

New Testament

Lesson 3 - Listen to God's Word

Aim

* To understand the importance of listening to God's word and practising it in our daily life

Materials

- * Moses' 10 Commandments & Jesus' 2 Commandments
- * The Parable of the Sower - Matthew 13:1-23
- * A Farmer went to sow (a simpler version)
- * Visual aids - large pictures to tell the story
- * children's worksheet
- * Spot-the-difference pictures
- * storyboard

Lesson Outline

1. Introduction
2. The Parable of the Sower
3. What does it mean?
4. What kind of person are you?
5. Activities - act out the story, storyboard, worksheet, spot-the-difference
6. Review the aims
7. Prayer

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1) Introduction

* Introduce the lesson by reminding the children of the 10 commandments and Jesus' 2 commandments

Moses' 10 Commandments

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make any idols or pray to other gods
3. You shall not misuse the name of God
4. You shall keep the seventh day as a holy day and a day of rest
5. Honor your father and your mother
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not lie
10. You shall not be jealous of other people

Jesus' 2 Commandments

1. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.
2. Love your neighbor as yourself

The commandments are God's words to teach us right and wrong, to show us how to be good and how to be happy. To love God and love your neighbour are the two most important.

Parents teach what is right and wrong. If you really listen to your parents and do as you are told, they will be happy and you will be happy. Then you will grow into a beautiful person - good, strong and loving.

2) The Parable of the Sower

* Jesus told stories to teach people about God. These stories are called **parables**. Last week you heard the story of the Good Samaritan. Jesus was teaching the second commandment; love your neighbour. Today's parable has another message.

- What does a seed need to grow? soil, water, sunshine
- Tell the story by asking questions. E.g. What do you think happens when seeds fall on rocky ground? Ask the children to retell the story

3) What does it mean?

The farmer is like Jesus or someone who teaches about God and the seed is like the message of God. Jesus sows the seeds in different places, and different people react differently to God's message.

Four kinds of people

When seeds fall on the **path** and are eaten by the birds it's like when people hear God's word, but don't really listen and don't understand what they hear. They carry on living their lives without God. The birds are symbolic of Satan who snatches the words away

The seeds that fall on the **rocky ground** grow quickly but then die because they can't take root and the sun scorches them. This teaches us that some people listen at first and receive the word with joy, but their understanding has no depth. When difficulties or persecution come because they are following God's word, they give up on God and quickly fall away.

The seeds that fall among the **weeds** are choked and the plants die. Some people accept God's message, but other things get in the way – they worry about things they need or think too much about money. There's no space left to listen. Like the weeds that choke the plants, these people's faith is smothered.

But the seeds that fall on **good soil** grow into big, healthy plants. The good soil is like the hearts of people who love God, who hear the good news and rejoice. They really listen and learn. God's word takes root in their lives, and they remain faithful to God. Their faith grows stronger and stronger.

4) What kind of person are you?

When we listen to God's words and take them into our heart, and put these words into practice, we develop our character. We develop a Godly character -caring, helpful, honest, trustworthy, respectful, etc..

Do you listen to your parents?

Four kinds of children

1. Path - Children who don't listen to their parents and don't do as they are told
2. Rocks - Children who listen when they are told, but easily forget. Parents have to keep telling the same things over and over again, and they still don't do as they are told
3. Weeds - Children who listen and understand, but forget because they want to do lots of other things instead.
4. Good Soil - Children who listen well and really take the words into their hearts. They do as they are told and grow to be good children their parents are proud of.

Do you listen to your teachers?

Four kinds of students

1. Path - Children who don't really listen in class, so they don't understand. They don't do the work and learn very little
2. Rocks - Children who listen at first, but they give up when the work is hard. They don't really understand why they should have to do the work
3. Weeds - Children who listen and really want to do their best, but they have too many other things on their mind, that get in the way of school work - football, TV, computers. They have no time to do their homework
4. Good Soil - Children who listen carefully to the teacher and want to do their best. They work hard, enjoy studying and learn very much. They put lots of effort in to studying and their knowledge grows and grows.

5) Activities

- Act out the story
- Colour the picture and answer the questions
- Draw and tell the story as a storyboard
- Spot the difference

6) Review the lesson aim

* To understand the importance of listening to God's word and practising it in our daily life
What happened in the story? What does it teach us?

7) Prayer



The Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13: 1-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears, let him hear."

The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?"

He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. This is why I speak to them in parables:

"Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

" 'You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.'

But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

"Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

A Farmer Went to Sow ...

Jesus was teaching about God. People came from far and near to listen. He told them stories. Jesus' stories helped people learn about God: they made them think and ask questions. He began his story ...

