

GLENVIEW NEW CHURCH SUNDAY MORNING PROGRAM
Primary Lessons: Phase 1 - Lesson 16
The Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-9)

I. Underlying Ideas for the Teacher

- A. All the Word is a parable - a story with a hidden meaning.
- B. The Lord can enlighten all those who want the truth for the sake of living a good life. Only if we want the truth in order to serve the Lord and our neighbor can we see it within the parables of the Word.

II. Story Circle

A. Introduce the Story

1. Today's lesson is a parable, which the Lord told to a multitude of people. Do you know what a parable is? (A story with a hidden meaning)
2. I'm going to read the parable of the sower today. Does anyone know what a sower is? (A person who plants seeds by scattering them on the ground)
3. While you're listening to the story, think about what the hidden meaning might be, and we'll talk about it afterward to see if anyone got the right idea.

B. Tell/Read the Story

1. Read aloud Mark 4:1-9.

C. Ideas to Discuss

1. Where was the Lord when He told the parable of the sower? (In a boat on the sea)
2. Some seed fell by the wayside. Do you know what the wayside is? (A path where people walked; it would have been very hard earth, packed down firmly from all those feet walking on it all the time.)
3. What happened to the seed that fell by the wayside? (Birds of the air came and devoured it.)
4. What happened to the seed that fell on stony ground? (The seed grew into plants right away; but the plants had no roots because the soil was so shallow, so the sun scorched them, and they withered away.)
5. What happened to the seed that fell among thorns? (The thorns grew up and choked the seed, so it never grew.)
6. But some seed fell on good ground and produced a very good crop.

Primary Sunday School Lessons: Phase 1 - Lesson 16

D. Further Ideas

1. The Sower, the Seed and the Ground
 - a. Who has an idea what this story might mean? It's not just a story about a man scattering seed on the ground and about whether the seed grew or not. (Listen to the children's ideas, and bring them around to some of the following points.)
 - b. The Lord is the sower, and He plants seeds (true ideas from the Word). Of course, the Lord doesn't plant true ideas in the ground, in the dirt! So where do you suppose He plants seeds, or true ideas? (In our minds)

2. Different Kinds of Ground
 - a. In the parable the seed fell on four different kinds of ground. Can you remember them all? (Thorny, stony, wayside, good ground) The different kinds of ground are like the minds of different kinds of people. Good ground is like the mind of a person who wants to learn true things from the Word so he can know how to be good. If the Lord plants true ideas in the mind of a good person, those ideas grow up, become strong, and bear fruit. The fruits are the good things we do because of the true ideas we have from the Word.
 - b. Some of the seed fell on thorny ground, some on stony ground, and some by the wayside. What kind of mind would you call "thorny" or "stony"? (Evil, or not really wanting to know what's true) The Lord can't make true ideas grow in minds like these.

3. Good Seeds and Bad Seeds
 - a. There are good seeds and bad seeds, or weed seeds. The Lord plants only good seeds - true ideas from the Word. What do you suppose the bad seeds, or weed seeds, are? And where do you think they come from? (Bad seeds, or weed seeds, are ideas that come into our minds that are evil. They are from the evil spirits.)
 - b. We get to choose which kind of seeds we want to have planted in our gardens (our minds) and have grow there. We can choose to learn true things from the Word, and that's like letting the Lord plant good seed in our minds. Or we can choose to listen to the bad ideas from the evil spirits, and that's like planting weed seeds in our minds.

Primary Sunday School Lessons: Phase 1 - Lesson 16

III. Enrichment Activities

A. Music

1. "Every child in heaven has a garden bright," HYMNAL 1149.
(Children in heaven have gardens that look beautiful when they have been good, but which droop and fade when they have done wrong. This is how the Lord shows children in heaven whether they are choosing good seed or bad seed for their minds.)
2. "The Sower," LORI'S SONGS FOR LITTLE CHILDREN, Tape I (Side 1). Listen to it in Story Circle and several times during project; then children can try to sing along.

B. Activities

1. Talk about these questions in preparation for Project #1 below:
 - a. If you could see inside your mind, what would your garden there look like if you chose to plant weed seeds (bad ideas from evil spirits)?
 - b. If you could see inside your mind, what would your garden there look like if you chose to plant good seeds (true ideas from the Word)?

C. Project

1. The Gardens of Your Mind (Use "Activities" above in preparation.)
 - a. Fold a piece of 9 X 12 white drawing paper in half widthwise and crease it.
 - b. Open it up and draw a line down the crease from the top of the page to the bottom.
 - c. On one side of the page have children draw a beautiful garden to show what the garden of their mind would look like if they chose to plant good seed there - true ideas from the Word.
 - d. On the other side of the page have children draw an ugly garden with flowers of dull colors, wilted leaves, drooping petals, etc. to show what their mind's garden would look like if they chose to plant bad seeds (weeds) from the evil spirits.
2. Collage of Sower, Seeds, and Good and Bad Ground
 - a. Provide a picture of the sower (on next page) for children to color and cut out.
 - b. On a piece of 12 X 18 white drawing paper, have children draw the good ground, perhaps by using a light green to show that plants could indeed grow there, or by using a rich brown to show the richness of the good earth.

Primary Sunday School Lessons: Phase 1 – Lesson 16

- c. Have them draw a thorny place and a stony place; be sure these are done in cold, dark, unlovely colors (gray, black, olive green).
- d. They could also draw a pathway to represent the wayside which would have been hard-packed ground from so many people walking on it – not a good place for seeds to grow; or a pathway could be cut or torn from a ground-colored piece of paper and glued in place, perhaps under the sower's feet.
- e. Glue sower to background once the drawing part is done.
- f. Give children a few seeds (popcorn, millet, other kinds of small beans) to glue onto the 4 different kinds of ground.
- g. Perhaps they would like to add a black bird or two swooping down to devour (eat up) the seed that fell on the wayside. (Note: Too many seeds or ones that are too heavy will not be supported well by a drawing paper background. Use seeds sparingly, or use a stiff paper background to support a more generous sowing of seeds!)
- h. Glue on text slip (provided on attached page).

3. A Poking Bird

- a. See project description in *General Convention's Sunday School Activity Book* (red volume) for lesson 116.

4. Plant Some Seeds

- a. See project description in *General Convention's Sunday School Activity Book* (red volume) for lesson 116.

IV. Teaching Aids

- A. Illustrations of the sower sowing seed
- B. Pictures of beautiful flowers and ugly weeds and thorny bushes to help in preparation for Project #1 above.

V. Further Reading for the Teacher

- A. DOLE'S BIBLE STUDY NOTES, Volume 5, "Parables" (Mark 4), pp. 49-63.
- B. THE SOWER, Vol. V, Mark 4:1-34.

Primary Sunday School Lessons: Phase 1 – Lesson 16

Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds devoured it. Some fell on stony ground, and because it had no root it withered away. And some seed fell among thorns, which choked it. But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced.

(Mark 4:3-8)

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