



Jesus Teaches the Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13:1–23



LESSON GOAL

Students will hear God's Word, understand it, and bear good fruit.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Describe what happens in the parable of the sower.
- Tell why Jesus taught in parables.
- Explain what it means to have ears but not be able to hear.
- Explain the parable of the sower.

KEY VERSE

"But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."
—*Matthew 13:23*

APPLICATION

- Praise God if you have eyes that can see and ears that can hear God's Word.
- Examine your fruit to see if it reveals a right response to God's Word.
- Tell others about God's good news.

NEXT WEEK

Jesus Feeds the Multitude
Matthew 14:13–21

Symbol Key



Craft



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Activity



Q & A



Work Sheet



2 Grade Level

Teacher Planning Sheet

PREPARE

Objectives/Truths to cover this week

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Personal Application

As a result of my study in this passage, God wants me to...

- _____
- _____
- _____

Three ways students need to apply this passage are...

- _____
- _____
- _____

POINT

Choose from various ideas to point them to the coming Bible lesson.

- _____
- _____

PROCLAIM

Choose from various ideas to proclaim the Bible lesson.

Presentation Ideas

- _____
- _____

Praise/Music Ideas

- _____
- _____
- _____

PRACTICE

Choose ideas to help review and apply today's lesson.

- _____
- _____

Materials Needed:

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... you shall teach them to your children.” —Deuteronomy 11:18–19

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here that will aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

Introduction

Although the intensity of their opposition varied, both the people of Israel and their leaders refused to accept Jesus as their King. The people were amazed by Jesus’ miracles and fascinated by His teachings, but they were unwilling to submit to His authority and become His disciples. The leaders were also unwilling to repent, but their opposition to Jesus was more intense since His authority threatened their own power. Instead of the indifference which characterized the general population, the leaders vehemently attacked Jesus’ character and conduct. In their attempt to discredit Jesus, the Pharisees had the audacity to say that Jesus cast out demons through Satan’s power. Israel did not want their King because the obedience He demanded was too costly. Because of their rejection, the King began to judge His people. Since the people were unwilling to understand, Jesus taught them in parables impossible for them to understand.

Jesus Teaches the Crowds in Parables (Matt. 13:1–9)

On the same day (Matt. 13:1) on which the Pharisees accused Jesus of being Satan’s servant and on which Jesus’ family (who thought He was crazy) came to take Jesus away (Matt. 12:46–47; Mark 3:20–21), Jesus taught the people on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. The crowds were so large that Jesus taught while sitting in a boat (13:2). As He taught the people, Jesus “spoke many things to them in parables” (13:3). Parables are extended figures of speech in which everyday objects and activities are used to explain spiritual truths. Parables incorporate the well-known to explain the less-known, the familiar to explain the unfamiliar, and the concrete to explain the abstract. While all of Jesus’ parables explained truth perfectly, Jesus’ parables were often unusual because He did not specify what truth He was teaching. The parable of the sower is just one of many parables Jesus taught that day which actually hid spiritual truth.

In the “parable of the sower” (it is called by Jesus in Matthew 13:18), Jesus described a common sight in ancient Palestine: a man scattering seed in order to grow crops. The success of the crop depended on where the seed fell. Seed which fell on the hard, packed ground of the “wayside” could not penetrate the soil and was quickly eaten by birds (13:4). Seed which fell on “stony places,” shallow soil on top of solid rock, grew quickly but withered in the sun. The plant’s roots could not grow deep because of the layer of rock beneath the surface (13:5–6). Other seed fell on ground infested with thorns. When the thorns sprouted along with the seed, the thorns overpowered and “choked” the young plants (13:7). The last seed fell on good soil and developed into a fruitful harvest, ranging from a very good crop of “thirtyfold” to an extraordinary crop of a “hundredfold” (13:8).

Jesus finished His parable without explaining it to the crowds. Even though Jesus knew that most of those present would not understand what He was teaching, Jesus still challenged the crowds to understand the parable. He finished by saying, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” (13:9) Jesus was not hiding truth from those who understood, but those who had “hardened ears” instead of “hearing ears” would not be able to understand Jesus’ parable.

Jesus Explains the Purpose for Teaching in Parables (Matt. 13:10–17)

When Jesus finished the parable, the disciples were curious about both Jesus’ method and His message. They asked Jesus why He spoke to the people in parables (Matt. 13:10) and what the parable of the sower meant (Luke 8:9). Before explaining the parable’s meaning, Jesus explained why He spoke to the people in parables.

Jesus gave His reason to the disciples: “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given” (Matt. 13:11). The ultimate reason Jesus spoke in parables was because God is sovereign. He gives revelation to whom He chooses. God chose to whom the “mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” would be revealed. These “mysteries” were the hidden truths about the coming of God’s Son and the arrival of God’s kingdom. These truths could not be understood from the Old Testament. Contrary to popular Jewish expectations, Jesus taught His disciples how God’s kingdom would continue and grow among those who responded to the gospel until the Messiah returned in judgment.

