Scripture, examine the context of the passage, and use common sense in our interpretation. Parables should not be our primary source of doctrine. Jesus said that His purpose in using parables was to hide His truth from unbelievers (Matthew 13:10-17; Mark 4:10-12; Luke 8:9-10; see also I Corinthians 1:18). To those who do know the Lord, however, parables can speak to the heart even more clearly than straight discourse.

Some commentators would not technically classify today's Bible story of the two builders as a parable, but differences are minimal and so we will include it in this quarter. Jesus said that those who do His words are like those who build their houses on rock, while those who fail to practice His words are like those who build their houses on the sand. The houses represent our lives, while the rock pictures Jesus (I Corinthians 3:9-15; Psalm 18:2; 61:1-3; Isaiah 28:16; I Peter 2:6-8; Romans 9:33; I Corinthians 10:3-4; Deuteronomy 32:15,18). A house built on a rock (the parallel passage in Luke says the builder dug deeply until he hit a good rock base) may require painful labor and self-denial, but when confronted with the storms of life, it will stand. The storm referred to may be a flash flood frequent in the Near East, especially in wadis, river beds dry much of the year. A house with a sand foundation may look good on the outside, but when affliction (sickness, worries, temptation, disappointment, enemies, etc.) comes, as it inevitably will, it crumbles. The parable points not merely to the common difficulties of life, but primarily to the final test of death and judgment before God. Only those who have built their lives on the Rock, Jesus Christ, will withstand this trial. Those who have built their "houses" on sand will be destroyed; they will fall with a great crash. May we be found having the Lord as our only foundation.

*Knowledge Objectives* - To know that Jesus told parables, which are "earthly stories with a heavenly meaning"; to know that Jesus said that those who do His words are like a wise builder who built his house on a rock, so that it stood firm when the storm came, but those who do not put His words into practice are like the foolish man who built his house on the sand, where it was washed away by rains and flood.

*Behavioral Objectives* - By God's grace, that your students will build their lives on the Rock, Jesus Christ.

## Lesson Procedure

**Introduction** - Explain to your students that this quarter they will be studying Jesus' parables, earthly stories with heavenly meanings. If desired, you may read **Mark 4:10-12** and explain the purpose of parables, or you may begin directly talking about the Parable of the Two Builders. Do one or both of the following activities:

- Have your children build houses or the tallest tower they can from blocks. Give the children different surfaces on which to build, such as a rug scrap, cloth, foam rubber, and a smooth, hard table top or floor. Discuss how the surface makes a difference to the stability of the building built on it.
- Show your children a picture (preferably a photograph) of a not particularly nice looking house built on a rocky foundation and a picture of a very fancy house built on a weak foundation. Ask them which house they would rather live in. Tell your students that you would rather live in the plain house, but do not tell them the reason for your decision (its firm foundation) until after you have read the Bible story.

## **BIBLE STORY**

Read **Matthew 7:24-27**. Later during the lesson you may wish to review by reading **Luke 6:46-49**. While you read the Scripture passage it would be helpful if an assistant demonstrated by pouring water over a toy house on a rock and a toy house on sand. Put the houses, rock, and sand in a tub to catch the water. Discuss the Bible story. Show your introductory pictures again and, if possible, those same buildings after a flood, and ask again which house your students would like to live in. Ask your children to consider what sort of foundation they are building their lives upon. Mention some types of weak foundations people build on (e.g., their abilities, intelligence, education, family, friends, wealth) and how important it is to build our lives on the sure foundation, Jesus Christ. You may wish to sing “The Wise Man Built” at this time.

## **STORY**

*The Three Little Pigs* - Read aloud from a children’s book or tell this story in your own words. Your students will enjoy dramatizing this story as well. Building our lives on a proper foundation is of paramount importance, but how we build on them also has great significance. The three pigs found out the difference proper building materials and a willingness to work hard could make in the construction of a physical building. Point out to your children that this truth from the material realm has even greater application to spiritual things, as Paul points out in **I Corinthians 3:9-15**, a passage you may to read at this time.

## **ACTIVITY**

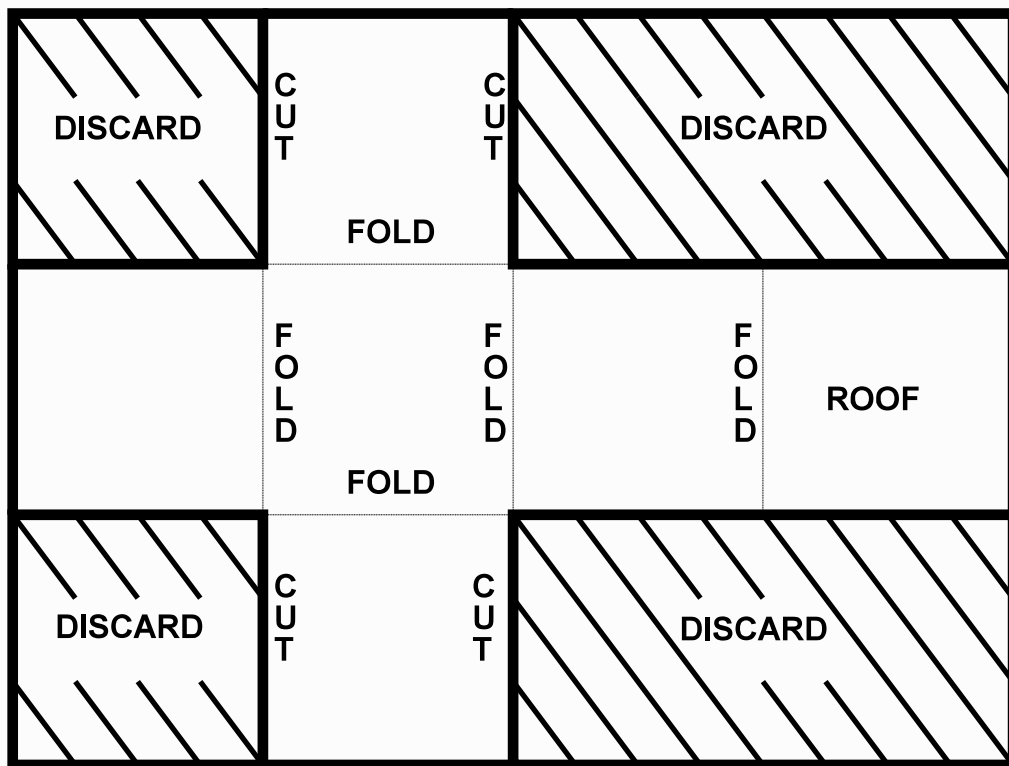
Have your students each draw one or more “life building blocks” on rectangles of paper. These are the “gold and precious stones,” ways in which your children should be honoring God with their lives such as obeying their parents, working hard in school, being kind to others, praying and reading their Bibles and the like. On a large piece of paper, draw and cut out a rock and tape it to the wall. Have your students tape their blocks to the wall on top of the rock to form a house. The lesson also includes a page to be used in the Parables Booklet the students will make as the quarter progresses..

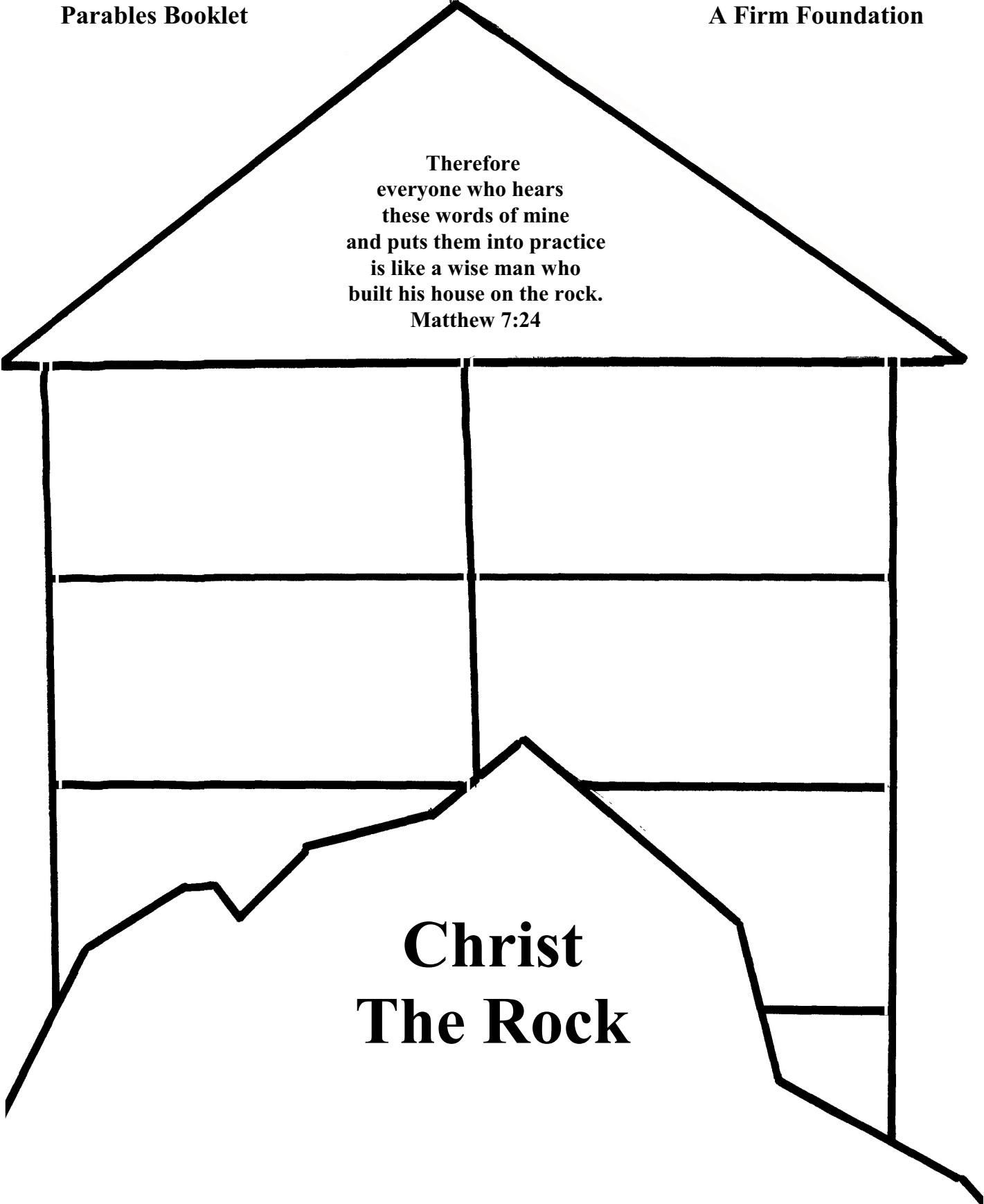
## **SONGS**

“The Wise Man Built” (Matthew 7:24-27); “Lead Me to the Rock” (Psalm 61:1-3); “Jesus is the Rock of My Salvation”; “My Hope is Built” (“The Solid Rock,” *Trinity Hymnal*, #521); “The Church’s One Foundation” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #347); “Christ is Made the Sure Foundation” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #342); “How Firm A Foundation” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #94).

## Take Home Activity

**House on a Rock Paperweight** - Have your children construct a house and glue it to a small rock for a paperweight to remind them that Jesus is the Rock on which we should build our lives. Your students can make a rectangular flat-roofed house such as was used in Israel in biblical times from clay, wood, cardboard, or paper. A block of wood need only have windows and a door drawn on, but clay or playdough will first have to be formed into a house shape. You may build a house by gluing toothpicks or popcicle sticks log cabin style. Cardboard boxes colored or covered with construction paper make ready-made houses, or students can make their own paper box shape by cutting out a cross and folding the "arms" of the cross up to form the walls of their structure (see diagram for Year I, Quarter 2, Lesson 7 or Year I, Quarter 3, Lesson 10).





Therefore  
everyone who hears  
these words of mine  
and puts them into practice  
is like a wise man who  
built his house on the rock.  
Matthew 7:24

**Christ  
The Rock**



### BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

**Matthew 7:24-27** - We should build our lives on the Rock, Jesus Christ. (Today's lesson begins a thirteen-week study of Jesus' parables.)

### MEMORY VERSE

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 15:3-10; this week, Matthew 7:24** - "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."

### SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Read today's Scripture and its parallel passage in Luke 6:47-49. We must build our lives on the firm foundation of Jesus Christ. Have your family members consider whether or not the Lord is the Rock upon whom they are building their lives. (Remember, never force or manipulate anyone into a salvation decision.) If your own life seems to be built on shifting sand, please contact your child's Sunday School teacher or one of the pastors of this church and/or read a book below about coming to know Christ.
2. A proper foundation is of paramount importance in construction, but what is built upon it is also highly significant, as the three little pigs found out in the classic children's story. In **I Corinthians 3:9-15** we learn that God is concerned about how we build our lives. Read this Scripture passage with your family and discuss it together. What in your lives is wood, hay, and straw, and what is precious gems?
3. Visit a construction site and/or talk with a knowledgeable person about how buildings are wisely constructed on a proper foundation and using good materials. Perhaps this could be combined with Activity 1 and/or 2.
4. Read other Scripture about God being a Rock (see Suggested Parental Reading).
5. Sing songs about Jesus being a solid foundation such as: "The Wise Man Built" (Matthew 7:24-27); "Lead Me to the Rock" (Psalm 61:1-3); "Jesus is the Rock of My Salvation"; "My Hope is Built" ("The Solid Rock," *Trinity Hymnal*, #521); "The Church's One Foundation" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #347); "Christ is Made the Sure Foundation" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #342); "How Firm A Foundation" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #94).

### SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

**Scripture** - About Jesus the Rock: I Corinthians 3:9-15; Psalm 18:2; Psalm 61:1-3; Isaiah 28:16; I Peter 2:6-8; I Corinthians 10:3-4; Deuteronomy 32:15,18; Psalm 89:26; Isaiah 17:10; John 6:28-29. About parables: Matthew 13:10-17; Mark 4:10-12; Luke 8:9-10; I Corinthians 1:18-25.

**Books about salvation -**

*Mere Christianity* (C.S. Lewis, Macmillan, 1952).

*Basic Christianity* (John R. W. Stott, Intersity Press, London, 1958, Eerdmans, 1979).

*Knowing God* (J. I. Packer, Intersity, 1973).



# **HIDDEN TREASURE**

**Matthew 13:44-45**

## **Lesson Aim**

That your students will realize that the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure worth giving all we have to obtain.

## **Memory Verse**

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 15:3-10; this week, Matthew 7:25** - “The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.”

## **Lesson Background**

Most of us would not classify ourselves as wealthy (although materially we are, in comparison with most of the world), but God has given Christians an invaluable treasure - Himself.

To be precise, Matthew 13 compares treasure with the kingdom of God, which has to do with the manifestation of God’s authority in our lives and the world both now and in the future. Hiding valuables underground was a common practice during biblical times because of frequent political unrest and difficulty in safely securing riches. It is uncertain why the man was digging in a field that he did not own or why the owner of the field was apparently unaware of the existence of treasure on his property. Perhaps a previous owner of the field had died or left the area unexpectedly without telling anyone what was hidden in his field; the treasure-finder may have been renting the property, working it for someone else, or he may have been digging in an abandoned field (although he did later purchase the property from somebody). A sense of fairness, fear of punishment, or the weight of the treasure may have been the reason its discoverer did not merely take the treasure without buying the field in which it was found.

The Parable of the Treasure in the Field forms a pair with the next incident related in Matthew 13, the Parable of the Pearl of Great Price. The main point of both stories is the inestimable value of the riches found and, by application, the incomparable worth of the kingdom of God, which, like the treasure and the pearl, is worth giving up everything we have to obtain (cf. Philippians 3:7-9). The men in both parables recognized the value of the treasure when they found it (the merchant had probably learned the value of different pearls in his diligent seeking while the treasure-finder immediately saw the value of his discovery); both determined to acquire the treasure no matter what the cost and sold all they had to purchase the treasure. The story of the Pearl of Great Price differs from the former parable in that the pearl-buyer had been seeking for his treasure for a long time, while it seems that the field-digger came upon his treasure accidentally. So some people come to Christ after a long search for truth, whereas others almost seem to stumble into their salvation in the midst of their sin (cf. Paul, Acts 9:1-19). All Christians, however, are only redeemed by God's grace.

Why would anyone fail to appropriate a treasure if he had the opportunity? He might not recognize the value of the treasure or he might think it would take too much trouble, time, or effort to acquire it. Perhaps he would have to give up something in order to obtain the treasure, and this he is not willing to do. We must be willing to give up our riches and righteousness, in fact all we have, in order to obtain the greatest Treasure. May you and your students know the "unsearchable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8).

*Knowledge Objectives* - To be able to relate the parables of the Treasure in the Field and the Pearl of Great Price and to explain their meaning.

*Behavioral Objectives* - By God's grace, to realize the incomparable value of God's Treasure and to seek to acquire it.

## Lesson Procedure

**Introduction** (optional) - Show your students a box decorated as a treasure trove and ask what they would hope to find inside. What things do they consider valuable? You may wish to show them magazine photographs of treasure as well.

## STORY

### HIDDEN TREASURE

"You're crazy, Max! Absolutely out of your gourd." Bill stared at his friend in amazement. "Where did you ever come up with such a hare-brained scheme? Searching for buried treasure like some wild-eyed kid."

"I saw it, Bill! I really did - and it's not buried - weren't you listening to me - it's in that sunken ship I found when I was scuba diving."

"Yeah, I was listening. Enough to know you're not even sure of the ship's exact location or how much treasure is really there."

"Only one chest would open, but there were lots more," Max explained. "That's why I need the money - to get a boat and equipment to go back there to search for the wreck and salvage the treasure."

"But to sell your house and quit your job . . . I repeat, you're crazy; and I'm sorry, I'm not going to lend you money; but I will give you a job when you get over this foolishness. No hard feelings?"

"No hard feelings," said Max. "I guess I'll have to sell my car, too. But I'd do anything to get that treasure, and it's there; you'll see . . . you'll see."

Weeks later, Bill answered his doorbell to find a messenger on his doorstep carrying a small, shoebox-sized parcel. Opening the door with one hand, Bill grabbed for the package with the other. “Wait,” cried the messenger. “It’s heav. . .”

It was too late. The package dropped on the hard concrete step and split open, spilling several gold coins and revealing the glint of many more still imprisoned in cardboard and brown paper. Bill gave a long whistle, reached down for the note sticking out of the paper, and read the words sprawled across it: “It was worth it. This is for you. No hard feelings. Max. P.S. You can keep your job.”

**Questions:**

- What did Max want?
- Did he get what he wanted?
- What did it cost Max to get the treasure?
- Was it worth it?

**BIBLE STORY**

Read **Matthew 13:44-45** and discuss as explained in the background material. Allow your children to look for the spiritual parallels in these stories before commenting upon them yourself. One man stumbled upon treasure and another found it after diligent searching. If these treasures are like the kingdom of heaven, how can a person “find” God? As mentioned before, never force or manipulate a child to confess Christ, but allow for the expression of true faith. You may use these questions to relate the *Hidden Treasure* story to the Bible story.

**Questions:**

- How is the Bible story like the story of Max and the Hidden Treasure?
- Does God want us to sell everything we have to look for hidden treasure like Max and the man in Jesus’ parable did?
- What, then, does this parable mean?

**DRAMA (optional)**

Have your students dramatize (ad lib.) the parables of the Treasure in the Field and the Pearl of Great Price.

**STORY (optional)**

*Tony’s Treasure Hunt* (Holly and John Peterson, Scholastic Book Services, 1966). A little boy follows clues to find a treasure.

**SONGS**

Psalm 19:7-11; “Lord, You Are More Precious than Silver”; “Jesus, Priceless Treasure” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #656).

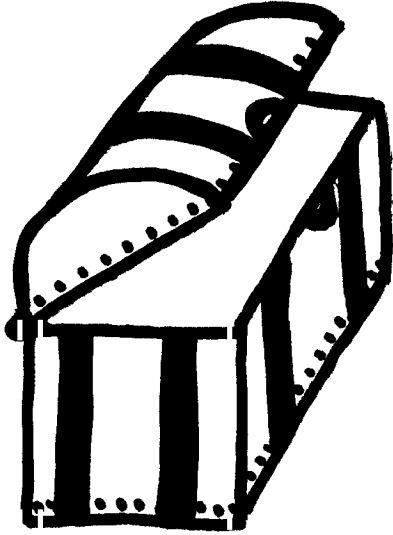
## **Class Work**

Have the students complete the worksheet. This will be a good opportunity to review and discuss the applications of the lesson. The page can also be used as part of the Parables Booklet the students will be making.

