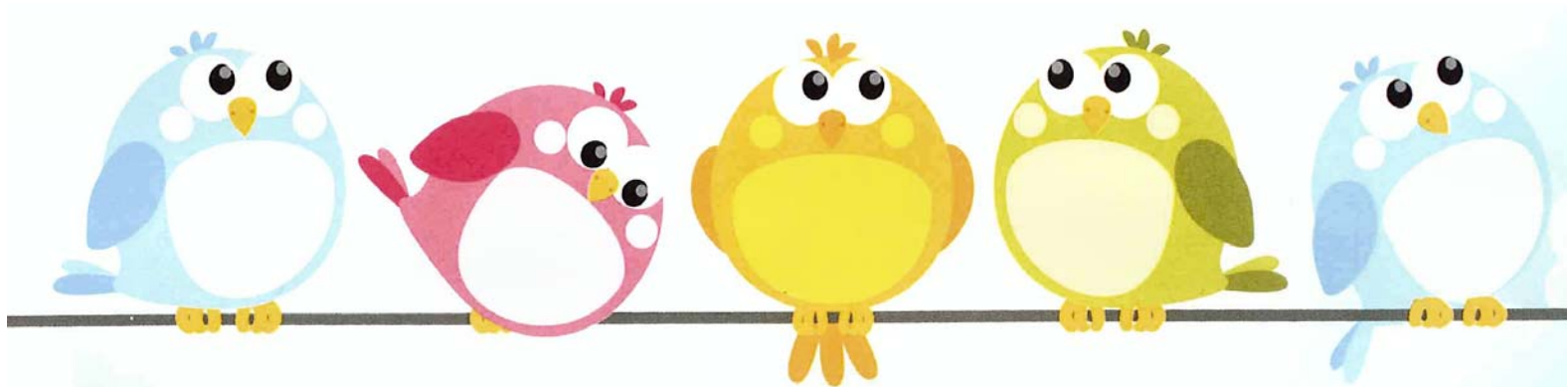


The Master's Tree House

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Somewhere Between Heaven and Earth


Short Stories  *By Jesus*



The Master's Tree House

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Someplace
Between
Heaven and Earth

Short  Stories
By Jesus

There was a house on a rock and a house on sand
the FIG TREE didn't bear a thing
ONCE THERE WAS A FARMER

WHO WENT OUT TO SOW SEED
GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED

Lamps ~ Lamps ~ Lamps
HIDDEN Treasure!



PARABLES!!!

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Pearls of Great Value

Two men owed \$

MY SHEEP IS LOST
MY COIN IS LOST
MY SON IS LOST

Praying in the Temple

The Vine and Branches

The Rich Man and Lazarus

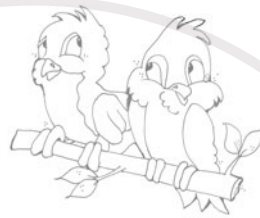
So the man went on a journey....



Parables!

-Small Stories With Big Ideas-

Parables are Jesus' Short Stories: When the disciples asked Jesus, "Why do you tell stories"? He said, "You know how God's kingdom works. Not everybody has this gift. They don't understand. They are not ready to hear God's message. That's why I tell stories: to create a ready heart, to nudge people toward receiving God's love." From Matthew 13: 10-15



*Parables are 'word pictures'
of Heaven's messages
Jesus wants us to understand!*

Little did people know Jesus would add a 'zinger' to the end of each short story to make them think about their own lives.

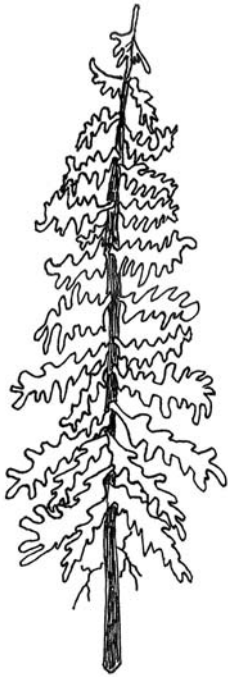
*Focus on Jesus' short stories.
Children hear the serious
and the funny parts of each parable.
As each Jesus short story unfolds,
make it real, make it fun.*

Enjoy a full Sunday School series filled with stories, snacks, scripture verses, games and crafts. Make a memory!

Hear a Parable!

Change The World!





Climb The Tree!

Let's Make This Happen!

Introduction and Index.....	1-4
Very Important "Techy" Information.....	5
Come Play In The Tree House.....	6
Our Director.....	7
Activity Centers.....	8-10
Adaptations-Keep It Simple.....	11
Publicity.....	12
Decorate.....	13-15
Teacher Tips.....	16-17
Snack Ideas.....	18-20
Memory Fun.....	21
Leaf It To Me-Games and Crafts.....	22-25
Opening-Music.....	26
Our Tree House Schedule.....	27-30

Our Master's Tree House Lesson Plans

Week #1: Good Samaritan: The Helping Hand.....	31-36
Week #2: The Lost Son: All About A Boy.....	37-43
Week #3: Three Servants: Bags of Gold.....	44-48
Week #4: The Farmer: Outstanding In His Field.....	49-52
Week #5: Lost and Found! The Lost Coin.....	53-56
Week #6: The Lost Sheep: A Baa-d Day.....	57-62
Week # 7: Nose In The Air: Flat On Your Face.....	63-67
Week #8: Build A House: Rock Paper, Scissors, Sand.....	68-72
Week # 9: Forgiveness: Not For Cowards.....	73-77
Week #10: Fair Not Fair.....	78-81
Week #11: Hidden Treasure: Pricey Pearl.....	82-86
Week #12: Get Ready: Ready or Not.....	87-91
Week #13: Tiny Beginnings: Mustard Is Yellow.....	92-95



Very Important 'Techy' Information!

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Some churches enjoy memorization and others avoid it. Except for young non readers, read all program segments. If your church is fond of memorization lead time must be longer and more intense rehearsal is necessary.

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Come Play In The Tree House!

What kid doesn't love a tree house?



The Master's Tree House A thirteen week series based on Parables, short stories Jesus told. Teach important life lessons like Jesus intended when He told His earthly stories with heavenly meanings.

The Master's Tree House Broadly graded for Kindergarten through Grade Six. Small *groups* travel to three activity areas to hear Jesus' short stories, eat snacks, learn memory verses and enjoy a game, craft or quick video.

The Master's Tree House Enter a homemade, rustic tree house room where Jesus' short stories come to life.

The Master's Tree House is divided into easy-to prepare activity segments. The staff prepare weekly plans with short term volunteers.

The Master's Tree House Encourage children and leaders to learn while laughing because God's Word is fun and Jesus is important!



Our Director

“When I Rise, Give Me Jesus!”

~ *Fernanda Ortega*

*Plan a creative Sunday School series.
Communicate fun and cooperation.*

Small group leaders guide individual activity centers.

Read the program privately.

Make program copies.

Assign activity centers to leaders.

Work with an art team to create the tree house.

Follow Directions

Leaders organize one activity center lesson complete with props.

Prepare Your Heart

Lead with a servant heart. Do it for the Lord! Do it for the children! Do it for the community!

One Step At A Time

Are you thinking, *“I cannot do this! Why me?”* Put those feelings aside. Dive into the Parables and bring God’s Word to life in a unique way for children of all ages.

Delegate!

Be specific! Schedule the staff in writing. Trust the staff to carry out their tasks. Check with them to give support.

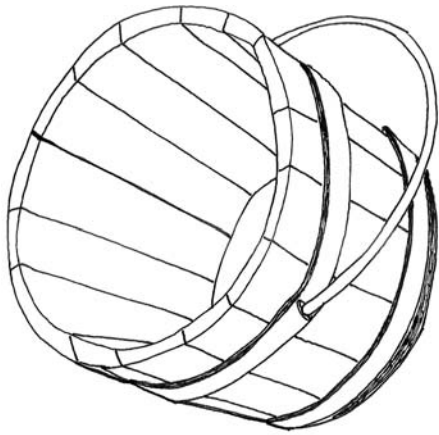
Preschool Options

Preschool students may participate in their classroom. Stories, games and snacks are easily adapted in a familiar setting. Adjust as needed.



Activity Centers

Set up three decorated activity centers in well lit rooms. If an outdoor area is available, use the yard, field or pavilion as an activity spot.



Crafts

Choose projects that reflect the themes. Purchase from national online companies, local craft stores or raid your well stocked craft closet.
Plan early to order and gather supplies.

Be Positive!

Create a thirteen week event kids and teachers enjoy. When you smile, everyone smiles!

Statements like, "We can't do it", "We never did it this way" or "No one wants to do it" don't work!

If the Director has a positive attitude, even the grouchiest saint responds cheerfully!

Pray!

Take details before the Lord and then – RELAX! Ask faithful people to be prayer support. Carry out the tasks at hand. **God is in control.**

Plan!

Print a personal working copy. Mark areas requiring attention. Adapt as desired. Eliminate what cannot be used. Divide teaching segments or combine lessons. Make copies of individual lesson plans for each small group leader.
Do NOT write on this master copy!

Prepare!

Assign responsibilities, prepare props, design simple decorations, plan music and snacks. Decide which games will be used. Once initial preparation is complete, the series moves along easily from week to week.



Set Up!

Opening - Music



Students gather in one place for a 15 minute general opening. Sing songs, take attendance, collect offering. Divide the groups and get them ready to move to their activity centers.

Divide students into three activity groups. Each group rotates to separate activities. Leaders teach the same activity three times in 15 minute segments.

Between Heaven and Earth Short Stories Jesus Told

15 Minutes: The tree house story area features one Jesus Short Story- Parable each week. Follow the lesson plan or create your own activity.



Up A Tree Café Snacks and Memory Verse

15 Minutes: Prepare a quick, kid friendly snack and learn a memory verse. As students enjoy their snack, teach the verse. Review verses.



Leaf It To Me Games and Crafts!

15 Minutes: Choose a simple craft, music video or group game. Use curriculum suggestions or create your own fun games, videos or projects. Purchase supplies before the series begins. Be sure everything is 'in house' before the program begins.



Mix It Up!

The Master's Tree House is an opportunity to enjoy activities and interesting Bible stories while having fun.

Get Ready!

Prepare! Give the kids the best time by becoming part of the fun.
Leave your 'grumpy self' home.

Jump For Joy!

Be joyful and engaged. If you are bored, they will be bored. If your mind is elsewhere, they will drift away. *"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'" (Psalm 122:1)*

Laugh! Giggle! Be Silly!

When you laugh, children love you and love what you are saying. There is a lot of serious stuff in life. The Bible is serious but lift up the best parts of God's message with laughter while teaching God's Word.

Move It! Move It! Move It!

Encourage quiet times but mix it up! Let kids move with games, drama, music and activities. Do not expect grown up attention spans in six year old bodies. Let them 'move it'!

Keep It Real!

Connect spiritual concepts to real, everyday life. Fancy words don't mean a thing if it doesn't make sense in their house, neighborhood, school and friendship circles. Make a difference in today's world because these kids know Jesus.

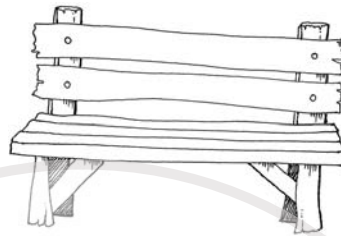
Be A Friend - Make A Friend!

Kids want to belong to you in the classroom and they want to belong to friends sitting near them. Involve them with each other and watch friendships grow.



Adaptations - Keep It Simple!

Each session lasts about forty five minutes depending upon personal choice and size of groups. Adapt the series to fit your favorite activities. Consider the group size and time limitations.



Small

Students remain in one group and travel together. Older students help younger students. The One Room Sunday School model works in small church situations.

Medium

With twenty students, create three groups loosely based on age and grade. These small groups rotate to three activity centers separately.

Large

With 50-100 children involved, divide the activity centers into individual departments based on existing grades. Provide leaders and materials for each department. Rotations to activity centers occur totally within their areas. A full opening and closing with all groups is a great way to get all the students and leaders together.

Children's Church

Children enjoy stories and games in their Children's Church area. Pick and choose activities as desired.

One Day Event

Sometimes an opportunity arises to create a simple **One Day** event, a short Vacation Bible School. Design a schedule based on the theme and keep it simple for the best results. Add music, food, crafts and traditional activities to round out the day.



Publicity!

Publicize through communication channels. Announce the Sunday School series in the church newsletter, weekly worship bulletin and from the pulpit.

Bulletin and Newsletter

Inform the congregation/parents about this special series. Print an announcement in newsletters. Let families know there will be a big event in Sunday School. Be generous with details.

Local Newspaper

Include an announcement on the newspaper church page. Talk to a reporter and photographer to ask if a feature article is possible. Prepare to be interviewed. Approach it from the attitude of exciting happenings in our community!