Although all Jews were commanded to respond to their King, these “mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” were not taught to all Jews. Only the Jews who turned to Jesus would understand these mysteries. Jesus gave a principle to explain God’s revelation: “For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance” (Matt. 13:12). Jesus’ parables were God’s way of giving more truth to those who had responded to the gospel. The parables were also God’s way of hiding truth from the crowds who followed Jesus but refused to repent. Jesus added, “Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him” (13:12). The Jews who continued to reject the gospel would have nothing left.

Jesus first explained His purpose for teaching in parables in terms of God’s choice. God could reveal kingdom mysteries to whomever He wanted. Jesus’ next reason for teaching in parables was that the parables were fitting judgment upon people who refused to see, hear, and understand (13:13). Like their forefathers who refused to listen to the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 6:9–10), the Jews of Jesus’ day refused to respond to Jesus’ message (Matt. 13:14–15). Because their hearts were hard, the Jews chose to make their eyes and ears useless. They might as well have been blind, deaf, and unaware of what Jesus said and did. Since the Jews enjoyed their spiritual blindness more than obedience, Jesus released them to their desires and taught them parables which they would not be able to understand. The people had been unwilling to understand; now they would be unable to understand—unless they humbled themselves and asked Jesus to take away their blindness and deafness.

Unlike most of the Jews, the disciples were blessed because their eyes saw and their ears heard (13:16). Their righteous response to God’s King had been rewarded with more of God’s revelation. Instead of being cursed with blindness and deafness, the disciples had received a great blessing. Jesus described this blessing to His disciples: “I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it” (13:17). Because the disciples saw the arrival of God’s King and His kingdom, they were more blessed than the greatest prophets and most righteous

men of the past. In keeping with their privileged position, Jesus taught His disciples what the parable of the sower revealed about God's kingdom.

Jesus Reveals the Meaning of the Parable of the Sower (13:18–23)

The parable of the sower describes four responses to the “word of the kingdom” (Matt. 13:19). The “word of the kingdom” is the good news of how to enter into God's kingdom through faith and repentance. The first response is an unwillingness to believe. This response is pictured by the seed which fell by the wayside but was devoured by birds (13:4, 19). Those who respond in unbelief are content not to understand the Gospel. Their minds will not submit to God's truth, and Satan accommodates their unbelief by snatching away whatever truth was there.

The second response is an unwillingness to persevere. This response is pictured by the seed which didn't have enough soil (Matt. 13:5–6). While the seed grew quickly, it also died quickly in the sun. This response is characterized by one “who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy” (13:20) but who “stumbles” “when trouble or persecution arises because of the word” (13:21). Although this person confesses Christ and mimics certain characteristics of a Christian life, he reveals the absence of true conversion at the first sign of opposition. To this person, salvation was a matter of emotion-altering experience rather than repentance and saving faith. When opposition reveals the cost of following Christ, his commitment to Christ ends.

The third response is an unwillingness to sacrifice. This response is pictured by the seed which was choked by thorns after sprouting (Matt. 13:7). It is characterized by one “who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful (13:22). Such a person is convinced of the truth of the gospel but unwilling to put the truth into practice. He is too consumed with this world to make the necessary sacrifices to obey and bear fruit. Instead of trusting God to supply his needs and satisfy his heart, he succumbs to worship of self and money. His divided heart leads to his destruction.

The last response is a willingness to believe and obey. Jesus describes the response of one who “received seed on the good ground” (Matt. 13:23). This response is characterized by hearing, understanding, bearing fruit, and producing thirtyfold, sixtyfold, or a hundredfold. Although every person is naturally bad ground, God changes a man's heart so that he becomes good ground. He gives him eyes to see and ears to hear His gospel and enlightens his understanding so he will respond with obedience. As the man responds to the gospel in faith and submission, he obeys and bears a multitude of fruit, the characteristic of a transformed life.

Conclusion

Although most of the Jews were blind and deaf to its message, the parable of the sower revealed a mystery about the kingdom of God: different people will respond to the word of the kingdom in different ways. While Christians are used to people rejecting the gospel, the Jews' failure to accept Christ could have been a stumbling block for those who were waiting for Him to reign as their King. With this parable, Jesus encouraged His disciples by helping them understand why the word of the kingdom was not accepted. It also challenged the disciples to bear fruit in keeping with their professed allegiance to Christ and to praise God that He had made their hearts good ground.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

*"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth."
—Psalm 78:1*

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

Was Jesus upset at the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum?
Yes.

Why was Jesus upset at the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum?
Because they saw His miracles and did not believe that He is God.