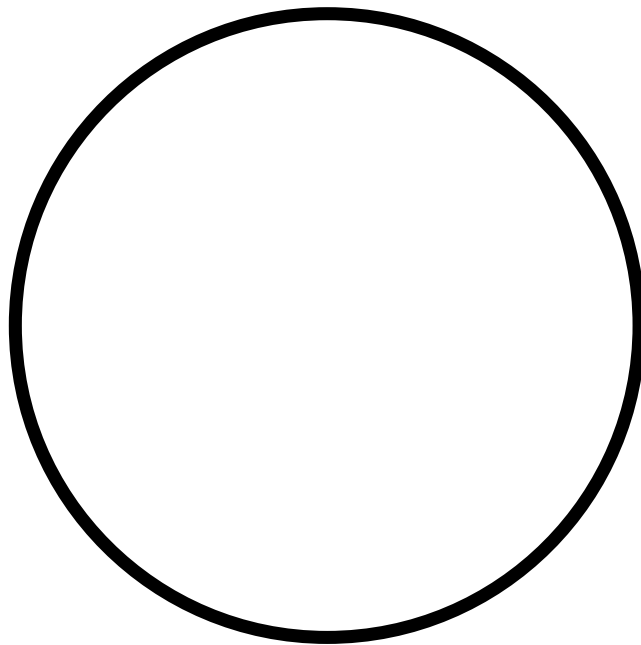
## **Take Home Activity**

**Treasure Hunt** - Your students will enjoy following clues to a prize (a snack, balloons, pennies, small toys, or Scripture portions - see Psalm 19:10) as did Tony in the story above. Hide the treasure, preferably outside in nice weather (e.g., in the low branches of a tree) and write a clue to lead to it (e.g., “God made this place for birds to nest, in its shade I like to rest, sometimes it gives fruit to eat, for climbing it is hard to beat”). Put this clue somewhere else (e.g., by a water fountain) and write a clue to lead your children to this location (e.g., “At a place like this Jesus told a woman He is the water of life”). Hide this clue (the water fountain clue) somewhere else (e.g., under a rock) and write a clue leading to this (e.g., “Satan told Jesus to turn one of these into bread”). Continue this procedure as long as desired. Read the last clue to your children and lead them on a treasure hunt. A class of older children may be divided into teams. Place a good reader on each team and instruct them to leave clues where they are found or make multiple copies of each clue on different-colored papers so each team can collect clues in their color. Be sure all of your students finally receive at least some of the treasure.

Draw the greatest treasure you can think of:



What is the pearl of great price?





### BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

**Matthew 13:44-45** - The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure worth giving all we have to obtain.

### MEMORY VERSE

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27, Luke 15:3-10; this week, Matthew 7:25** - “The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.”

### SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Have your children relate Matthew 13:44-45 to you. Ask your family members to consider whether they have obtained the true Treasure, Jesus Christ (never force or manipulate your children into a salvation decision).
2. Have your children make up a play about **Matthew 13:44-45** and dramatize it themselves or by using puppets.
3. Read Scripture about the riches of Christ (see Suggested Parental Reading).
4. Discuss the sorts of treasure people seek (as seen, for example, in books read and television programs watched this week) and how the true Treasure can meet all our needs.
5. For fun, read *Tony's Treasure Hunt* (Holly and John Peterson, Scholastic Book Services, 1966) or another book about children seeking treasure and/or have a family treasure hunt (write a clue that leads to somewhere in the house where the seeker will find another clue that leads to another location, etc., until finally a treasure, e.g., a snack, is discovered).
6. Sing songs about the riches of God such as: Psalm 19:7-11; “Jesus Priceless Treasure” (*Trinity Hymnal* #656).

### SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

**Scripture** - Psalm 19:10; 119:127-128; Philippians 3:13-14; Matthew 6:19-24; Colossians 2:2-3; II Corinthians 4:7; Romans 2:4; Philippians 4:19; Ephesians 1:7; 2:4-7; Romans 11:33.

Christ is an incomparable Treasure. If you do not know Him, speak to your child's Sunday School teacher or a pastor of this church, and read a book about salvation in Christ such as:

*Mere Christianity* (C.S. Lewis, Macmillan, 1952).

*Basic Christianity* (John R. W. Stott, Intervarsity Press, London, 1958, Eerdmans, 1979).

*Knowing God* (J. I. Packer, Intervarsity, 1973).





# **THE SEED AND FOUR SOILS**

**Matthew 13:1-23**

## **Lesson Aim**

That your students may realize that people respond differently to God's Word and will consider whether they are hard ground, rocky ground, thorny ground, or good ground hearers.

## **Memory Verse**

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 15:3-10; this week, Matthew 7:26** - "But everyone who hears these words and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand."

## **Lesson Background**

If length and repetition are any indicators, Jesus considered the Parable of the Sower to be one of His most significant. The parable certainly deals with a crucial subject, for it examines the response of different people to God's Word, resulting in death for some, but for others eternal life.

Jesus told parables about everyday concerns. Perhaps as He spoke to the crowd by Lake Gennesaret they could see farmers planting their seed on the surrounding hillsides. At any rate, His listeners would be well acquainted with the picture of a farmer sowing his seed by scattering handfuls over the land from a larger supply held in his tunic or in a bag over his shoulder. Yet the people's familiarity with the components of Jesus' story did not illumine its spiritual meaning to them. He spoke to the multitude in parables because "though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand" (Matthew 13:13). We, however, have the privilege of reading Christ's explanation to the disciples of the Parable of the Sower. Jesus probably told them this parable to encourage the disciples that although many would reject the message of the kingdom as they spread His word (after all, had they not even reviled the Lord? [Matthew 10:24-25]), some would believe and produce fruit, even a hundredfold.

Christ explained most of the elements of the parable quite clearly to the disciples, and those He did not, such as the identity of the sower and the meaning of the harvest, can be readily discerned from the context and other portions of Scripture. A farmer (who represents Christ or those who proclaim His message) went out to sow his seed (which symbolizes God's Word). As he was scattering the seed (in the method described above; Israelite farmers plowed after sowing) some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. The seed could not penetrate the hard, trampled ground of the footpath connecting the fields; neither does God's Word find any entrance into the hearts of some people. The life-changing Gospel makes no impression on them whatsoever, so hardened have they become through sin (Matthew 13:14-15; Romans 1). They are impervious to the Word; it slides off them like water off a duck's back; it goes "in one ear and out the other" so that the devil and his minions (cf. the birds) snatch it away and the individual does not even retain a memory of it.

The second type of ground mentioned in Matthew 13 does not refer to dirt containing many stones, but a sort of rock, possibly limestone, shelf covered with a thin layer of soil. In the early part of the growing season, seeds planted here would sprout quickly, for the small amount of dirt would be easily warmed, and the rocky layer beneath would keep plenty of moisture near the surface. Later, however, the thin layer of soil would quickly dry out as the weather became hotter. Unable to sink roots into the ground to obtain water and nourishment, and its stunted roots unable to support the growing stem and leaves, the young plant would die. Jesus compared the rocky ground to those who respond to His message with joy and a great deal of emotional fervor, but when trials come like the scorching heat of the sun, their rootlessness and lack of connection to Him becomes readily evident (how like the multitudes who followed Jesus solely for His miracles and the material benefits He could provide for them).

Even seed that falls on seemingly good soil may not grow up to become a fruitful plant because thorns, which represent riches and worry, can come and choke the life out of the tender sprouts. An area of ground can only support so many plants; useful plants will remain stunted or die because they cannot compete with the weeds for air, light, and nutrients. Thorns do not need to be cultivated; they are sure to come if the plot of ground is neglected.

Some seed, however, falls on good soil that is free of weeds and produces a crop that bears fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundredfold. The good soil represents the true believer. Although Christian lives may yield fruit (Galatians 5:22-23) in differing degrees, all produce a crop (John 15:1-8). Unbelievers (represented by the first three types of ground), though they may show temporary interest in the things of God, do not. What kind of soil are you and your students? May the Word penetrate deeply into your lives and may you produce much fruit.

*Knowledge Objectives* - That your students may know the four types of ground of which Jesus spoke and what they and the other elements in the Parable of the Sower represent.

*Behavioral Objectives* - That your students will recognize what sort of ground they are and, by God's grace, become good soil and produce much fruit.

## **Lesson Procedure**

**Introduction** - Show your class a seed. Ask them what it is, what should be done with it (it should be planted) and what should be the results when this is done. Have them tell you what is necessary for a plant to grow and what might prevent it from growing properly. Tell your children that today they will study a parable about what can happen to a seed depending on where it is planted. Explain how farmers in biblical times sowed their seeds by scattering them over the land. You may need to define the word "sow" for them.

## BIBLE STORY

Read **Matthew 13:1-9** (NIV). You may have to explain how a seed can produce thirty, sixty, or a hundred times what was sown. You may wish to have your children try to discover the meaning of the parable themselves, but if the disciples could not do it, do not expect them to be able to. Tell your children that the disciples did not understand the parable either, so Jesus told them what He meant by the different parts of the story.

Read **Matthew 13:18-23** (NIV) and discuss, using appropriate background material and emphasizing to your children that they should consider what kind of ground they are.

## WORKSHEET

Have your children do the worksheet individually or as a class. A completed set of drawings is included for the Parables Booklet to be made in a later lesson.

## SONGS

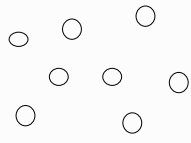
“We Plough the Fields and Scatter” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #714); “Come Ye Sinners” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #472).

## Take Home Activity

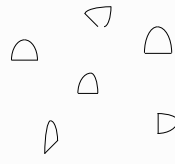
Do one or both of the following as a reminder of the seed of God’s Word of which Jesus spoke.

- 1. Seed Plaque** - This project can be completed next week or wrapped as a Christmas gift at that time. Have your students glue pieces of uncooked spaghetti onto a rectangular piece of wooden paneling or board, dividing it into six sections, three per half, with a seventh long rectangle across the top. Glue uncooked alphabet noodles in the top rectangle to spell the words “God’s Gifts.” In each of the six boxes glue a different kind of seed, several seeds per box, such as corn, navy beans, lima beans, kidney beans, peas, black-eyed peas, popcorn, or rice. Your students may glue alphabet noodles identifying each type of seed, if desired. When the plaques are completed, you should take them home and shellac them, if possible. If you are doing this, have your students write their names on the back of their piece of paneling before beginning to work. If you prefer, your children can make **trivets** rather than plaques by using a square board rather than paneling, dividing it into only four sections, and gluing many seeds in each section.
- 2. Plant** - Have your students plant a seed in a pot of soil and take it home to care for it and watch it grow.

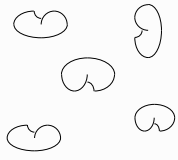
# GOD'S GIFTS



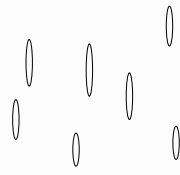
**PEAS**



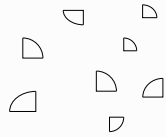
**POPCORN**



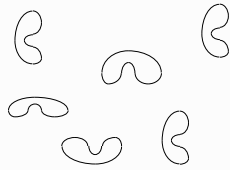
**BEANS**



**RICE**



**CORN**



**BEANS**

**Class Work**

**The Seed and Four Soils**

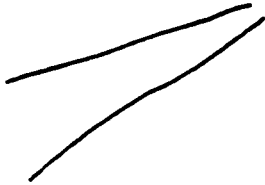
**Match the picture with the meaning.**



trials



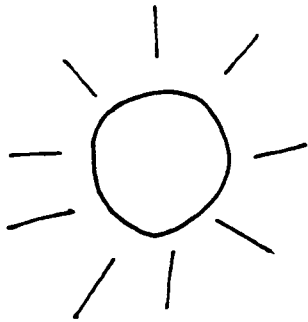
Christ or His helpers



worries and riches



Satan and his helpers

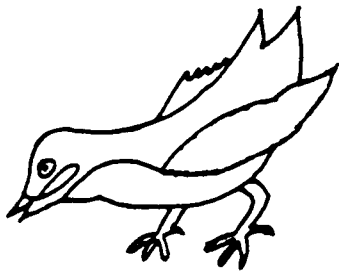


the Word of God

a person who doesn't listen  
to God's Word



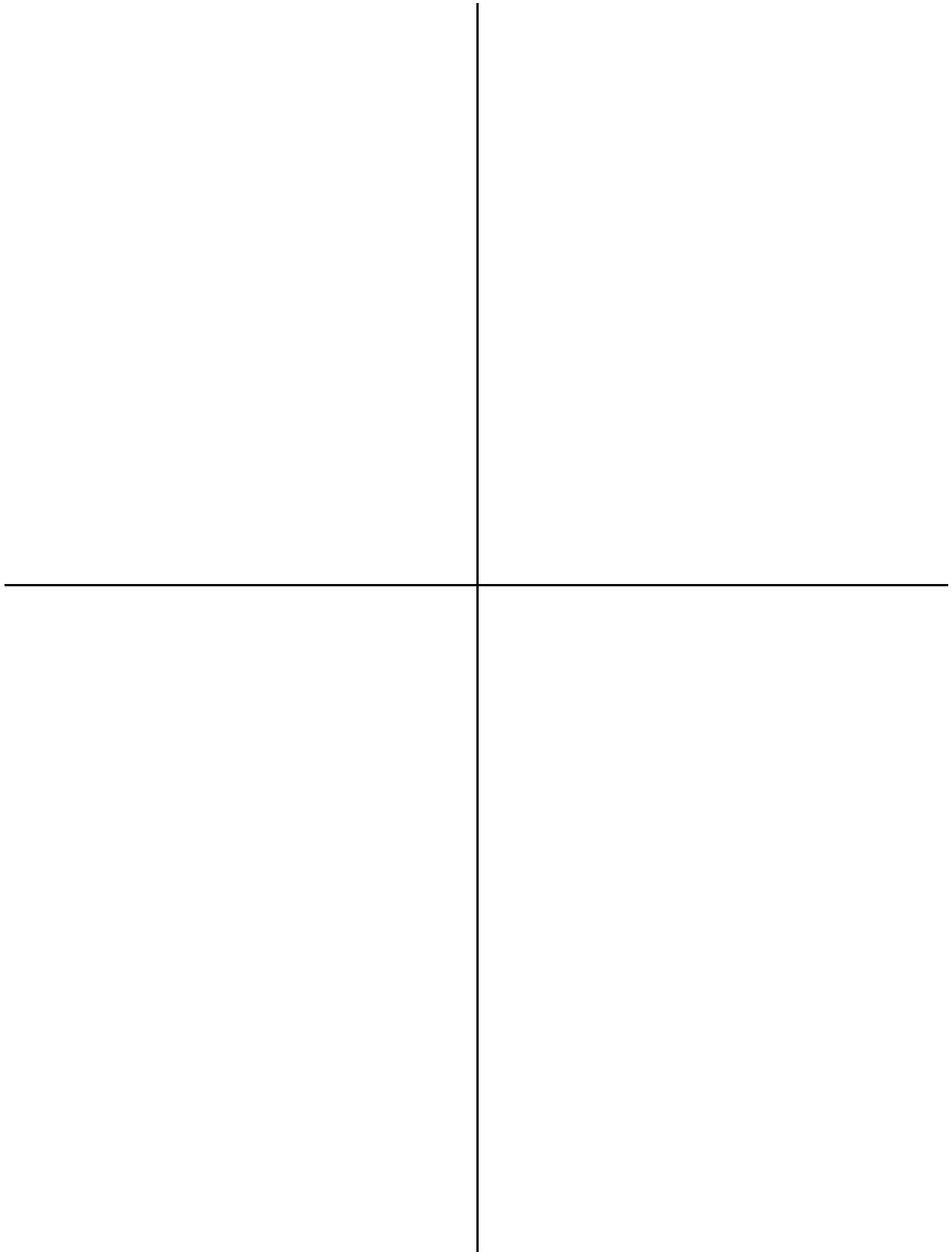
Christians



where seeds grow fast but  
soon wither



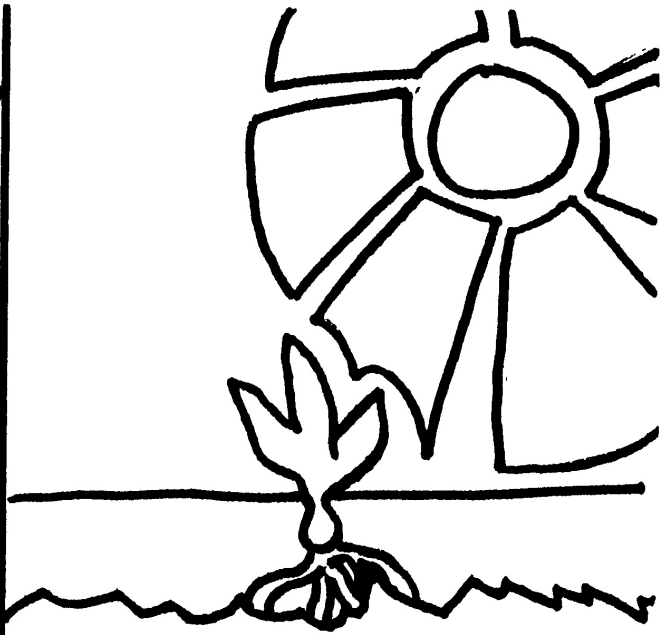
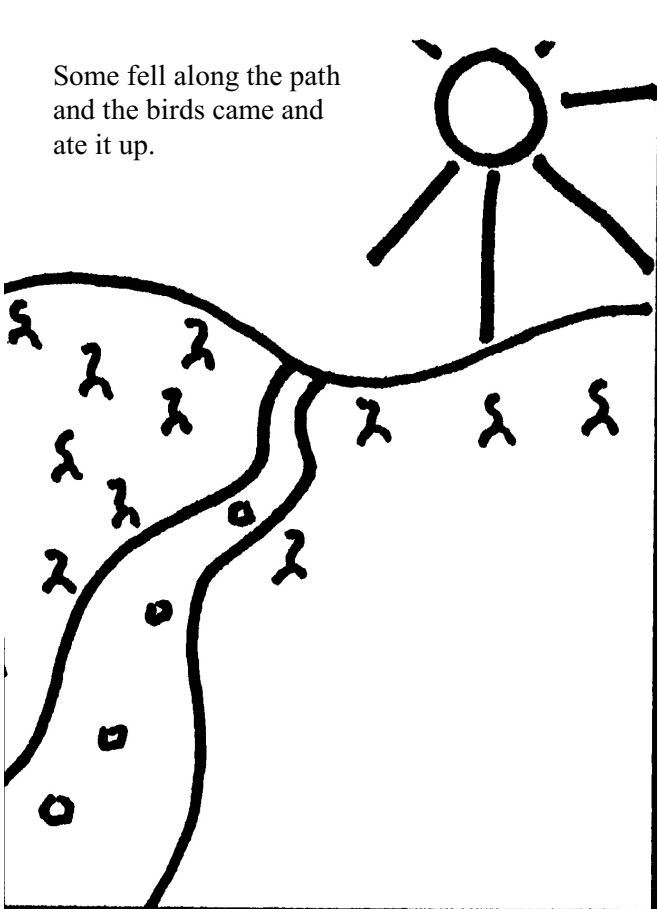
**Draw pictures of the four types of soil of which Jesus spoke  
and what grows on them.**



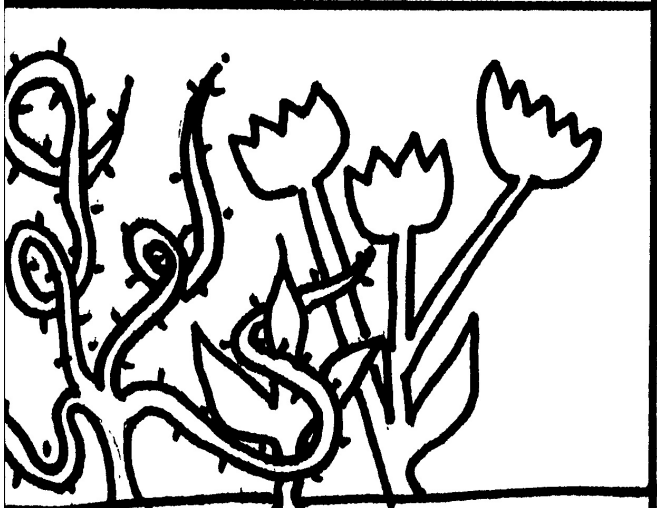
# Parables Booklet

# The Seed and Four Soils

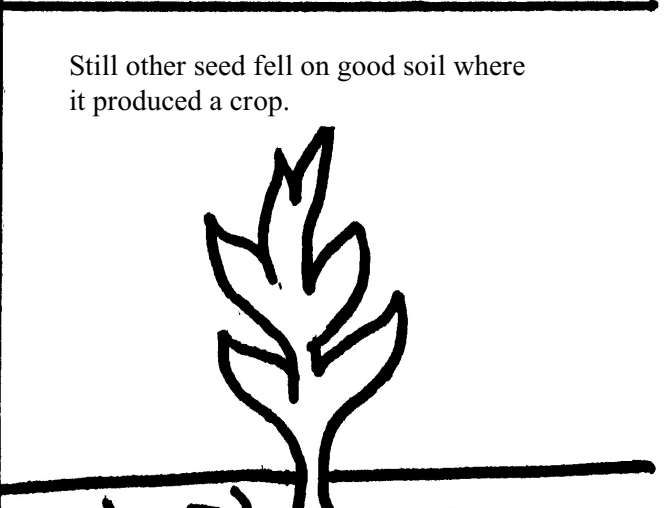
Some fell along the path and the birds came and ate it up.



