

Date: 3.2.25 | Title: Parables of the Kingdom | Scripture: Matthew 13:1-52, Mark 4:1-34 and Luke 8:4-15

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

Middle School Students:

Jesus is fully God and fully man, and He is altogether Holy
Jesus lived for the glory of the Father and taught that we should do the same through lives of worship
Jesus is the only way people can connect with God
Because Jesus is God, He had the power to perform miracles

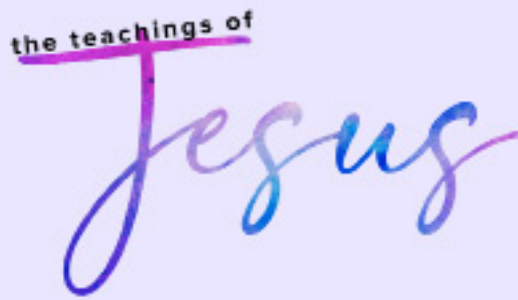
High School Students:

From the beginning, God planned that Jesus would save people from their sins.
Jesus is fully God and fully man, and despite being tempted while on earth, remained altogether free from sin.
Because of Jesus, we who were once separated due to sin are now accepted into His presence due to Christ's righteousness
Whereas many claim that Jesus was a good man or a great teacher, the truth is that Jesus is God



**MEMORY
VERSE**

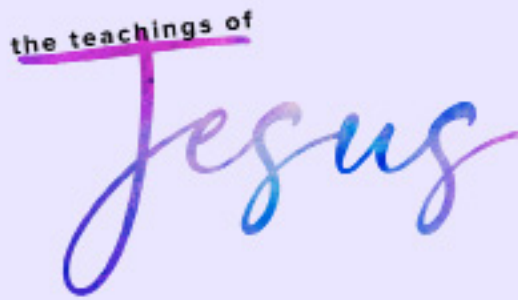
"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:45



INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON

Invite the students to think about the most valuable thing in their life. What do they love dearly?

Tell the students that there are many things we love or consider valuable to us, yet the greatest treasure on this earth is worth nothing compared to the kingdom of God. His kingdom is eternal and worth giving everything for. In today's story, Jesus used parables about a man finding a treasure in a field and a fisherman finding a pearl to illustrate the great worth of God's kingdom.



BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

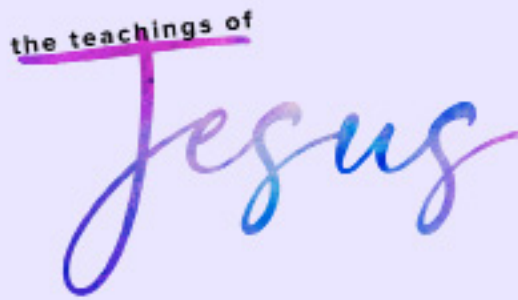
Jesus often used parables to teach about the kingdom of God. These were fictional stories designed to illustrate deeper truths. Through these narrative analogies, Jesus communicated moral and spiritual lessons. His parables had two very different effects on two distinct groups of people: they hide truth from the “crowd” (13:2), while they communicate truth to the disciples. In Matthew 13, Jesus addressed two common questions readers of the parables often ask: Why does He teach this way, and what do these parables mean? Jesus explained that He taught in parables to fulfill the prophecy that those who belong to the kingdom of God would hear and understand, while those who do not would hear but fail to understand (5:11-15, 34-35). Jesus had a specific, intentional purpose behind everything He did- nothing was accidental or circumstantial. In the same chapter, He also explained the meaning of some of His parables. Ultimately, all of the parables were intended to reveal the unique, surprising and powerful nature of the kingdom of God.

As you consider this week’s scripture, reflect on two realities illustrated by these parables about the kingdom of God:

First, the kingdom of God will appear to be made up of those who are true believers and those who are not. There are some good fish and some worthless fish; some wheat and some weeds. In these parables, we learn that there is no confusion for God in who His children truly are. In the end God will separate the two, which means we don’t have to. God will take care to guard His eternal kingdom.

Second, the kingdom of God may look small or weak, but in the end, it will prove to be larger, more powerful and more beautiful than we can imagine. The kingdom of God is worth giving up all you have; though starting from a small seed it will grow to be the most prominent tree, and the leaven of the kingdom will impact every bit of the flour.

God’s kingdom is unlike anything else we’ve ever known, and the way Jesus sought to explain that was through parables that demonstrated the beauty and power of the kingdom. These parables allowed God’s people to hear and understand yet left those of this world to hear and wonder.



BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

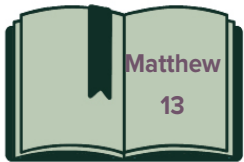
Below you will find a chart of the parables found in the synoptic Gospels. Take some time this week to familiarize yourself with some of these spiritual lessons taught in narrative form.

| Parable | Matthew | Mark | Luke |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| The Purpose of the Parables | 13:10-17 | 4:10-12 | 8:9-10 |
| The Sower | 13:1-9, 18-23 | 4:1-9, 13-20 | 8:4-8, 11-15 |
| The Weeds | 13:24-30, 36-43 | 4:26-29 | |
| The Mustard Seed | 13:31-32 | 4:30-32 | 13:18-19 |
| The Leaven | 13:33 | | 13:20-21 |
| The Hidden Treasure | 13:44 | | |
| The Pearl of Great Value | 13:45-46 | | |
| The Net | 13:47-50 | | |
| The Lost Sheep | 18:10-14 | | 15:3-7 |
| The Unforgiving Servant | 18:23-25 | | |
| The Two Sons | 21:28-32 | | |
| The Tenants | 21:33-44 | 12:1-11 | 20:9-18 |
| The Wedding Feast | 22:1-14 | | 14:16-24 |
| The Ten Virgins | 25:1-13 | | |
| The Talents | 25:14-30 | | 19:11-27 |
| The Good Samaritan | | | 10:29-37 |
| The Rich Fool | | | 12:16-21 |
| The Barren Fig Tree | | | 13:6-9 |
| The Wedding Feast | | | 14:7-11 |
| The Lost Coin | | | 15:8-10 |
| The Prodigal Son | | | 15:11-32 |
| The Dishonest Manager | | | 16:1-9 |
| The Rich Man and Lazarus | | | 16:19-31 |
| The Persistent Widow | | | 18:1-8 |
| The Pharisee and the Tax Collector | | | 18:9-15 |

the teachings of Jesus

LOCATE THE SCRIPTURE & TELL THE STORY

Locate the scripture in the Bible: Matthew 6-7



Remind your group that we are now studying the New Testament. The first four books, the gospels, tell the story of Jesus' time as a man on earth from the voice of different authors.

Tell the story:

TELL
THE
STORY



Have you ever listened to someone teach and found it hard to understand? Today, we're going to learn about how Jesus told short and simple stories about everyday things—like a woman baking bread, fishermen casting their nets, a shepherd caring for his sheep, and a farmer planting seeds. These stories were called parables, and they helped people understand what God's kingdom is like. Sometimes, people didn't quite get what Jesus meant, and even when we have trouble understanding the Bible, we can ask God to help us listen and believe His words.

Read directly from Scripture, use The Jesus Storybook Bible, The Biggest Story Bible, or the summary provided in the lesson

People came from all over to listen to Jesus and see His amazing miracles. Jesus' teachings were different from what the religious leaders taught because He spoke with authority and aimed to reach people's hearts. Jesus didn't just teach people how to do what's right; He wanted them to believe what's true so their hearts could be changed. Today, we're going to learn more about Jesus' teachings as He shared stories, called parables, about God's kingdom.

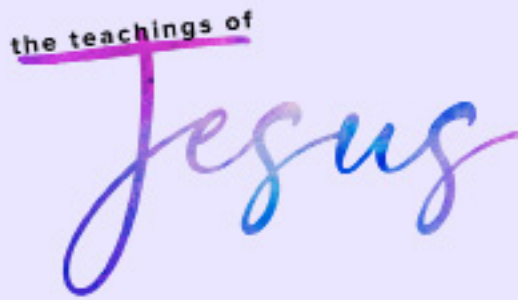
One day, Jesus went out and sat by the sea. Large crowds of people gathered around Him, so He got into a boat and sat down. All the people stood on the shore and Jesus told them parables, or stories, to teach them about the kingdom of God.

Re-Tell

The Bible
Story

Put the events in order, draw a comic strip, build it with blocks or playdough, act it out, etc...

Jesus' disciples asked Him, "Why do you teach in parables?" Jesus answered, "Not everyone will understand the hidden truths about the kingdom of heaven." Jesus reminded them about some of the words spoken by the prophet Isaiah. Some people look, but they do not see. They hear, but they do not listen or understand. Jesus made these prophecies come true. Jesus said, "You are blessed because you do understand."



BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

Jesus told a parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a man planted in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but it grows taller than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, and the birds come and build nests in its branches.

Jesus continued, “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, or yeast, that a woman mixed into fifty pounds of flour. The leaven makes the dough rise.” Jesus told another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure, buried in a field, that a man found. He reburied it, and then he joyfully sold everything he had and bought that field.”

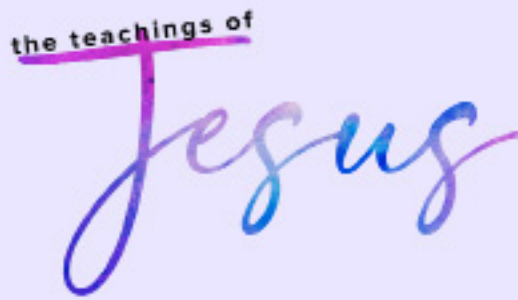
Then Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls. When he found one priceless pearl, he went and sold everything he had and bought it.”