Television and Radio

Advertise on the local television cable advertising channel. Radio stations often have free spots available as community service. *Check it out!*

Social Networking / Web Site

Does your church have a web site and facebook page? Use this opportunity to advertise. Take pictures, include a short description.

Include dates and times.

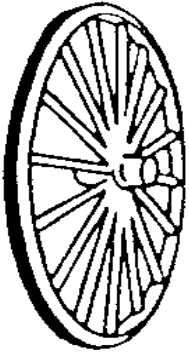
Invitations!

Sending colorful invitations home is effective for parents who are not involved. Mail invitations to all families. Add a small treat or a balloon with a message tucked inside. Add "Bring this message with you to and get a prize! See you there!"

The shape of the invitation can be printed on green paper in the shape of a leaf.



Decorate! Create A Kid's Tree House



*“Today isn't just another day.
Today I'll CREATE something beautiful.”*

Decorating is worth the effort! Create a simple, tree house atmosphere. We offer a variety of suggestions. Use the ideas as space is available!

Choose ideas you like the best!

Artsy Craftsy Crew

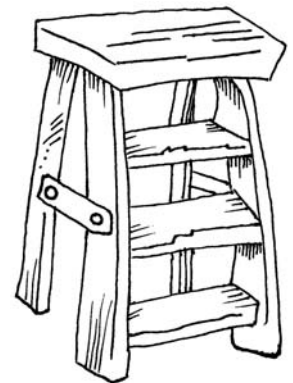
Ask creative people to take charge! Decide what decorations are best. Set up before the first week. Make homemade decorations or bring appropriate items from home.

Tree Vines: Make large paper leaves. Tape them to crepe paper streamers strung ceiling to floor along one wall or across the ceiling. Bright greens are great but consider fantasy leaves in neon pinks, yellows, greens and purples.

Tree House Accessories: Fill the room with items that kids would love to see in their own personal tree house. Pottery, woven baskets, birds, scrap wood, tree limbs. Burlap table runners, binoculars, buckets.

Wood benches, barrels, checkered tablecloths, quilts, metal coffee pots, wooden spoons, posters, live plants, logs, old fencing, large rocks, wooden tables and chairs, rag rugs.

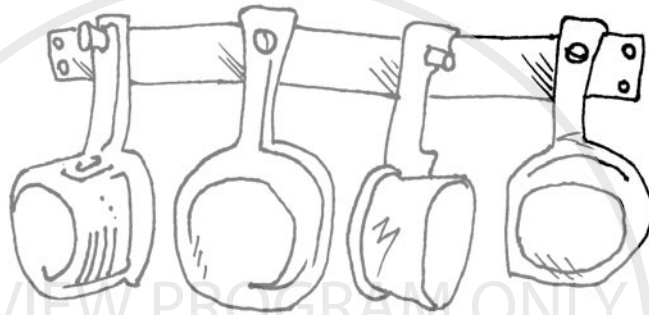
Hint: Check internet images for no cost ideas.



Cardboard Box Creations: Break out as many brown cardboard boxes to use in creative, kid-friendly ways. Cut out long 2 x 4 style 'planks' to attach around each window and around the door. Place boxes upside down to look like tables.

Signs: PRIVATE – BOYS and GIRLS ALLOWED – WIPE YOUR FEET –CLIMB CAREFULLY

ATTIC FINDS: Ask church friends and family to search their attics, garages and basements for old items that fit the tree house theme.



PICNIC TABLES: Borrow picnic tables for snacks. Cover with red and white checkered tablecloths. Add wild flowers in canning jar centerpieces.

LIGHTS. Be creative with lighting. Place spot lights on the floor shining upward. Use electric candles instead of real candles.

Camping Canopies: A Great Visual Adventure!

A fun way to bring the tree house theme to life is to set up camping canopies. Size doesn't matter. Place them inside the classrooms or large group meeting area where activities come to life. If an outdoor area is available and weather cooperates, set up canopies outside where small groups gather.

*Carefully consider the placement of activity centers.
The space is needed for 13 weeks.*



Tents

Camping tents, large or small, make great spots for stories and talk time and decorations inside a classroom or outdoors.

Check Out These Online Catalogs Craft Projects, Decorations and Gifts

S&S Worldwide: Arts and Crafts
Games, Party and Sports Supplies
www.ssw.com 1-800-288-9941
catalogs available

Oriental Trading Company
www.orientaltrading.com 1-800-875-8480
catalogs available

Rhode Island Novelty
www.rinovelty.com
catalogs available

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Teacher Tips:

Between Heaven and Earth Short Stories Jesus Told

The short stories Jesus told are classic. Students of all ages enjoy the twists and turns and tune into the lessons learned.

Tell Earthly Stories with Heavenly Meanings.

This story time is designed for 12-15 minutes per group.

There are many ways to tell stories. Mix it up with story telling, visuals, props, costumes and a bit of humor.

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Tell the story to separate small groups. If there is time, quiz students and encourage them to learn the life lessons Jesus thought are important.

Come prepared with whatever is needed to tell the story of the week.

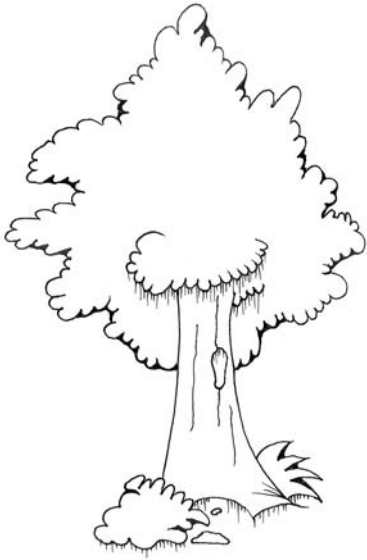
Know the story.
Make a plan!

The scripture verse is taught at **Up A Tree Café**. Talk about it but do not take time to memorize it.



Up A Tree Café

*This activity center is designed for 12-15 minutes.
Serve quick, kid friendly snacks
and teach the scripture verse.*



Snacks

Three small groups rotate and show up separately. Prepare snacks before the day begins. Keep it simple. Use suggestions from our *Snack Ideas* or make your own favorite snacks. Engage in friendly conversation while snacking and learning the verse of the week.

Memory Verse

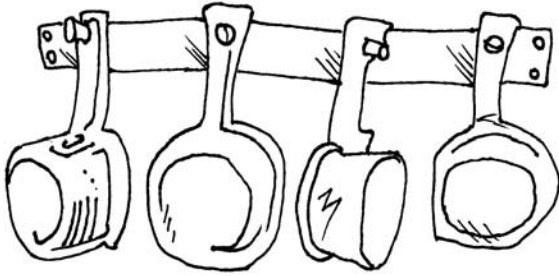
Teach A Bible Verse. See the *Memory Verse Activities* ideas for fun ways to teach the weekly verse. As the series moves along, review the verses from past weeks. Hand print verses on construction paper tree leaves posted around the café.

Setting Up The Café

Decorate! The area becomes a kid friendly tree house café. This can be a classroom, Fellowship Hall or outdoor pavilion. Place several card tables and chairs or a wooden picnic table in the area. If a canopy is available, use it as the covering. Kids love it! Cover each small table with colorful table cloths. Place center pieces on each table with tree house accessories to make the theme come to life.



Snack Ideas!



Make the snacks so much fun that when the time comes to get ready for Sunday School the kids know a great snack is waiting! They won't miss Sunday School for anything else going on in their world!

Make it memorable! Mix and Match!

Doughnut Holes
Blueberry Muffins
Hot, Toasted English Muffins (butter and jelly)
Banana Bread and Butter
Cinnamon Buns

French Toast Strips w/dipping syrup
Mini Pancakes w/butter and syrup
Mini Waffles w/butter and syrup

Mixed Fruit Kabob
Pineapple ring with cherries in middle
Strawberries and Cream
Bananas and Strawberries and Cream
Grapes - Peaches - Raisins - Watermelon

Scrambled Eggs w/Toast
Bacon - Sausage Links
Cereal (Individual boxes)
Ham and Cheese Biscuits
Egg Mc Muffins
Soft Taco Egg Wrap w/shredded cheese

Beverages: Milk, Chocolate Milk, Orange Juice, Apple Juice

GENTLE SUGGESTION: Do not be held hostage to the dislikes of picky eaters. Do NOT provide separate options. It is a 'slippery slope' to students picking and choosing between snacks. If any student does not like the snack cheerfully say, "No problem! I know lunch is just around the corner at your house." The only exception is for food allergies. Know which students need a safe alternative by talking with parents.



Yummy Snack Ideas!

Monkey Bread

Everyone loves these sweet little treats. Easy to make and fun to serve.

4-7.5 oz. Buttermilk Biscuits (found in dairy case)

3/4 Cups Sugar

1 T Cinnamon

Cut biscuits into 1" squares, put sugar and cinnamon in zip lock bag. Shake 12 pieces at a time. Place pieces in an ungreased bundt pan or cake pan. Between layers sprinkle nuts raisins or leave as is.

1 ½ sticks butter

1 ½ T. Cinnamon

1 C. Sugar and remaining sugar/cinnamon mixture

Melt butter and add sugar and cinnamon. Pour over biscuits.

Bake 30-40 minutes at 350 degrees. Remove immediately from pan.

Spider Webs

Make a traditional FUNNEL CAKE recipe.

2 beaten eggs added to 1-1/3 cup milk.

Stir into bowl with 2 C. Flour, 4 T. Sugar, ½ t. salt, 1 t. baking powder and 2 t. baking soda. Beat well.

Heat 2-3" oil in large frying pan. Drizzle batter into oil. Let the batter all in rings. Turn with a fork when risen. Remove when both sides are lightly browned. Dust with powdered sugar. Serve hot.

Tree Bark Gingerbread

Make gingerbread from a favorite box mix.

Top with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.

Dippy Bananas

Melt chocolate in microwave oven.

Slice bananas into circles.

Use forks to dip banana into the chocolate. Roll in crushed nuts or coconut. Other fruits and snacks to try: cherries, pineapple, apple, marshmallow, angel food cake.





Snack Names

Make a Memory!

Hungry Dippo
Cheetos For Climbers
Sunshine Sushi (Wrap fillings of choice in lettuce)

Snails (Licorice Whips Cut)
Animal Cupcakes (Animal Cracker On Top)
Leafy Tree Lettuce

Chunky Monkey (Banana slices dipped in chocolate)
Elephant Ears (Sugar Cookies)
Snacks In Jars! (Canning Jars filled with Jello and Fruit)

Mixed Fruit in Ice Cream Cones

Bug Juice

Gummy Worms

Bugs! (Rice Krispies Treats)

Fire Ants (Chocolate Covered Raisins)
Bugs On A Log (Raisins, Cream Cheese, Celery Stick)



Memory Fun!

Vary activities. Repeat games students enjoy. Offer a small reward. Present small prizes at the end of the series too. (Grand Prize: new dollar bill, small New Testament, mustard seed necklace, t-shirt, toy, trophy.)



Fill In The Blank: Print individual words on 3 x 5 cards. Place cards in proper order on the table. Remove one card as they say the verse aloud. Keep removing cards until they can say the verse without help.

Follow The Bouncing Ball: Bounce a large ball around the circle and say the verse aloud. Each bounce represents one word. Once the verse is memorized, toss the ball to individuals who say the verse aloud. Applaud!

Erase A Word: Print the verse on a chalkboard/erase board. Allow students to erase one word of their choice. The group repeats the verse until it is memorized.

Scrambled: Mix up 3 x 5 cards. Give one card to each student. They must meet in the middle and put the words in order as fast as possible. Do this several times with different teams.

Circle Up: Assign one word to each student around the circle. Point to a student who must say their word. Point faster and faster until it sounds like one person saying the verse. Ask individuals to say the verse aloud.

Relay: Once many verses have been learned, line up two teams. Stand at one end of the area. Give the reference of one verse. Teams send one person to tag you and say the verse. If the first person cannot do it, the second team has a chance to say the verse. Try to stay on your feet!

Whistle Stop: Teacher says the verse omitting one word. Blow a whistle instead for that word. The first person to fill in the whistle stop gets one point.

Catch The Teacher: Challenge group to catch you making a mistake in a verse.





Leaf It To Me! Games and Crafts!

This is pure fun! During the 12-15 minute time slot, the group makes an easy craft project, sees a video OR plays a game. Vary activities.

We make suggestions. You pick the fun!

Crafts

Order and organize supplies before the series begins so that weekly planning is minimum. Projects may be ordered from online companies, local craft stores or may be found in your abundant storage closet!

Keep the time limit in mind. It goes fast!

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Games

Gather supplies. Ask volunteers to help with crowd control. Use curriculum suggestions or develop your own games. You know your children and the games they love to play. Let them laugh!

Movie Time

Every few weeks show a short you tube video, a short kid friendly movie clip or music videos of your choice. Pick short videos!

Setting Up

Weather permitting, play games outdoors. If not, choose a large room where children can run, skip, jump and move. Crafts should be completed at work tables where students sit or stand. Divide project parts into individual kits for easy use. Each student receives all their parts to complete the project.