Some fell on rocky places and they withered because they had no root.



Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.



Still other seed fell on good soil where it produced a crop.





### BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

**Matthew 13:1-23** - People respond to God's Word in four ways corresponding to four types of soil: hard ground, rocky ground, thorny ground, and good ground.

### MEMORY VERSE

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 15:3-10; this week, Matthew 7:26** - "But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand."

### SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Read Matthew 13:1-23 and/or a parallel passage and discuss its meaning with your family. Have them consider what sort of soil they are. For information on how to become "good soil" read a book about salvation listed below and/or speak to your child's Sunday School teacher or a pastor of this church.
2. Have your children complete the worksheet if this was not done in class.
3. Cultivating a garden will make the Parable of the Sower "come alive" for your children. Let them help you work a small plot of ground outdoors, if possible, or if you live in an apartment or the climate is unsuitable, plant a few seeds indoors, to some extent trying to duplicate the conditions of the parable.
4. Find characters in the Bible who seem to match up with the four kinds of soil spoken of in the parable, e.g., hard ground - the Pharisees; rocky ground - the multitudes who followed Jesus; thorny ground - Demas; good ground - Timothy.
5. Sing songs such as: "We Plough the Fields and Scatter" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #714); "Come Ye Sinners" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #472).

### SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

**Scripture** - Parallel passages to Matthew 13:1-23: Mark 4:3-20; Luke 8:4-15. Also: I Corinthians 3:5-9; Jeremiah 4:3; Hosea 10:12; Matthew 7:15-20; John 15:1-8; Galatians 5:22-23; Psalm 126:5-6.

#### **Books about salvation -**

*Mere Christianity* (C.S. Lewis, Macmillan, 1952).

*Basic Christianity* (John R. W. Stott, Intervarsity Press, London, 1958, Eerdmans, 1979).

*Knowing God* (J. I. Packer, Intervarsity Press, 1973).



# **THE RICH FOOL**

**Luke 12:13-21**

## **Lesson Aim**

That your students will realize that true security and happiness come from God, and that we should be generous, not covetous.

## **Memory Verse**

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 15:3-10; this week Matthew 7:27** - “The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” Also review **Matthew 7:24-27**.

## **Lesson Background**

Imagine what people’s reactions would be if two little boys burst in upon a meeting of heads of state discussing world problems and demanded that they arbitrate a dispute over the rightful ownership of an ice cream cone! Such a scenario seems ludicrous, but a similar situation arose in the Lord’s ministry. As Jesus spoke to a large group of people about persecution, death, and judgment, “someone in the crowd said to Him, ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me’” (Luke 12:13). The man may have sought out Jesus because rabbis often gave judgments in such matters, and/or because he thought Christ would set up an earthly reign under which he thought he could obtain justice. The passage is unclear as to whether the man had actually been defrauded or whether he wanted a more equal split than the two-thirds/one-third division customary according to primogeniture. Jesus is concerned about the material needs of His children, but the man’s interruption showed his disregard for the spiritual matters about which Christ had been speaking. The Lord saw beyond his inappropriate request to the greed that lay behind it. Jesus warned the people to guard themselves (“take positive action to ward off a foe”) against greed, for the sum total of people’s lives is not their possessions, as many seem to think. He then told a parable to illustrate His admonition.

The man in Jesus' parable was extremely covetous and sought happiness in his possessions. He did not regard them as blessings lent to him by God to use in service to Him, but rather as his own property (notice the frequent use of the word "my"). He gave no thought to asking God what he should do with the riches, nor how he could use even his surplus to benefit others. The man in the parable thought himself prudent to provide luxury and security for himself, but he was really a fool. The man discovered that God retains exclusive right over our lives. He really owned nothing; all belongs to the Lord.

We are all prone to covetousness. For many, the temptation may not be to acquire a superabundance, but to achieve a surplus to ensure that the future is in their control. It is so easy to trust in our possessions rather than God's care, but, as the man in today's parable discovered, this is futile. Your children's temptation to covetousness, spurred on by television advertisements and the lifestyles of their friends, may arise from a simpler motivation, but it is just as deadly. May we, especially during the Christmas season, guard against it as a deadly foe and help our children to do likewise.

*Knowledge Objectives* - To know that as Jesus was speaking of serious matters to a crowd, a man asked Jesus to tell the man's brother to divide an inheritance with him, whereupon Jesus warned the crowd of greed and told a parable illustrating this about a rich man who built larger barns in which to store his crops, giving no thought to God or others but only to his own security and pleasure, and who was told by God that he would die that night without enjoying any of what he had prepared for himself.

*Behavioral Objectives* - To realize that security and happiness come only from God and, by His grace, to be generous, not covetous.

## Lesson Procedure

**Introduction** - Lead your children in a discussion of covetousness, which is especially apparent during the Christmas season. Perhaps you could bring in a popular toy, ask who would like it and then discuss your children's reactions with them. Be careful that you don't deceitfully offer something you don't intend to give and realize, too, that a child could desire the toy without actually being covetous. If you prefer, you could ask your students what they would do if they were given a million dollars for Christmas. Some children may give unselfish answers because they think that is what is expected of them (and some may genuinely mean what they say), but try to show them that we are all covetous. Continue this discussion after the Bible story.

## BIBLE STORY

Read **Luke 12:13-21** (NIV) to your class and discuss. You may wish to tell the parable in your own words before you read it from Scripture.

## STORY

### THE MONSTER ON THE MOUNTAIN

"I . . . want . . . more . . . gumballs!" The voice echoed down from the top of the mountain, rumbled boulders in the great gorge, swayed giant pine trees, stirred up whitecaps on the lake, lurched down the path into the village where it stirred the thatch on the roofs, and shook the body and quivering heart of Emmett Thudlow. Emmett was at his wits' end. He and the other inhabitants of Sweethaven-in-the-dale spent their entire lives harvesting gumballs from the confecticus trees to feed Gimmy, the monster on the mountain, but

it was never enough. His appetite was insatiable. Gimmy had caves full of gumballs - red gumballs, yellow gumballs, blue gumballs, orange with purple stripes and even pink with green polka dot gumballs - but still he wanted more. If the villagers did not feed Gimmy, he would shake the mountain, causing earthquakes and floods. He could do this because Gimmy had actually become part of the mountain himself. Unfortunately, the harvest had been bad this year and there were almost no gumballs left.

Emmett decided that the only thing to do was to take the long and dangerous journey to see the king and ask him to help the people of Sweethaven-in-the-dale. Finally, after many trials, Emmett arrived at the palace and gained an audience with the king. "Your majesty," pleaded Emmett, "please help us. What should we do?"

"Keep feeding the monster gumballs," said the king.

"But they're almost gone! What will we do when there are no more?"

"Trust me," the king replied. "You will come to no harm."

Emmett started for home. "A lot of good that did," he grumbled. "I took that whole trip for nothing." But in spite of his griping, Emmett was somehow encouraged by his visit with the king. When he reached the village, Emmett asked how things had gone while he was away.

"Terrible," one of the villagers replied. "Gimmy has been shaking the ground and roaring for gumballs loud as a thunderclap. He wants more and more and now we only have three gumballs left! Someone will have to go and give them to him and tell him that is all we have." But no one wanted to face the anger of the monster on the mountain. Finally, Emmett agreed to go. Solemnly he shook hands with the silently staring villagers and began to trudge up the mountain. "I want gumballs! Gimme gumballs!" Emmett felt himself pressing against the noise as if it were a physical force. Finally, he reached the top and stared at the cavernous mouth of the monster.

"I . . . I . . . b-b-brought your gumballs," said Emmett.

"Good," chortled the monster. "I hope you brought lots - bucketsful, wheelbarrowsful, wagonsful! But, where are they?"

"Uh, here, I've got three."

"Three! Three gumballs? Three puny, tiny, ugly, nasty, icky, sticky gumballs? Three wretched gumballs? Why I'll . . ."

Emmett didn't wait around to find out what the monster would do. Throwing the three gumballs into the monster's open mouth, he ran down the mountain as fast as his legs could take him.

Halfway down, Emmett was knocked from his feet as a terrific noise, louder than any of the monster's roarings, split the air. The ground pitched beneath him as clumps of dirt flew through the air, hitting Emmett where he crouched on the ground. But it wasn't only clods of dirt that were falling all around him. It was gumballs. Hundreds and hundreds and thousands and thousands of gumballs! Red and yellow and blue and orange with purple stripes and pink with purple polka dot gumballs. Cautiously raising his head, Emmett peered out from beneath his crossed arms at the peak of the mountain. But there was a hole where the summit should have been and shooting out of the hole was a stream of gumballs a hundred feet high. Gimmy had blown his top! He had eaten one too many gumball.

### Questions:

- What kind of creature was Gimmy? How was he like the man in the Bible story who built more and more barns? What happened to Gimmy because of his covetousness?
- What kind of a person was Emmett? How was he different from Gimmy?
- Think to yourself, are you a Gimmy kind of person? How can you change?

## **ACTIVITY (optional)**

Encourage your students to be generous with what the Lord has given them. Have your students bring in next week one of their toys that is in good condition or a new toy that they have bought with their own money to give to a mission, hospital, or some other charity, or plan a garage sale with their used toys and give away the proceeds. It is important that the giving come from the child himself, not from the parents (as when the parent buys a new toy with his money).

## **PARABLES BOOKLET**

The page from the Parables Booklet for this week also includes questions for the students to answer.

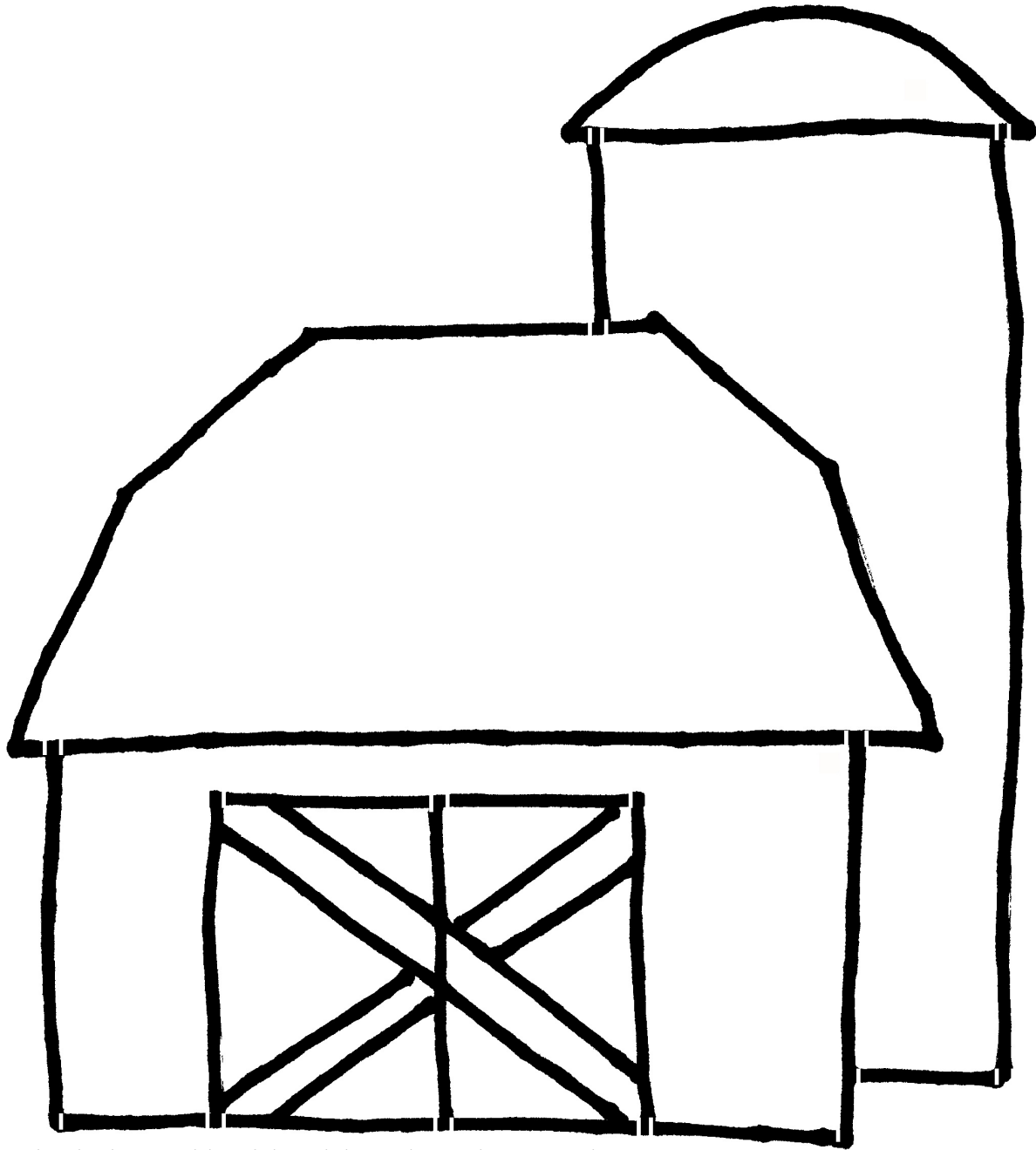
## **SONGS**

“The Kingdom of God is Not Meat or Drink” (Romans 14:17); “Except the Lord Build” (Psalm 127:1); “Jesus, Priceless Treasure” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #656); “Not What My Hands Have Done” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #461).

## **Take Home Activity**

Do one or both of the following:

1. **Seed Plaque** - Finish making or wrap the seed plaques begun last week. Have your children give them to someone.
2. **Parables Booklet** - You may wish to begin a booklet of pictures of the parables that will serve as a reminder at the end of the quarter of the stories Jesus told. Have your children draw a picture representing each of the parables discussed so far (two houses, treasure and pearls, four soils, and the rich man with his many barns). Clip their papers together and keep them to incorporate into a booklet at the end of the quarter. If you would prefer not to use student drawings, a picture for the Parables Booklet for this lesson is included below.



What is the Parable of the Rich Fool warning us against?

How should we act toward the things we have? (Luke 12:32-34)

*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Luke 12:34).*





### BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

**Luke 12:13-21** - Unlike the rich fool in Jesus' parable, we should be generous, not covetous, and trust God for our security and happiness.

### MEMORY VERSE

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 15:3-10; this week, Matthew 7:27** - "The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

### SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Read Scriptures about riches and greed and discuss how they apply to your lives. A person's attitude toward his riches is more important than the amount of money he has, but Scripture makes its inherent danger abundantly clear (and remember, almost anyone living in the United States is wealthy compared to most of the world). Pray that God will show you any lifestyle changes you should make in light of these verses. In so doing, remember that time is also a valuable resource, and sometimes it is better to spend money rather than time. Do not hoard the money you save, but give it to help others.
2. Poor people can be greedy as well as the rich. Our covetousness can disguise itself as a desire for security. The more we have, the less we tend to regard God as the Provider of our daily bread. Are you trusting God to care for you, or are you trusting in your riches (e.g., house, money for bills, insurance policies - not that these are bad in themselves) to keep you from harm? Thank God for His provision for you.
3. Is it wrong to save for the future, as some may take this parable to imply? Discuss, giving Scriptural justification for your answers.
4. "Eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12:19), the philosophy of many in today's society, is especially evident in television programming and commercials. This week help your children recognize characters acting for purely selfish motivations and advertisements pandering to greed.
5. People are especially susceptible to covetousness during the Christmas season. Help your children focus on the true meaning of Christ's birth. Keep gift buying as minimal as possible and try to find practical ways to serve others.
6. Sing songs such as "The Kingdom of God is Not Meat or Drink" (Romans 14:17); "Except the Lord Build" (Psalm 127:1); "Jesus, Priceless Treasure" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #656); "Not What My Hands Have Done" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #461).

## **SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING**

**Scripture** - Luke 12:22-35; Matthew 6:1-4, 19-34; James 4:13-5:5; 1:9-11; 2:1-7; Hebrews 13:5; I Timothy 6:10; Psalm 52:5-7; Deuteronomy 8:3; Philippians 3:7-8; Revelation 3:14-18.

# **THE LOST SHEEP**

**Luke 15:3-7**

## **Lesson Aim**

That your students will realize that they are lost like the sheep in Jesus' parable if they do not know Him, and that, like the shepherd, Jesus seeks the lost.

## **Memory Verse**

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 15:3-10; this week, Luke 15:3-4** - "Then Jesus told them this parable: 'Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?'"

## **Lesson Background**

The Pharisees, the self-righteous, legalistic religious leaders of Israel, had been criticizing Jesus for befriending sinners (a technical term for those who were not terribly fastidious in observing the ceremonial law and its man-made accretions). They found fault with the Lord's very purpose in coming to earth - to save those who are lost. In response to the Pharisees' censure, Jesus told three parables about God's love for the lost.

When the shepherd in the first parable realized that one of his flock was missing, he did not wait around hoping that it would return by itself, but took the initiative and immediately set out to look for the sheep (cf. Ephesians 2:8-9). This was not a token search. He considered no trouble, sacrifice, or suffering too great to recover his property. The shepherd would probably have struggled up mountains and been scratched by thorns before the object of his search was rewarded and he found his sheep. The shepherd did not berate the lost sheep and complain about all the trouble it cost to find him. Rather, he tenderly picked up the helpless sheep and carried it home with great joy. Similarly, there is joy in heaven when one sinner repents and comes to know the Lord.

Jesus told this parable to confront the self-righteous Pharisees (verse 7) with their unloving attitudes and need of redemption. We should act toward sinners not as the Pharisees did, but by loving them as Christ did. Sheep may or may not realize their lost condition, but they cannot find their way home alone; they are totally dependent on the shepherd who is willing to go through trouble to help them. Jesus suffered more than the weariness and few scratches of an earthly shepherd to save His lost sheep. May we praise Him eternally for all He has done.

*Knowledge Objectives* - To know that Jesus told a parable about a man who, losing one of his hundred sheep, left the ninety-nine to search for it and, finding it, joyfully put it on his shoulders, went home and called in his friends and neighbors to rejoice; and to know the meaning of the parable.

*Behavioral Objectives* - By God's grace, that your children will recognize that they are lost sheep (or were if they are already redeemed) in need of a Shepherd to whom they should cry out for help, and that they will show love to other sinners.

## Lesson Procedure

**Introduction** - Read "The Lost Dog" and/or discuss times when your children may have lost a pet, how they felt, and what they did about the situation. Use this to lead into the story Jesus told about a lost sheep.

### STORY

#### THE LOST DOG

"Sancho, what is the matter?" Rosita inquired, gazing at the teary-eyed little boy.

"My p-p-puppy; he's lost," Sancho wailed.

"Oh, no, not Paco!" exclaimed Rosita. "Why, you've had him practically since he was born, and I know how much you care for him. How did it happen? Did you ask your parents to help you find him?"

"I tied Paco to the railing here," Sancho pointed, "and went inside quick to get a drink of water, but when I came back, he was gone!" The small child looked as though he would start crying again, but he controlled himself, gave a sob that shook his whole body, and continued. "Papa's at work and Mama had to take Carlos to the doctor. I am not allowed to cross the street without a big person, so I could not look for him. You're big; you're my babysitter; I could look with you. Would you help me, please, Rosita?"

"Si, I will help you, Sancho. First, do you have paper and crayons? We will make many posters that will tell people to call you if they have seen your puppy, and we will hang them on telephone poles."

They worked for some time on the advertisements and Rosita wrote Sancho's mother a note so she would not worry. Then the two set out to look for Paco. Up and down the streets they roamed, hanging posters, calling the dog's name, and asking children if they had seen him. "Oh, where is he?" cried Sancho. "Maybe he's hurt. Maybe a big dog hurt him or he got run over by a car."

"Don't worry," Rosita said, wiping off his dirty face.

It finally got to be close to dinner time and there was still no sign of Paco. "Rosita, wait," Sancho said. "Can we stop a minute? My feet hurt and so does this cut on my knee where I tripped over that skateboard."

"Sure, Sancho," said Rosita, "and after that I think we'd better go home. It's getting late. I'm sorry we didn't find your dog."

"We can't go home. I've got to find Paco!" protested Sancho.

“I’m sorry, Sancho, but we must go home; your mother will be. . .” Rosita stopped in the middle of her sentence and stared at Sancho in surprise. “Did you hear that? It sounds like a dog whimpering under the porch.”

“It’s Paco, I know it is!” Sancho shouted. He squeezed through an iron fence and down a narrow flight of stairs before Rosita could stop him. There he was greeted by such tongue-licking and tail-wagging as would seem impossible from so small a dog, for it was indeed Paco, elated to see his master. The dog’s leash had become entangled in an old baby stroller and he had been unable to free himself. This Sancho did with great joy and, hugging his pup, ran up the steps to see Rosita. “See, I found him, I found him!” he exclaimed. “Thank you, Rosita. Let’s go show my parents.” So two happy people and one happy dog walked home.

