

The Parable of the Banquet- Luke 14:15-24

THE POINT

Focus:

All sorts of people, even some unexpected, belong to the Kingdom of God
God seeks to bless his people.

Application:

We share the good news of the Kingdom with all sorts of people.
We trust that we belong to God's Kingdom out of generosity, not our merit.

HEART CONNECTION (8-10 MINUTES)

MATERIALS:

- A table decorated with party supplies: table cloth, party hats, balloons, etc. (Think twice before including noisemakers! These can become frustrating for the teacher!)
- A small party favor or treat for each child

Content: When the class enters, have them make a wide circle around the party table- don't touch it yet! Prompt some conversation about parties- what does it take to get ready for a party? Who comes to a party? End with asking them if they would like to join the party prepared at the table- make sure each child gets a favor/hat.

*Note: this is not a full-fledged party! If they ask about an actual party, tell them there will be a church-wide celebration for Easter in a few weeks!

STORY CONNECTION (10-12 MINUTES)

MATERIALS:

- Envelopes with an invitation for every child.
- In 3 envelopes, place a special picture. Mark these envelopes so you can pass them out first!
 - In one, place a picture of a field
 - In another, place a picture of oxen
 - In the last, place a picture of a bride and groom

Optional: There's a great song from Rain for Roots that tells this story. Consider listening to the recording or showing the music video before or after the story.

You can find it here: <https://vimeo.com/134619361>

Instructions:

As you begin to tell the story, pass out the 3 prepared envelopes at verse 16. Have the children open them and show their invitation. Ask, "what else did you find in the envelope?" Have them hold onto it.

Have the children sit in a circle for the story This helps include children who might feel shy, and it helps each child feel equally engaged. It reassures children that they are seen and welcome in the community.

Like the lessons throughout February, this too is a parable. For children, focus on the joy of inviting others to the banquet. If you're in a congregation that celebrates Communion weekly, draw a parallel between the weekly feast of the Eucharist and the feast in the story.

Luke 14:15-24 (NirV)

15 One of the people at the table with Jesus heard him say those things. So he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in God’s kingdom.”

16 Jesus replied, “A certain man was preparing a great banquet. He invited many guests. **(Pass out 3 Envelopes)** 17 Then the day of the banquet arrived. He sent his servant to those who had been invited. The servant told them, ‘Come. Everything is ready now.’

18 “But they all had the same idea. They began to make excuses. The first one said, ‘I have just bought a field. I have to go and see it. Please excuse me.’ **(Envelope #1)**

19 “Another said, ‘I have just bought five pairs of oxen. I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’ **(Envelope #2)**

20 “Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’ **(Enveloped #3)**

21 “The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry. He ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the town. Bring in those who are poor. Also bring those who can’t see or walk.’

22 “ ‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done. But there is still room.’

23 “Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads. Go out to the country lanes. Make the people come in. I want my house to be full. **(Pass out the rest of the invitation envelopes.)** 24 I tell you, not one of those people who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’ ”

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WONDER CONNECTION (3-5 MINUTES)

I wonder how Jesus felt when talking about the Kingdom he was preparing.

I wonder what distractions keep me from God's Kingdom.

I wonder what the food at God's table tastes like.

I wonder if you can think of a feast that we celebrate that is part of God's Kingdom.

What do you wonder?

SPIRIT CONNECTION (7-10 MINUTES)

MATERIALS: Coloring supplies: paper, crayons, pencils, hard drawing surfaces (floor, clipboard, or a table).

Take a few minutes to talk quietly with the Lord while you draw, write, or just think inside your heard. Talk with God about the story today. This is a quiet time for you to spend with the Lord, not with your neighbor or anyone else.