Plan ahead!



Craft Ideas



Older groups can complete more complicated projects. Keep in mind they are under the same 12-15 minute time constraint as younger students.

Choose simple, quick projects from online companies, local stores or make homemade versions of projects that reflect the weekly themes and scripture verses as much as possible.

*Crafts are NOT needed every week.
Mix up the activities with crafts, games
and special short videos as available.*

*YOU get to pick a few craft projects!
Try to choose Christian crafts
for the New Testament parable theme.*

Check out the large variety of inexpensive Christian projects offered by S&S Worldwide Arts and Crafts: www.ssw.com Their supplies and projects change from season to season. If one project is no longer available, just pick another one!

S&S also provides small gifts and prizes for Christian groups. Choose from their latest online offerings! Catalogs are available. Call them to have one sent: 1-800-288-9941

Choose from: Sand Art Candles, Beaded Cross Necklaces, Painted Rocks, Color Me Hats, Totes, Greeting cards, Pot Holders, Visors, Jewelry, Sun catchers and much more!

*Shop for the best choices.
Stay within your budget!*



Game Ideas

By all means play favorite games and enjoy familiar competitions. Here are a few fun ideas to get started.

Games are NOT needed every week. Mix activities with crafts and short videos as available.

Gather game supplies. Keep the game activities simple. Repeat games as desired during the 12-15 minute time slot.

Paper Airplanes: Create and decorate paper airplanes. Choose competitions. Who can go the farthest? Highest? Straightest? Can anyone fly it through a hula hoop? Do loops? Make a target bulls eye...can anyone hit the bulls eye.

Elephant Race: Divide kids into two teams lined up evenly. First kid bends at the waist, puts one arm in front of their face like an elephant's trunk and puts their other hand through their legs toward the person behind them. The next kids bends over, grabs the first kid's tail with their trunk and extended their tail through their legs. Keep it going until you have two teams of elephants lined up and ready to go. They race to a finish line. Repeat the race until laughter collapses everyone!

Animal Charades: Prepare animal index cards. Each kids picks a card. The act out their creature (no words allowed) until the other shout out the animal. Then everyone has to act out the same animal together. Hilarious!

Peanut Race: Start and finish line. Line kids side by side at the starting line. Place one peanut on the line in front of each kid. Push the peanut to the finish line with THEIR NOSES. Think it's easy? Try it!

Pinata Hunt: Hide candy everywhere. Kids go on a hunt to find small treats.

Guess Your Animal: Attach a paper with a picture or name of an animal on each kid's back. They have to ask yes and no questions until they find out what their animal is.

Doughnut Stretch: Kids play in pairs. Tie doughnuts to strings and sticks. Team members must get their team mate to capture the doughnut in their mouth. Then repeat with other player. Yummy! Not so easy!



Bed Sheet Ping Pong: Hold the edges of a sheet. Place balls on sheet. Goal is to keep the balls on the sheet as long as possible. Get several balls going at the same time. Count the number of times the balls are kept up in the air before falling. Keep getting better and better. To vary the game-try to get the balls off the edge of opposite team's sheet.

In The Air: 3 Beach Balls Players scatter over the playing area and a ball is tossed into the air. Keep the ball in the air using any part of the body. Get two or three balls going at the same time. Keep count of time the balls are kept in the air before falling. Get better and better.

Newspaper Race: 2 newspaper sheets per players. Each player must race to the turning pint and back stepping only on their papers. Step on one, lay the other and step on it. Move back and forth across the playing field.

Shoe Box Relay: Players slip their feet into the boxes and race. This can be done individually or as a team relay.

Dress The Teacher: Two grown ups and an assortment of silly clothing in bags. Line up in front of adults, run up, place one items on the adult. First team done wins. Take pictures!!!!

Notes:

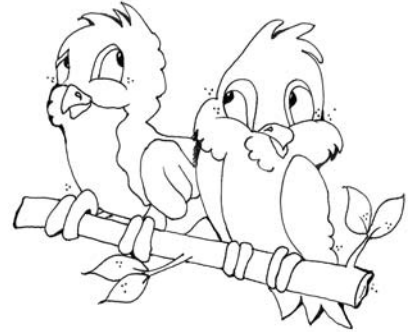
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Opening - Music

Meet as a large group.
Take attendance and SING!

Begin on time even if students and teachers are arriving late. The activity centers are timed and the schedule will be delayed if waiting for latecomers.



Decorate

Follow curriculum suggestions. Focus toward the front where leaders stand.

Attendance

Assign one person who knows the students to take attendance as they arrive.

Offering

Combine individual class offerings unless a traditional class by class accounting is typical.

Announcements

Announce upcoming events. Feature children's ministry information.

Seating

Seat small groups together so they are ready to rotate to individual activity centers with leaders.

Sing

Sing familiar songs the children enjoy.



Our Tree House Schedule

Schedule leaders before the series begins. Explain each activity center task. This is the perfect opportunity to use volunteers who commit to one week at a time.

Write leader names, emails, phone numbers in the appropriate schedule sheet blank and touch base before the date they are scheduled.

If props or supplies are needed, remind them. Avoid mis-communication. Tell craft volunteers where to find their supplies. It may be helpful to make a sample.



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Tip!
*Pre-plan substitute leaders
in case of illness or forgetfulness.*

Give each leader a folder with dated copies of their individual lesson plans. Include teacher information to give them a clear job picture.

The completed schedule worksheet is a great organizational tool. Call staff members so they are reminded to arrive prepared for the day's lesson, snack or activity.

Notes:



Our Tree House Schedule



Week #1:

Good Samaritan: A Helping Hand

Between Heaven and Earth:
Up A Tree Café:
Leaf It To Me:

Week #2:

The Lost Son: About A Boy

Between Heaven and Earth:
Up A Tree Café:
Leaf It To Me:

Week #3:

Three Servants: Bags of Gold

Between Heaven and Earth:
Up A Tree Café:
Leaf It To Me:

Week #4:

The Farmer: Outstanding In His Field

Between Heaven and Earth:
Up A Tree Café:
Leaf It To Me:

Week #5:

Lost and Found: The Lost Coin

Between Heaven and Earth:
Up A Tree Café:
Leaf It To Me:

Week #6:

Baa-ad Day: The Lost Sheep

Between Heaven and Earth:
Up A Tree Café:
Leaf It To Me:

Week #7:

Nose In The Air: Flat On Your Face

Between Heaven and Earth:
Up A Tree Café:
Leaf It To Me:

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___ **Week #8:** **Rock, Paper, Scissors, Sand**

Between Heaven and Earth:
Up A Tree Café:
Leaf It To Me:

___ **Week #9:** **Forgiveness: Not For Cowards**

Between Heaven and Earth:
Up A Tree Café:
Leaf It To Me:

___ **Week #10:** **Vineyard Workers: Fair/Not Fair**

Between Heaven and Earth:
Up A Tree Café:
Leaf It To Me:

___ **Week #11:** **Hidden Treasure: Pricey Pearl!**

Between Heaven and Earth:
Up A Tree Café:
Leaf It To Me:

___ **Week #12:** **Get Ready: Ready Or Not**

Between Heaven and Earth:
Up A Tree Café:
Leaf It To Me:

___ **Week #13:** **Tiny Beginnings: Mustard Is Yellow!**

Between Heaven and Earth:
Up A Tree Café:
Leaf It To Me:

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Advice From A Tree!

Stand Tall and Proud

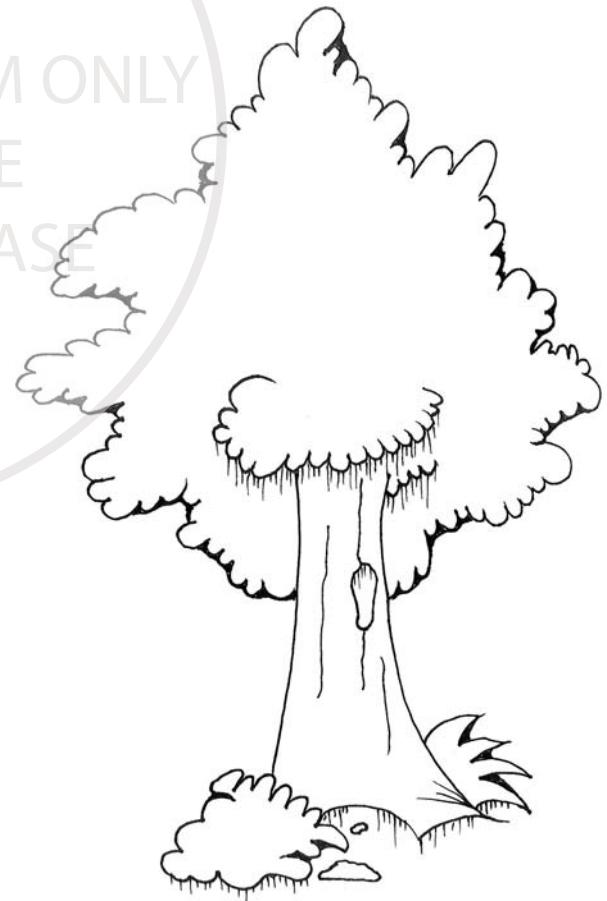
Go Out On A Limb

Remember Your Roots

Drink Plenty of Water

Be Content With
Your Natural Beauty

Enjoy The View



30



Week #1:

Short Story Parable



Between Heaven and Earth Short Stories Jesus Told

Good Samaritan: The Helping Hand

Memory Verse: The Golden Rule

Do unto others what you would have them do unto you.

Matthew 7:12

Introduction

Sit in a circle on the floor with the small group.

SUPPLIES: Colorful band-aids, Two silver coins

Welcome to a place somewhere Between Heaven and Earth! A tree house adventure is waiting for us. Jesus' short stories always have a lesson. Let's discover what Jesus wants us to know about living a Christian life! Are you ready to visit the Master's Tree House?

Describe your hands? Two hands, 20 fingers, fingernails, bones, skin, muscles, clean, dirty, large, small, wiggle, attached to wrists and arms

What do we do with our hands? Eat, wash, write, draw, play games, work, count, hold hands, hit, grab, hold things

Why did God create hands for people and not for dogs, cows, birds? He had big plans for humans to create wonderful things and to help each other.

Try This: Hold hands around the group. I will squeeze the neighbor next to me. Let's see how long it takes for our hands to communicate all the way around the circle and back to me. No talking allowed. Only gentle hand squeezing. Sshh, let's see if we can do it. (Try it several times.) Great hand talking!!!



The Good Samaritan: The Helping Hand

Luke 10:25-37: This "Good Samaritan" short story (parable) happened because a smart lawyer asked Jesus a question: "What can I do to make sure I go to Heaven?"

It was a very good question. Ears perked up to hear Jesus. Jesus said, "Let me ask YOU...What does the scripture say about that?" Ah-hah! Jesus was smart too. He let the lawyer answer his own question.

The lawyer said, "The scriptures say 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind...and love your NEIGHBOR as yourself.'"

"Good answer," smiled Jesus. "Do this and live." The lawyer gave a sly smile. He wanted to give Jesus trouble. "Just WHO is my neighbor?" Instead of answering him, Jesus told this story. It's just what the man needed to hear.

Jesus' stories are called **Parables—Earthly Stories with a Heavenly meaning**. When we listen carefully, we can hear the message Jesus told the people. So...right NOW is the time to listen carefully.

Jesus said a bad thing happened to a poor, unsuspecting guy who just wanted to walk from one town to another town. He wasn't looking for trouble. He had no idea that he would soon need a serious 'helping hand' from an unlikely neighbor.

The old road from Jerusalem to Jericho was dangerous, very dangerous. Who knew? Robbers attacked the traveler. They took his clothes, his money and beat him up. He was nearly dead.

Along comes a priest...an honest, honorable religious leader. He saw the man but he hurried on leaving the poor guy to die alone.

Along comes another religious person...a Levite...who was a leader. He saw the man and hurried on leaving the poor guy to die alone.

That could be the end of the story but...Along comes a Samaritan. Everybody hated Samaritans. They were next door neighbors but worshiped God in another spot. People would walk on the other side of the road to avoid a hated Samaritan.



The Samaritan stopped to give the poor traveler helping hand. He gave as much help as he could, carried him to a nearby inn and cared for him all night long. What a good thing to do!

The next morning the Samaritan had to get to his business meeting. He handed the innkeeper some coins to pay for the man's care until he was well.

**PASS TWO SILVER COINS AROUND THE GROUP
TO SHOW THEM HOW THE BILL WAS PAID.**

And that's not all! The Samaritan said, "If that is not enough money, I will be back and will pay the rest of his bill." Now, that's a GOOD SAMARITAN!

Back to Jesus and the smart lawyer. Jesus finished His short story and asked the lawyer, "Which of the three men was a neighbor to the traveler who was attacked by robbers?"

I think the lawyer had a hard time admitting, "I guess it was the man who treated him kindly." It was the person you would least expect to do a good thing...a Samaritan!