Should the people have believed that Jesus is God because of His miracles?
Yes.

Where did Jesus say that the people of Capernaum would be sent because they did not repent?
Hell.

What does Jesus invite people to do?
Jesus said those "who labor and are heavy laden" should go to Jesus and He will give them rest.



Blind, Deaf, or Believing

Materials: Handkerchief for blindfold, earplugs, picture book of a less familiar fairy tale

Directions: Select three students from the class. Blindfold the first student, place earplugs in the second student's ears, and allow the third child to both listen and watch the story. Read the unfamiliar fairy tale to the three children while the class observes. After reading the story, have each student retell the story in his or her own words. Ask the class to judge which student retold the story most closely to the original version. The third student should come closest to an accurate retelling, as his or her vision and hearing were not hindered. Use this game to introduce the concept that Jesus taught in parables so that only believers would truly understand the true meaning behind the lesson. Explain that the two students with the blindfold and earplugs represent people whose hearts are hardened to Jesus' message.



On Target

While the sowing of seeds was a common metaphor in the first century, it is foreign to many city dwellers today. Give the children an opportunity to be the "farmer" who is trying to sow his seed in the best possible soil. Use a sheet of construction paper to create a field with a section of good soil, surrounded by weeds and thorns and hard soil. Have the child scatter his seed and count how many fell in the various types of soil.



1
2

A Modern Parable

A parable is a simple story with a moral lesson. Jesus taught many spiritual truths about God in parables. To introduce the children to this concept you may want to read a modern parable to the children at the beginning of class and then ask them what the story teaches us. A good example would be “Twice Mine” by Paul Hinton or a book from the Adam Raccoon series.



Our Soil

In last week’s lesson Jesus taught about two types of trees. One of the trees grew good fruit and the other grew bad fruit. Where do trees come from? What is inside of fruit? In today’s lesson we will be learning more about how Jesus used plants to teach us a lesson about the spiritual life. Let’s listen carefully to see if we can figure out what type of soil our spiritual life is like.



Observing Their Reaction

The parable of the sower reveals that there are a variety of responses which people may have to the word of God. A simple skit can illustrate this well to the children. Have various children come and look at something hidden from the rest of the class. Prepare them before hand to show a variety of responses: shock, anger, confusion, apathy, etc. Ask the children to identify their responses and then ask them if they can guess what they were reacting to. This week’s lesson will provide them with the answer.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

“Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.” —Psalm 78:4

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students’ understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use alongside the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done right from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

Passage Outline

Jesus Teaches the Crowds in Parables (13:1–9)

Jesus Explains the Purpose for Teaching in Parables (13:10–17)

Jesus Explains the Meaning of the Parable of the Sower (13:18–23)

Introduction

Have you ever asked yourself why Jesus taught in parables, or why some people responded to Jesus’ message differently than others? Well Jesus’ disciples asked similar questions. In today’s lesson, Matthew writes about one of Jesus’ parables: The Parable of the Sower. After the disciples were confused as to the meaning of such a parable, Jesus explains that his parables were an act of judgment upon those who had not responded to his earlier message of repentance. Because they



had hardened their hearts to the Messiah and loved their sin more than Christ, Jews in Jesus' day were unable to understand the teachings of Jesus. Those that are able to understand the things of today's lesson should be thankful that He has given you ears by which to hear Him. To hear Him correctly is to respond to Him in faith and repentance. Let's now look into the Parable of the Sower and see the many different ways that people respond to Jesus' call to have life in Him

Lead-off Questions (LOQs)

LOQ: What occurred at the beginning of today's lesson?

Answer: Even though many Pharisees had just openly ridiculed Jesus, falsely accusing Him of being from Satan, a great many people continued to gather around Him. Many did not believe that what the Pharisees were saying about Jesus was true and wanted to hear His teaching. This crowd started to become so large that Jesus had to sit in a boat out in the water in order to teach all the people who were gathered along the shore. From this shore, Jesus begins teaching the people in parables.

LOQ: What exactly is a parable, and why would someone use it to teach people?

Answer: Jesus was teaching some rather hard concepts to the people. Since the people were not used to hearing such things, Jesus chose to teach them by using events from everyday life. Such word pictures are often called parables. One such picture is the Parable of the Sower in today's lesson. By using the common scene of a man scattering seed in order to grow crops; Jesus describes four different ways that people can respond to the message of how to enter God's kingdom.

LOQ: What was unusual about the way that Jesus taught in parables?

Answer: While Jesus' parables explained truth perfectly, Jesus' parables were often unusual because he did not explain the meaning of the parable. He often spoke in parables without specifying to what spiritual truth He was referring. Today's lesson is one of the few parables (The Parable of the Sower) that records Jesus explaining His what it meant. Although Jesus had challenged the crowd listening to understand what He was teaching, His explanation to the parable was only to those disciples who were confused to why He would teach the people this way.