## **BIBLE STORY**

Read **Luke 15:3-7** and discuss, emphasizing the fact that “all we like sheep have gone astray” and the necessity of being rescued by the Great Shepherd, as well as the idea that we should love sinners as Christ did. You may tell the story in your own words before reading the Scripture. Perhaps you could ask the children to help the shepherd count his sheep (it is probably better to skip the middle numbers and tell them you are doing so) e.g., “1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and he kept counting, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, and he kept counting, 96, 97, 98, 99; oops, maybe I counted wrong; there are supposed to be a hundred sheep; let’s count again 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. Oh, no; one lamb is missing!”

## **ACTIVITY**

**Find the sheep** - Hide, or have one of the children hide, a toy sheep or other object and have the class try to find it. You may give clues or tell them they are “getting warmer” when they move closer to the sheep (and “getting cooler” when they go away from it).

## **WORKSHEET**

**“Find the Lost Sheep” Maze.**

## **SONGS**

“Jesus, What A Friend For Sinners” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #498); “Bring Them In” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #445); “There Were Ninety and Nine” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #187); “Jesus Sinners Doth Receive” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #473, verse 3); “Gracious Savior, Tender Shepherd” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #416).

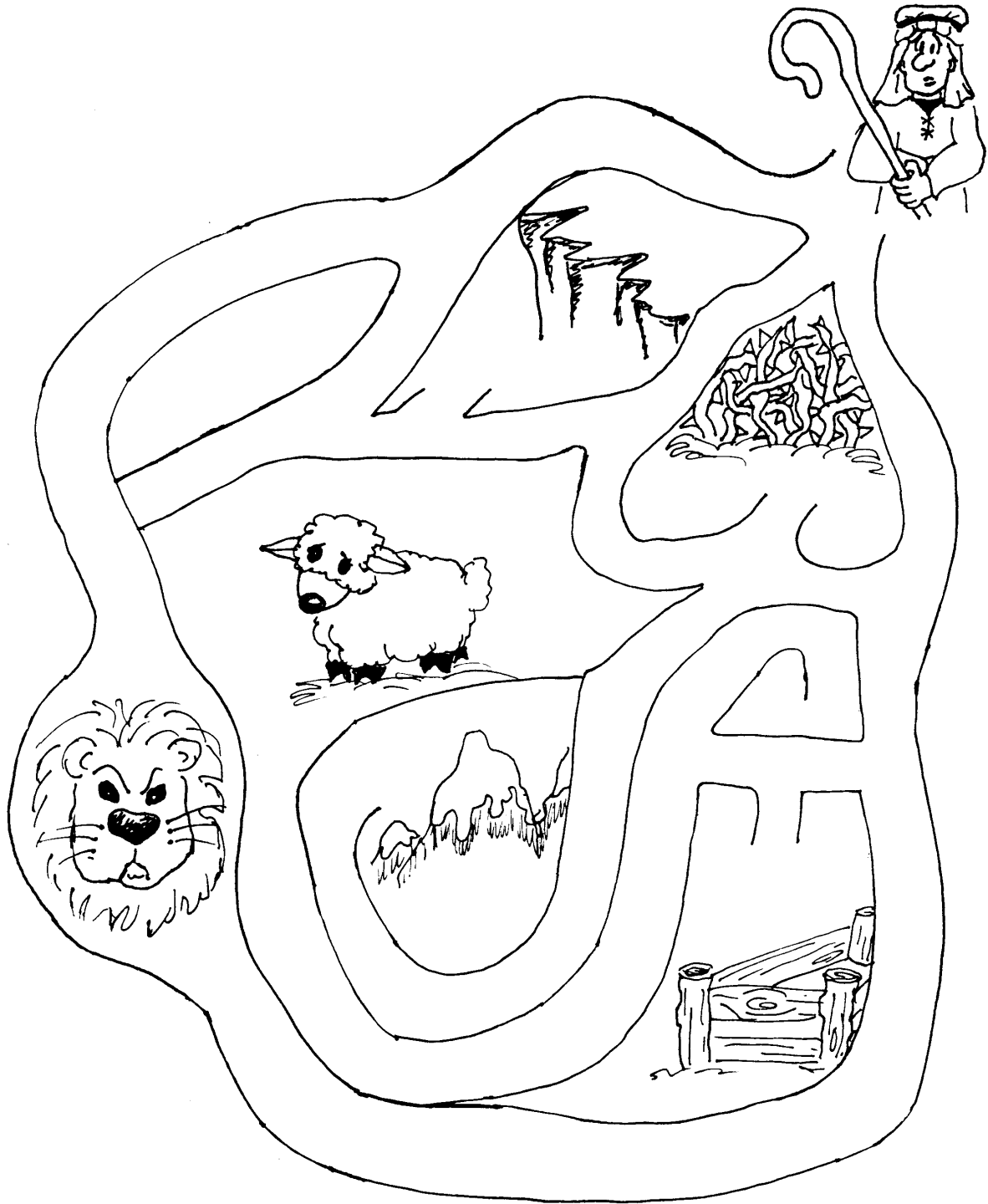
The following assume the singer is a Christian: “I Was A Wandering Sheep” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #464); “Savior, Like A Shepherd Lead Us” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #599).

## **Take Home Activity**

Have your students color the picture of a shepherd leaving his flock behind and looking for a lost sheep. The pictures (with the children’s names on them) should be kept by the teacher to add to the children’s Parables Booklets. Students should also answer the questions at the bottom of the picture in order to review the meaning of the lesson.



Help the Shepherd Find His Sheep









What is the parable of the Lost Sheep about?

Who are the sheep?

Who is the Shepherd?

What does it mean to say, “Jesus is a friend for sinners”?



### BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

Luke 15:3-7 - We are like lost sheep until we are found by Jesus the Great Shepherd.

### MEMORY VERSE

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 15:3-10; this week, Luke 15:3-4** - “Then Jesus told them this parable: ‘Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?’”

### SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Read today’s Scripture and/or its parallel passage in **Matthew 18:12-14** and also the similar parable about a lost coin (**Luke 15:8-10**) and discuss. Have family members consider whether they are still lost like the sheep or coin, and if not, how they can help lead others to the Shepherd.
2. Read (and sing) **Psalm 23** and other verses about sheep and shepherds; learn about the life of a biblical shepherd and characteristics of sheep.
3. Play “Hide and Seek” or “Find the Hidden Object” and discuss the situation of the lost (they cannot find their own way home) and the searcher (he may become tired or hurt in looking).
4. Read books that use a shepherd/sheep motif such as *The Tanglewood Secret* (Patricia M. St. John, Moody Press, 1982).
5. Sing songs such as: “Jesus, What A Friend For Sinners” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #498); “Bring Them In” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #445); “There Were Ninety and Nine” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #187); “Jesus Sinners Doth Receive” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #473, verse 3); “Gracious Savior Tender Shepherd” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #416); “I Was A Wandering Sheep” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #464); “Savior Like A Shepherd Lead Us” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #599). The last two songs assume the singer is a Christian.
6. Listen to “All We Like Sheep” from Handel's *Messiah*.

### SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

**Scripture** - John 10:1-21; Isaiah 53:4-7; Psalm 23; Ezekiel 34; Zechariah 11.

**Books** - *A Shepherd Looks At Psalm 23* (Philip Keller, Zondervan, 1970).



# **WORKERS IN A VINEYARD**

**Matthew 20:1-16**

## **Lesson Aim**

That your students will realize that God's grace is not contingent upon the extent of our labor.

## **Memory Verse**

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 15:3-10; this week, Luke 15:5-6** - "And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'"

## **Lesson Background**

Today's parable strikes at the belief that a certain amount of work earns a proportional amount of God's blessing. Jesus told this story in response to a comment Peter made following their encounter with the Rich Young Ruler. The Lord had just effectively demonstrated to the young man the futility of depending on good works for salvation when Peter proclaimed, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" - a statement that revealed his own pride, complacency, an attitude of comparison with others, and a misunderstanding of what Jesus had said.

The parable shows clearly that God's blessings are not based on merit, but are solely by His grace. It was the landowner (God) who sought and chose the workers in the first place (He probably called the laborers for a harvest). God is sovereign, doing what He wants when He wants. He saves some people early in life and others on their deathbeds, like the penitent thief on the cross, but all who are truly redeemed receive eternal life. Similarly, in the evening, the landowner paid a denarius (a fair day's wage) to each of his workers whether they were hired early in the morning, at 9:00 AM, noon, 3:00 PM, or 5:00 PM.

The early laborers' dissatisfaction stemmed not from the paucity of the wages agreed upon (the first group being the only one to have made a specific contract), but the landowner's perceived partiality. A denarius had seemed sufficient when they came to terms with the landowner that morning, but when other people seemed to benefit from circumstances more than they, they begrudged their master's generosity. Of course, Jesus was illustrating God's grace, not giving a paradigm for management/labor relations. However, the lesson taught here about not envying others and constantly making comparisons with others is one to which a few labor unions and certainly all of us need to pay attention. Are we jealous of others' blessings and angry with God because we do not think we deserve the trials we are enduring? May the Lord help us to view these things from His perspective and thank Him for His grace.

*Knowledge Objectives* - To know that, in response to Peter's proud statement, Jesus told a parable to illustrate God's grace and to combat the idea that so much work deserves so much reward by God; that the parable told of a landowner who hired workers early in the morning, at 9:00 AM, noon, 3:00 PM, and 5:00 M, but all received a denarius, which had been agreed upon by the first group of workers; to understand the meaning of the parable and to know that salvation is by God's grace, not works.

*Behavioral Objectives* - By God's grace, to serve Christ from love and trust, not a desire for reward, and not to view others with jealousy, but to be thankful for the way God is working in one's life.

## Lesson Procedure

**Introduction** - Introduce today's lesson in one of the following ways:

- “What would you think if I gave everybody in our class a gooey piece of chocolate cake but only gave a girl who was visiting an apple? You would probably think that was terribly unfair. If I told you, however, that the chocolate cake would make the girl very sick because she had diabetes, you would no longer think me unjust. Many times when people are angry because things don't seem fair, they are only dissatisfied with what they have because they are jealous of other people. Some situations seem unfair because we do not know all the reasons behind them or because we are looking at them from wrong perspectives. One of Jesus' parables speaks about this.” Read the story “Unfair” following this introduction and then tell the Bible story.
- Imitate the Bible story by asking one or two of your children if they will do a particular job for you for a certain sum of money or for some other payment, such as a cookie. The job could be cleaning the classroom, setting up chairs, or picking up trash, but do not make the job too easy. A few minutes later, ask another student or two to help the first worker(s). This will work especially well if your children tend to arrive at church at scattered intervals of time. Have the last child work only a brief amount of time and then pay them all the same wage. If your children have the same reaction as the workers in Jesus' parable, you have a natural lead-in to the Bible story. If, on the other hand, your plan “backfires” and the children work willingly without thought of reward, praise them for their actions and contrast this with the attitudes of the men in Matthew 20. If you choose to use this introduction, read the story “Unfair” after the Bible story.

## STORY

### UNFAIR

“It’s unfair!” Darien complained, stamping her foot. “Work, work, work; that’s all I ever do around here. All Melissa does is empty the trash cans, but I have to clear the table. I have to make my bed. I even have to dust sometimes. It’s just not fair!”

“Whoa, there, young lady. Settle down,” said her mother. “I think you’d better watch your attitude. If you don’t like your jobs, perhaps you would like to switch with me. Then you could do the cooking, cleaning, dishwashing, sewing, vacuuming, laundry, and several other things as well. Melissa is only three years old; there’s only so much she can do, and she does put her toys away, which is more than I can say for some people I know.”

“Well, if Melissa’s so little, she shouldn’t get the same allowance as I do.”

“Darien, we don’t pay you an allowance for the chores you do. You should help out because you are a member of this family. We give you an allowance to pay for the things you need with a little extra for treats. Are you so jealous of your sister? Should we not show love to her as well as you?”

“Yeah, I guess so, mom,” said Darien. “I’m sorry I spoke to you that way.”

Darien’s mom gave her a hug. “I know there are times when things seem unfair and sometimes are, but often if we look at the whole situation we will find they are not as unequal as we seem to think. And there is one Person we can always trust to do what is right - God.”

#### **Questions:**

- Do you ever think you are being treated unfairly?
- Are you sometimes unhappy, not because you do not have enough, but because another person has more? Today’s Bible story talks about some people who thought they were being treated unfairly.

## BIBLE STORY

Jesus had just been talking with the Rich Young Ruler, a man who was unwilling to give up his possessions to follow God. When the young man had walked away from Jesus, Peter proudly told the Lord, “We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?” In other words, Peter said that, unlike the Rich Young Ruler, he deserved good things from God because of all his good works. This was the very thing the Rich Young Ruler had thought. Jesus reassured Peter that God would take care of him, but then told a parable to demonstrate that God’s blessings are given because of His love and generosity, not in exact payment for good works accomplished. Read **Matthew 20:1-16** (NIV) and discuss, giving attention to various lessons mentioned in the background material, particularly God’s grace in salvation, our response of love and trust, and a desire to work for His glory, not rewards. Emphasize that we should not be jealous of God’s blessing in others’ lives.

## ACTIVITY

Have your class brainstorm ways in which they as individuals and as a class can serve the Lord without thought of reward. Make a list of these ideas and implement at least one of them.

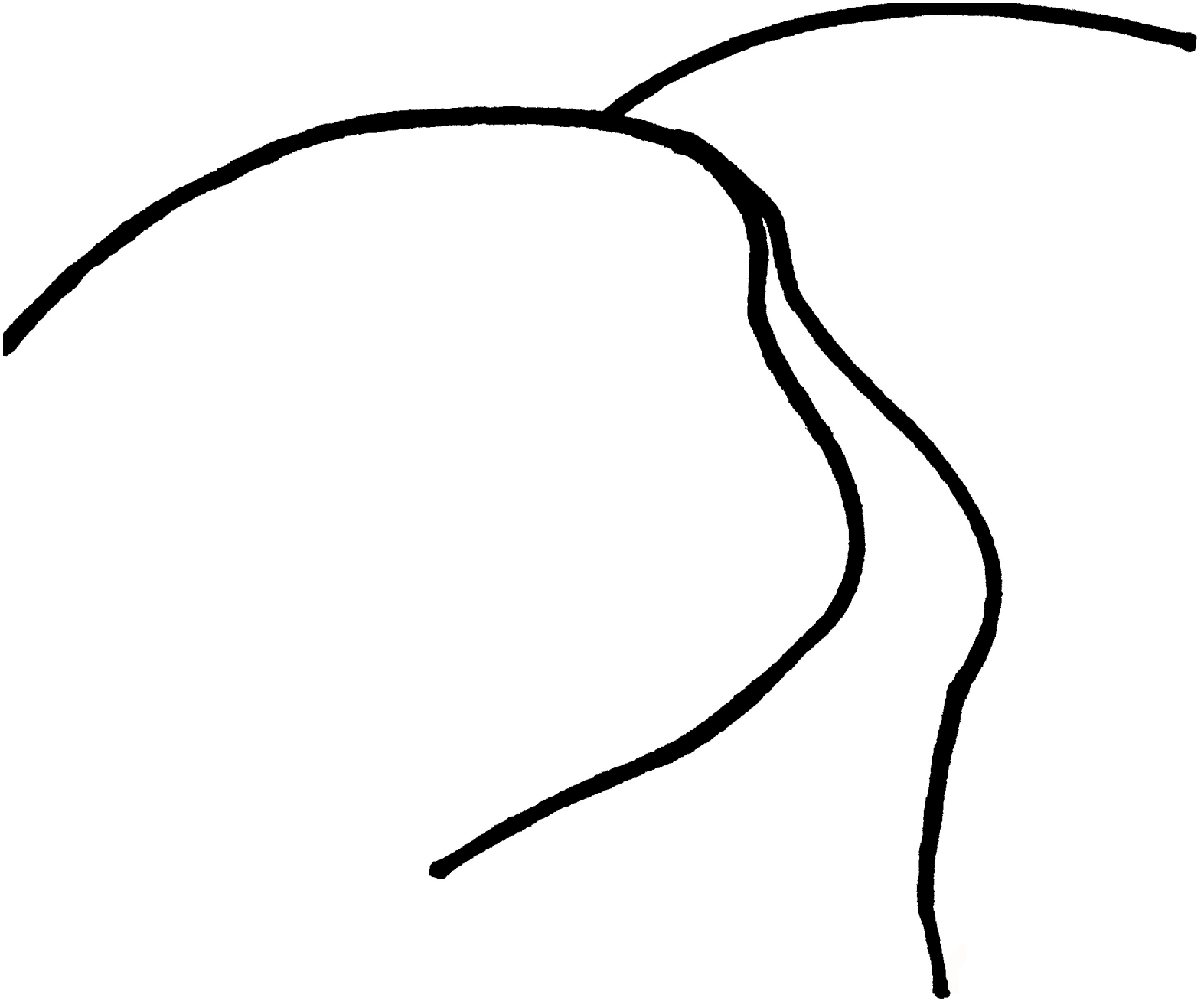
## SONGS

“Marvelous Grace of Our Loving Lord” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #465); “Come Ye Sinners” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #472); “Jesus Sinners Doth Receive” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #473); “Love Divine” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #529); “O God of Mercy” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #433).

## Take Home Activity

**Man With A Penny Picture** - Have your children make another picture to add to their parables booklets. They should draw a man and tape or glue a penny in his hand. They may glue scraps of cloth to the man for clothes.





We learn from this parable that \_\_\_\_\_

is by \_\_\_\_\_, not by \_\_\_\_\_.



### BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

**Matthew 20:1-16** - Workers in a vineyard; God's grace is not contingent upon the extent of our labor.

### MEMORY VERSE

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 15:3-10; this week, Luke 15:5-6** - "And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'"

### SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Read and discuss Jesus' parable together as a family. Thank God for His grace and blessing in your lives. Ask His forgiveness for complaining about what He has given you and being jealous of others. Thank Him that salvation is not dependent on our good works.
2. Have your family members do something nice for someone of whom they are jealous, and ask God to change their attitudes toward that person.
3. It is natural for people to observe how others are different from themselves, but discuss with your family how they can avoid an attitude of comparison.
4. Read the Scripture passages under Suggested Parental Reading and discuss how a servant should act and the attitudes he should have. Are you and your family members servants of God?
5. Sing songs such as: "Marvelous Grace of Our Loving Lord" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #465); "Come Ye Sinners" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #472); "Jesus Sinners Doth Receive" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #473); "Love Divine" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #529); "O God of Mercy" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #433).

### SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

**Scripture** - Romans 14:4; Matthew 7:1-5; John 21:15-24; Ephesians 2:8-9; Mark 10:35-45; Luke 17:7-10; Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 6:35-42; John 13:3-17; Philippians 2:14-15.



# **THE WEDDING BANQUET**

**Matthew 22:1-14**

## **Lesson Aim**

That your students will realize that they must be dressed in Christ's righteousness if they are to attend the marriage supper of the Lamb.

## **Memory Verse**

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 15:3-10; this week, Luke 15:5-6** - "And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'"

## **Lesson Background**

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet, this week's Bible story, concerns the requirements necessary to enjoy eternal fellowship with God, here symbolized by a wedding banquet (Revelation 19:7). This parable is similar to one told by Jesus on a different occasion as related in **Luke 14:15-24**.

A king sent his servants to summon those he had invited to a wedding banquet for his son. This long-range invitation, followed by an actual calling when the feast was ready, was common practice during an era when time was more loosely regarded than it is today (see Esther 5:8 and 6:14). The invited guests refused to come to the king's banquet, however, because of their apathy, worldly concerns (cf. the lame excuses offered in Luke 14:15-24: who would buy a field without first seeing it or oxen without first testing them?), or because they actually despised the king and wished to do his servants harm. Therefore the king told his servants, "Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you can find" (Matthew 22:9). This part of the parable can be seen as a picture of the Jews' (for the most part) rejection of Christ (verse 7 may refer to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 A.D.), and the Gentiles' acceptance of Him, but more

importantly it is an illustration of God's compassion. The servants "gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests" (Matthew 22:10). There will be many people in heaven whom we would not expect to find there. How merciful is our God!

The king in the parable came upon one further problem. A man had come to the banquet without wearing wedding clothes. To condemn the man for doing so at first seems unjust, for he would hardly be dressed for a wedding if he had just been bidden to come to the feast from the streets, and he would probably be too poor to afford such finery. The man was accountable for his actions, however, for it was the custom for the king to give away to his guests a garment that he expected them to wear to the wedding. This man treated the royal order with contempt by coming in his own ragged clothes, symbolically his own self-righteousness (see Isaiah 64:6). Unless we put on Christ's righteousness, we will all likewise be condemned (Revelation 19:7-8, Romans 13:14, Galatians 3:27).

Have your students been too proud, self-satisfied, apathetic, busy, or antagonistic to accept God's invitation to come to His Feast? Do they think they are Christians, but are they actually dressed in the rags of good works? Pray that the Lord will graciously send His servants to bring them to Himself and that our King will dress them in His own righteousness.