Jesus told this small story with a big idea. He said, "Go and do the same thing."

We Get It!

GIVE BAND AIDS TO EVERY STUDENT.

Put this bandage on yourself so you remember Jesus' lesson! Every time Jesus told a story, He wanted us to "get it". To understand there is another way to live. Today our Good Samaritan parable teaches:

1. Who should I help? Help anyone even if that person doesn't deserve it.

The Jericho Road traveler was careless. People knew the road from Jerusalem to Jericho was dangerous. It was not wise to carry money. People traveled in caravans to protect themselves. This traveler had no one to blame for his trouble but himself. Still, he needed a helping hand. The Good Samaritan was that helping hand.



2. Who is my neighbor? Any person from any nation who is in need.

It does not matter if the person does not look or act like us. We are given the responsibility to help anyone. Today we send food, money, medical help, missionaries, soldiers and help in many other ways to nations who need help. Jesus said we should learn to carry that good work person to person. You are never too young to give a helping hand.

3. What does 'help' mean? 'Help' means more than feeling sorry and moving on without doing anything.

The priest and Levite felt sorry for the traveler but they had places to go and people to see. They could not be bothered to stop and help. They knew it would mean time and money and they were busy. The Samaritan had places to go and people to see. He saw the need and helped his neighbor.

4. Who should listen to Jesus' story? Jesus spoke to the lawyer but Jesus was speaking to you and me!

Jesus' earthly story was about a poor, hurt traveler. His heavenly meaning was that if we want to please God we should be kind to our neighbor. Who knows? We might need help someday!

Our scripture verse is: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."
Matthew 7:12

Close In Prayer

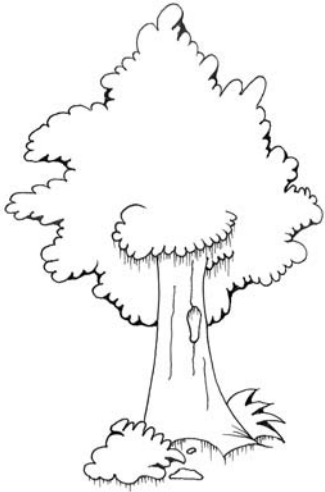
Notes:



Week #1:

Snacks and Memory Verse

Up A Tree Café Snacks and Memory Verse



Memory Verse: The Golden Rule

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

Matthew 7:12

Today's Parable:

The Good Samaritan

Read Jesus' story: Luke 10:25-37

Snack: Choose this snack or create your own treat.

Feature the Golden Rule with Chex Mix or a golden colored sweet cereal. If serving cereal, add 'golden' toast and butter. Golden apple juice.

Memory Verse:

The Golden Rule

Tape the words vertically on a wooden yard stick. Students point to each word as they say the verse aloud as a group. Students remove one word at a time until the yard stick has no words and the group can say the verse from memory.

Today's verse reminds us to be a helper like the Good Samaritan. He didn't think he would need help someday but he lived like he should do good things for others just like you would like them to help you.

Notes:



Week #1:

Games and Crafts

Leaf It To Me Games and Crafts



“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

Matthew 7:12

Choose one game, craft project or video that features friendship or lending a helping hand.

Today's Parable:

The Good Samaritan

Read Jesus' story in Luke 10:25-37

Jesus told a short story that has meaning for us. The Good Samaritan was not liked by those who were his neighbors. Instead of running away, he went about his business and even helped a stranger in danger.

Game Idea: Choose a game that includes helping a partner.

Tossing a ball between partners on a team to reach a finish line is a good example of helping each other cross the line. Team games are great for this parable theme.

Video Idea:

Check out www.youtube.com

Several short videos are available to tell the story of the Good Samaritan for children. Choose one or more you like the best.

Check Out: The Beginner's Bible story version for younger students (begins at about 9:00 minute mark)

Notes:



Week #2:

Short Story Parable



Between Heaven and Earth Short Stories Jesus Told

The Lost Son:

All About A Boy

Memory Verse: Honor your Father

“Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.”

Ephesians 6:1

Introduction

Today's short story (parable) takes us to another place and time. Come to the Master's Tree House and hear what happened.

Jesus told a story about a boy, a young man, living a selfish life. The boy enjoyed the finer things of life: family, job, house, clothing. He grew up on a farm with servants. Was that enough? No.

Jesus told this short story to His disciples, leaders of the temple and a crowd. I hope they got His message. Sit back, relax and listen to Jesus' "Short story with Heaven in mind".

Luke 15:11-32

Luke 15:11-32: Tell the prodigal son story in rhyme. Students sit on the floor, relaxing with large pillows and a fan. Let the parable unfold with gentle humor.

Come listen, come listen, come one and come all
To the tale of a boy who had a great fall.
With father and brother, his life was all set.
The farm and the money and life were all his.
He was happy, yes, happy, oh happy, and yet....



37



He dreamed: "I wonder what life in the city is like.
Do they dress just like me?
Do they ride a sleek bike?
I'm stuck on this farm far away from the light
I'm stuck here. I'm stuck here. I can't be too bright."

His wise father said: "O son, my dear son, the farm is not bad.
I've given you life, money, health...all I had.
When I die, you will get all that's left, so be glad.
You will be the big boss, our family Kahuna.
Just share with your brother and sing a glad tune-a."

His brother grumbled: "I'm oldest, you know. I don't want to boast.
But when the time comes I should get the most."
Our boy, overhearing his brother, replied,
"See? That's what I thought. Why? Why? Why? Why? Why?"

That brother of mine wants me to leave here.
Well that's quite fine with me, sir!
Just give me what's due me and I'll fly the coop.
There's life in the city that I need to scoop."

His father said: "Oh son, my dear son, the farm is your home.
Stay here and work here. Don't try to roam."

The boy sniffed: "Just give me your money, oh father dear.
I need it right now to fly far from here!"
The father, who loved him, handed over the money.
The son, who was silly, hopped away like a bunny.

Life in the city wasn't quite what he thought.
He bought ...and he bought ...and he bought ...and he bought!

And soon, when he dug in his purse for a coin
The coins were all gone and his friends were gone too.
Take a moment to think. There's a lesson to "loin".

He tapped his head, thinking:
"I now need a job, I need money you see.
I can't live in the city and let me be me.
I need a good job to buy more new clothes.
I want a new outfit, like those and like those."



No jobs could be found in the big, big, big city.
He tried to be smart and he tried to be witty.

The only job he could find was in a pig pen.
He slopped all the hogs and remembered just when
Life at home was so peaceful on dad's lovely farm.
Where food did abound and he came to no harm.

"I want to go home. I want my dear dad.
The job in this pen makes me mad, makes me sad.
I want to see trees and rivers and such.
The workers at home get much, oh, so much.

If I could just travel to father and brother,
I'd stay there and work there. I'd want no other."
So the son traveled home, all alone, with his duffle.
He walked with some fear. He walked with a shuffle.

"I know what I'll say. I know what I'll do.
I'll say, 'Hello father, so nice to see you.
I'll admit that I sinned.
I'll beg to start over
...and over ...and over
With him."

When the son neared the farm, shaded eyes with his arm,
He saw his dear father running fast from the barn.
They hugged and they hugged and they danced in the road.
The father was crying, the son crying too.
He tried to confess, all his sins to unload.

But his father had plans of his own to complete.
He wanted to shout to the world, "My son's sweet!
My son, my dear son, you are home at last.
The time you were gone went slow and not fast.
Come in to the house, take a bath, get a drink.
I need time to blink and to think in a wink."

His traveling son cried, "But father, I've sinned against Heaven and you.
I've wasted your money and now I feel blue."



Before he could finish, his dear father said,
"Hush, hush now, I tell you
The servants will give you
Our best robe of red
Put rings on your fingers and shoes on your toes.
I won't take excuses. I won't hear your "no's"!

So...

A party was planned.
The whole family rejoiced.
They danced and they feasted on platters piled high
With the juiciest juices and a fatted calf's thigh.

The end of our story now is in sight.
For the family was happy, so happy, that night.

Except....

For one person, who lurked in the alley.
His brother was mad and kicked his cat, Sally.
"I'm the brother who stayed.
I worked long. I worked hard.
Do I get a party? Do I get a card?
No, no. It's not fair!

I want some rejoicing for me on the stair.

This brother of mine wasted stuff on wild living.
And now father celebrates with even more giving.
It's not fair, it's not fair, it's not fair, I say.
I want a party. I want to play!"

His father whispered, "I have heard your sighing and crying and moaning.
What you don't understand, son, is that you've been growing.
You've had all my wisdom, my love and my stuff.
Your brother was gone, said he'd had enough.
I thought he was dead but now he's alive!

It's right to rejoice for now he's come home.
We'll be here together no longer to roam.
So cheer up that face, join the party inside.
Next week we'll invite your friends
From far and from wide."

And now we've come to the end of our story.
It is told for God's love. It is told for God's glory.



We Get It!

Jesus had lessons for us to "loin". Learn them from this young man and his loving father.

SUPPLIES: Print each phrase on paper leaves on the wall.

1. Admit Sin

The son greeted his father and admitted his sin. He did wrong and he knew it. He offered to be a worker at his father's farm: "I'm sorry! Just let me come home." Our first step to meeting Jesus is knowing we have sinned. God's Word says,

"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23

2. Accept God's Forgiveness

The son's good father forgave him, dressed him in a robe, a ring and shoes. He was welcomed to his family...forgiven and free. That is what happens to us when we accept Jesus as our Savior.

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." Acts 16:31

3. Celebrate God's Love.

The happy father planned a party! God is so happy when each person, young or old, comes home to Him. God's Word says,

"There is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents." Luke 15:10

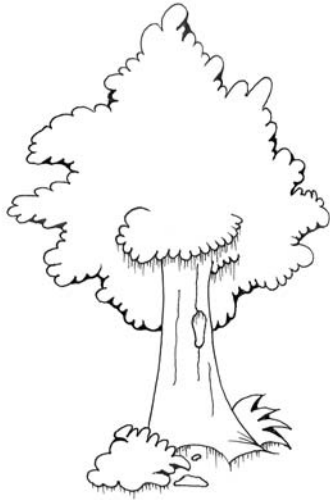
What Do We Learn? Jesus told the parable of the lost son and his loving father to say that God is always waiting for us to return to Him. The only thing we need is to believe Jesus is our Savior and believe He died and rose again. Talk to God in prayer and the deal is sealed. No longer between Heaven and Earth but headed for Heaven!!!!

CLOSE IN PRAYER



Week #2:

Snack and Memory Verse



Up A Tree Café Snacks and Memory Verse

Memory Verse: Honor your Father

“Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.”

Ephesians 6:1

Snack: Choose this snack or create your own treat.
The parable of the lost son and his loving father ends with a party. Make this snack time a party! Serve small samples of party foods on crystal plates with real silverware.

Fruit and veggie trays
Ham roll ups with cream cheese in middle
Fruit punch (fruit juice with Sprite or ginger ale)

Memory Verse: Honor Your Father and Mother
*Use one of the curriculum activities or create your own memory game.
Teach while students are partying with their snacks.*

The young man in Jesus' short story did not honor his father. He wanted to live life on his own. What he should have done is obey his father.

Parents want to protect us from harmful things. Think about their wisdom. Listen to the words of today's memory verse.

Notes:



Week #2:

Games and Crafts

Leaf It To Me Games and Crafts

Memory Verse: Honor your Father
“Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.”

Ephesians 6:1

Choose a game, craft or video
featuring the story of the prodigal son.

Jesus told a short story about a lost son with a loving, forgiving father. When the disobedient, selfish son returned home, his father forgave him and gave him a robe, a ring and shoes...forgiven and free!

Game Idea:

Fill two garbage bags with crazy, mismatched clothing. Divide group into two teams. The teams must take turns dressing and undressing so the next person can dress. First team to complete the task is the winner.

Dress Up Relay

Video Idea:

There are several youtube videos available that tell the story for children. Choose one or more you like the best.

Prodigal Son

Check out: The Prodigal by the Skit Guys (7 minutes 26 seconds) for older students.

Notes:



Week #3:

Short Story Parable



Between Heaven and Earth Short Stories Jesus Told

Three Servants:

Bags of Gold

Memory Verse:

Be Faithful

“Well done, good and faithful servant.”

Matthew 25:23

Introduction

SUPPLIES: Three small bags (any type) filled with small, medium and large amounts of loose change.

Hide 3 bags of “gold” somewhere in the activity center. When the group arrives, search for the bags. When found, the three student finders become the three servants in the parable. Let them open their bags and decide what to do with their coins.

Three Servants:

Bags of Gold

Matthew 25:14-30: Money is a big deal! Jesus knew a short story about money would make people perk up. They would think of themselves as one of the three servants.

Have I mentioned Jesus was very smart when He told stories?