LOQ: What reason or purpose does Jesus give the disciples for teaching in parables?

Answer: The ultimate reason Jesus spoke in parables was because God is sovereign. In being God, Jesus had every right to choose whom he was going to give the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven". These mysteries were the hidden truths about the coming of God's Son and the arrival of God's kingdom. An understanding to such truth was only given to those who had responded to Jesus through genuine faith and repentance. To those who would not respond with repentance, Jesus' teaching in parables served as an act of judgment against their sin. Many Jews of Jesus' day refused to respond to Jesus message of repentance. Since these Jews loved their sin more than obedience, Jesus taught them in a way that they would not be able to understand the things of God.

LOQ: What did Jesus mean when referring to those who have ears but are unable to hear?

Answer: The hearts of those who had not responded to Jesus in repentance were hard and callused. Because their hearts were hard, they chose to make their eyes and ears useless. When they listened to Jesus' teaching but did not responding to the message it was like they were blind and deaf, unable to hear what Jesus said and did. Jesus' use of parables was not hiding the truth from those who understood and responded, but was a way of keeping the truth away from those who had hardened-ears instead of hearing ears.

LOQ: What are the figures of speech used in the Parable of the Sower referring to?

Answer: The different types of soil in the Parable of the Sower represent the different ways that people can respond to Jesus' message. The seed in the parable is a picture of that message, representing the good news of how to enter God's kingdom through faith and repentance.

LOQ: What did Jesus mean when he spoke about the seed falling on the hard packed ground of the wayside where it was then eaten by birds?

Answer: This hard packed ground where the seed first fell represented how people can respond to Jesus' message in unbelief. Because they do not accept Jesus' message to be true, Satan (or the birds in the parable) is able to immediately come along and snatch up the message that they have just been given.

LOQ: What response is represented by the seed that fell on stony places?

Answer: This response is unwillingness to persevere. The seed fell on the stony places where it quickly grew. Because it did not have enough soil it also quickly died in the sun. This type of soil represents the person who was never genuinely committed to Christ. When opposition or persecution (like the sun in the parable) arrives, the person's commitment to Jesus Christ quickly ends. This is a person who might confess Christ and may look like a Christian at first, but at the end of the day is proven to have never genuinely committed themselves to Christ.

LOQ: What response is represented by the seed that fell in thorny places?

Answer: This response is an unwillingness to sacrifice, represented by the seed that was choked after sprouting. The soil at this part of the parable represents those who hear the word and are convinced of its truthfulness, but are unable to put it into practice. The cares and temptations of this world, represented by the thorny bushes, choke out all that which the person hears, causing them to live an unfruitful life for God. This unfruitfulness is a sign that the person was never a genuine Christian. Being so caught up in the world, this person was never willing to deny himself and follow Christ.

LOQ: What response is represented by the seed that fell on good soil and produced much fruit?

Answer: This response is a willingness to believe and obey. Those that God chooses to receive the things of the kingdom he makes their hearts like that of the good ground in this parable. The hearts are ready to hear, understand, and be obedient just as the good soil is ready to receive the seed and have it grow and be fruitful. As this person responds to God in faith and repentance, he obeys and bears much fruit. This obedience and fruitfulness is characteristic of a person who is a genuine Christian.

Summary

In today's lesson, Jesus is teaching a group of people who had already responded to Him in different ways. To those who had responded to His message of repentance Jesus sought out to give them even more truth by teaching them in parables. By teaching in parables, Jesus used the everyday common things of life to explain the truths about God's kingdom. These same parables were also used to hide the truth from those who had already responded to Jesus incorrectly. Many of the crowd had heartened their hearts towards Christ and therefore towards God. In order to judge them of their sin Jesus spoke to them in parables that they would not be able to understand. One such parable that Jesus taught the people was that of the Parable of the Sower. Jesus here uses the image of a man throwing out seed in order to grow crops. In illustrating the different types of soil that the seed fell on Jesus describes the various ways that people can respond to God's message. Whether each person dies or lives is dependent on whether or not he or she responds to Christ correctly. Those whose life displays true faith and obedience to Christ will live. Those whose life lacks this fruitfulness characteristic to a genuine believer will be judged by their sin.

Application

Jesus encouraged His disciples by helping them understand why the word of the kingdom was not accepted among some of the people. It also challenged the disciples to bear fruit that was consistent with their profession as a follower of Christ. This same challenge applies to those who read it today. Each one of us should examine our lives to see whether or not we represent that seed that fell on good soil. If your life does represent that of repentance and obedience to Christ you should praise God that he has made your heart like that of the good soil. That he has given you ears to hear and eyes to see His Son Jesus Christ is reason to rejoice today.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards®

Use appropriate A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards® with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannel Graph

Use appropriate flannel graph pieces with the lesson.