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A farmer went to sow. He scattered the seeds from his bag.
Some fell on the path, where the birds just gobbled them up.
Some fell among stones. They began to grow, but the stones got in the way. The little plants drooped and died in the baking sun.
Some fell among thorns that grew up and choked them.

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But some seeds fell into good rich earth. Each of those seeds made a big strong plant. And every plant made more new seeds-thirty, or sixty or a hundred times more than the farmer sowed.

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"What does the story mean?" asked Jesus' friends. "Please tell us."

"It's about what happens when people hear God's words," Jesus said. "Some people don't really listen at all. So it's snatched away, like the seed the birds gobbled up.

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"Some people are glad to hear it-but only at first. When trouble comes, they are like the little plants that drooped and died in the baking sun.

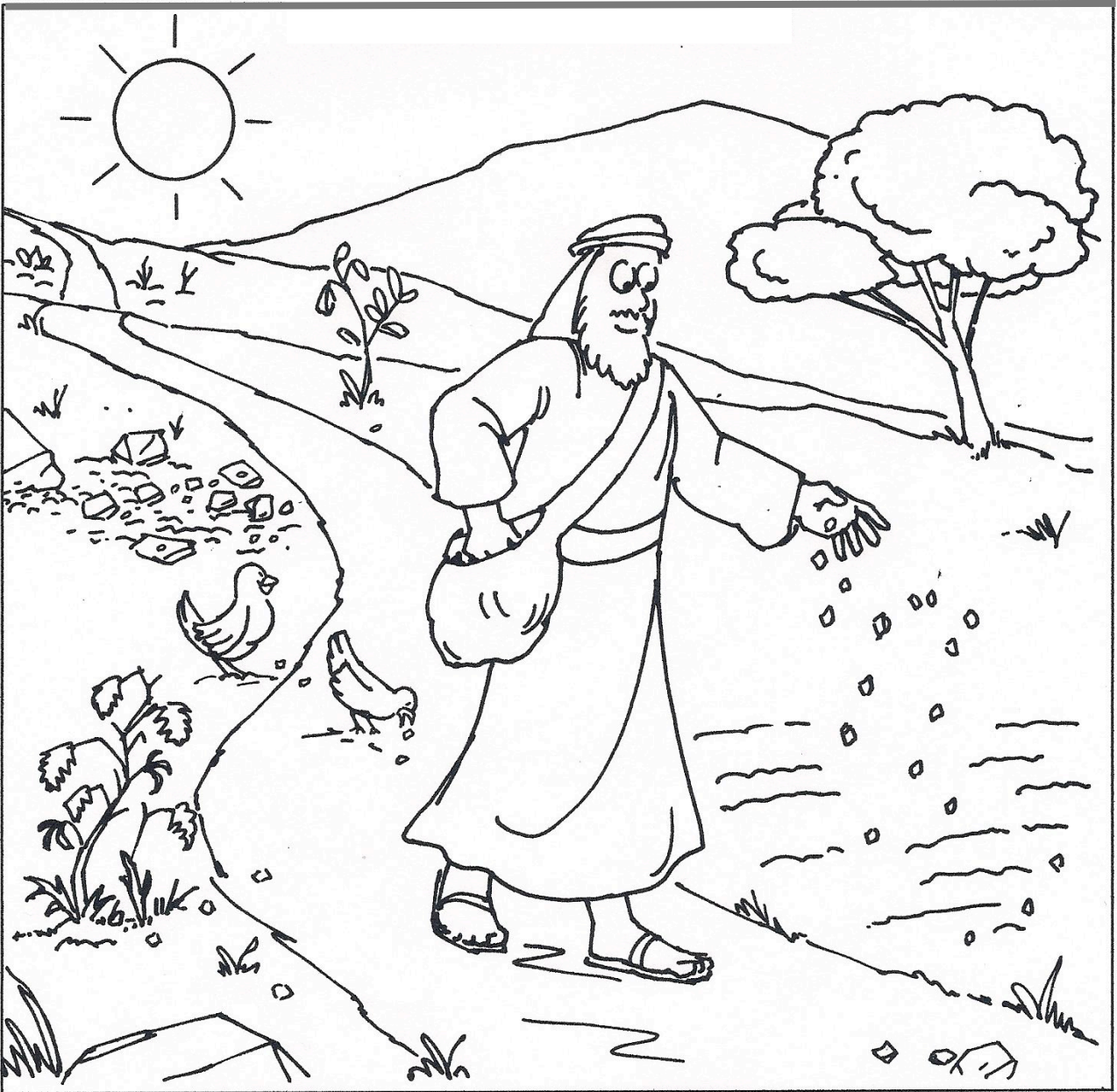
"Some people are so worried about the things they need, or so busy getting rich, that there's no space left for them to listen That's like the seed that was choked by thorns.

