

The Parable of the Sower- Matthew 13

THE POINT

Focus:

The Kingdom of God is growing in the hearts of people.

The Word of God bears fruit in the lives of people whose hearts are prepared.

Application:

We listen to the word of God with a heart of "good soil".

We obey the Word of God.

Last Week: The Lord's Prayer (2)

2 Weeks Ago: The Lord's Prayer (1)

HEART CONNECTION (8-10 MINUTES)

Outdoor Option:

If you have a safe, reasonably warm, nature area accessible to your congregation (i.e. a courtyard, park, or garden), consider **going on a nature walk** to observe how things grow.

- Where are there big plants?
- Where are there no plants?
- Do you see any weeds?
- What might help the garden grow more?
- Are there any plants that look dead because it's winter, but will "wake up" when it's spring?

Transition to the story by talking about how Jesus compares the Kingdom of God to growing plants in a field. Some areas are good for growing plants; Jesus wants our hearts to be ready for growing in his word!

Indoor Option #1:

Consider planting your own plants! This is a little messier and often not an option in a rented worship space. Leaving the plants on a cart outside of the Sanctuary will help keep plants from spilling after worship time.

Materials:

- Tarp
- Soil
- Seeds
- Water pitcher
- Cups
- Permanent Marker

Talk about what a plant needs to grow and then work with children too

- 1) Label cups,
- 2) Fill with Soil
- 3) Plant seed
- 4) Water seeds.

Indoor Option #2:

Act out what happens to plants under different circumstances. Have each child pretend they are a seed that has just been planted (crouch on the ground as a seed). Have them use their bodies to act out what happens under different circumstances such as...

- sunshine
- shade
- a little bit of rain
- a huge thunderstorm
- weeds nearby
- rocky ground
- freezing cold
- fertilizer
- etc.

Transition to the story by telling the children that today you're going to see how Jesus used a story about plants growing to talk about how the Kingdom of God grows in our hearts.

STORY CONNECTION (MINUTES)

PREK and KINDERGARTEN:

MATERIALS:

- Parable Roll for each child: Instructions can be found online at www.worshipwithchildren.com

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. Hand each child a Parable Roll before you start and have them pattern their movements after your own.

Contextual Information: Sowing seeds by scattering them was common in the ancient world; plowing the fields would then cover the seeds with soil. A crop that yields 100-fold is successful, but not unrealistically wild.

Matthew 13:1-9; 18-23

“That same day Jesus left the house and sat by the Sea of Galilee. Large crowds gathered around him. So he got into a boat and sat down. All the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things using stories.

Unroll the Parable Wrap. Explain that a parable is a little story that tells a bigger story.

He said, “A farmer went out to plant his seed. He scattered the seed on the ground.

Roll out the brown felt on top of the gold felt. This is the field.

Scatter some beads across the felt as the seed.

Some fell on a path. Birds came and ate it up.

Place the 2 blue triangles on top of 2 beads. Pick up the beads.

Some seed fell on rocky places, where there wasn’t much soil. The plants came up quickly, because the soil wasn’t deep. When the sun came up, it burned the plants. They dried up because they had no roots.

Use your hand to simulate the sun coming up and eating down on the field.

Pick up 2 more beads.

Other seed fell among thorns. The thorns grew up and crowded out the plants.

Pick up 2 more beads.

Still other seed fell on good soil. It produced a crop 100, 60 or 30 times more than what was planted. Whoever has ears should listen.”

Roll the green felt out over the brown felt and remaining beads. This is the harvest.

(continued on the next sheet)

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Reader’s Version®, Nlrv® Copyright © 1995, 1996, 1998, 2014 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. www.zondervan.com The “Nlrv” and “New International Reader’s Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

(continued, Matthew 13:18-23)

“Listen! Here is the meaning of the story of the farmer.

*Reset the story. You will perform the same actions again,
this time telling the meaning instead of the story.*

*Roll out the brown felt on top of the gold felt. This is the field.
Scatter some beads across the felt as the seed.*

People hear the message about the kingdom but do not understand it. Then the evil one comes. He steals what was planted in their hearts. Those people are like the seed planted on a path.

Place the 2 blue triangles on top of 2 beads. Pick up the beads.

The seed that fell on rocky places is like other people. They hear the message and at once receive it with joy.

But they have no roots. So they last only a short time. They quickly fall away from the faith when trouble or suffering comes because of the message.

*Use your hand to simulate the sun coming up and eating down on the field.
Pick up 2 more beads.*

The seed that fell among the thorns is like others who hear the message. But then the worries of this life and the false promises of wealth crowd it out. They keep the message from producing fruit.

But the seed that fell on good soil is like those who hear the message and understand it. They produce a crop 100, 60 or 30 times more than the farmer planted.”

Roll the green felt out over the brown felt and remaining beads. This is the harvest.

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Reader's Version®, NIV® Copyright © 1995, 1996, 1998, 2014 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Reader's Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

WONDER CONNECTION (3-5 MINUTES)

MATERIALS: None.

I wonder what it was like on the day that Jesus told the parable.

I wonder what growing, healthy fields looked like in Jesus' time.

I wonder what this story can teach me about my heart.

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.