See the Soil?

Bring in some seeds and a plant. Tell the children that when the seeds are planted in soil and watered, they grow into the plant. But the type of soil in which the seeds are planted will make the difference whether the seeds will grow and produce fruit. Illustrate this concept by bringing in four clear containers and fill three with one of the following: soil with rocks, soil and weed plants, and good soil. Also bring in other props for gardening: trowel, fork, gardening gloves, watering can, etc. Explain to the students that each of these environments impact if the seed will grow.



Choose to Reveal

During the lesson or an earlier discussion time show the whole class a picture. Then, show a second picture, this time only showing half the class the picture. Next, show a third picture to one or two children of your choice. Talk about how God chooses to whom He will reveal the truths of His Word.



Make an Announcement

Make an announcement in another language and wait for the children to respond. Repeat it a few times and watch their reactions. After a few minutes give them instructions they understand. Then talk about what happened. Talk about being able to hear but not understand, and when you do not understand you cannot do what you are asked.



The Sower

Explain to the students how seeds were sown in biblical times. Dress up in the time period clothing and sow seeds. You may want to even set up a situation like the one found in today's lesson. A road could be created with butcher paper; rocks could be made with paper bags, etc. After sowing some seeds discuss with the students how some of your seed fell in each type of area illustrated in today's lesson. Conclude by talking to the students about what may have happened to each seed on each type of soil.



Seed Selection

Materials: four identical flower pots, soil, rose bush thorns, rocks, one seed for each student, plastic or paper birds, picture of the sun (or made out of construction paper), plastic plant

Advance Preparation: Prepare four flower pots as directed:

1. Pack down hard, dry soil a few inches from the top of pot.
2. Fill pot halfway with soft, damp soil, and place rocks on top of the surface.
3. Fill with soft, damp soil a few inches from the top of pot; bury thorns under the surface of the dirt (making sure they are not visible from the surface).
4. Fill with soft, damp soil a few inches from the top of pot.

Note: Pots three and four should look identical from the surface.

Before the Lesson: Pass out one seed to each student. Direct each student to place their seed in the pot of their choice by dropping it into the pot (not burying it). Explain that they should choose the pot they think the seed will survive and grow best in.

During the Lesson: Use the pots as a visual aid while teaching each section of the Parable:

Matthew 13:1–4—Bring out the plastic birds and devour all of the seeds students placed in pot #1

Matthew 13:5–6—Bring out a picture of the sun, and scorch all the seeds in pot #2

Matthew 13:7—Uncover the thorns beneath the soil, and choke all the seeds in pot #3

Matthew 13:8—Stick the plastic plant into pot #4, and explain how this soil was the best for plant growth

Discussion: At this point in the lesson, stop and ask students to share which pots they placed their seeds in and why. Ask students to explain how pot #3 was deceptive in comparison to pot #4. After a brief discussion, continue teaching the remainder of the parable.



Seeds and the Soils

To illustrate the impact of different types of soils on plants prepare in advance a few situations for the students to observe. Place lima beans in between wet paper towels and into plastic bags. Leave them in a warm place such as a windowsill. Once the plants have begun to sprout, place them in each of the situations from the lesson. For the thorny soil use pipe cleaners or wire to show what a vine choking the plant may have looked like. For the seeds by the road, place some gravel with no seeds (because the birds ate them). For the stony soil, use pebbles. For the good soil, use a soil with fertilizer such as miracle grows potting soil. The students will be able to observe first hand what effect each type of soil has on the seeds.



Read and Respond

While teaching the lesson, give the students the opportunity to participate. Break the class up into four groups. Each group will represent one of the types of seeds. As the teacher reads the part of the lesson that represents their seed have them make their noise and action. When the seed that fell on the roadside is spoken of the students can make a bird noise and flap their wings. When the students hear about the seed that fell among stony soil the students will clap their hands once and say “ouch”. When the seed that fell among thorns is spoken about the students will make a choking sound and hold their throats. Finally, when the seed that fell on good soil is read about those students will say, “aaaaaah” and will pretend that they are growing big and tall.

Hey, I Want to See Too

Jesus explains that the purpose of teaching in parables was so that spiritual truth could be revealed to some, while hiding it from others. This concept could be incorporated into your teaching time by starting to teach the lesson to the whole class and showing pictures to them all. Midway through, the teacher can gravitate to one portion of the class and show the pictures in such a way that the others cannot see. The class will quickly object that they cannot see. This will provide the perfect opportunity to explain why Jesus taught in parables.