A rich businessman prepared to take a long trip. He called three trusted workers to his office. He gave \$5000 to the first man, \$2000 to the second man and \$1000 to the third man. They must have been surprised. Maybe their eyes sparkled. “Ooh! Money, money, money!”

There were rules. He gave them the job of taking care of the money while he was gone. Away he went on his camel. The workers had his money. What to do? What to do?



**What would YOU do with \$5000? – \$2000 – \$1000?
Let's dream about it for a minute!**

\$5000! Back to Jesus' short story. The worker with \$5000 traded in the marketplace. He doubled his boss's money to \$10,000! Wow!

\$2000! The worker with \$2000 traded in the marketplace and he also doubled his boss's money to \$4000. Yay!

\$1000! But...the third worker, the \$1000 guy, was unsure. You know how it goes, the market go up and down, thieves steal, scammers smile and offer a fake deal. "My boss is a tough guy. If I lose his money, he will be angry. I am going to wrap \$1000 in this bag and bury it in my backyard. It will be safe. I won't spend it or lose it. That is the perfect plan!"

The boss got back from his trip and called his three workers into the office. "Well, what have you done with my money?" The first worker handed him \$10,000 and the second worker handed him \$4000. "That's great guys! Well done, good and faithful servants. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things. You get a big promotion! Enter into the joy of your master."

The boss turned to his third worker. The worker cleared his throat, held out the original \$1000 and said, "I am proud to report I am returning the entire \$1000 unharmed. I was a bit nervous so I hid it in the ground. Here it is! Safe and sound! You can just wipe off a bit of that dirt on the bag."

The boss saw the dirt covered bag. His face turned red. He pounded on his desk, "You wicked, lazy man. You know I wanted you to make more money for me! You could have at least put the \$1000 in the bank so I would have gained a few dollars! Give that \$1000 to my \$10,000 man. Get out of here! YOU – ARE – FIRED!"

We Get It!

SUPPLIES: LARGE PAPER LEAVES ON THE WALL WITH THEME PHRASES

Between Heaven and Earth: Like the worker with \$1000, the leaders Jesus was talking to wanted to keep everything exactly the same. Any change, anything new, anything that required faith to move forward was terrible to them. Jesus brought a new plan. He looked for people with faith that God's plan was true.



1. What is life's great adventure?

Faith!

Jesus said FAITH is the great adventure. He reminded them (and us) God says, "Well done, good and **faithful** servant". Jesus looks for people of faith who step out of their comfort zone and take big risks with their faith.

Are you faithful?

2. What do I have?

Use what God gives you!

Each worker got a different amount of money. It doesn't matter how much you have. It is how you use what God gives you that makes a difference in the world. Use what you have today!

What do you have?

3. What is my Reward?

Work!

The workers worked hard to earn money and what did they get? More work! That sounds awful. Actually it is good to have great work to do. God doesn't let us quit. When we step out in faith, He comes alongside, gives us what we need and keeps us going.

4. What happens if I don't risk everything?

You're Fired!

If the worker with \$1000 tried to earn money but lost it, it would have been better than doing nothing at all. It is so easy to say, "I am too young. I don't have any money. I'm not smart enough. It isn't worth it to risk my life for the little bit I could do". If we say "no" long enough, God will let us go our way.

5. What Does Jesus Offer?

Well Done!

The two faithful workers risked more, earned more and got huge rewards. That is God's promise to us too! We are not punished for risking. This is true for any talent we have: playing piano, playing golf, carving wood or thinking new ideas. Or, going to a foreign land as a missionary.

Let's talk about what we can do!

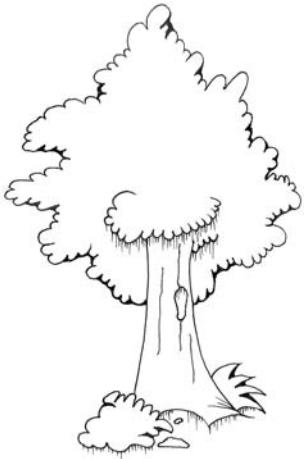
Well done, good and faithful servant.
You have been faithful with a few things;
I will put you in charge of many things.
Come and share your master's happiness!"
Matthew 25:23 NIV

CLOSE IN PRAYER



Week #3:

Snacks and Memory Verse



Up A Tree Café

Snacks and Memory Verse

Three Servants: **Bags of Gold**

Memory Verse: **Be Faithful**

“Well done, good and faithful servant.”

Matthew 25:23

Snack: Choose this snack or create your own treat.
Because today's parable features a worker who buries his boss's treasure in the dirt, consider burying a small treat in the middle of a larger treat.

Cupcakes-cream , Cookies-raisins, Cake-strawberry filling,
crushed Oreos-candy worms

Memory Verse: **Be A Faithful Servant**

Teach the memory verse using one of the activities on the curriculum list or create your own fun game. Teach the verse while students are enjoying their snacks.

Jesus told short stories with important lessons (parables). Today's short story is about three workers, a boss and money...lots of money!

The worker's were handed thousands of dollars and told to use it wisely while their boss was out of town. Two of the workers doubled their money but one worker buried his money in the yard. He was not faithful and got fired. Jesus' lesson is that when we risk ourselves to serve God, we are rewarded with God's "well done".

Notes:



Week #3:

Games and Crafts



Leaf It To Me Games and Crafts

Memory Verse: Be Faithful

“Well done, good and faithful servant.”

Matthew 25:23

Choose a game, craft or video
featuring the parable of the faithful servants.

Jesus told a short story about a demanding boss and three workers given \$5000, \$2000 and \$1000. Two workers invested the money and earned more and got better jobs. The last worker buried the money and lost his job.

Game Idea: Choose a game from the list or create your own fun.

Craft Idea: Choose a simple craft from www.ssw.com
There are many Christian craft kits available. The kits change from season to season so see what is available and affordable.

Video Idea:
There are several www.youtube.com videos available that tell the story for children. Choose one or more you like the best.

Check out: “The Parable of the Talents.” Cartoon (@4:00 minutes)
This is a great little cartoon youtube video, no narration or words, showing different ways the servants earned money. The story is colorful and simple.

Notes:





Week #4:

Short Story Parable

Between Heaven and Earth Short Stories Jesus Told

The Farmer: Outstanding In His Field

Memory Verse: Tell The Whole World

*“Go into all the world
and proclaim the gospel.”*

Mark 16:15

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY

Introduction: The Farmer

SUPPLIES: Hershey kisses mixed with a variety of small wrapped candies

A forest floor has many surprises. Let's plant seed to find out exactly what kind of plants we grow in our tree house woods!

Sit on the floor in rows like corn stalks in a field. Fold your hands and do not unfold them until it is time.

Throw (sow) the candy into the rows of students. Be sure some candy falls into their laps, some beside them, some much farther away, some in the corners of the room.

Now, now! Do not touch that seed! I feel a short story coming on. It might be a parable! It might be a story Jesus told because people loved to hear Him tell stories. They gathered in fields and on mountains to listen to Jesus.

One day Jesus was teaching from a small boat. He notice a farmer planting his field. He pointed to the farmer and told the people on the beach a story.



Outstanding In His Field

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23: Jesus said, "What do you think about this? A farmer planted seed in his field. As he tossed the seed, some fell on the **road** and birds ate it. Some seeds fell in the **gravel** and it grew fast but the roots died. Some seed fell in the **weeds**. The weeds strangled the good plants. Some seeds fell on **good dirt**. The harvest was huge...beyond the farmer's dream!

Look at the fun "candy seed" planted around you. NO TOUCHING! Some is in the corner, some seed is a little closer but you cannot reach it. BUT...the best seed is the seed that fell in your lap. That is a great harvest of candy!

Did you really listen to Jesus' story? Were you more interested in the seed candy around you? Are you STILL thinking about that delicious harvest of candy around you? Wait! **I feel another story coming on!**

We Get It!

As always, Jesus' short story had a God Lesson.

Look at the candy seed in the path next to you. Jesus said this is seed that reminds us of anyone who hears the Word of God and does not understand it. They walk by and think it is interesting but not for them. Just like birds ate the see, Satan snatches God's truth away from the person who does not understand.

Look at the candy seed that is too far to reach. Maybe you worry that if I say, "reach for the candy" you won't get any. That is like the thorny ground in Jesus' story. The worries and problems we face take our minds from God's message of salvation. Weeds can be beautiful. Like dandelions in a lovely lawn, weeds are like school, jobs, planning a good life, get in the way of God's message. Weeds, ugly or beautiful, choke out our love for the Lord.

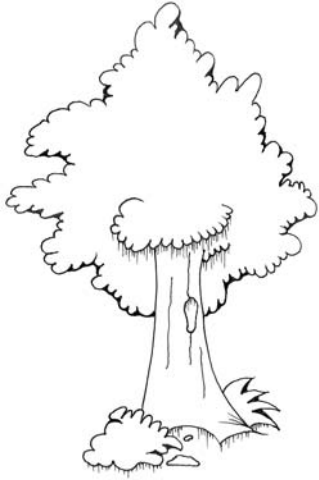
Look at the candy seed in your lap. Jesus said some seed falls on good ground! The story of Jesus is told and we say, "Wow! Yes! That's for me! I will love the Lord with all my heart. I will serve Him!" Then we tell other people to grow an even bigger harvest. Now that's what a farmer wants!

**Are you ready? It's time!
You may eat the candy seed that fell in your lap!**



Week #4:

Snacks and Memory Verse



Up A Tree Café Snacks and Memory Verse

The Farmer: Outstanding In His Field

Memory Verse: Tell The Whole World

*“Go into all the world
and proclaim the gospel.”*

Mark 16:15

Snack: Choose this snack or create your own treat.
Today's parable features a farmer and his seed. Consider snacks that are grown from seeds.

Apples: Slice and leave the seeds on each plate.

Peach: Cut in half. Leave large pit on plate.

Plum: Cut in half. Leave large pit on plate.

Check out the produce department for fresh produce with seeds.

Memory Verse: Tell The Whole World

Teach the verse using one of the curriculum suggestions or create your own memory game. Teach while students are enjoying their snacks.

Jesus told short stories with important lessons (parables). Today's short story is about a farmer doing his spring planting.

In those days, farmers walked up and down the field with a bag of seed. Some blew away in the wind, some seed was caught in weeds or between rocks. The path was hard. Seeds that fell there could not grow.

When seeds fell on good, fresh earth, a huge harvest grew. We can grow a harvest of people who love Jesus just by telling them His story. That is what today's verse means!



Week #4:

Games and Crafts



Leaf It To Me Games and Crafts

Memory Verse: Tell The Whole World

*“Go into all the world
and proclaim the gospel.”*

Mark 16:15

Jesus' short story is about a farmer planting seeds in his field. He found rocky dirt, thorny dirt, weeds, hard ground and even wonderful, rich soil. Jesus' lesson about how people understand God's Word is still true today. Some folks don't get it. We must be the people who are God's harvest!

Game Idea: Choose a game from the list or create your own fun.

Craft Idea: Choose a simple craft from www.swww.com
There are many Christian craft kits available. The kits change from season to season. See what is currently available and affordable.

OR: Paper plates, white glue, variety of cereals. Students make a mosaic using the varieties of dry cereals on the table. (Cheerios, Fruit Loops, Rice Krispies...anything colorful!) Of course, they may eat a bit as they work!

Video Idea:

There are several www.youtube.com videos available that tell the story for children. Choose one or more you like the most.

Check out: "Jesus Parable of The Sower." Cartoon (@5 minutes)
From Unleashed Ministry. This is a great little cartoon youtube video, no narration or words, showing the story from the view of the seed. The story is told colorfully and simply.



Week #5:

Short Story Parable



Between Heaven and Earth Short Stories Jesus Told

Lost And Found!

The Lost Coin

Memory Verse: Search With All Your Heart

*“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,
as for the Lord.”*

Colossians 3:23

Introduction: The Lost Coin

SUPPLIES: 10 Silver Coins (dimes or quarters)

Before class, hide one dime in a difficult spot. Students search for it until someone finds it.

Wait here at the door. I cannot let you into the tree house. I lost something very important. If you come in, you may bury it deeper and I will never find it. Look! I have 9 silver coins in my hand. These are not any old coins. They are collector's coins. Very valuable! My family has given me these coins as a keepsake and as a savings account for a rainy day.

I own 10 silver coins! 10! I must have lost one. I cannot find it anywhere. It is possible it was stolen but I really think I lost it somewhere in the tree house.

Maybe you CAN help me. Step carefully and look everywhere. Maybe it is hiding somewhere and we can find my lost coin.



Lost And Found!

Luke 15:8-10: Jesus' short story...and this is a SHORT story.... about a woman's lost coin has it all. Drama, mystery, sadness and then...joy!

Jesus said, "Imagine this! A woman has ten coins and loses one. Won't she light a lamp, and scrub the house and sweep the floor and look in every nook and cranny until she finds it?"

Imagine when she finds it! You can be sure she will call all her friends and neighbors: 'Celebrate with me! I found my lost coin!'