*Knowledge Objectives* - To know that Jesus told a parable about a king who sent his servants to summon the guests he had invited to a wedding banquet for his son, but they refused to come and some even killed his servants, so the king sent his army, which destroyed those murderers and burned their city; then the king sent his servants to the street corners to invite whomever they could find, both good and bad, to the feast, but that one man who came did not wear wedding clothes, so the king had his attendants throw the man into the darkness; and that your students will know the meaning of the parable.

*Behavioral Objectives* - By God's grace, that your students will accept God's invitation and that He will dress them in Christ's righteousness, and that they will see the need for this.

## Lesson Procedure

**Introduction** - Following the general outline of the introduction written below, have your students give details of the best party they can imagine and write a story about a child who refuses to attend the event and/or goes inappropriately dressed. "What would you do if you were invited to a party, not just any party, but a wedding banquet for a king's son. Many people you know would be going to this party and it would be the best, most exciting, and fanciest occasion you could possibly imagine. There would be tables overflowing with delicious food and many enjoyable activities planned. What if one day you were in the middle of a kickball game when someone told you it was time for the party? Would you go to the feast or would you continue to play kickball? If you decided to attend the king's banquet, would you go straight there just as you were (remember you would probably be dirty and sweaty and perhaps have a rip in your jeans from sliding into second base)?" Discuss and use this to lead into today's Scripture passage.

## BIBLE STORY

Read **Matthew 22:1-14**. Explain to your children the cultural background necessary to understanding the story. Discuss the meaning of the parable with your students and its application to their lives. Ask them why they think they are Christians if they do regard themselves as such.

## SONGS

“Obey My Voice” (Jeremiah 7:23); “I Will Sing of the Mercies” (Psalm 89:1); “King of Kings and Lord of Lords”; “Not What My Hands Have Done” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #461); “Jesus Thy Blood and Righteousness” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #520).

## Take Home Activity

**Paper Figure and Clothes** - Using carbon paper, copy the pattern for the figure on the next page onto a large index card or light-weight cardboard and the clothes onto card or paper. Make one figure and two garments per student. Have your children draw features on the figure’s face and color one set of clothes as a beautiful wedding garment while coloring the other to look old, patched, and dirty. Your students should then cut out the figure and clothes. They should not cut by the bottom of the figure’s feet if they want it to stand, but cut the stand off the side of the figure’s leg and fit the two cuts labeled “A” together in an “X” shape. Your students should fold the tabs on the clothes to attach them to the figure.

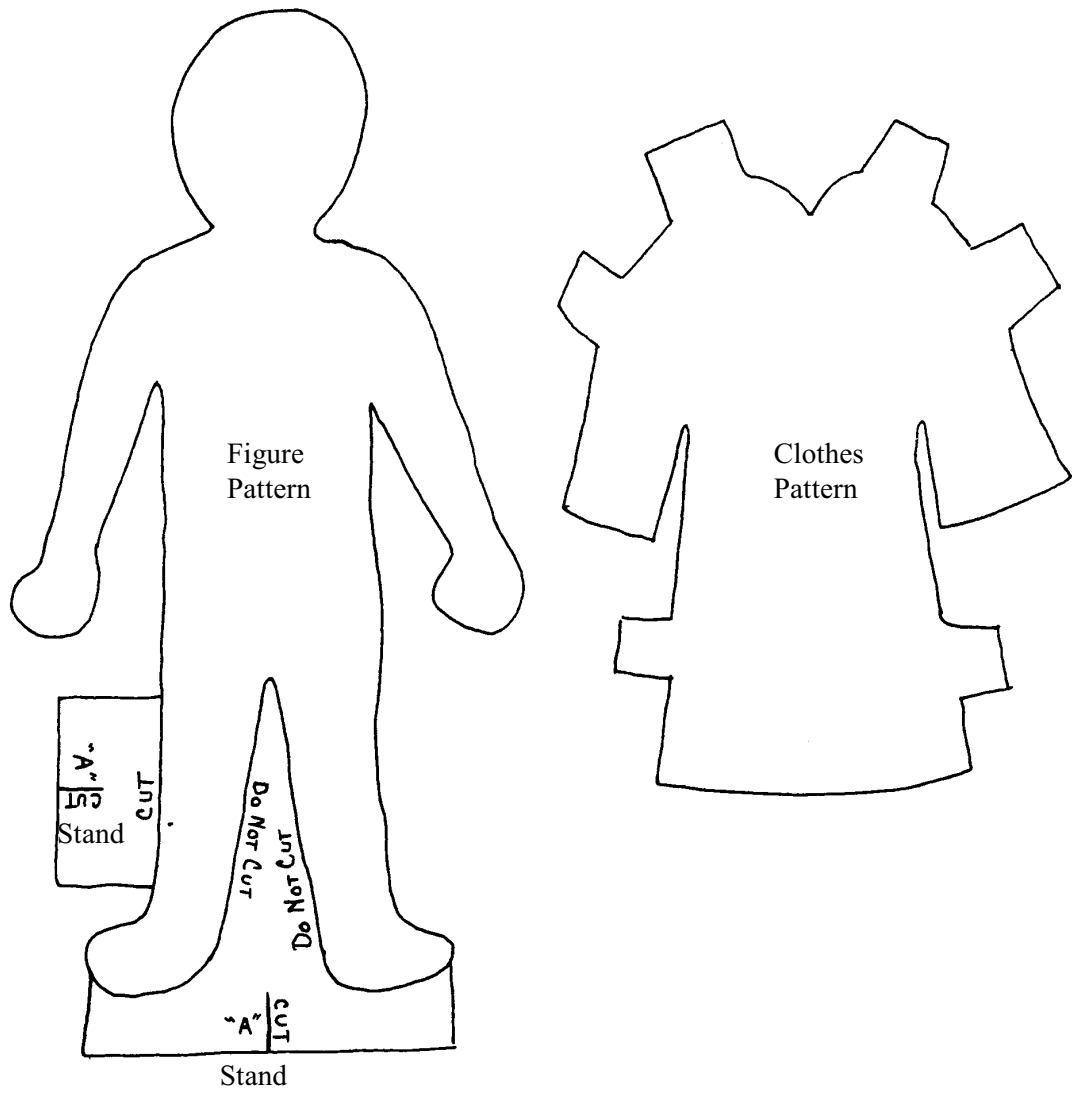
**Parables Book** - Today’s page for the Parables Book includes questions as well as a picture to help the students remember the story and its meaning.





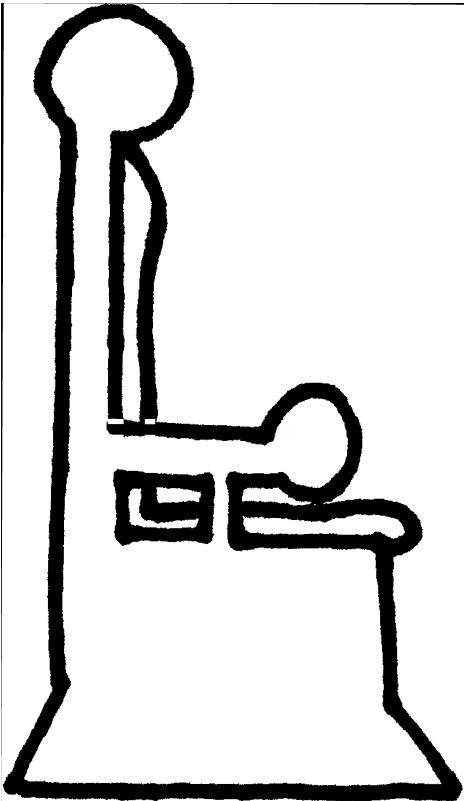
PAPER DOLL FIGURE PATTERN

WEDDING CLOTHES PATTERN





You are going to a very fancy party. What do you wear? Draw a picture in the space below.



Why was the man thrown out into the darkness by the king?

What does this parable mean?

What does it mean to be “clothed in Christ’s righteousness”?



### BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

**Matthew 22:1-14** - Like the man in Jesus' parable who needed a wedding garment, we must be dressed in Christ's righteousness if we are to attend the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

### MEMORY VERSE

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 15:3-10; this week, Luke 15:5,6 (NIV)** - "And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'"

### SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Read Matthew 22:1-14, or have your child (or children) tell you the story they learned today. The first people invited to the king's banquet thought their concerns more important than what the king wanted. Which is more important to the members of your family: God's will or their own? Read a parable Jesus told that is similar to this one related in Luke 14:15-24. What excuses do you and your family offer God for your rebellion against Him?
2. Let your child make other clothes for the paper figure he made in class. He can trace the figure's clothes for a pattern. He may wish to cut out pictures of different sorts of clothes from an old magazine (perhaps he would like to make a collage from this) or look at pictures of clothes from other countries in a magazine such as *National Geographic*. Ask your children why we wear clothes (protection, warmth, modesty, decoration, as a symbol of a group to which we belong). Ask why it is inappropriate to wear certain types of clothes for certain activities (give examples), and questions such as: Who wore the first clothes? Where did they get their clothes and why did they wear them (read Genesis 3 and discuss this passage)? What does it mean to be dressed in Christ's righteousness?
3. Sing songs such as: "Obey My Voice" (Jeremiah 7:23); "I Will Sing of the Mercies" (Psalm 89:1); "King of Kings and Lord of Lords"; "Not What My Hands Have Done" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #461); "Jesus Thy Blood and Righteousness" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #520).

### SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

**Scripture** - Luke 14:15-24; Isaiah 64:6, 61:10; Romans 13:14; Revelation 19:7-8; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:8-14; Job 29:14; Psalm 132:9; Genesis 3; Isaiah 62:5; Hosea 2:19; John 1:10-13.



# **WHEAT AND WEEDS**

**Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43**

## **Lesson Aim**

That your students will realize that Christians and non-Christians will grow up together in this world, but that the Lord will some day punish those who do not belong to Him.

## **Memory Verse**

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 15:3-10; this week, Luke 15:7** - “I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”

## **Lesson Background**

The world is a mixture of evil people and those who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ; it is not always easy to tell which is which. The Lord told a parable about this situation that can give us warning, instruction, and encouragement.

“A man sowed good seed in his field, but while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away” (Matthew 13:24-25). The weeds (traditionally “tares”) were probably darnel (*lolium temulentum*), which closely resembles wheat and is host to a poisonous fungus. They were not in the field by accident, or because the good seed was contaminated, but by a malicious act. The farmer warned his servants not to try to destroy the weeds at that time lest the wheat, the roots of which might be closely intertwined with the weeds, be pulled up also.

As was the case with other parables Jesus told, that of the Wheat and the Weeds was explained only to His disciples. The sower of good seed is Jesus Himself (“Son of Man” is a messianic title, cf. Daniel

7:14), and the good seed represents Christians. The weeds stand for unbelievers, while the enemy who sowed them is Satan. Jesus said that the harvesters are angels and the field represents the world. Notice that the field is not equated with the church, for while unbelievers are sometimes present in the visible church, this parable would then speak against church discipline, clearly presented as necessary in other portions of Scripture.

The Parable of the Wheat and Weeds presents some important lessons to us. First, we must realize that weeds will be with us until the end of time (we cannot escape evil as some monks tried to do), and we can only distinguish them from the wheat by the fruit that is produced. It is essential that this teaching be grasped by those involved with Christian schools, who all too often assume that their “field” is free from weeds and communicate this to the students, who presume their own salvation without examination. Wheat and weeds may closely resemble each other, especially when young shoots. When plants and people grow, evil becomes easier to distinguish. The farmer’s servants recognized the presence of weeds in the field and did not continue to work as if everything growing there should be nurtured to be brought into the farmer’s barns. On the other hand, the servants were told not to pull up the weeds lest the wheat be injured at the same time. Satan is trying to destroy God’s work by deception, counterfeiting Christianity. We have the sure hope that some day God will destroy evil, but for now, we must wait, recognize evil, but be careful in our efforts to eradicate it. God’s kingdom will grow and prosper and Satan cannot stop it.

*Knowledge Objectives* - To know that Jesus told a parable about a man who planted wheat in a field, but at night an enemy sowed weeds in the field; the man’s servants asked if they should pull the weeds, but the man said no, lest the wheat be rooted out at the same time, but that at the harvest, the weeds would first be pulled out and burned, and then the harvest would be gathered; to understand the meaning of the parable, including knowing what Jesus said the different elements in the parable (field, farmer, enemy, wheat, weeds, and harvesters) represented.

*Behavioral Objectives* - That your students will recognize whether they are wheat or weeds, consider the final destiny of “weeds,” and, by God’s grace, turn to Him; that those students who are Christians will be encouraged that one day God will deliver them from the evil environment in which they live, judge evil, and bring them to Himself; and that they will be careful in their judgment of others.

## Lesson Procedure

**Introduction** - Before class, make some fake cookies from salt and flour dough. Mix 1½ cups flour, 1 cup salt, ½ cup water, and 2 tablespoons cooking oil; knead well until pliable. Roll out this dough and cut with cookie cutters. Let the cookies air dry or bake at low heat (200° - 250°) and decorate with real icing, sugar sprinkles, etc., if desired. Show your children a plate of cookies, ask them if they would like some, and pass them out. The “cookies” are non-toxic, but you might want to warn the children that they are imitation before they actually try to devour them, lest someone break a tooth or choke on the hard substance (although this is unlikely). The point of this activity, of course, is to show your children that things are not always what they seem, and to lead into the parable of the wheat and similar-looking weeds. After tricking your students, you should, of course, have some real cookies to give them, preferably a rolled cookie that looks like the imitation you gave them, both to compare it with the fake cookie (one can tell the difference sometimes), and so you will not hurt and disappoint them by your deception (and actually lie by telling them by action, if not words, that you will give them something and then not doing it). Later, as a take-home activity, you may wish to have your students put a fake cookie in one plastic sandwich bag, a real cookie in another sandwich bag, and staple or tape the bags to a piece of construction paper on which they can print



“Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43: Am I a weed or wheat, a fake cookie or real?”, and use this to tell others about today’s Scripture lesson.

## **BIBLE STORY**

**Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43** - Discuss Jesus’ parable, bringing out lessons covered in the background material, particularly focusing on the difference between the wheat and tares and the fact that, though they may have fooled others as you did with the genuine and imitation cookies, some of your students are not Christians, and need to consider what God has to say about the final destiny of “weeds.” Also encourage those in your class who have been saved that they will not have to fight against evil forever.

## **STORY**

### **THE WOLF IN SHEEP’S CLOTHING** **adapted from a fable by Aesop**

Rolf licked the wound on his forepaw and grumbled to himself. He hated to admit it, but he was getting old. He had ignored his creaking bones and the silver on the tip of his tail and the comments of his friends about how big the pups of his pups were getting, but this last episode had finally convinced him. He had been unable to catch a sheep before the farmer running after him had shot him. He would recover from the flesh wound soon, but his dignity would take far longer to heal.

Rolf scowled as his stomach rumbled. What he needed was a stratagem, a plan. Stiffly he rose and walked to the rise of ground overlooking the farmhouse. “Sheep!” he exclaimed, startled. “What are sheep doing there and not in the far pasture?” But straining his failing eyes, he realized that he was not looking at live animals, but only sheepskins. “That’s it!” said Rolf. “I’ll dress up as a sheep!” He sneaked down toward the skins, grabbed one in his teeth, and dragged it back to his den.

Later, dressed in the sheepskin, Rolf went to the far pasture and mingled with the sheep. They couldn’t tell the difference! They thought Rolf was one of them. When a sheep wandered away from the rest of the flock, Rolf seized it in his powerful jaws and killed it. Several more times Rolf used his plan without being recognized, but one day the farmer came to the pasture. “I’ll just hide here among the sheep and he’ll never know the difference,” thought Rolf. But he did. “Bang!” went the gun, scattering the sheep. “Boom!” came the next shot, and Rolf was dead.

### **Questions:**

- How did Rolf plan to fool the farmer?
- Was his plan successful?
- Who do you think the wolf, sheep, and farmer are like?
- Can Christians always tell who the “wolves” are among the flock? Who does know?
- What always happens to “wolves” in the end?

## **SONGS**

“Let God Arise” (Psalm 68:1); “The Lord Will Come” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #367); “O Quickly Come” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #322); “Great God What Do I See and Hear” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #321); “Come Ye Sinners” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #472).

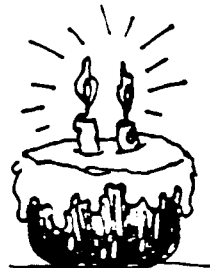
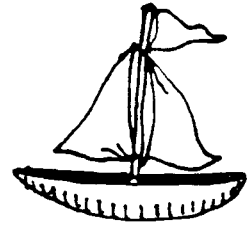
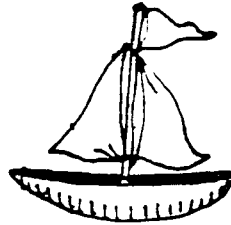
## **Take Home Activity**

1. **Worksheet** - Which is different? The fourth group of pictures all look the same. Point out that even if we cannot always tell who is a Christian, God can.
2. **Parables Booklet** - The students should match the words in the two columns to show they understand what the different elements of the parable represent.
3. **Real/Fake Cookie Project** - See the Introduction.

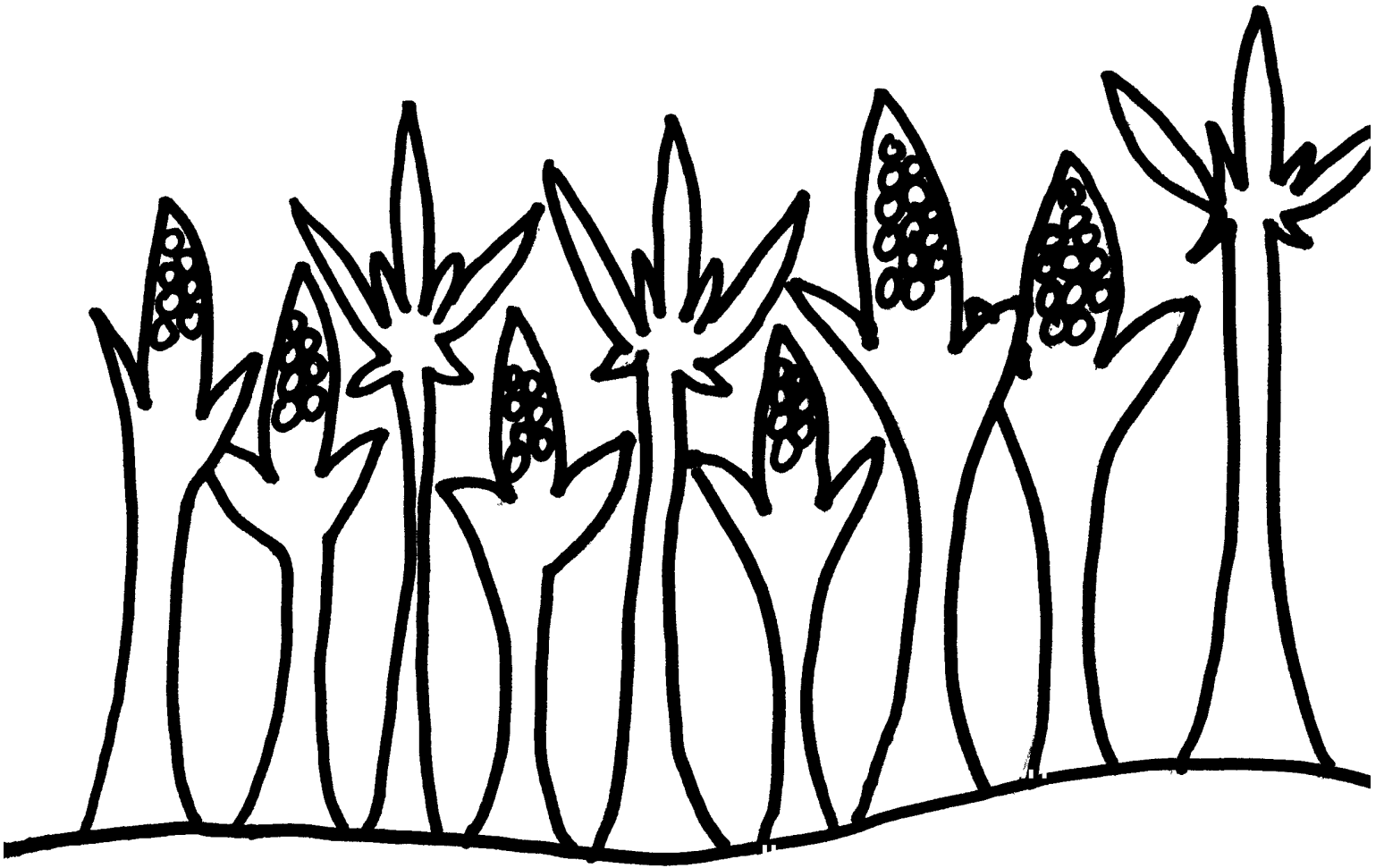
Class Work

Wheat and Weeds

WHICH IS DIFFERENT?