Explain It to Us

Jesus taught the crowds in parables and then explained to the disciples the meaning of His teaching. Follow a similar pattern by beginning the lesson in the standard fashion. However, midway through the lesson revert to drawing simple pictures on the board to depict the lesson. This could alternatively be done by simply showing the students a series of pictures without giving any explanation. Test the children to highlight that they require some additional explanation in order to fully understand what you have just “taught” them. In the same way, Jesus’ disciples did not fully understand His parables until He explained their meaning to them. Teach the rest of the lesson by explaining what the various pictures mean and how they fit together.



How Does that Fit?

Jesus’ parables were somewhat like a set of puzzles pieces which became clear as they were fitted in place. Today’s lesson could be taught along similar lines. A picture of the parable of the sower could be cut into a number of portions and pasted randomly on the board. As you progress through the lesson, begin to position the pieces in the correct place until, at the end, the children can clearly see what is being depicted.

Praise and Worship

Jesus, Draw Me Close

Jesus, Name Above All Names

Lord, I Lift Your Name On High

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

“That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments.” —Psalm 78:7

Choose ideas from this section that review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.

Snack Time

For snack time give the students some samples of edible seeds. Beware of any children that have allergies to nut products.



“Ears to Hear”

Materials Needed: copies of “Ears to Hear” craft pages, construction paper, scissors, tape

Directions: Make a headband out of construction paper for each child that fits his or her head. Give the students the “Ears to Hear” craft page. Students may decorate their headband and ears. Have them cut out the two ears and the Scripture verse and tape the ears to the sides of the headband. Finally, have the students tape the verse card to the front of the headband.



Parable Lift-the-Flap

Materials: craft pages, Exacto blade, glue or stapler, seeds, dirt, pebbles, pipe cleaners, etc.

Directions: Precut the top sheet along solid lines with knife. Give each student access to the above materials. Instruct them to carefully glue or staple the top sheet with flaps to the bottom sheet without gluing the flaps down. The students may then decorate the top sheet to represent each type of soil.



The Good Soil

Materials Needed: Styrofoam cups, lids, potting soil, verse cards, glue, seeds or small plants, large piece of plastic

Directions: Give each child a Styrofoam or paper cup and a pencil. Ask them to punch several small holes in the bottom of the cup with a pencil. (This can also be done by the teacher before class). Glue a verse card with Matthew 13:23 “But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit...” on the side of the cup. Give each child a small plant (or a several seeds). Over a large piece of plastic pour potting soil into each cup until it is 2/3 full. Instruct students to place their seeds on top of the dirt. Give each student a lid to take the cup home. Instruct them to dampen the dirt and leave the cup in a warm place for a few days. Within several days the students should have small plants to remind them of the lesson.



“Parable Pinwheel”

Materials: copies of pinwheel pattern on cardstock, one unsharpened pencil per student, one thumbtack per student, scissors, and crayons

Directions: Pass out pinwheel pattern and scissors to each student. Instruct students to cut around the outside square only. Instruct students to draw a picture of each of the four soil types and responses on the left side of each triangle that go along with the Scripture reference (explain the right side of each triangle will be folded up to the center of the pinwheel). Students should turn the square each time they complete a picture so that the Scripture reference is facing up when they complete their drawings. After students illustrate all four sections, instruct them to cut along the solid lines to the end points. Model how to fold corners one through four to the center point (in order), and attach to the pencil with a thumbtack. Encourage the students to take their pinwheel home and place it in their yard to remind them of the lesson taught by the Parable of the Sower.



“Jesus teaches a parable”

Use this worksheet to reinforce the key truths of today’s lesson. The worksheet is located at the back of the lesson.



Small Group Activity: “Good Ground”

Use this worksheet in a small group. Lead the students in discussing the questions and their answers. The worksheet is located at the back of the lesson.

Coloring Pages

Give each child a copy of the coloring pages at the back of the lesson. He or she can color the pages in class or take them home to color.



MEMORY VERSE

“But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces.” —*Matthew 13:23a*

Ears to Hear

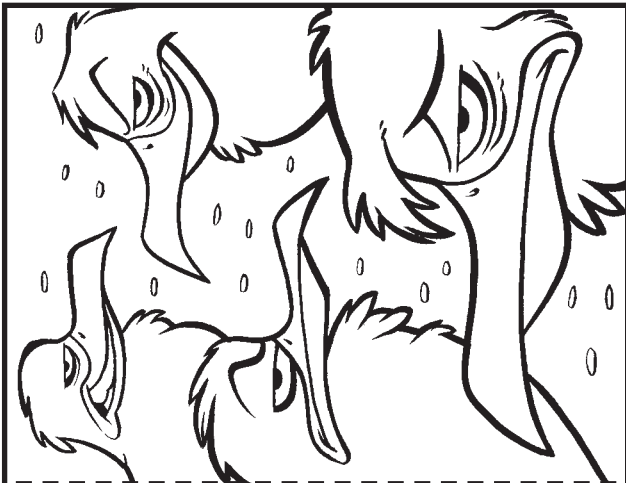


“He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” —Matthew 13:9

The Parable of the Soils

Matthew 13:3–8, 18–23

The seed is the gospel of the Word of God.
What kind of soil are you?