Count on it—that's the kind of party God's angels throw every time one lost soul turns to God."

We Get It!

We are God's children, but sometimes we get lost. When that happens, God doesn't give up on us. He searches for us and He won't stop until we are found. Why? Because He loves us!

God sent His Son, Jesus, to seek and save the lost. Just like the friends and neighbors rejoiced with the woman when her coin was found, Jesus said, "There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

I am happy that God loves us so much that He doesn't give up when we get lost from Him!

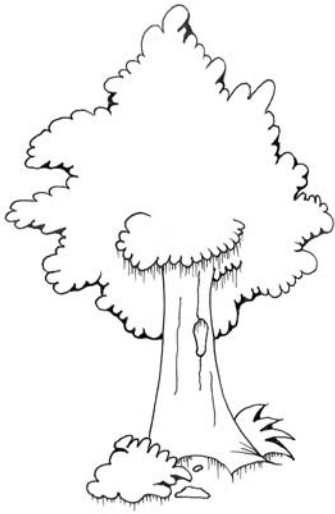
Ask students to hide their eyes while one person hides the coin again. Allow one or more students to search. Repeat until the end of the activity center.

Close In Prayer



Week #5:

Snacks and Memory Verse



Up A Tree Café Snacks and Memory Verse

The Lost Coin:

Lost And Found

Memory Verse: Search With All Your Heart

*“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,
as for the Lord.”*

Colossians 3:23

Snack: Choose this snack or create your own treat.

Today's snack could be hot dogs cut into coin shapes
and served with a variety of dips like ketchup, mustard, cheese.
Add potato chips and dip. Beverage.

Memory Verse: Search With All Your Heart

*Teach the memory verse using one of the activities on the curriculum list or
create your own game. Teach while students are enjoying their snacks.*

Jesus told short stories with heavenly lessons (parables). Today's short story is about a woman who lost one coin out of her ten silver coin collection. She was devastated. The coins were worth a lot of money and to lose even one coin was a horrible loss.

So...she searched and searched until she found her silver coin. She was so happy she celebrated with her friends and neighbors.

When we lose our way, Jesus searches for us until He finds us.

Today's verse reminds us to be people do God's work with all our hearts just like the woman searched her house with all her heart.



Week #5:

Games and Crafts

Leaf It To Me Games and Crafts



Lost And Found:

The Lost Coin

Memory Verse: Search With All Your Heart

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,

as to the Lord.”

Colossians 3:23

Choose a game, craft or video
featuring the parable of the lost coin.

Jesus told a short story about a woman who lost one of her ten silver coins. Nine coins was not enough. She had to find that last coin and she searched until she found the coin. Then she celebrated with her friends and neighbors.

Game Idea: Choose a game from the list or create your own fun.
Hide and Seek

Craft Idea: Choose a simple craft from www.swww.com
There are many Christian craft kits available. The kits change from season to season so see what is available and affordable.

Video Idea: Choose a short video found on line
Several www.youtube.com videos show and tell the story for children.
Choose one or more you like the best.

Check out: “Frank and the Lost Coin” Live Action (@10 minutes)
This is a funny take on the parable. Silly but fun. The kids will love it.



Week #6:

Short Story Parable



Between Heaven and Earth Short Stories of Jesus

The Lost Sheep

A Baa-d Day

Memory Verse: Seek and Find

"The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost."

Luke 19:10

Introduction:

Get Lost!

Have you been lost? (Students share) It is a scary feeling. No one is familiar, the place is strange, everything looks big. You can't trust strangers. Being lost is awful.

And then? Your mom comes around the corner, "There you are! I have been looking all over for you." How do you feel? (Students share.) Being 'found' turns a very bad day into a very good day!

Jesus told a short story about a lost son, a lost coin and now...a lost sheep. Jesus made a big deal about being lost. He didn't want anyone to have that yucky, scary feeling of being lost.

Jesus told the lost sheep parable to tax collectors and religious leaders. They thought they were too important to need help from anyone. They were very rude to people. They started whispering about Jesus and how He shouldn't eat and talk with sinners. Jesus was not impressed.

It was odd, because we all are sinners, we all do things we shouldn't. God's Word says, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23). These men didn't think they had to say sorry to God for their mistakes. They didn't even feel bad! So, Jesus told them a short story.



57



The Lost Sheep

Luke 15:3-7: When you think of sheep, what is the first thing that comes to your mind? (Cute, cuddly, sweet, smelly, loud) There is another side to sheep.

Sheep are fearful. Water with little ripples scares them. The water must be very still so they can drink. They need a shepherd to guide them to still waters.

Sheep are followers. The shepherd is the most important person in a sheep's life. These animals need someone to show them where to go. They follow their shepherd.

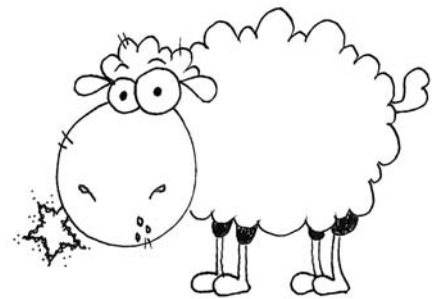
Sheep need protection. When the weather is good, sheep stay outdoors with their flock. At night the shepherd guides them to their sheep pen. If the pen does not have a gate, guess who sleeps in the doorway? The shepherd!

Sheep get lost easily. Munching grass, drinking water, wandering...sheep have their heads down and get lost. They know their shepherd's voice. If another shepherd calls, they ignore his voice. If heir shepherd calls, they come. When they do not hear his voice, they are lost!

Jesus said there was a shepherd who had 100 sheep. That's a big flock. Lots of baa-ing, lots of grazing, drinking and wandering. At the end of the day, the shepherd counted all his sheep. "95-96-97-98-99.... Hey! Where's little Fluffy? He was here a few minutes ago. I know him by the black spot near his eye. Fluffy! Fluffy!"

Off goes the shepherd to find that rascally little sheep. The shepherd walked back up the mountain. He searched the weeds near the river. He called that lamb's name the whole time he searched.

Finally, he heard a very quiet, "Baa" and looked over the cliff. Stuck in the thorns was helpless, scared Fluffy. It was getting dark when the shepherd reached down and pulled him up. Fluffy's leg was hurt so the shepherd slung him over his shoulders and walked back to the 99 sheep who were already sleeping in the sheep pen. Whew! It was a very Baa-d day for a Lost Sheep. He was grateful for a Good Shepherd.



We Get It!

Fluffy was pleased with how his day turned out. He was found! The tax collectors and religious leaders enjoyed the story too but what did Jesus mean? Short story, big idea in there someplace.

People are fearful. We don't like to admit it but sometimes we feel afraid and want to find peace. We do not like being afraid.

People are followers. We think we want to be "free to be me". It is safer to have a wise leader who guides us to right decisions.

People need protection. Just like sheep, people need someone who protects and keeps them safe.

People get lost easily. Jesus wants us to realize people get lost! People get lost from God.

Jesus NEVER lets us get lost from Him. He is the Good Shepherd who searches for one fearful, lost little person. Jesus short story means that if you are the only person who is lost, He will find you no matter how long it takes or where you are!



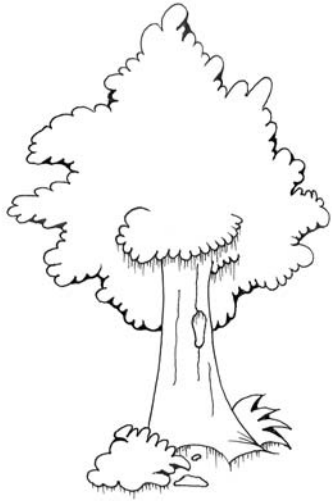
Close In Prayer

Notes:



Week #6:

Snacks and Memory Verse



Up A Tree Café Snacks and Memory Verse

The Lost Sheep

A Baa-d Day

Memory Verse:

Seek and Find

"The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost."

Luke 19:10

Snack:

Choose this snack or create your own treat.

If you think you might get lost, it is always a good thing to have a little sack lunch in your backpack just in case you need a bite to eat while you are finding your way home.

Fill brown bags with sample lunches: Jelly sandwich, chips, fruit, small water bottle, napkin.

Memory Verse: Seek and Find

Teach the verse using one of the curriculum activities or create your own memory game. Teach while students are enjoying their snacks.

Jesus' short story is about one lost sheep. The shepherd owned many other sheep but he loved this one little lost sheep so he searched for the sheep and found him.

That is just like Jesus! Jesus does not let us ever be lost from Him. When we lose our way, He searches until He finds us.

Like the lost son, the lost coin, Jesus will never let us be lost from Him. We never have to be afraid or lonely. We are that lost sheep that was found!



Week #6:

Games and Crafts



Leaf It To Me Games and Crafts

Memory Verse: **Seek and Find**
“The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.”

Luke 19:10

Choose a game, craft or video
featuring the parable of the lost coin.

Today we hear the short story Jesus told about a shepherd and his lost sheep. The shepherd never gave up and he found that sheep and carried him home. He called all his friends together to celebrate the found sheep!

Game Idea: Choose a game or create your own fun.

Craft Idea: Choose a simple craft from www.ssw.com
Feature Jesus as the Good Shepherd. **Use the Psalm 23 NLT included.** Copy on colorful cardstock–1 per student. Let them decorate the edges with markers, glitter buttons, paper shapes (whatever is available) Talk about what the Psalm means.



Video Idea: Choose a short video found
online

There are several www.youtube.com videos available that tell the story for children. Choose one or more you like the best.

Check out: “Parable of The Lost Sheep” RodTheNey Cartoon (2:11)
“The Lost Sheep” Told at Jungle Jamboree Storybook pictures
(5:25)



Psalm 23



The Lord is my shepherd;
I have all that I need.
He lets me rest in green meadows;
He leads me beside peaceful streams.
He renews my strength.
He guides me along right paths,
bringing honor to His name.
Even when I walk in the darkest valley,
I will not be afraid,
for You are close beside me.
Your rod and your staff
protect and comfort me.
You prepare a feast for me
in the presence of my enemies.
You honor me by anointing my head with oil.
My cup overflows with blessings.
Surely your goodness and unfailing love
will pursue me all the days of my life, I
will live in the house of the Lord forever.



Week #7:

Short Story Parable

Between Heaven and Earth Short Stories Jesus Told

Nose In The Air: Flat On Your Face



Memory Verse

“God be merciful to me, a sinner.”

Luke 18:13 b

Introduction

What does “He has his nose in the air” mean? It could mean he walks around looking at the sky. (Let students discuss) If a person has their nose in the air, they are acting stuck up, snooty, unkind, judging. It means behaving as if you think you are better than other people and do not want to speak to them.

What does “fall flat on your face” mean? It could mean to trip on something and fall down on the ground. (Let students discuss) Or, it means they fail or make a mistake in an embarrassing way. Sometimes they deserve to fall flat on their face.

Today, Jesus’ short story with a big meaning has a twist in the “fall flat on your face” part of the saying. Today we will meet a humble man who falls flat on his face before God ... and God notices!

Flat On Your Face

Luke 18:9-14: Let’s peek in on a day in the life of Jesus. People saw Jesus getting ready to talk. They showed up in huge crowds. They knew they were going to hear a great story.

Trust me, in the days before television, video, DVR, youtube and i-pads, a good story teller was great entertainment. The audience was not going to be disappointed when Jesus said, “Let me tell you a story.”



Jesus was thinking about leaders who were pleased with themselves. They were proud of how good they were, how much they did for others and how perfect they lived. They **looked down their noses** at common people who made mistakes, disappointed family and friends and said "I'm sorry" all the time. It was an excellent time to tell a short story.

Jesus said, "Two guys went to the Temple to pray." One was a Pharisee, a religious teacher, an important and well known leader around town. He wore amazing clothes, lived in a beautiful house and made a big deal of how much he loved God. What a guy! Just ask him. He will tell you!



The other guy was a tax collector. Tax collectors worked for an enemy government. In those days, everyone hated the tax collector. He took hard earned money from people who could hardly afford to live. He cheated people. He took more money than he should and secretly kept it for himself. Awful, just awful.

The Pharisee posed with his head and arms in the air. He prayed really loud so everyone could hear; "Oh, God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, crooks, cheaters or, heaven forbid, like THIS TAX MAN! I fast twice a week and I give money to You on all my income." Everyone nodded and heard him shout his prayer. They must have thought, "Now this is a wise, wealthy leader we can follow."



Jesus said, "But over in the corner that tax man was slumped in the shadows. He held his face in his hands. He did not dare to look up to God to pray. He said, "God, give mercy. Forgive me, a sinner." He was flat on his face before God."

That was Jesus' short story. The people probably thought, "Go on. What's next? Tell us more." That was it. Sort of. Jesus had a big idea for them.



We Get It

Here are prayer facts we learn from Jesus' short story.

1. DON'T BE PROUD. Somebody said, "The gate of Heaven is so low that no one can enter except on his knees." Be humble when you bow your head in prayer. You are no better than anyone else and God loves all sinners.