**Enemy**

**Field**

**Farmer**

**Harvesters**

**Weeds**

**Wheat**

**Angels**

**Christians**

**Jesus**

**Unbelievers**

**Satan**

**World**



### BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

**Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43** - Christians and non-Christians will grow up together in this world like wheat and weeds, but the Lord will some day punish those who do not belong to Him.

### MEMORY VERSE

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 15:3-10; this week, Luke 15:7** - "I tell you that in the same way, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine persons who do not need to repent."

### SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. The weeds in Jesus' parable were probably a type that looked very similar to wheat. Make a list of imitation and counterfeit things and how they differ from what is real. How does a real Christian differ from someone who only pretends he is? Challenge your family members to examine themselves as to whether they are real or imitation Christians.
2. Christians and unbelievers are mixed up in the world together. Discuss how you and your family can be in the world but not of the world.
3. Jesus said that some day He would gather harmful weeds together to be burned. Read and discuss Scripture about His Second Coming and judgment of evildoers. What difference should these truths make in our lives?
4. Sing songs about Jesus' destruction of His enemies and His Second Coming such as: "Let God Arise" (Psalm 68:1); "The Lord Will Come" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #367); "O Quickly Come" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #322); "Great God What Do I See and Hear" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #321); "Come Ye Sinners" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #472).

### SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

**Scripture** - Matthew 13; I John 1:15-27; 3:4-10; 4:1-6; II Corinthians 11:13-15; Hebrews 10:35-39; II Peter 3:8-15.





# **THE PRODIGAL SON**

**Luke 15:11-32**

## **Lesson Aim**

That your students will realize that a loving Father stands ready to welcome repentant sinners to Himself.

## **Memory Verse**

Review **Matthew 7:24-27** and **Luke 15:3-7**.

## **Lesson Background**

Perhaps no parable gives us as close a picture of the Gospel as the story of the Prodigal Son, although, like any parable, it focuses only on one aspect of the truth. The selfish prodigal (meaning “wasteful”) wanted to escape authority and live without restraint. This he did by obtaining his portion of the inheritance from his father, but found bondage rather than the expected freedom he sought (John 8:34). A sinner usually takes no thought of the future, but sin has consequences and always hurts the sinner himself as well as other people. The prodigal certainly found this to be true. He was reduced to feeding swine, an occupation despised by the Jews as unclean (and, indeed, the filth can be seen as a picture of the prodigal’s sinful condition). He even longed to fill his stomach with the pigs’ food, the pods of the carob tree. As is often the case, his so-called friends refused to help him when they found him in trouble.

At this point of utter ruin, the prodigal recognized his rebellion, repented of it, and resolved to return to his father. He experienced genuine sorrow for his sin, not just a surface remorse because he needed help. The prodigal realized that his sin was against God (verse 18 - “heaven” is a circumlocution used because of the Jews’ reluctance to use the name of God) as well as his earthly father; he had confidence that his father would receive him, and offered no excuse to justify his sinful behavior. Rather, he was willing to accept the

consequences of his actions and humbly beg for work as a servant. The prodigal son did then, in fact, return to his father. Had he remained in the far country, his sorrow for sin and his good resolutions would have been to no avail.

The prodigal son might have wondered about the reception he would receive when he returned home, but he had no cause to worry. His father (who, of course, represents God) was waiting for him with open arms. In fact, he ran toward his son, an action almost unheard of for a mature adult in that culture, and joyfully embraced him, even in his presumably filthy and smelly condition (cf. Romans 5:8). The father called quickly for the best robe, sandals (signifying that one was part of the family, not a slave) and a ring (which conferred authority) for his son. He ordered that a fattened calf, reserved for very special occasions, be killed and a feast prepared. The father's explanation for these arrangements joyfully echoes the message of the Gospel: "For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found! So they began to celebrate" (Luke 15:24).

One person did not share in the rejoicing over the prodigal's return. The conceited elder brother was angry that the prodigal's sin should be rewarded (or so it seemed to him), while his loyalty and hard work seemed ignored. "Nobody appreciates me; nobody gives me any credit," was his attitude, and he had no gratitude for the many blessings his father daily bestowed upon him. He apparently regarded himself more as a worker earning his wages than as a son, and so did not enjoy the riches that were his. Like all hypocrites, he served his father from selfish motives, not out of love. Perhaps he thought that now that his younger brother had wasted his inheritance, he, the elder, would have to share his possessions. Yet the father was kind to the elder brother, as he was to the younger, and gently reminded him of his own love and the son's family relationship (Luke 15:30-32: note "this son of yours . . . this brother of yours").

Jesus told this parable to point out to the Pharisees God's love for the lost in comparison to their own harsh, self-righteous attitudes. Like the elder brother, they presumed they deserved God's love (see John 8:31-59; Luke 18:9-14; and Luke 7:36-50), denounced Jesus' ministry to sinners, and scorned the notion that others might be partakers of God's grace. The Parable of the Prodigal Son challenges us not to be self-righteous and hypocritical like the elder brother, but to love sinners as Christ did and pray that they will return home from a far country into the loving arms of the Father.

*Knowledge Objectives* - To know that Jesus told a parable to a group of Pharisees about a prodigal (wasteful) son who squandered his inheritance in a far country, but when he was ruined to the point of feeding pigs and longing for their food, he recognized his sin, felt sorry for it, repented and returned to his father, who welcomed him with open arms, had a robe, shoes, and a ring given to him and a fattened calf killed for a feast, though the prodigal's elder brother did not rejoice over his sibling's return; and to recognize the Gospel parallels in this story.

*Behavioral Objectives* - By God's grace, not to be self righteous and hypocritical, trying to earn a relationship with God, but to repent of sin and turn to Him in faith; also to show love to, not jealousy of, others, particularly siblings.

## **Lesson Procedure**

**Introduction** - Introduce today's Bible story by asking your students how they would feel if their brothers or sisters received gifts and they did not. How do they act when their brothers or sisters get in trouble? Are they gleeful over their punishment, or are they sympathetic? Tell your students that today's Bible story is about two brothers, one of whom was jealous of the other. Explain that Jesus told this parable

to a group of Pharisees, self-righteous Jewish leaders who thought they deserved God's grace but that nobody else did.

## **BIBLE STORY**

Read **Luke 15:11-32** (NIV), interrupting your reading where necessary to explain significant background information (e.g., the Jews' abhorrence of pigs). Focus on the Gospel message in the parable, but also discuss the elder brother's jealousy.

## **STORY**

### **THE RUNAWAY**

"I don't care about your dumb old rules! I'm gonna do what I wanna do and you can't stop me! You act so nicey-nice, but you hate me. Everybody hates me."

"Johnny, I care about you very much, but you must learn to obey me."

"Yeah, right. That's what you think. I don't need you. I can take care of myself."

Johnny stomped off to his room, slamming the door hard behind him. Mr. Andrews looked after his foster son in dismay, but wisely thought he would wait until Johnny had cooled down before talking to him again. Instead, he knelt to talk to the One who could meet all Johnny's needs and help Mr. Andrews know how to deal with his troubled son as well.

Meanwhile, Johnny, like a caged lion, paced back and forth in his room. He tripped over the cassette recorder Mr. Andrews had given him, turned around cursing, and gave it a vicious kick. "I'll show him," Johnny muttered. "I don't need nobody."

He stuffed a jacket, jeans, and extra shirt in his backpack and slowly opened the door. No one was in sight. Stealthily he walked down the hall toward Mr. Andrews' room. Looking in, Johnny saw Mr. Andrews' wallet sitting on the night table. He crept in, quickly pulled out a handful of bills, and, stuffing them in his pocket, ran downstairs and out the front door.

At first, the feeling of freedom was exhilarating. Johnny went to a local carnival and rode the bumper cars, swings, and giant slide. He stuffed himself with pizza, popcorn, ice cream, and cotton candy. Then he met some boys he knew slightly, treated them to food, and went on more rides.

But by nightfall, Johnny's money was gone, he was tired and sick to his stomach, and his friends had deserted him. It was getting cold, but Johnny had left his jacket with his backpack on the ferris wheel, and when he went back for them they were gone. The carnival was closing down for the evening. Johnny looked around for somewhere to stay. He finally found an empty hamburger stand and, stumbling in, flopped on the floor and fell asleep.

Johnny awoke early, took two hamburger buns for breakfast, and left the stand before anyone could find him there. He tried to get a job at the carnival, but there were none available and some people started looking at him suspiciously, so he stopped asking. He found eighty-five cents in the dust by the penny toss booth and bought a bag of chips, which for some reason only made him feel hungrier. That night, Johnny slept in the hamburger stand, first eating a late dinner of hamburger buns. He would have liked to have a hamburger to go with the rolls, but the electricity to work the grill was turned off at night and he sure wasn't going to eat the hamburger raw.

In the morning, he grabbed some more buns and left the shack to wander aimlessly around the carnival. It was blisteringly hot. Johnny looked forward to returning to the cool stand that evening and filling his belly with buns. But when he got to the shack that evening, Johnny discovered a shiny new padlock on the door. The owner must have found out about the missing buns and put the lock on the door to keep people out. Famished, Johnny picked a half-eaten hotdog and soft pretzel out of the trash and lay down on the grass for the evening. He could hear a low rumble of thunder and hoped the storm wasn't heading his way.

“What am I doing here?” Johnny said to himself. “Why didn’t I stay with Mr. Andrews? Right now I’d be home eating dinner, maybe chicken and rice and peas and even pie for dessert. Blueberry pie! And after dinner, we’d play a game together and I’d sleep in my nice comfortable bed. So, why don’t I go home? But, he’d *kill* me. After what I did and all those things I said to him, maybe he’d even call the cops or child welfare. I guess I’d deserve it too. But maybe Mr. Andrews would give me a job and maybe he’d let me sleep in the garage. That would sure be better than living here. Even Mr. Andrews’ dog eats better than this,” he thought, looking at his empty paper plate. “I guess it’s worth a try. I can always run away again.”

So Johnny returned to Mr. Andrews’ house. Timidly, he walked toward the door, but just as he was ready to push the bell, Mr. Andrews flung open the door and grabbed him in a bear hug, tears trickling down his cheeks. Johnny had come home.

### **Questions:**

- What kind of person was Johnny at the beginning of the story? How did he change?
- At the beginning of this story, how did Johnny feel about Mr. Andrews?
- Did Johnny’s attitude change by the end of the story? Why did it change?
- Did Mr. Andrews’ feeling toward Johnny change during the story?
- Who are Johnny and Mr. Andrews like in this story? How are they alike?

### **ACTIVITY**

Write a sequel to this story about how Mr. Andrews’ son Ben felt when Johnny returned home. Make your story about Ben like Jesus’ parable about the elder brother when the prodigal returned home.

### **SONGS**

“I Will Sing of the Mercies” (Psalm 89:1); “The Steadfast Love of the Lord” (Lamentations 3:22-23); “Come Ye Sinners” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #472); “Jesus Sinners Doth Receive” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #473); “Not What My Hands Have Done” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #461); “The Tender Love a Father Has” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #93); “Marvelous Grace of Our Loving Lord” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #465); “O God We Praise Thee” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #105); “O Come My Soul” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #628).

### **Take Home Activity**

Have your students complete the worksheet, then draw pictures from the story to add to their parables booklets.

## Class Work

## The Prodigal Son

Answer the questions and find  
the secret word that means “wasteful.”

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\_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_

1. The son had a job feeding these.
2. To turn from sin to God, like the son in the parable.
3. This parable is about two \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ brother was jealous.
5. The father gave this to his son.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ is a heavenly Father.
7. The father’s servants killed a fattened \_\_\_\_.
8. The father and God showed \_\_\_\_ to their children.

**SECRET WORD:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number these in order**

- \_\_\_ The elder brother spoke to his father in anger.
- \_\_\_ The father welcomed his son.
- \_\_\_ The son wasted his money and ended up feeding pigs.
- \_\_\_ The son asked for his share of the estate.
- \_\_\_ The son was sorry for his sin and returned to the father.

**Draw a picture of where the son was when he recognized his sin.**



**Draw a picture of the son returning home.**







### BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

**Luke 15:11-32** - The parable of the prodigal son, which shows that a loving Father stands ready to welcome repentant sinners to Himself.

### MEMORY VERSE

Review **Matthew 7:24-27** and **Luke 15:3-7**.

### SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Have your child relate the Parable of the Prodigal Son to you and explain its meaning. Challenge him and the other members of your family to examine their lives to see if they are in fellowship with the Father or in rebellion “among the pigsties.”
2. The prodigal son showed true repentance for his sins, not just surface remorse. Find evidence for this in the parable and discuss its application to your lives.
3. The prodigal son wasted his father’s substance. Are we squandering the gifts of God (including our lives, talents, material possessions, etc.)? Discuss how you can be a better steward of your inheritance and plan to obey God in these matters.
4. Study what the father’s example in the parable can teach us as parents about love for our children.
5. The prodigal’s older brother was jealous of the gifts and forgiveness their father had bestowed on him. Discuss this aspect of the parable with your children. Can they think of times when they might be jealous of their brothers or sisters? Are they glad when their siblings get in trouble? How does the father’s reply to the elder brother speak to these things?
6. Sing songs such as: “I Will Sing of the Mercies” (Psalm 89:1); “The Steadfast Love of the Lord” (Lamentations 3:22-23); “Come Ye Sinners” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #472); “Jesus Sinners Doth Receive” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #473); “Not What My Hands Have Done” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #461); “The Tender Love a Father Has” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #93); “Marvelous Grace of Our Loving Lord” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #465); “O God We Praise Thee” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #105); “O Come My Soul” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #628).

### SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

**Scripture** - Luke 18:9-14; John 8:31-59; Romans 5:8; Psalm 1.



# **THE EVIL TENANTS**

**Matthew 21:33-46**

## **Lesson Aim**

That your students will realize that we are stewards of God's blessings and that we owe Him all we are and have.

## **Memory Verse**

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 15:3-10; this week, Luke 15:8** - "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?"

## **Lesson Background**

Today's parable (its parallels are found in Mark 12:1-12 and Luke 20:9-18) tells of a landowner who planted a vineyard and set up a winepress and a watchtower (which might also be used for storage). The typical Israelite winepress was dug in the ground and lined with masonry, having a wide shallow compartment on top where the grapes would be trampled (Isaiah 63:2) and a narrow, deep part below into which the juice would flow. The landowner then made a fair agreement with some men to lend them the land in return for a share of the produce. However, when the rent became due, the tenants refused to pay. In fact, they mistreated and even killed those the landowner sent to collect what was owed him. At last, the landowner sent his son to deal with the evil tenants. Greedily and maliciously, realizing that he was the heir, the farmers killed him. It is difficult to understand how they could fail to realize that this action would provoke the landowner to wrath, although sin is always foolish. Perhaps the tenants thought the landowner had died and the son had come to take possession of the property, or that the owner had transferred title to the son, and if he were killed, the landowner would not wish to go to any more trouble to claim his estate. Tenants could claim possession of land they had worked for three years if the owner died and there was no other claim on it.

“Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do with those tenants?” (Matthew 21:40 cf. II Samuel 12), Jesus asked the Pharisees to whom He was telling the parable. The Jewish leaders agreed that the landowner should “bring those wretches to a wretched end” (Matthew 21:41), whereupon Jesus quoted Psalm 118:22-23, pointing out the Pharisees’ own culpability, for of course it was they and the Jewish people as a whole who were the subject of His parable. The religious leaders had abused their positions of authority and failed to give God (cf. the landowner) what was due Him, even though He had sent prophets (cf. the landowner’s servants) to warn them. Therefore, the “vineyard” would be given to other “farmers,” Gentiles for the most part, an idea unthinkable to these people. The story of the evil tenants is a prophecy as well as a parable, for the son in the story, as well as the rock in Psalm 118, is Jesus Himself. Unlike the son in the parable, Jesus did not remain dead when rebels killed Him. As a rock, He will therefore fall in judgment on all who do not fall upon Him in repentance.

Because Jesus directed this parable to the Pharisees, we should not think it has no application to us. Like the evil tenants, we all deserve God’s judgment because we have not given Him what He deserves. Like the landowner, God demands fruit from us (John 15; Galatians 5:22-23). If we are not producing fruit, we must throw ourselves on the Owner’s mercy. We are accountable to Him.

*Knowledge Objectives* - To know that Jesus told a parable about a landowner who rented his property to evil tenants who refused to give him what was due, but rather killed his servants and even his son, resulting in the tenants’ punishment; and to know the meaning of the parable.

*Behavioral Objectives* - By God’s grace, that your children will give their Landlord good fruit.

## **Lesson Procedure**

### **STORY**

To familiarize your students with the concept of investments and to lead into the Scripture passage, tell the story of a child who wanted to set up a lemonade stand but had no capital for supplies. He therefore made an agreement with a local store owner to make him a large pitcher of lemonade (or to share the profits), if the storekeeper would provide him with lemons, sugar (or lemonade mix), and paper cups. The child then sold all the lemonade and spent the profits without giving the store owner his share. The proprietor then, of course, confronted the child and expressed disappointment and/or anger with him. You may act out this plot with an assistant or read the story below to introduce the Bible story. You should also ask your children what it means to rent a house, apartment, or piece of land.

### **THE SOUR DEAL**

“Hey, Mr. Marino. Can you give me a job?”

The storekeeper looked down at the youngster in dirty T-shirt and shorts leaning on the counter in front of him. He didn’t know the boy, but he’d seen him around. Mr. Marino stared at the toe peeping out of a hole in the child’s high-top sneaker and considered what to do. His first instinct was to get rid of the kid, but perhaps there was a way he could help him.

“Look, kid, you’re too young to work in the store and I have all the help I need, but I’ll make a deal with you. I’ll give you this can of lemonade mix and paper cups and you can make some lemonade and sell it to the kids at the playground. Here’s a big bag of popcorn. Divide that up into little bags and sell that too. But you have to come back at the end of the day and give me half the money you earn to pay for the stuff I gave you. O.K.?”

“O.K., Mr. Marino.”

The boy did as Mr. Marino suggested and pretty soon had a lot of customers. One of them ran up and called to him. “Hey, Larry, how’s business going?”

“Great, Jake. It’s been really hot, so lots of people buy the lemonade. They buy popcorn, too, which gets them thirsty so they buy more lemonade. Look at all this money I’ve got. Of course, half of this belongs to Mr. Marino.”

“How come?”

“Because he gave me the supplies so I could sell this stuff.”

“Why don’t you just keep all the money? Does he know who your are? How’s he gonna catch you if he doesn’t know your name?”

“Well, I don’t know. . .” said Larry.

### Questions:

- How do you think the story will end?
- Should Larry pay Mr. Marino? Why or why not?
- What do you think Mr. Marino will do if Larry does not pay him?
- Jesus told a story in the Bible about a man who owned a vineyard. The grape farmers who worked there were supposed to give the landowner some of the crops, but they, like Larry, had to choose whether or not to pay what they owed. Let’s see what they did.

### BIBLE STORY

Read **Matthew 21:33-46** and discuss using background material, being sure to apply the parable to your children’s lives. Ask them whether they would act like the evil tenants. They may say not, but are they giving God all that He deserves, including their lives, possessions, and love? Are they producing fruit in keeping with repentance, or do they need to ask the Landowner for mercy? Perhaps you would also like to read Galatians 5:22-23 and John 15:1-8 at this time.

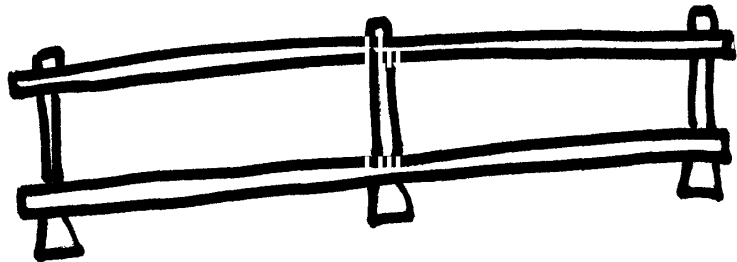
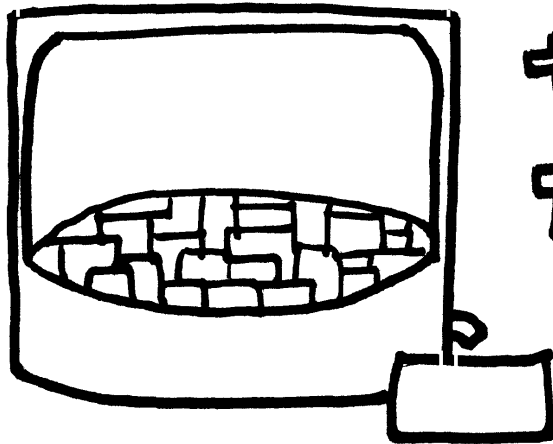
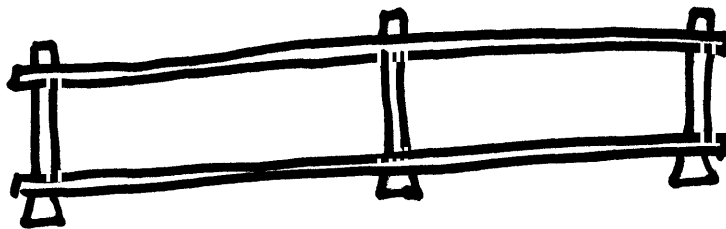
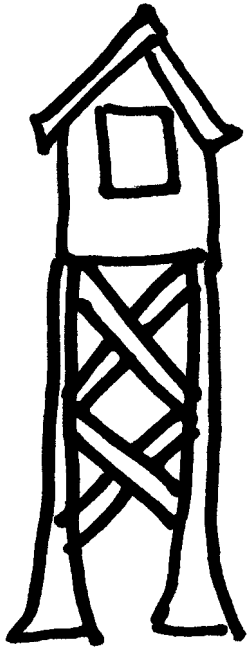
### SONGS

“King of Kings and Lord of Lords”; “O God of Mercy” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #433); “We Give Thee But Thine Own” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #432).