Finally, Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a large net thrown into the sea. It collected every kind of fish, and when it was full, the fishermen dragged it ashore, sat down, and gathered the good fish into containers. But they threw out the worthless ones.” Jesus said at the end of time, God will separate people who trust in Him from those who don’t.

When Jesus finished teaching the crowds, He left that place and went to Nazareth.

Re-tell the Bible Story: put events in order, draw a comic strip, build it with blocks or playdough, act it out, etc.

Share the GOSPEL: The kingdom of God is growing in the world. This kingdom is valuable and worth giving everything for. While we wait for Jesus to return and fully set up His kingdom, we carry out the mission of telling others about King Jesus, who rescues sinners.



ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

ATTENTIVE - God hears and responds to the needs of his children.

COMPASSIONATE - God cares for his children and acts on their behalf.

CREATOR - God made everything. He is uncreated.

DELIVERER - God rescues and saves his children.

ETERNAL - God is not limited by time. He exists outside of time.

FAITHFUL - God always keeps his promises.

GENEROUS - God gives what is best and beyond what is deserved.

GLORIOUS - God displays His greatness and worth.

GOOD - God is what is best and gives what is best. He is incapable of doing harm.

HOLY - God is perfect, pure, and without sin.

IMMUTABLE/UNCHANGING - God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

INCOMPREHENSIBLE - God is beyond our understanding. We can comprehend Him in part but not in whole.

INFINITE - God has not limits in His person or on His power.

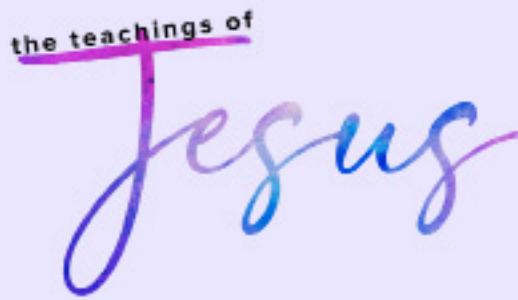
JEALOUS - God will not share his glory with another. all glory rightfully belongs to him.

JUST - god is fair in all his actions and judgements. He cannot over-punish or under-punish.

LOVING - God feels and displays infinite, unconditional affection toward his children. His love for them does not depend on their worth, response, or merit.

MERCIFUL - God does not give his children the punishment they deserve.

OMNIPOTENT/ALMIGHTY - God holds all power. nothing is too hard for God. What He wills He can accomplish.



ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

OMNIPRESENT - God is fully present everywhere.

OMNISCIENT - God knows everything, past, present, and future - all potential and real outcomes, all things micro and macro.

PATIENT/LONG-SUFFERING - God is untiring and bears with His children.

PROVIDER - God meets the needs of his children.

REFUGE - God is a place of safety and protection for his children.

RIGHTEOUS - God is always good and right.

SELF-EXISTENT - God depends on nothing and no one to give him life or existence.

SELF-SUFFICIENT - God is not vulnerable. He has no needs.

SOVEREIGN - God does everything according to His plan and pleasure.

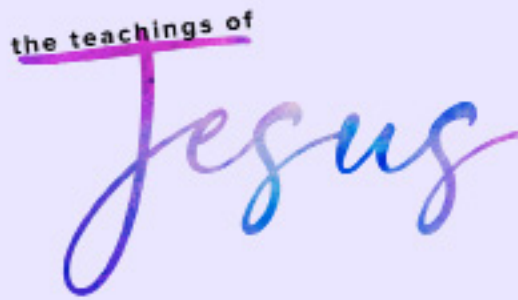
TRANSCENDENT - God is not like humans. He is infinitely higher in being and action.

TRUTHFUL - Whatever God speaks or does is truth and reality.

WISE - God knows what is best and acts accordingly. He cannot choose wrongly.

WORTHY - God deserves all glory and honor and praise.

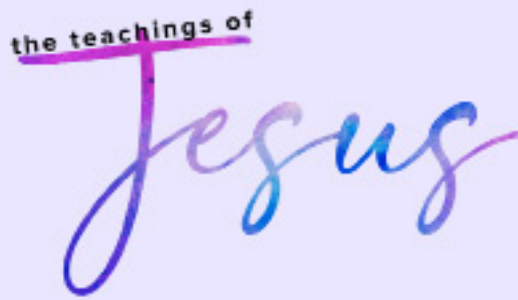
WRATHFUL - God hates all unrighteousness.