That's what Jesus was saying to the crowd listening to His short story.

2. DON'T HATE ANYONE. Rich or poor, young or old, smart or not so smart...God listens to everyone. We are a great army of sinners kneeling before God, asking to be forgiven. If you have your **nose in the air**, God will not be able to work through you.

That's what Jesus was saying to the crowd listening to His short story.

3. KNOW GOD. God cannot answer prayers of people who do not take the time to get to know Him. God knows our hearts and loves our prayer time when we get to know Him better.

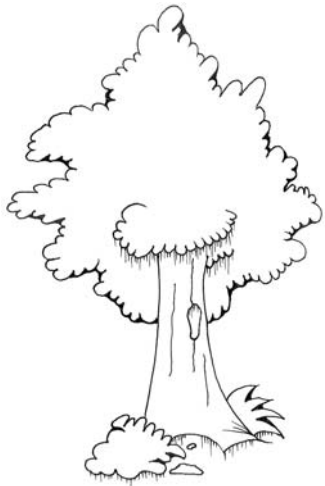
That's what Jesus was saying to the crowd listening to His short story.

PLEASE PURCHASE



Week #7:

Snack and Memory Verse



Up A Tree Café Snacks and Memory Verse

Memory Verse: I Am A Sinner

“God, be merciful to me, the sinner.”

Luke 18:13 b

Snack: Choose this snack or create your own treat.

Angel Food Cake/Devil's Food Cupcake and Fruit
Serve a slice of angel food cake.

Offer two or three types of fruit toppings and whipped topping.

Fruit: Peaches, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, bananas.

Memory Verse: I Am A Sinner

You are learning the do's and don'ts of life. “Do this and don't do that! Stay away from this person and make friends with that person. Eat this and don't eat that. Be a good person. Tell the truth and never tell a lie.” There are so many rules and regulations that it is no wonder we become like the ‘nose in the air’ religious man in Jesus short story.

The religious man thought he knew how to live a Godly life. If he was just religious enough, he would be the perfect person who pleased God.

The ‘flat on his face’ dishonest tax man knew he was not perfect. His salvation depended on the pure mercy of God. He begged God to forgive him and he was forgiven.

Jesus was so good at telling short stories with a lesson that many people turned their lives around listening to Him.

Today's verse reminds us that we are sinners and need God's mercy.



Week #7:

Games and Crafts



Leaf It To Me Games and Crafts

Memory Verse: I Am A Sinner

“God, be merciful to me, the sinner.”

Luke 18:13 b

Craft Idea:

Sun Catchers

Many stores offer easy to complete sun catchers that children of all ages can finish. One online company that offers Christian theme projects is Oriental Trading. www.orientaltrading.com

Check out their latest options which may include:

God's Love is So Big: IN-13673890 \$9.99/24 pieces

Cross: IN-56/9277 \$9.99/24 pieces

Butterfly: IN-48/2474

Christ Is Our Light Stand Up: IN-13721034 \$9.99/dozen
and more

What to Say:

Our goal is to become shining lights in a dark world. Let's keep working on our attitudes so other see Jesus in us. Don't be a 'nose in the air' person'. Be the kind of Christian who knows God loves us because we come to him as humble sinners.

Video Idea:

Prayer In The Temple

youtube videos are available that tell the story for children. Check out: Parable of The Publican and the Tax Collector (2:12 minutes) animated by RodTheNey. Other videos are available that tell the story well.



Week #8:

Story Time



Between Heaven and Earth Short Stories Jesus Told

Build A House: Rock, Paper, Scissors, Sand

Memory Verse

*“A good man has firm footing
but a crook will slip and fall.”*

Proverbs 10:9 llb

Introduction

I cannot imagine how hard it is to build a house. The ground may look firm but might have quick sand under it. Floods come without warning. Hot sun dries and destroys wood. Bugs and ‘critters’ crawl.

Some people in dangerous places build their homes in the air on long poles to keep enemies, animals and water away. Some villagers build their houses fast and are destroyed after a storm or robbed by evil people or entered by wild animals. Where a family builds their house makes a big difference.

Play quick games of “Rock, Paper, Scissors”
by dividing the group into teams of two.

1. Shape one hand into a fist (rock), two fingers (scissors) or flat palm (paper).
2. Make one gesture on the third count while saying “shoot”.
3. Figure out who won: Rock smashes scissors, scissors cut paper and paper covers rock.
4. Play two out of three.

68



Build A House: Rock, Paper, Scissors, Sand

Matthew 7:24-27: Here goes Jesus, telling a short story that has a big idea. Let's see what Jesus said. (Read the story aloud from the Bible.)

Jesus was a carpenter who knew about building houses and choosing places to live. In those days, builders had to think ahead when choosing a building site. During summer months, shade trees, gently flowing creeks and soft sand looked good. After the house was built and winter rains came, a sandy yard became a trap. Soon the house would wash away. Another family left homeless.

Jesus said a smart carpenter built his house on solid rock. Rain poured down, the river flooded, a tornado hit—but nothing moved that house. It was fixed to the rock.

The dumb carpenter built his house on the sandy beach. When a storm rolled in and the wave came up, it collapsed like a house of cards.

We can imagine His listeners nodding their heads thinking, "That would never be me. I would never build on a beach. Of course a rock is a better choice."

Jesus told more than a short story, He shared a big lesson. Build your life on these words. Don't just listen to God's Word and go your merry way. Work them into your life.

Be like the smart carpenter building your life on God's words. Do not be like the stupid carpenter who hears God's words and thinks the rules don't apply to him. Dangerous thinking. Dangerous life when problems come, when sickness surprises, when life doesn't go our way.

We Get It: The Only Sure Foundation Is Jesus

Supplies: One hand tool for each theme phrase. Attach a tag to each tool. Pass them around the group.

1. Foolish Builder/No Work: The foolish man did not want to be bothered digging into the rock. The rock was hard and unforgiving. Sand was beautiful and much less trouble.

It is easy to live lives without Jesus. The end is destruction. Jesus' way is safe and secure now and forever. Our life/house will stand firm!



2. Foolish Builder/Doesn't Think Ahead: The foolish carpenter did not take time to think about the weather six months from the day he finished the house.

Making poor choices today because it's easy, is not smart. Think ahead and build a firm foundation on the rock of Jesus for your future.

3. Wise Builder/Building Site: The smart carpenter looked over the properties and picked just the right spot to build a house. It took time, long walks, and talking to folks who knew the area.

Do you want to be a leader? Start by being a listener and a follower. Learn how to 'take on' the world as a Jesus follower by spending quality time in school and church.

4. Wise Builder/Work Hard: The wise carpenter worked hard to make the house strong. No short cuts!

Jump into action. Practice faith in Jesus until it is your whole life. Do not get lazy.

Conclusion

What was Jesus' short story really teaching?

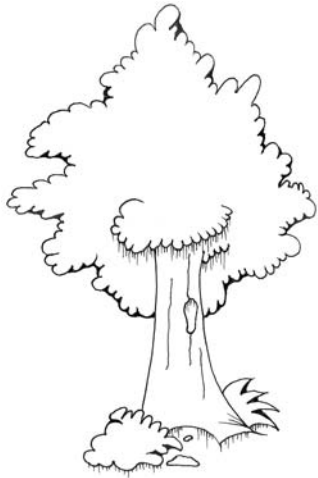
Obey God. It is the best thing we can do in life. Even if it seems hard at the time, we will live a happy life. Do not be like the foolish builder, building your life on cheap happiness. Be like the smart builder. Build your life on Jesus, Our Rock.



Week #8:

Snack and Memory Verse

Up A Tree Café Snacks and Memory Verse



Memory Verse

*“A good man has firm footing
but a crook will slip and fall.”*

Proverbs 10:9

Snack:

Choose this snack or create your own treat.

Bake or buy plain sugar coolies. Offer a variety of cookie decorations including frosting, m&m's, sprinkles, etc. Let students decorate their own cookies.

Students become builders of their own snack.

Serve cold milk with the cookies.

Or serve rock candy easily purchased at stores.

Let students take home their treat in a zip lock bag.

PLEASE PURCHASE

Memory Verse

While students 'build' their cookies, say today's verse aloud until everyone standing around the cookie table can say it and know it's meaning.

Today's short story by Jesus includes a wise builder, a foolish builder and houses that stood firm or fell over depending on where they were built.

Remember, we build our lives just like those houses. Be smart. Take your time and build your life on Jesus Christ.

Notes:



Week #8:

Games and Crafts

Leaf It To Me Games and Crafts

Memory Verse

*“A good man has firm footing
but a crook will slip and fall.”*

Proverbs 10:9 llb

Choose a game, craft or video
featuring the story of the wise and foolish builders.

Craft Project Idea: Sand and Rock
S&S arts and crafts www.ssw.com offers several sand crafts that are quick and easy. Seashell Sand Art Bottle Kit (makes 12) GP1953 \$15.99.

Gather pebbles or hand sized garden rocks. Let students paint their rock to take home as a garden rock at their house.

Game Idea: Rock, Paper, Scissors
Play quick games of “Rock, Paper, Scissors”
by dividing the group into teams of two.

1. Shape one hand into a fist (rock), two fingers (scissors) or flat palm (paper).
2. Make one gesture on the third count while saying “shoot”.
3. Figure out who won: Rock smashes scissors, scissors cut paper and paper covers rock.
4. Play two out of three. Award a few fun prizes (Hershey kisses, smarties candies, rock candy.)

Video Idea: Rock and Sand
Several youtube videos tell the story for children.

Check out: House on Rock and Sand, Robert Kendell’s scientific experiment (2:32 minutes). There are many other youtube options.



Week #9:

Story Time



Between Heaven and Earth Short Stories Jesus Told

Forgiveness: Not For Cowards!

Memory Verse

“Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.”

Matthew 6:12

Introduction

Supplies: Pennies. Bring as many pennies as possible to toss on the floor. Know the exact amount of money on the floor.

Today there is treasure on the floor. Sit in a circle around the treasure. Some might think this treasure is not worth much. Others may think it is a lot of money. It depends on your own eyes. **Ask:** How much money do you think is on the floor? What could you buy with this money? Is it worth the effort to pick it up?

Play a quick game of tossing pennies into containers lined up along one wall.

Forgiveness: Not For Cowards!

Matthew 18:23-35: Jesus couldn't help Himself. He loved to tell stories and people loved to hear His stories. He taught important lessons about forgiveness.

Some folks are nasty on purpose. Do they deserve to be forgiven? The surprise is that Jesus said we must forgive mean people so we can be forgiven of our sins. How can this be? His short story:

A king asked his leaders to give a report on how much money they owed him. One man owed the king **fifty million silver coins** (more than the budget of the entire kingdom!). The man was not able to pay this awful bill.



The king decided to sell the man, his wife and his children into slavery. They did that in those days. He decided to sell the man's home and all his things to get a small portion of the money.

You can imagine the shock! The leader got on his knees and begged for more time. "Have mercy on me and I will pay every cent I owe!" The king felt sorry and forgave the entire debt. The man was very happy to hear the good news.

But... as the forgiven leader was leaving the palace he met a man who owed him **one hundred silver coins**. He grabbed the man, choked him and said, "Pay me what you owe me!" The poor man got on his knees and begged, "Have pity on me and I will pay you back."

But... the leader refused. He had the other man put in jail until he could pay what he owed.

But... other people found out what happened. They felt sorry for the poor man in jail and told the king. The king called the leader before him. "You are an evil man! When you begged for mercy, I forgave the entire debt. Don't you think you should show pity to someone else like I showed to you?" The king was angry. He ordered the leader to be jailed until he could pay the entire debt.

Jesus warned the people, "That is how my Father in Heaven will treat you if you don't forgive each of my followers with all your heart!"

We Get It: Forgive!

Jesus' short story was important. He said it often: **A person must forgive to be forgiven.**

"He who does not forgive his fellow man cannot hope that God will forgive him." "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (Matthew 5:7)
"If you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:14-15)

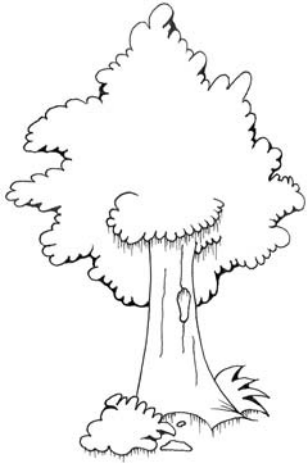
Because God has forgiven us, we must forgive others for smaller things they do to us. Hey! I didn't make up the rule. God did!



Week #9:

Snack and Memory Verse

Up A Tree Café Snacks and Memory Verse



Memory Verse

“Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.”

Matthew 6:12

Snack : Choose this snack idea or create your own snack.

Fruit Salad

Make a large fruit salad. Serve in small bowls or disposable cups. Mini muffins or mini doughnuts make a delicious side treat.