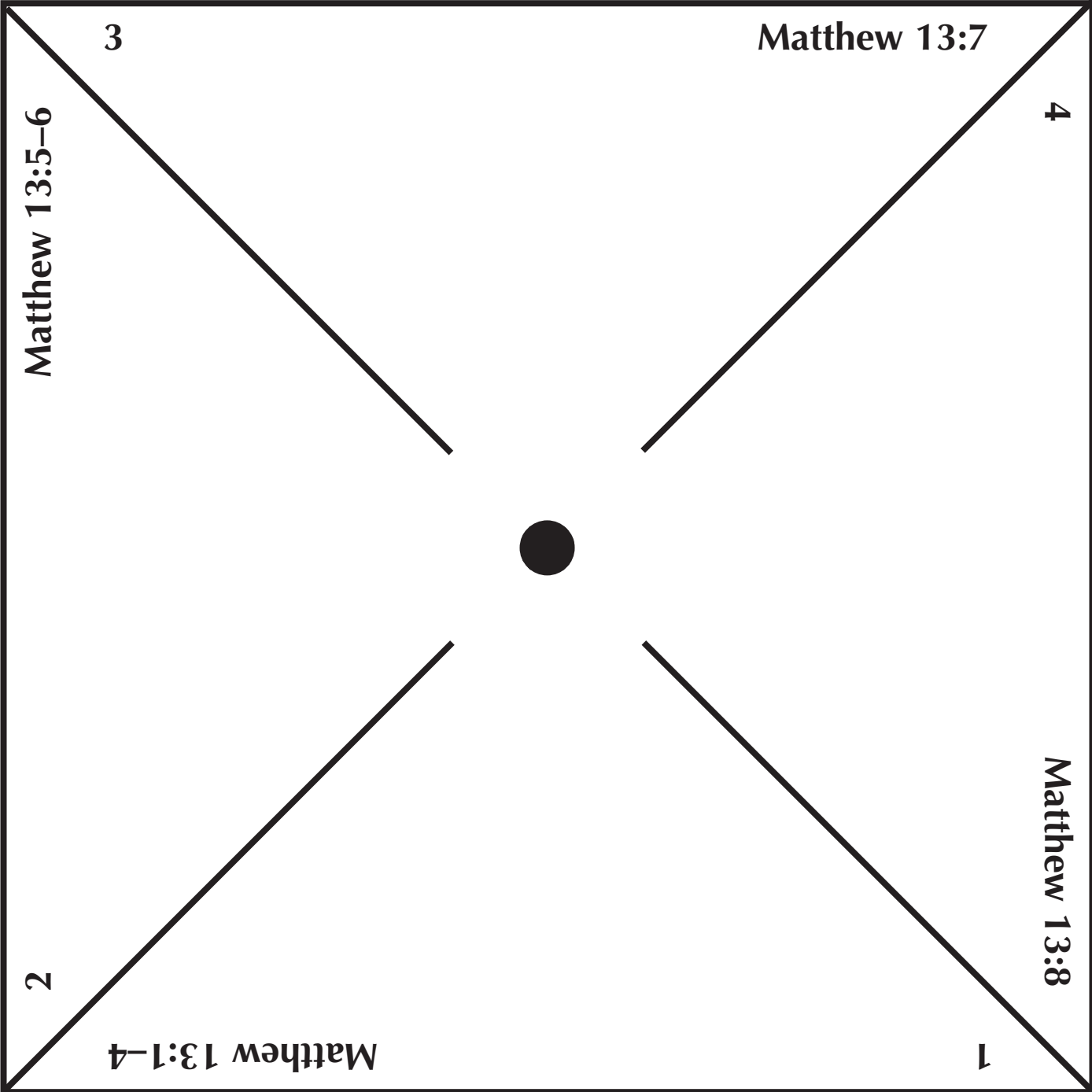
"But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for awhile. For when persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles."
—*Matthew 3:20–21*

"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside."
—*Matthew 3:19*

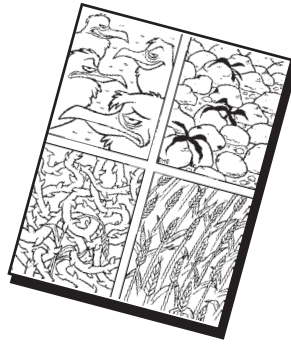
"But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."
—*Matthew 13:23*

"Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful."
—*Matthew 13:22*

Parable Pinwheel



Jesus teaches a parable



Matthew 13:1-23

Name _____

1. A _____ is a story about everyday life to explain biblical truth.
2. Could the crowd understand Jesus' parables? _____
3. Why could the disciples understand Jesus' parables? _____

4. The seed that fell by the wayside was _____ by birds.
5. The seed that fell by the stony ground sprang up and then _____ away.
6. The seed that fell among thorns was _____ by the thorns.
7. The seed that fell among good ground yielded a _____.
8. In the parable of the sower, the seed is the _____.