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"But some people really listen and learn. They are like the plants that made more new seeds - thirty, or sixty, or a hundred times more than the farmer sowed."

"We want to be like that," thought Jesus' friends.

The Parable of The Sower



Where did the farmer throw the seeds?

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Which seeds grew best?

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What should we do when we hear God's word?

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The Parable of The Sower



Where did the farmer throw the seeds?

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What happened to them?

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What should we do when we hear God's word?

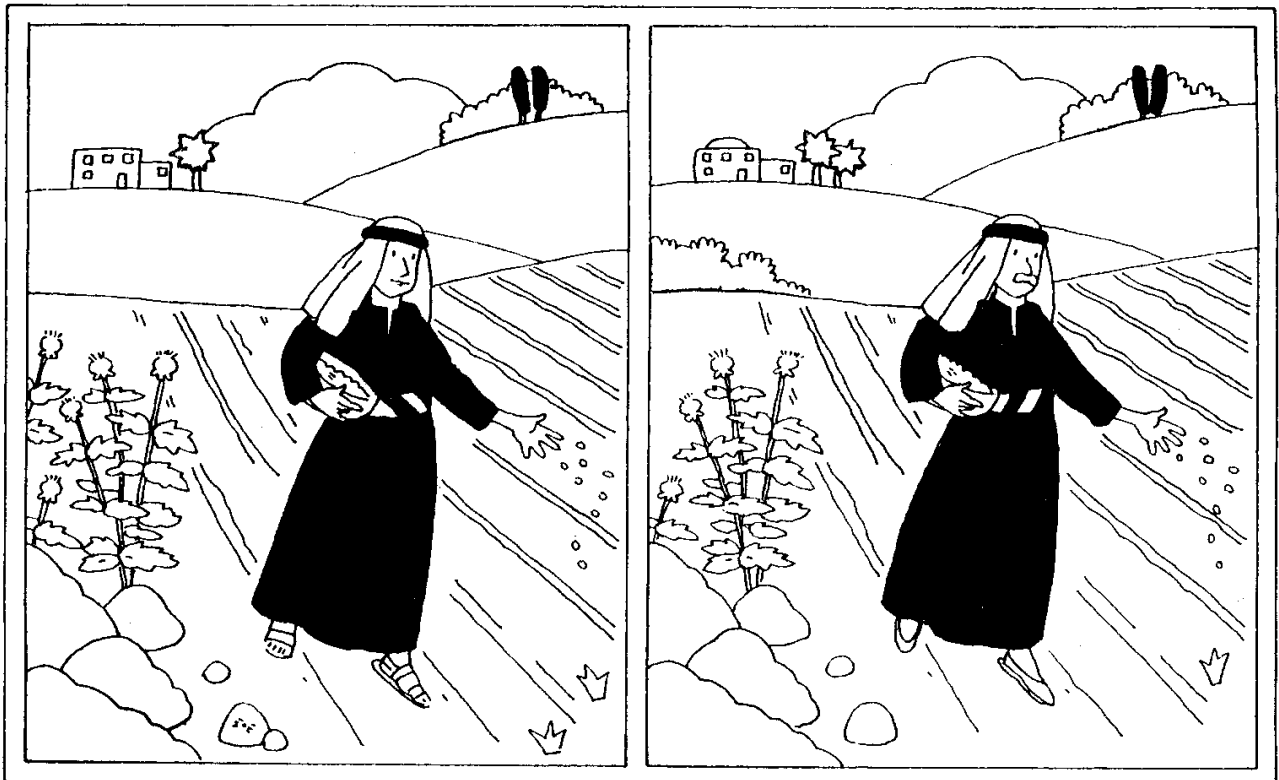
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A Farmer Went to Sow

Find 12 ears of wheat in the picture



Spot 10 differences between the pictures



The Parable of the Sower

The Parable of The Sower

To act out

Read the following lines aloud one at a time, and encourage the children to become the farmer/ seeds/plants. You may need to lead by example and show the children the kind of movements they can do.

A farmer sowed some seeds in his field.

Show the action of scattering seeds

Some seeds fell onto the path and the birds quickly ate them.

Some of the children can be birds; some seeds.

Some seeds fell onto rocky ground, where there wasn't much soil. The seeds grew quickly into plants. But because the roots were not in good, deep soil, the plants couldn't get enough water. When the sun shone down they got too thirsty and they died.

The children can act out the growth of the seeds, the sun's hot rays, and then the plants' collapse.

Some seeds fell into an area that was full of weeds. As the plants tried to grow, the weeds got in the way, and the plants died.

Some of the children can be weeds; some plants.

But some seeds fell onto good ground, so the plants grew well.

The children can be tall, strong plants.

When they had grown, the farmer harvested lots of plants.

You can show how a farmer harvests a crop.