

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

GROW LOVE DIFFICULTIES RELATIONSHIP SPIRITUALLY FALLING AWAY

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Luke 8:4-15

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the children reflect on the need to take care of their relationship with God, to grow spiritually, and to face difficulties without falling away from God

MEMORY VERSE

“He answered, ‘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, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Read Luke 8:4-15. The term “parable” was used in the Old Testament to describe any kind of story that was not to be taken literally; this also included fables, stories and riddles. Other Jewish teachers also used stories, but in general, their quality was not as good as the parables of Jesus.

Jesus’ parables included a moral lesson or illustrated a truth. They were stories about common places, people and events. Jesus used them to illustrate the nature of the acts of God and the kind of response that people should give. (See also Matthew 13:10-23.)

This parable is a simple description of the result of seeds being scattered on a field that had different soil types, both fertile and sterile. But the story itself says nothing about its meaning. Listeners were expected to ask, “What Does It Mean?”

Later, when the disciples asked Jesus what his parable meant, he began by making an overall statement about his use of parables. He said those who responded to his teachings had received knowledge according to God’s purposes.

When Jesus spoke of “secrets,” it referred to God’s plans concerning the Kingdom that had been hidden for a long time, but were

now being revealed to those he had chosen. Others refused to accept God's message, and that is why he now presented the truth in a veiled manner, so that if they did not put in the effort to understand and accept, they would not become any wiser. This fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 6: 9-10 about those who do not understand the meaning of what they hear.

The language of the explanation of the parable differs in some details from Mark's account of it (see Mark 4:13-20). Luke emphasizes the elements that he considers important for readers. The Word of God must be received with faith and perseverance if listeners are to be the kind of "soil" that produces good fruit.

In the hearts of some, the seed will never have opportunity to grow; while in others, growth will be interrupted because they will fail to persevere.

The principle revealed in this passage challenges us to receive the gospel message and to remain sensitive to the Holy Spirit for instruction.

The main goal, as a Christian teacher, is to help children come to know Jesus as their Savior. It is important to take advantage of this stage of childhood to sow the seed of the gospel, because it is at this age when the ground is very fertile and our commitment is to guide the child to establish a relationship with God.

Therefore, they need to understand that spiritual growth follows forgiveness of sins. To take care of your spiritual life requires nourishment and care, like a plant. Our Heavenly Father will provide that care in their lives through obedience to the Word of God and perseverance in prayer and worship.

Christians go through many difficulties that lead to spiritual failure, so you need to warn children of the dangers of not taking care of their personal relationship with God. Discuss with them the risks they may face in their spiritual life; perhaps discouragement due to problems they have with a friends in the church, or in sports, or in their neighborhood.

Also, television programs, magazines or music that contradict the truths of God can be like thorns that damage their faith and keep them from seeing Jesus. Explain how dangerous it is to stop praying, reading the Bible and gathering to worship in a church.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Prepare the room and welcome your children. Ask them to recall the previous lesson. The theme was praying and trusting in God. Ask, "Did you get an answer to prayer this week?" (Wait for replies.) Remind them that to trust in God is to wait knowing that he remains faithful to us.

Allow time for your children to put their gifts for project "Operation Good Samaritan" in the basket.

If possible bring to the session a small plant and ask, "Do you know what this plant needs to live?" (Replies: water, sun and earth) "Do you think we could replace the soil with stones? (Wait for answers.) What would happen if it did not get water or sunshine? (It would die.) Bring some seeds (beans, corn, etc.) and pass them around to your children, and ask, "Have you ever sown (planted) seeds?"

TEACH THE LESSON

Explain that today's story unfolds in Galilee during the busiest days of Jesus' ministry; villagers gathered to hear him teach. (Read the story aloud and have your children follow along on the worksheets that you give them.)