Good Ground

“But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

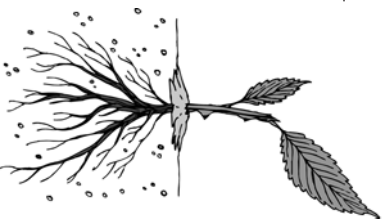
—Matthew 13:23

Did you know that your Sunday School teacher is like a sower or a farmer who sows seeds? Each week when your teacher tells you about God’s Word, she is planting seeds (God’s Word) in your heart. What type of ground do you think the seed is falling on? Today you heard the lesson Christ gave about seed falling on different types of ground and what resulted when the plant started to grow.

In the mix and match columns below, write the letter for each result and meaning that matches the type of ground:

TYPE OF GROUND	RESULT	MEANING
<i>Wayside</i>	_____	_____
<i>Stony Places</i>	_____	_____
<i>Thorns</i>	_____	_____
<i>Good Ground</i>	_____	_____

- RESULTS**
- A. Weeds Choked
 - B. Fruit Grew
 - C. Birds Ate
 - D. Sun Scorched
- MEANING**
- F. Brings Forth Lots of Fruit
 - G. Cares and Riches Choke It
 - H. Endures For Awhile
 - I. Wicked One Snatches It Away



Good Ground

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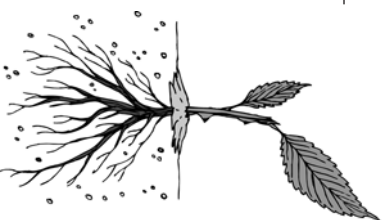
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If your heart is good ground then you will be producing fruit. In Matthew 13:23, Christ tells His followers that good ground brings forth fruit and produces some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.

Sharing God's Word with your friends is a very good way to bring forth fruit for Christ. Who can you tell about Christ this week?

I can tell:

I will tell him or her:

You can also examine your own heart. By examining your own heart you can see if there are any "weeds" that are choking your growing fruit or if any "birds" are snatching it away.

On page one, circle the ground that represents how your heart has responded to God's Word. Tell your parents or Sunday School about it.

I circled this type of ground:

I circled this type of ground because:

PRAYER

Thank Christ for providing His Word in order that you may grow and please Him. Ask Him to help you be a fruit bearer. Pray for your friends that they too may come to know God's lovingkindness and forgiveness.

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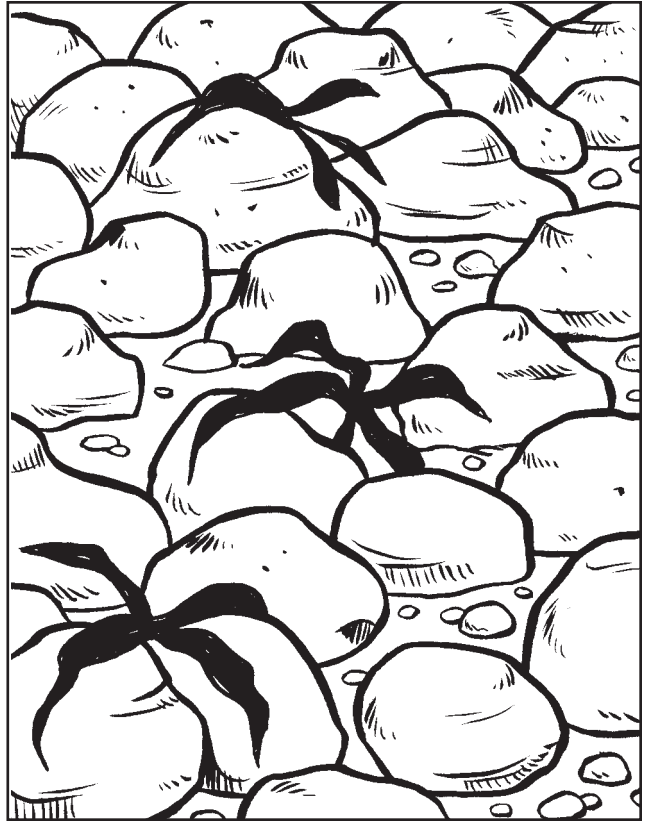
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Thank Christ for providing His Word in order that you may grow and please Him. Ask Him to help you be a fruit bearer. Pray for your friends that they too may come to know God's lovingkindness and forgiveness.



“On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.” —Matthew 13:1-2



“The Parable of the Sower”
Matthew 13:1–23