### Take Home Activity

**Parables Booklet/Sponge-Painting** - Have your students draw or sponge-paint a picture of workers in a vineyard. To sponge-paint, dip the end of a dry piece of sponge (a 1-inch piece is large enough) onto a dampened block of watercolor paint or lightly into tempera paint and lightly dab on the Parables Booklet page white paper. By lightly dabbing the sponge that has been dipped in green paint in different places (leaving some white showing) around the fences and adding small spots of purple paint, the effect of a vineyard seen at a distance can be created. Other detail may be painted with a brush or drawn with felt-tip-pen.





Landlord - person who owns the land  
Tenant - person who pays to use the land

1. What was the agreement between the landlord and the tenants?
2. When the landlord came for his payment, what did his tenants do?
3. What was the landlord's response and the result?
4. Do we deserve God's judgment?





### BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

**Matthew 21:33-46** - Like the tenants in Jesus' parable, we are stewards of our Master's blessings, and we owe Him all we are and have.

### MEMORY VERSE

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 15:3-10; this week, Luke 15:8** - "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?"

### SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Read Matthew 21:33-46 (or the parallel passages in Mark 12:1-12 and Luke 20:9-18) and discuss it with your family. Also read Galatians 5:22-23 and John 15:1-8. Are you and your family giving your Owner what is due Him? Are you producing fruit for Him?
2. Think of specific ways in which you and your family could better serve God (in such areas as prayer, Bible reading, worship, evangelism, and kindness and service to others), and do so.
3. Sing songs such as: "King of Kings and Lord of Lords"; "O God of Mercy" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #433); "We Give Thee But Thine Own" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #432).

### SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

**Scripture** - Parallel passages: Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-18. About vines and vineyards - Hosea 10:1; Psalm 80:7-19; Isaiah 5:1-7; Isaiah 27:2-6; John 15:1-8. Also - Matthew 22:37-39; Romans 5:10; 12:1-2; Hebrews 1:1-2; 11:32-38; I Corinthians 4:2; Exodus 5:2; Job 21:15; John 12:44; Psalm 2:3; John 3:16-17; Galatians 5:22-23.



# **TALENTS**

**Matthew 25:14-30**

## **Lesson Aim**

That your students will realize that they should serve God with the gifts and abilities He has given them.

## **Memory Verse**

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 15:3-10; this week, Luke 15:9** - “And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’”

## **Lesson Background**

Jesus told His disciples the Parable of the Talents to encourage them to be faithful servants. A talent was actually a unit of weight (approximately seventy-five pounds), and hence its value would depend on the metal being used as a unit of exchange, although we can safely assume a value of at least a thousand dollars per talent. It was not unusual in ancient times for slaves to be given money to invest for their master. This the first two servants in the story did to good profit. The third servant, however, fearfully hid what he had been given. When questioned, rather than confessing his lack of diligence, the servant disparaged his master’s character. How often do we misrepresent God’s character? The master saw through the man’s excuses and had his wicked and lazy (verse 26 - the words in Greek rhyme, as “pernicious and unambitious” - William Hendrickson) servant thrown “outside into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 25:30).

We are God our Master’s servants, and stewards of the manifold blessings He has given. We must use our spiritual gifts, talents, abilities, and opportunities for Him. As in the parable, our talents (gifts, etc.) vary, but according to what we have received, it will be expected of us. It is required that a servant be found

faithful. We should not, therefore, judge others whose gifts differ from ours (Romans 14:4; Matthew 7:1-5). However, we must examine our own lives. God will return some day bringing reward and punishment (Matthew 24-25; I Corinthians 3:10-15). We are not saved from God's wrath by our good works (Ephesians 2:8-9), but our deeds give evidence whether or not we have truly been redeemed (James 2:14-26). When the Lord returns in judgment, excuses, such as those of the wicked servant, will be worthless, and many, like him, will be "thrown outside into the darkness" of hell.

*Knowledge Objectives* - To know that Jesus told his disciples a parable about a master who, going on a journey, entrusted three of his servants with money; to one he gave five talents, to one he gave two talents, and to one, one talent, according to their abilities; the first two servants doubled their investments, but the third buried his talent in the ground; the servant claimed to have done this because he feared that his master was a hard man; the master saw through his wicked and lazy servant's excuses and had him thrown "outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth"; also, to know the spiritual meaning of this parable.

*Behavioral Objectives* - By God's grace, to serve God diligently with the gifts He has given.

## Lesson Procedure

**Introduction** - Ask your students what they could do with ten dollars if you gave this to them. Lead them in a discussion to help them realize that they could spend it, save it, put it in the bank, or invest it (by, for example, buying supplies to make and sell lemonade, popcorn, or cookies). Explain the advantage of the latter two options and what they involve (remind your students of last week's introductory story). Use this to introduce today's Bible story, explaining that the men in the parable would have to return the money they had been given, since it did not belong to them but was only given them in trust. Also tell your students what a talent was.

## BIBLE STORY

Read **Matthew 25:14-30** (NIV) and discuss. The master's treatment of the wicked servant may seem cruel to your students unless they understand that the servants were expected to make a profit with what they had been given. Focus on our responsibility to use what our Master, God, has given us for His glory; include other pertinent lessons from the background material as well. You may wish to compare today's Scripture with last week's parable of the evil tenants.

## STORY

### THE NO-TALENT KID

Jeremiah Jones indifferently tapped the crumpled paper ball from one palm to the other. He winced as his brother Melvin played the same wrong note on the piano for about the twenty-fifth time (well, maybe only the fifth, Jeremiah admitted to himself honestly). At least, he thought, Mel sounded better than Linda Sue Carter screeching away on her clarinet or Mrs. Holmes with her quavering soprano, which, legend had it, once broke a glass at some fancy dinner.

Jeremiah rested the paper ball on the end of a fork, balanced the fork on his finger, and catapulted the ball down the long, empty table. At least Mel and those people had a part in the talent show that was being put on to raise money for the inner-city mission. Jeremiah wanted to help too, but he was "too little," they'd all told him. "Besides, Jer," Mel had taunted, "you don't have any talent."

Mel had later apologized for speaking so meanly, but Jeremiah thought he was right. What could he do to help? The play parts were all being done by older kids; he couldn't play an instrument nor even sing a song in tune. Even the posters he tried to make looked like someone had turned a monkey loose with a bunch of markers.

A voice interrupted his thoughts. "Hey, young fella."

Jeremiah turned and looked up. "Oh, hi, Mr. Pettigrew."

"Would you help me finish setting this table?"

"Sure, Mr. Pettigrew. I don't have anything else to do."

Jeremiah and Mr. Pettigrew finished setting not only that table, but all the rest of the tables where people would sit to eat while they watched the show. Jeremiah also promised to come back and help serve food during the performance.

At last, it was time for the talent show and everything went well. The play went off without a hitch, Mel played only two wrong notes on the piano and even Linda Sue and Mrs. Holmes sounded pretty good.

After the show, a number of people came up to show their appreciation. A grey-haired man walked slowly over to where Jeremiah and a number of the performers were standing. "Wonderful job, wonderful," he told them. "It's sure good to see people doing things to serve the Lord. You, too, young man," he said looking straight at Jeremiah.

"Me!" the boy replied. "But I wasn't in the show. I don't have any talent."

"What do you mean, you don't have any talent? I don't know if you can sing or play an instrument, but God's given you many abilities you can use to serve Him. Those are talents. You served Him tonight just as much as those musicians and actors if you passed out salads or poured water into glasses to please Him."

"I did?" Jeremiah wondered. "Wow!"

"Hey, mister," he called as the man shook his hand and turned to go. "Would you like a piece of cake?"

### **Questions:**

- How did Jeremiah feel at the beginning of the story? Why? (What did he want to do?)
- How did Jeremiah help at the talent show?
- What did the old man tell Jeremiah about serving God that changed his idea of what talents are?

### **SONGS**

"We Give Thee But Thine Own" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #432); "Jesus Bids Us Shine" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #592); "O God of Mercy" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #433).

## Take Home Activity

**Parables Booklet** - Have your students answer the questions on the worksheet and draw a picture of themselves using a “talent” God has given them for him.

**Talents Pouch** - Give each of your students a large needle such as is used for darning or tapestry, threaded with approximately 30 inches of yarn knotted at one end, and a circle of open-weave (such as burlap) cloth or felt, 8 to 10 inches in diameter. The cloth should be non-fraying or cut with pinking shears. If necessary, a heavy, cloth-like paper towel can even be used instead of fabric. Using a running stitch, each stitch approximately 1/3 inch in length, your children should sew around the outside of the circle about 1/2 inch from the edge. Tie the ends of the string together and pull the bag closed. A small, very advanced class could make a nicer pouch as follows: Sew with needle and thread a hem around the circle of cloth, leaving or cutting two small openings on opposite sides of the circle of hem. Thread two drawstrings (string, yarn, shoelaces) through the openings and around the hem. Temporarily attaching a safety pin to the drawstring to push it around the hem will make this easier. Pull separate drawstrings on opposite sides of the pouch to close.

Have your children cut circles of construction paper to put in their pouches as “talents.” To remind your students to serve God, on each of the “talents,” they may write a different gift, ability, or talent (e.g., money, hands, ears, sports ability, intelligence, education) or draw a picture of themselves using their talents for God.

The word “talent” in our lesson refers to weight. The more talents that were given to someone, the more the money was worth.

1. What did the master give to his servants?

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2. What did they do with it?

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3. What was the master’s response?

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The word “talent” can also mean a special ability. What special abilities do you have? Draw a picture of yourself serving God by using a gift or talent He has given you.





### BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

**Matthew 25:14-30** - Like the first two servants in Jesus' parable, we should serve our Master with the gifts and abilities He has given us.

### MEMORY VERSE

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 15:3-10; this week, Luke 15:9** - "And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.'"

### SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Read Matthew 25:14-30 as a family and ask: "What words could describe the first two servants? What words could describe the third servant? Which of these adjectives describes you?"
2. Today's parable teaches us to use our gifts and abilities for God. Discuss with your family what gifts from God each one has and how they can be used for Him. Some areas to evaluate would be spiritual gifts (for Christians), talents and abilities such as intellectual, social, physical, emotional and educational strengths, time and money. Perhaps each family member could write down what gifts he feels God has given him; all could discuss what is written and consider ways in which each person could better serve God. Are there any abilities a family member feels God might want to develop in him? How could this be facilitated?
3. The master said his servant was lazy. Read verses about idleness (see Suggested Parental Reading) and discuss. Are you and/or your family members lazy? Is there a legitimate need for times of rest and relaxation?
4. The servant with one talent offered excuses for his negligence, but the man's guilt was transparently obvious to his master. Sometimes there are legitimate reasons for our failings, but usually the fault lies with ourselves. Discuss with your family the importance of admitting their sins and mistakes (I John 1:8-10). Remind your children of today's parable and what their response should be when they try to make excuses this week. The wicked servant also misrepresented his master's character. Do we misrepresent God to others?
5. To help your child understand this parable better, and for the learning experience, entrust your child with some money with which to earn more, for example by investing it in the ingredients for lemonade, popcorn, or cookies that he could make and sell.
6. Sing songs such as: "We Give Thee But Thine Own" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #432); "Jesus Bids Us Shine" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #592); "O God of Mercy" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #433).

## **SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING**

**Scripture** - I John 1:6-7; Romans 2:1-11; James 2:14-17; 4:7; I Corinthians 3:10-15; Romans 14:4; Matthew 7:1-5. About spiritual gifts - I Corinthians 12:4-11; Ephesians 4:7-13; I Peter 4:10, 11. About idleness - Hebrews 6:11; II Thessalonians 3:6-14; Proverbs 6:6-11; 10:3-5; 13:4; 15:19; 18:9; 19:15,24; 20:4,13; 21:25; 23:21; 24:30-34; 26:13-16. About the Lord's return - Matthew 24; Matthew 25:31-46.

# **THE TEN VIRGINS**

**Matthew 25:1-13**

## **Lesson Aim**

That your students will realize that they, like the five wise women in Jesus' parable, must be ready for the coming of the Bridegroom.

## **Memory Verse**

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 15:3-10; this week, Luke 15:10** - "In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

## **Lesson Background**

The parable of the wise and foolish virgins, like several of the Lord's parables, focuses on the critical necessity of being prepared for His return. In ancient times, a bridegroom would arrive without warning at his betrothed's house and bring her back to his own home amid a torch-lit processional. Jesus used this custom to illustrate His future return to earth as a Bridegroom coming for His Bride, the Church (Matthew 9:14-15; Revelation 21:1-4); this will catch many unawares.

In the parable, ten virgins, presumably friends of the bride, were awaiting the bridegroom's arrival in order to join in the procession. When the wedding party came, however, five of the girls discovered they had no oil for their lamps (these may have been a type of torch, possibly oil-soaked rags in a pot, held aloft on a pole). The five wise women realized they did not have sufficient oil to share with their friends, and so bade the foolish ones to go to the merchant to buy oil for themselves. Oil often symbolizes the Holy Spirit in Scripture (Exodus 30:22-23; Zechariah 4:1-6), although this cannot be definitely posited here. The difficulty in such an assumption is that the foolish women appear to have had oil in their lamps, but as the night progressed, it ran out. This, of course, would mitigate against the doctrine of eternal security.

However, the parable does not state that the women had lit their lamps prior to the bridegroom's arrival. The place they were waiting, either at the bride's house or somewhere along the way, may have had sufficient illumination so that the girls did not need to light their own lamps until they joined the procession. In this case, the foolish women would have lit the wick or rags at the bridegroom's arrival; they would have burned very briefly, but then almost immediately sputtered and gone out. In any case, as with any parable, details must not be pressed too closely. Jesus wished to drive home one main point - we must be ready at all times, for we know not when the Bridegroom will come.

Several other facts should be noted. As the foolish women could not obtain oil from their wise companions, neither, when the Lord returns, will unbelievers be able to be helped by their Christian friends. The foolish virgins wanted to attend the wedding feast, too. These were not like the scoffers invited to the banquet in Matthew 22 and Luke 14. Rather, the girls were careless, short-sighted, and irresponsible. These women may have appeared no different from their friends, but when, after a while, the bridegroom arrived, their foolhardiness became obvious (cf. the Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds). They could not hope to make up for their past negligence and would not be admitted to the feast. May we not be like those foolish women, but rather may we be prepared to meet the heavenly Bridegroom.

*Knowledge Objectives* - To know that Jesus told a parable about ten women, five of whom were wise and brought oil for their lamps for the wedding procession, but five of whom were foolish and did not, and since, when the bridegroom arrived they had no time to buy some, they were excluded from the wedding feast. Also, to know the spiritual significance of the parable.

*Behavioral Objectives* - By God's grace, to be ready for the coming of Jesus, the Bridegroom.

## **Lesson Procedure**

### **STORY**

#### **READY, SET . . . GO!**

Mark sat daydreaming as he tied his running shoes. He couldn't believe it; here he was, Mark McGonigle, an entrant in the All-City Track Meet! How had it all started? Last winter Mark wouldn't have even considered participating in a sport. He was rather shy and the school athletes had not been exactly friendly to him. Then Coach Murray had seen him running for the school bus, of all things, and had invited him to try out for the team. "Boy, am I glad I was late getting to the bus stop that day!" Mark mused.

From then on, things had been terrific. Mark had practiced almost every day and his speed and endurance had increased tremendously. This had boosted his confidence; he had become more outgoing and more popular as the other kids heard of his successful races. "Not that that's a good reason for people to be friendly," Mark thought, "but it's been kind of nice not having all those guys look down on me like they used to."

A shout startled Mark from his mind-wandering. It was his friend Terry hurrying across the field. "Where have you been?" Terry exploded. "Coach has been looking all over for you. Your race is just about to start!"

"I'm sorry," Mark apologized. "I guess the time just got away from me."

"Well, tie your shoe and get going. If you're quick, you might make it in time," Terry replied.

Mark gave a tug at his lace and then stared down at his shoe in horror. The lace had snapped and from one hand dangled the useless end. "Oh, no," Mark groaned, "what am I going to do?"

“Well, quick, put in your spare pair of laces. That’s what I had to do when mine broke this morning,” Terry said.

“But I don’t have extra laces. I know the coach told us to get some, but I never did. I can’t borrow yours. You run right after me and we wouldn’t have time to switch again before your race started. What am I going to do?”

At that moment from across the field came the muffled sound of a shot. “That sounds like the starter’s pistol,” said Terry, putting his arm around Mark’s shoulder. “Guess there’s nothing you can do now.”

### Questions:

- Why was Mark excited?
- Was he ready to run the race?
- What happened because Mark was not prepared?
- What are some other things a person might have to be ready for?
- Today’s Bible story is about some women who were unprepared to go to a wedding. Does anyone remember another parable Jesus told about someone who did not prepare properly for a wedding feast? (The man who wore the wrong wedding clothes in the parable in **Matthew 22:1-14**.) Tell your children about the ancient wedding customs explained in the background material to help them better understand today’s parable. If anyone asks, you may wish to define “virgins” as “unmarried ladies.”

### BIBLE STORY

Read **Matthew 25:1-13** and discuss using pertinent background material. Emphasize the crucial importance of being ready for the Lord’s return.

### SONGS

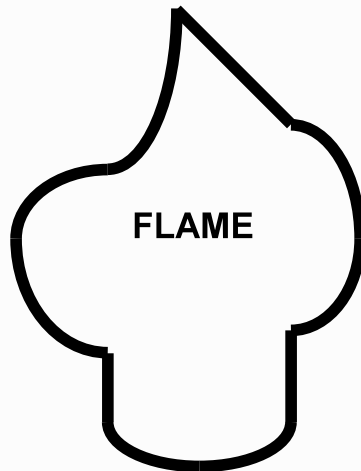
“Give Me Oil”; “Wake, Awake” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #317); “Rejoice, All Ye Believers” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #320); “Jesus Bids Us Shine” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #592); “Great God What Do I See and Hear” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #321); “The Lord Will Come” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #367).

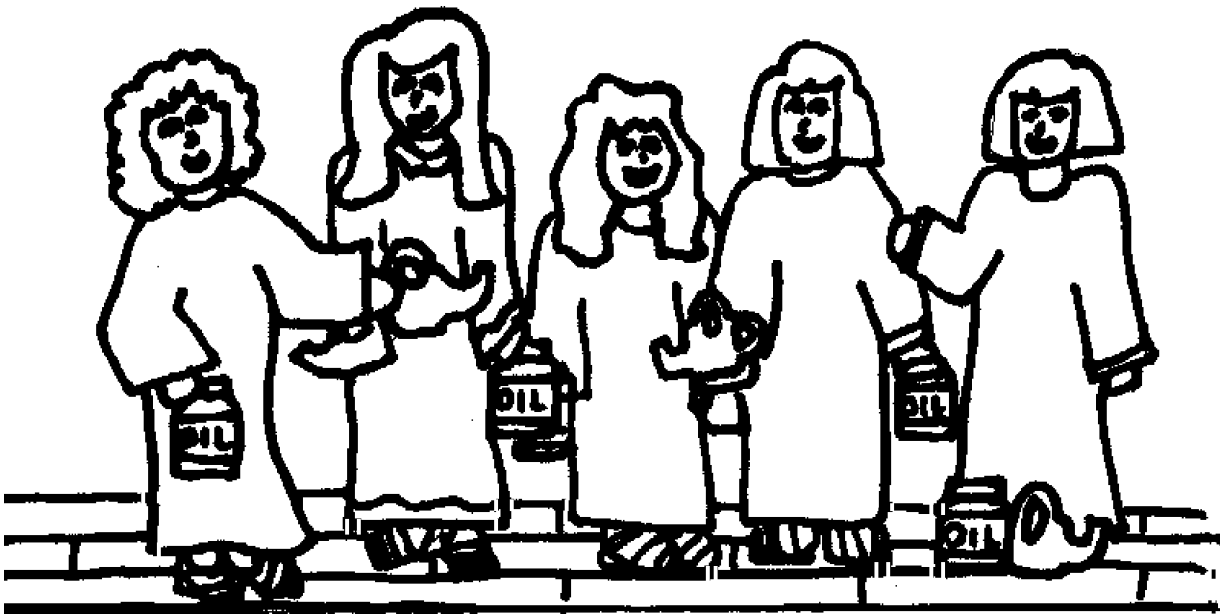
## Take Home Activity

**Parables Booklet** - Today's page includes a picture and some questions for the students to answer to show their understanding of the story.