QUESTIONS TO REBUILD THE STORY

“Storying” Questions: As you ask these questions, have your students find the answers in the actual verses of scripture instead of recalling them from your re-telling of the story. We always want to encourage all of our students to go directly to God’s Word over a commentary on or summary of scripture. Use the Bible Study Bookmark Questions as well as these questions to help students understand the text:

1. In the New Testament, many people referred to Jesus as Teacher. Why do you think that is? What makes Jesus different than any other teacher?
2. How did Jesus respond when His disciples asked Him why He taught in parables? Jesus explained that not all people have ears to hear or eyes to see. What does this mean?
3. What objects did Jesus use in His first two parables? *Jesus used a mustard seed and yeast to illustrate that the kingdom of God may appear small but it will one day be fully expanded throughout all the earth. The kingdom of God is growing in the world and when we share Jesus with others, we are taking part in His kingdom’s expansion.*
4. What objects did Jesus use next? Jesus used a pearl and a hidden treasure to teach truths about His kingdom. What do you think is the meaning behind these parables? *The kingdom of God is of great value, like a priceless pearl or a grand treasure. It is valuable because it is eternal and is the dwelling place of God. Living in the kingdom of God is worth giving everything for.*
5. Jesus taught that the kingdom of God is like a net full of fish. How does this parable teach about the kingdom of God? *The kingdom of God may seem to have many people who have heard about Jesus, but one day, God will decide who truly follows Him and who doesn’t. Those who haven’t believed in Jesus won’t be part of God’s kingdom. But unlike those who hear the good news and don’t believe, we can ask God to give us hearts that live by faith and seek the truth found only in Him. By faith, God can use the gifts He has given us to help share the good news and grow His kingdom in the world.*



QUESTIONS TO REBUILD THE STORY

6. Why is God's kingdom so valuable? *It is where God rules and reigns for all eternity. Those who trust in Jesus will be saved from sin and death and be able to live with God forever. God's kingdom is full of joy because Jesus is there.*

7. What might we have to give up for God's kingdom? *Living for the kingdom of God means being willing to give up worldly ways and sometimes even good desires because we treasure Jesus more. Sometimes we may need to give up friendships, comfort, sports, wealth and other things to demonstrate that we treasure God's kingdom most of all.*

8. How can we participate in the growth of God's kingdom? *Share the gospel, help the poor, pray for others, endure suffering with joy, serve as a missionary, invite people to church, etc. Encourage students to seek ways to contribute to kingdom growth this week.*

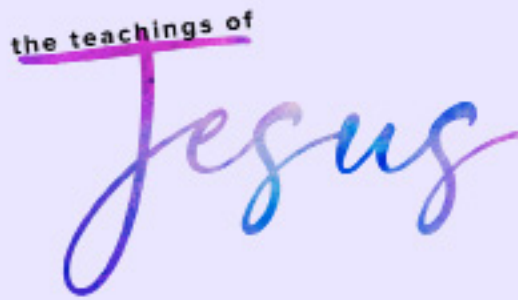
9. What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?

10. What does the story teach me about myself?

11. Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?

12. Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?

13. How does this story help me live on mission?



PRAYER PROMPTS

Father, we praise You for being powerful and great. Everything is Yours and Your kingdom will have no end. Thank You that through Jesus, we can enter Your kingdom. Amen.

IF TIME ALLOWS:

Play a game of Bible drill using the gospels.

MISSIONS EMPHASIS:

We will begin focussing our mission project on the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. Please make sure to bring all of your spare change and drop it in the funnell at the top of our lobby.

REVIEW UNIT VERSE:

Spend time reviewing memory verse with students.

FETSOMCNTBSBT SATGHLAARFM - Mark 10:45

the teachings of
Jesus



Application Questions

LOOK UPWARD



- How does this story apply to your relationship with God?
- What does it teach you about Him- His will and His heart?
- What aspect of His character is He inviting you to experience and enjoy?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your relationship with God?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in your relationship with God?

LOOK INWARD



- How does this story apply to your heart and your own spiritual growth?
- What does it teach you about yourself, your needs, or your goals in life?
- In what aspects of your personal life is God inviting you to grow and mature?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story inwardly?
- How will those around you benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to allow these truths to help you grow spiritually?

LOOK AROUND



- How does this story apply to your relationship with others?
- What does it teach you about how to see others and relate to them?
- What is god inviting you to do differently in your relationships?

the teachings of
Jesus



Application Questions

LOOK OUTWARD »»

- How does this story apply to your ministry and mission in life- to your role in God's kingdom, in society, and in the world?
- What does it teach you about God's purposes for the world?
- What part of His mission is He inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your ministry?
- How will the world benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in the world?

LOOK FORWARD »»»

- How does this story apply to your future, both in this age and in eternity?
- What does it teach you about God's plan for your life, now and forever?
- What aspects of eternity is God inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit in the future by applying these truths now?
- How will God's kingdom benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to impact eternity now with these truths?