The parable of the sower

Read: "A farmer went out to plant his field; some of his seeds fell on the road and the people who passed by stepped on them and the birds ate them. Other seeds fell where there were many stones: the plants sprouted, but soon died because they had no water. Others fell among thorns: the plants sprouted, but the thorns choked them and did not let them grow. The rest of the seeds fell on good soil: the plants sprouted, grew and produced a crop that produced a hundred times more than what was planted."

"Look! Jesus is coming!" shouted a villager.

"And I see that some of our neighbors are already with him. Let's go so we can hear what he's saying."

Many villagers joined the crowd to hear the story Jesus was telling.

"A farmer went out to sow his seed," began Jesus. "As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up."

The crowd looked at each other. Some of them were farmers and knew exactly what he was talking about, because this had happened in their fields.

“Some fell on rocky ground,” Jesus continued, “and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown.”

“What does this parable mean?” the disciples wondered.

“I am telling you some secrets about the Kingdom of God,” said Jesus. “You will understand, but some people will hear and not know what it means.”

“This story is like a riddle,” they thought.

Later, Jesus’ disciples asked him what the story meant, and so he said, “This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the Word of God. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the Word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the Word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing, they fall away. The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.”

“Mmm,” murmured the people. They had seen overgrown fields. Weeds do not let the seeds grow.

The disciples listened carefully until Jesus finished his explanation.

“But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.”

CONNECT THE LESSON

What difference does the soil make?

Give your group Student Activity Sheet #290-A entitled “What Difference Does the Soil Make?” They will also need SAS #290-B (the back of the worksheet.) If you make copies and cannot copy both SAS #290-A and #290-B on one sheet of paper, be sure to have the second page for them to cutout. Ask them to look at the pictures of the two plants. Show them how to cut the page to discover what makes the difference between the two plants. Let them plant some seeds, take care of them and wait for the plants to germinate. When the plants have sprouted, let them tell others about it.

Who is what?

Refer your group to Student Activity Sheet #290-B and #290-C. Help your children remember the story to find the answers to this activity. Tell them: “You have learned that a parable is a story that uses a common thing or experience to explain a biblical truth. Let us look at the parable again. Jesus told the disciples the meaning of each symbol in the story. Now, draw a line to connect the symbols with their meanings.

Avoid the traps

Give your group Student Activity Sheet #290-D titled “Avoid the Traps.” Let them use their Bibles to complete the activity. A wise Christian avoids the dangers that would hurt their growth. Look up Luke 8:4-15 in your Bible. In the parable of the sower, what dangers or situations can become traps that would keep you from growing spiritually? (To listen, but not hear the truth; to allow difficulties to keep you from believing and growing; to let problems or activities capture your attention and thus neglect God.)

How do you avoid these dangers? (Truly listen to the Word of God; refuse to allow difficulties to get in the way of your relationship with God; keep God at the center of your life.)

Say, “What did Jesus say about those who are represented by the seed that falls on good soil?” (Those with a noble and good heart.) What do those that have a noble and good heart do? (Hear the word, retain it. They hear the word and put it into practice in their lives.) Ask your children if they have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior. (If some say “no” or express that they have not taken root, then give them the opportunity to ask Christ’s forgiveness and renewal. Pray with each of them according to each need.)

Have your children make a list of what they should not do to care for their spiritual life, and another of what to do every day to grow spiritually.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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Write the verse on sheets of paper. Remove the vowels and leave blank spaces in their place. You can give each child a sheet or let them work in pairs. Explain that you have lost the vowels and you need them to write them in the blanks.

When they finish, give them a piece of paper with the entire verse on it so they can see if they did it correctly. While they are checking their work, have them recite the verse from memory.

WRAP-UP

Pray

At the end of the session, pray with the group, asking God to help each one of them keep their hearts clean for Him. And that they will always listen to God's Word and grow spiritually.

Encourage

Thank your students for their attendance and ask them not to forget what they learned.

Invite

Announce something about the next session to increase the group's interest. Encourage them to invite friends.