**Model Oil Lamp** - Have your students make a working model of an oil lamp from clay or a toy one from aluminum foil. In the first case, a "pinch pot" should be constructed with an air-drying type of clay (if a kiln is unavailable; do not use plasticine "modeling clay"). Your students should do this by rolling a ball of clay, poking a hole in the center with their thumbs, and pinching the clay between their thumbs and fingers, widening the hole until a pot is produced. Your students should then pull out one end to make a spout into which they could put a cloth wick, one end of which would rest in the bottom of the pot that could later be filled with cooking oil. Your children should be severely warned never to light their lamps without adult supervision.

The aluminum foil lamp, made for illustrative purpose only, is constructed by scrunching a large piece of aluminum foil into an oil lamp shape. Your children may cut a flame from yellow construction paper and tape it to the lamp. They should color the center of the flame orange and red. The lamp may be three-dimensional or squashed flat, taped to a piece of paper, and put in your students' parables booklets. They may draw a picture of the Bible story for their booklets instead, if desired.





1. How many young ladies were waiting for the bridegroom? What did they have?
2. What did the foolish women say to the wise women when they heard that the bridegroom was coming?
3. What did the wise women tell them?
4. Who came while the foolish women were away?
5. Were all the women allowed to go to the wedding banquet? Explain what happened.
6. What is the heavenly meaning behind this parable?





### BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

**Matthew 25:1-13** - We, like the five wise women in Jesus' parable, must be ready for the coming of the Bridegroom.

### MEMORY VERSE

**This quarter, Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 15:3-10; this week, Luke 15:10** - "In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

### SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Have your family think of examples of things for which they need to be prepared and what they need to do to get ready for them. Read Matthew 25:1-13 and discuss. Why were the foolish women excluded from the marriage feast? Why will some people be excluded from heaven and the marriage supper of the Lamb?
2. Read Scripture about the Lord's Second Coming (see Suggested Parental Reading). How can we be prepared for His return?
3. Act out Matthew 25:1-13, adding appropriate dialogue *ad lib*.
4. Research the type of lamps that might have been used by the women in the parable and make a working model of one from clay if this was not done in class (of course, lighting this should only be done under adult supervision). If you do not wish to construct a model, show your children pictures of biblical lamps.
5. Sing songs such as: "Give Me Oil"; "Wake, Awake" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #317); "Rejoice, All Ye Believers" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #320); "Jesus Bids Us Shine" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #592); "Great God What Do I See and Hear" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #321); "The Lord Will Come" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #367).

### SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING

**Scripture** - Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 13:22-23; II Timothy 3:1-5. About preparing for the Lord's return - II Corinthians 6:2; I Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; II Peter 3; Matthew 24-25. About oil - Isaiah 61:1; Zechariah 4:1-6; Exodus 30:22-23; Hebrews 1:8-9. About the Bridegroom and Marriage Supper of the Lamb - Matthew 9:14-15; John 3:27-30; Revelation 21:1-4; Ephesians 5:22-33.



# **THE GOOD SAMARITAN**

**Luke 10:25-37**

## **Lesson Aim**

That your students will realize that we should show love to others, as did the Good Samaritan, and that we cannot earn eternal life.

## **Memory Verse**

Review **Matthew 7:24-27** and **Luke 15:3-10**.

## **Lesson Background**

“On one occasion, an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus” (Luke 10:25). This man was not an attorney, but a scholar, a specialist in Old Testament law. He presented Jesus with the same question the Rich Young Ruler asked, one which, indeed, should concern us all: “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” The Bible says he put forth this query to test Jesus, either merely in an academic sense to see how Jesus’ answer measured up intellectually with his own thoughts on the subject, or, in keeping with the way the word is usually used in Scripture, in a malicious way to trap the Lord. Whatever the man’s motivation, he soon found himself on the defensive, as Jesus turned the tables by asking him a question. The lawyer gave an excellent answer; in fact, he quoted the same passages (Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18) Jesus had when the Pharisees had challenged him about what was important in God’s law. The lawyer realized that he could not completely obey these commands, but, rather than humbly confessing this, he sought to justify himself by narrowing the scope of the statutes. He therefore asked Jesus to define the word “neighbor” in the second law. (It would be interesting to know whether the lawyer focused on the second commandment because he intended to discuss the first later, or because he assumed he was already keeping its requirement of loving God with all one’s heart.)

Jesus again did not directly answer the law expert's question, but told a parable to demonstrate that love has an infinite scope. "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he fell into the hands of robbers" (Luke 10:30). Jericho lies in an oasis in the Jordan Valley, approximately eighteen miles away from and three thousand feet below Jerusalem, which is located in Israel's central mountain range. The rocky, barren, desolate wilderness between the cities made an ideal lurking place for outlaws. In Jesus' story, as the victim lay helpless by the roadside, a priest and later a Levite (a descendent of Levi, but not of Aaron, who helped the priests in temple duties) came by. They ignored the wounded man and, in fact, walked by on the other side of the road because they wanted nothing to do with him. We rightly condemn these religious leaders for their hard-heartedness, but are we not like them? The priest and Levite probably felt completely justified in their actions and may have reasoned like this: "Oh, the poor man; well, I certainly can't help him. If I don't hurry, I'll be late for my duties at the Temple. After all, my service to God certainly takes precedence over helping people. Someone else will probably come to his aid soon. Not that it will do much good. He looks dead already. Ugh, perhaps he is dead. That settles it. I can't risk touching a dead body. That would make me ceremonially unclean (Leviticus 21). I wonder how long the guy's been lying there? Uh-oh, maybe the men who attacked him are still around. I'd better get out of here - quick." Love for God does not excuse a person from a responsibility to show love to other people (cf. Mark 7:9-13). The priest and Levite should have realized that if God's law made provision for animals left by the side of the road (Deuteronomy 22:4, Exodus 23:5), it certainly speaks to human beings in the same circumstances.

The religious leaders were not the only ones traveling by the Jerusalem/Jericho road that day in Jesus' parable. A Samaritan came by, took pity on the stranger, and helped him. Samaritans were the descendants of people taken captive from foreign nations by the Assyrians and sent by them to intermarry with those Israelites left in the land when Assyria conquered Israel in 722 B.C. The resulting mixed racial groups had also adopted a syncretistic religion, and was hence despised by the pure-bred, orthodox Jews in the south. The Samaritans in turn generally hated the Jews (Josephus says even murdered them). Needless to say, there was very little contact between these two groups of people. Yet, in Jesus' parable, a Samaritan showed more love to a Jew than did his fellow countrymen. The law expert could not fail to understand the Lord's meaning; everyone in the world is our neighbor, and if a Samaritan could show this much love for his enemy, surely God's law demanded that all the Jews, including the lawyer himself (who was obviously not as righteous as he thought), do likewise (Luke 10:37; the verb tense means *continue* to go and do likewise).

We, too, should show others the kind of love the Samaritan demonstrated, which God has shown to us. The Samaritan risked his life for his enemy, for the robbers may still have been close by. He kindly bandaged the man's wounds, pouring on wine (as an antiseptic) and oil (probably olive oil, for healing), not a pleasant task. He probably got dirty, bloody, and perhaps slightly injured in carrying the man to the inn. Perhaps he gave up sleep and comfort to look after the man that night. Certainly there were time (the Samaritan had to spoil his own plans to help the stranger), trouble, energy, emotional and financial expenditures involved. The Samaritan showed *agape* love, God's kind of love, that shows compassion regardless of the response of the one on whom it is bestowed. May God give us this sort of love for others, and may He assure us of His love for us, which we could never earn.

*Knowledge Objectives* - To know that Jesus told a parable in answer to a law expert's questions about how a person can obtain eternal life and who our neighbors are about a man journeying from Jerusalem to Jericho who was beaten, robbed, and left half dead by the side of the road; a priest and Levite ignored the man's predicament, but a despised Samaritan bandaged the man's wounds, pouring wine and oil on them and taking the man to an inn, where he took care of him and paid for him to be looked after for many days.

*Behavioral Objectives* - By God's grace, to love others and to realize that we cannot earn God's love.

## **Lesson Procedure**

**Introduction** - Introduce today's parable by explaining background material about who the Samaritans were. You may wish to begin something like this: "People often do not like those who are different from them. If someone is extremely tall, overweight, very bright, or not very smart, he is often laughed at. Sometimes one group of people will keep away from another because they seem strange to them. Perhaps people from one group have a different color skin or speak a different language. If someone from one group hurts a person from another group, this feeling of shyness or dislike may grow to hatred. This is what happened in Bible times with the Jews and Samaritans." Explain further as discussed in the background material.

### **BIBLE STORY**

Read **Luke 10:25-37** and discuss, emphasizing that we should show love to others, how we can do this, and the fact that only by God's grace can we obtain eternal life. Use appropriate background material to aid you in your discussion.

### **ACTIVITY (optional)**

Have your children act out the parable of the Good Samaritan, adding appropriate dialogue *ad lib*.

### **ACTIVITY (optional)**

Have your students write a modern-day adaptation of the story of the Good Samaritan. Perhaps non-readers could narrate a story for you to write down, or you could write the story as a class.

### **SONGS**

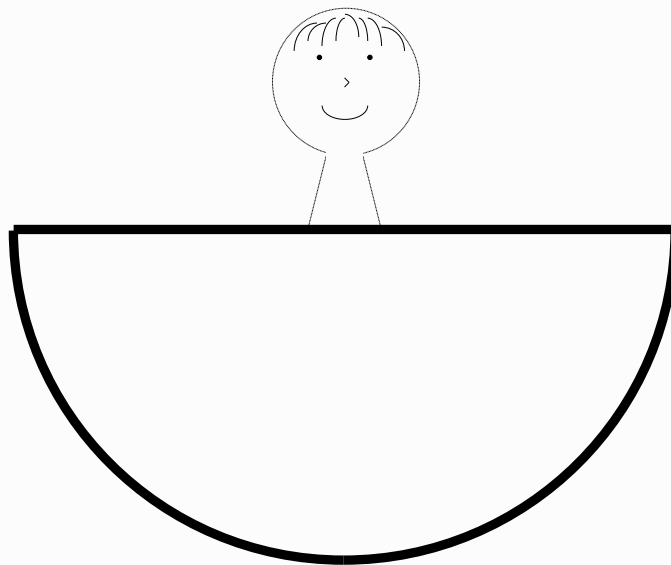
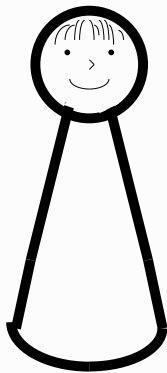
"This is My Commandment" (John 15:12); "A New Commandment" (John 13:34); "Beloved, Let Us Love One Another" (1 John 4:7-8); "What Does the Lord Require" (Micah 6:8); "Not What My Hands Have Done" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #461).

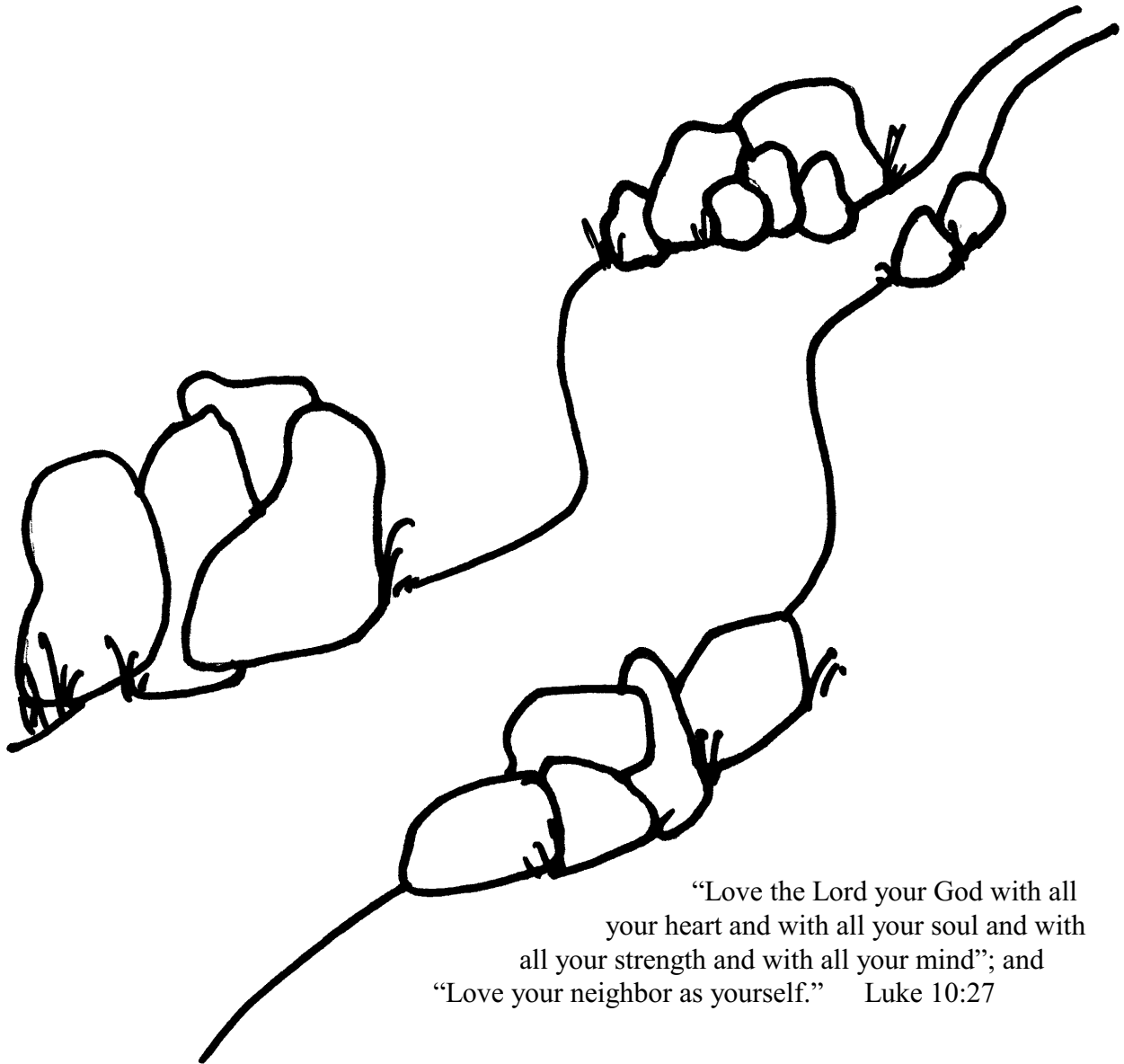
## Take Home Activity

**Parables Booklet** - Have your children complete their parables booklets by doing today's worksheet and take them home at the end of class.

**Parables Review** - Today's lesson includes a review of the parables studied this quarter. If you have time to use it, the review should help the children remember the stories they've learned. This, too, can be included in the Parables Booklet.

**Finger Puppets** - Have the children construct finger puppets with which to dramatize the parable of the Good Samaritan. Trace body pieces from the pattern below and give each child several roughly cut. Have your students neatly cut out the body pieces and, for each body, draw a neck and head about the size of a nickel (they may trace around a nickel to do this). Your students should draw features on their faces and color clothes on the body pieces. Finally, the children should tape the heads to the bodies as shown and fold and tape the body into a cone shape.





“Love the Lord your God with all  
your heart and with all your soul and with  
all your strength and with all your mind”; and  
“Love your neighbor as yourself.” Luke 10:27

1. Who is your neighbor?
  
2. How do you inherit eternal life?





A parable is an \_\_\_\_\_ story with a \_\_\_\_\_ meaning.

1. On what did the foolish man build his house? \_\_\_\_\_
2. On what did the wise man build his house? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the Rock we are to build our houses (our lives) on? \_\_\_\_\_
4. In the Parable of the Hidden Treasure, what is the Kingdom of Heaven worth?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Match the following pictures with their meanings from the Parable of the Seed and the Four Soils:



Trials



Christ or His helpers

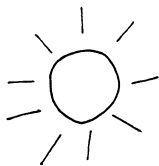


Worries and riches



Satan and his helpers

Word of God

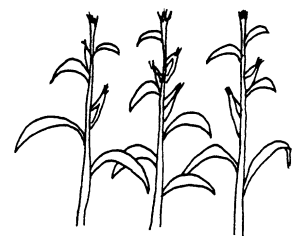


Someone who doesn't listen to God's Word



Christians

Where seeds grow quickly but soon wither away



6. What happened to the Rich Fool after he had stored up all of his food in a barn?

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7. The Parable of the Rich Fool taught us that we should be generous with what God has given us, not \_\_\_\_\_.

8. In the Parable of the Shepherd and the Lost Sheep, how many sheep did the shepherd have? \_\_\_\_\_ How many were lost? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Whom does the shepherd represent? \_\_\_\_\_

10. In the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard, which group of men were paid the most? \_\_\_\_\_

11. One of the things we learn from this parable is that salvation is by \_\_\_\_\_, not by \_\_\_\_\_.

12. In the Parable of the Wedding Banquet, we learned that in order to go to the wedding planned by the king, a man needed to wear clothes that the king provided for him. What do we need to be clothed in?

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13. In the Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds, the weeds are eventually destroyed. What do the weeds represent?

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What does the wheat represent?

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14. In the Parable of the Prodigal Son, we learned that the father welcomed his son home, even though his son was wasteful and sinful. God will forgive us, too, if we repent of our sin. Draw four things the father gave to the son.

15. What did the evil tenants do to the servants and the son who were sent to collect the fruit owed to the landowner in the Parable of the Evil Tenants?

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16. In the Parable of the Talents, what were the servants expected to do with the money their master gave them to take care of? (Circle one)

make more money      give back the same amount      lose money

17. In the Parable of the Ten Virgins, what did we learn we have to be ready for?

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18. How can we be ready for this?

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19. The Parable of the Good Samaritan teaches us that we are to be obedient to God and love our neighbors as ourselves. Who helped the injured man? (Circle one)

his friend

someone he thought was his enemy

20. The story we read in class today about the priest with the dirty clothes explained to us what it means to be clothed in Christ's righteousness.

What part of us needs to be made clean? \_\_\_\_\_

Who can do this? \_\_\_\_\_

Complete the following sentence: God \_\_\_\_\_ Sin.

Who has satisfied God's anger? \_\_\_\_\_

Draw the symbol that represents what Jesus has done to satisfy God's anger.

### BIBLE PASSAGE - LESSON FOCUS

Luke 10:25-37 - We should show love to others, as did the Good Samaritan; also, we cannot earn eternal life.

### MEMORY VERSE

Review this quarter's memory verses: **Matthew 7:24-27** and **Luke 15:3-10**.

### SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. The law expert to whom Jesus told the Parable of the Good Samaritan thought he could obtain eternal life by his own efforts. He realized that he could not completely keep God's commandments, so he tried to limit their scope in order to justify himself. Discuss why it is impossible to earn eternal life, and the fact that we can only be brought into a right relationship with God and go to heaven by God's grace because of what Christ has done. Support these truths by reading appropriate Scripture together (e.g. Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 5:6-8).
2. The Samaritans were a people despised by the Jews as religious and racial half-breeds (find out why this was so). Search the New Testament to find out how Jesus treated Samaritans (John 4) and other outcasts. What groups of people today are treated as Samaritans were in Jesus' time? How do you and your family treat those rejected by society? Children will often refuse to associate with the unpopular students in their school classes. Together plan ways to show love to their outcast classmates and those children they "just can't stand."
3. Jesus showed the law expert that he could not limit love to his close relatives. The Samaritan even showed love for his enemy (cf. Matthew 5:43-48). Plan specific ways you and your family can show love to "neighbors" near and far away.
4. Love costs something; it is no easy thing. The Good Samaritan spent time, trouble, energy and money in his efforts to help the injured man. He changed his plans, probably got dirty and lost sleep, and perhaps even risked his life (for the robbers may still have been in the area) to show love to his enemy. Plan how you and your family can show sacrificial love for your "enemies."
5. As a family, dramatize the Parable of the Good Samaritan or have your children tell the story with the finger puppets they made in class.
6. Have your children write a modern-day story about a "Good Samaritan."
7. Sing songs such as: "This is My Commandment" (John 15:12); "A New Commandment" (John 13:34); "Beloved, Let Us Love One Another" (1 John 4:7-8); "What Does the Lord Require" (Micah 6:8); "Not What My Hands Have Done" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #461).

## **SUGGESTED PARENTAL READING**

**Scripture** - Romans 5:6-8; Ephesians 2:8-9; I Corinthians 13; I John 4:7-21; Matthew 5:43-48; James 2; Matthew 23:23-28; Matthew 25:31-46; Mark 7:1-13.