Serve an orange juice punch by mixing orange juice with ginger ale or 7-Up for a bit of sparkle.

Memory Verse:

Play a Table Game

Print verse words on the tops of individual paper plates. Place them upside down along the table. Students turn them over and put them together in the correct order. Say the verse until everyone can say it alone. Mix up the plates and do it faster and faster.

Notes:



Forgive us
our debts

as we
forgive
our
debtors."

Matthew 6:12



Week #9:

Games and Crafts

Leaf It To Me Games and Crafts

Memory Verse

“Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.”

Matthew 6:12

Choose a game, craft or video featuring the story of the king and the debtor.

Jesus talked about a king who was forgiving and a leader who was not forgiving. What happens is a lesson for all of us to learn.

We have been forgiven if we accept Jesus as our Savior. Jesus died on a cross so that we can be forgiven. Think about how much you have been forgiven. Jesus asks that we forgive the tiny sins of others toward us because we have been forgiven so much!

Craft Idea:

Cross

www.swww.com offers many easy to complete cross projects. Browse their online web site to find the perfect choice. These may be available:

Sparkling Tile Cross Craft Kit (makes 24) RE412	\$24.99
Papier Mache Cross Box (pack of 6) PS1414	\$8.99
Foam Cross Kit (makes 12) CE4469	\$5.99

Game Idea:

Large bed sheet and Balls

Place all the balls on the sheet. Use it like a parachute. Bounce the balls. Time each small group to see how long they can keep all balls bouncing without falling off. Test to see how high they can bounce. Test to see if they can bounce all off the quickest. Lots of fun and laughter follow!!!

Video Idea:

Forgiveness

www.youtube.com Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (1:42 minutes).

77



Week #10:

Story Time



Between Heaven and Earth Short Stories Jesus Told

Memory Verse

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart.”

Proverbs 3:5

Introduction:

Fair/Not Fair

Did you ever play a game where someone was cheating?
Were you the one cheating, hoping no one would catch you?

What does PLAYING FAIR mean?

Do you PLAY FAIR?

Jesus' Short Story:

Fair/Not Fair

Matthew 20:1-15: A farmer hired some vineyard workers early one morning. They decided on a fair pay for the day's work and away they went.

Mid morning the farmer saw some guys sitting along the road doing nothing. He offered them the vineyard job and let them work. Then at noon and again at 3:00 PM, the farmer found even more guys who wanted to work. More men showed up at 5:00 PM to work for a short time.

At the end of the day, every worker got the same paycheck. From early to late, workers earned the same money. Then the 'fun' began! Shouting and yelling could be heard: "Not Fair"! The 'early birds' whined that they worked all day in the hot sun, gave their all for the farmer and worked more hours than the guys who showed up later. How could those lazy bums get the same money? It was quite a scene of 'fair/not fair'.



The farmer listened to their complaints. He calmly replied, "Friends, I didn't cheat you. I paid you exactly what we agreed on. Take your money and go. What business is it of yours if I want to pay them the same that I paid you? Don't I have the right to spend my own money the way I choose? Don't be jealous if I want to be generous."

We Get It

Jesus was a great story teller. People understood exactly what happened. They were thinking, "Yeah, that wasn't fair at all!"

Jesus ended His story with a zinger. "Who is to say what's fair and unfair? It's the farmer's choice." Jesus had a bigger idea in mind. Let's think about it.

1. Some people accept Jesus when they are young children. They serve the Lord and work hard to please God for long lives.
2. Some people say no to Jesus until they are older. Suddenly, faith in Christ makes perfect sense and they ask Jesus to be their Savior. They have a few healthy years to serve the Lord.
3. Some people say no to Jesus until the day they are dying. They cry, "Jesus! Save me...a sinner!" And He does! Away they go to Heaven with moments to spare!

Jesus said the people who come to Him last will have just as much joy in Heaven as the people who serve Him since childhood. Why should we care that God wants to be generous to someone who figures out salvation on their own time line? We agree to serve the Lord with our lives. Do what God expects no matter what others do.

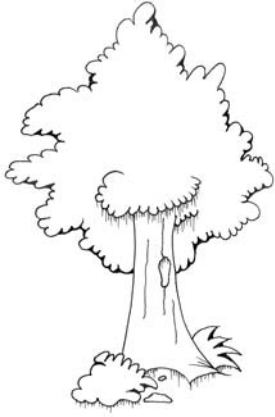
WARNING: Do not think you have all the time in the world to accept Jesus as your Savior. Once Jesus touches your mind and heart, that is the perfect time to become His follower.

Close In Prayer



Week #10:

Snack and Memory Verse



Up A Tree Café Snack and Memory Verse

Memory Verse

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart.”

Proverbs 3:5

Snack:

Choose this snack or create your own treat.

GRAPE JELLY TOAST

Serve warm toast with grape jelly toasted fresh in the room.

Beverage: Hot Chocolate and mini marshmallows.

Add A Treat: Serve a variety of fresh grapes on or off the vine.

Today's short story parable takes place in a grape vineyard. Day workers were used to bring in the ripe grape harvest. The harvest had to be picked quickly. Workers were hired day by day, several hours at a time.

The grape jelly on our toast reminds us of the vineyard grapes Jesus mentioned in His short story. **Remember:** A parable is an earthly story with a Heavenly meaning. Always look for the Heavenly meaning.

Memory Verse:

Proverbs 3:5

Trust in the Lord
With all your heart.
Proverbs 3:5

Say the verse several times. Today is a good day to review all the verses.

Notes:



Week #10:

Games and Crafts



Leaf It To Me Games and Crafts

Memory Verse

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart."

Proverbs 3:5

Choose a game, craft or video
featuring the story of the vineyard workers.

Game Idea:

The Great Marshmallow Race

Secret: This relay shows an unfair advantage for one team. Do not respond to complaints about the distance unfairness. Smile and let the relay run its' course.

Supplies: Lots of mini marshmallows!

Rules For Team One: One person tosses marshmallows to each team member in line until that person catches one in his/her mouth and joins the tosser at the end of the course. The tossing distance is FIVE GIANT STEPS from the team. Get organized...NOW!

Rules For Team Two: One person tosses marshmallows to each team member in line until that person catches on in his/her mouth and joins the tosser at the end of the course. The tossing distance will be ONE SMALL STEP from the team. Get organized...NOW!

The first team to complete and cross the finish line is the winner. GO!

When the relay is done, seat the students and explain the FAIR/UNFAIR Parable from Matthew 20:1-15.

Video Idea:

www.youtube.com

Parable of the Workers In the Vineyard

Choose one of the short videos for children.



Week #11:

Story Time



Between Heaven and Earth

Short Stories Jesus Told

Hidden Treasure: Pricey Pearl!

Memory Verse

*“For where your treasure is,
there your heart will be also.”*

Matthew 6:21

Introduction

Bring 3 or more interesting items (treasures) to display. One item can be an antique treasure like china, an oil painting or expensive looking jewelry. (If it includes pearls, that's great!) One item can be a fascinating book, toy or game. One item can be delicious candy, cookies. Discuss the treasures.

I brought treasures from home. Which one is your favorite? Why? If you had my treasures at your house, where would you keep them? Would you show other people? Who? How much money do you think I paid for each one? Name some items you or your parents own that you think of as real “treasures” or collections that might be valuable someday.

Do you notice that we have different items that are treasures to us? No one thinks of money as a treasure unless it is a collectible old coin. People and precious memories are attached to items that are real treasures in families.

Hidden Treasure:

Matthew 13:44-46: A crowd gathered on the Mount of Olives so Jesus sat down to tell them a short story. They loved hearing Jesus tell them about God's kingdom.

Pricey Pearl!

82



Jesus spoke hard words to a rich, young man. "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you own and give to the poor and you will have treasure in Heaven; and come, follow me." The rich, young man could not part with his treasure. He did not want to be poor. It was a deal breaker. He would not follow Jesus. Jesus told the people that God's treasures are better than treasures that grow old and wear out and have little meaning.

Most people listening to Jesus were poor. Treasures were few and far between. If someone found a treasure like gold, silver, pottery, fabrics, they hid it from people who would steal. If armies marched through town, the soldiers would never find a treasure buried in a corn field or tucked under a tree root. Sometimes the owner forgot where the treasure was buried or died before digging it up to use it. Others would find it and celebrate!

THE FIELD: Jesus told two short stories about treasure. He said God's kingdom is like a treasure hidden in a field for years. A trespasser sneaks into the field and digs. Lo and behold, he finds the forgotten treasure. The man is thrilled!

What a find! He knows the field belongs to another man. He goes home, sells everything he has and convinces the owner to sell the field to him. In the end, the man owns the field and the hidden treasure! What a happy day!

Jesus had their attention! It could be that the people on the Mount of Olives clapped and cheered for the good luck of the new field owner and treasure! Maybe they thought, "As soon as Jesus is done speaking, I'm going to get my shovel and start digging next door."

THE PEARL: Jesus said God's kingdom is like a jewelry sales person looking for the best pearls to buy and resell to customers. It is a hard job. Looking at jewelry every day gets boring. One day the person finds a huge pearl, a beautiful pearl, a pearl of great price. Why hasn't anyone noticed it? He sells everything he owns and buys that gorgeous pearl! What a happy day!



We Get It!

What was Jesus telling the crowd on the Mount of Olives? The kingdom of Heaven is of huge value. Both short stories are about men who sold everything they had.

1. SALVATION! The hidden treasure and the pearl are the salvation Jesus offers. We cannot pay for salvation by selling all our treasures. We are willing to give up everything to have it.

It is like trading a bag of trash for a ton of diamonds!

2. HIDDEN! God's truth is often missed by people. It isn't how smart a person is or how rich or how powerful. We must hear, see and understand what Jesus says.

Only God can help us understand.

3. FIND! When treasures are found, the finders quit looking for other treasures. They found the biggest and the best. Jesus is THE Treasure! The great price was paid by Jesus to save us for God's kingdom.

Jesus, our Treasure, died to pay the price for our sins.

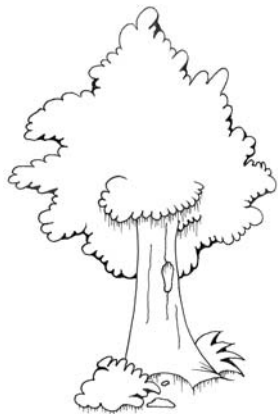
Close In Prayer



Week #11:

Snack and Memory Verse

Up A Tree Café Snacks and Memory Verse



Memory Verse

*“For where your treasure is,
there your heart will be also.”*

Matthew 6:21

Snack: Choose this snack or create a treat.

The parable of hidden treasure is the perfect opportunity to make a treat with a small treasure hidden inside. Cupcakes with a gummy bear tucked inside before adding frosting is a fun surprise.

Memory Verse: Hidden Treasure

Teach the verse by hiding the words on slips of colorful paper shaped like hearts. Hide them around the room. Search!

Put the words in the right order and say the verse aloud until everyone can say it from memory.

Notes:



Week #11:

Games and Crafts



Leaf It To Me Games and Crafts

Memory Verse

*“For where your treasure is,
there your heart will be also.”*

Matthew 6:21

Choose a game, craft or video
featuring the story of the vineyard workers.

Game Idea:

Treasure Hunt

Place lots of tiny items on a large tray. Cover the tray with a towel. Let the group look at the items for a specific amount of time. Cover the tray. See how many items they can remember.

OPTION: Take away one item in secret and see if they can discover which treasure is missing.

Craft Idea:

Sparkling Tile Cross

www.ssw.com S&S arts and crafts offers a Christian craft option that is quick and fun. The sparkling tile cross craft kit (makes 24) looks like brightly colored gems when completed. Check this idea and others at their web site. RE412 \$32.99 to see if still available.

Video Idea:

Hidden Treasure/Pearl

There are several youtube videos available that tell the parable for children.

Check out: “The Pearl of Great Price” Michael Yeager animated song and story with brief pastor’s words at the end. (3:52)



Week #12:

Story Time

Between Heaven and Earth Short Stories Jesus Told

Get Ready: Ready Or Not!



Memory Verse

*“Be on the alert for you do not know
which day your Lord is coming.”*

Matthew 24:42

Introduction

SUPPLIES: 2 Flashlights. One with batteries, one without batteries. Let's say we are going to take a walk in the woods tonight. We have two nice flashlights. Because it is getting dark, we grab just one and run out the door. (Hand lights to 2 students.) Try your lights. Which one do you want?

Be Prepared! Whether going into the jungle or going on a trip, it is wise to be prepared. Think ahead and get ready for any emergency situation. Ask:

1. How can you prepare for dinner?
2. How can you prepare for school?
3. How can you prepare for church?
4. How can you prepare for a house fire?
5. How can you prepare for a new pet?
6. How can you prepare for...Heaven?



Get Ready:

Matthew 25:1-13: Jesus' short story is a happy and sad reminder to be prepared. Jesus said God's kingdom is like ten young girls going to a wedding....really? How can that be true? Let's find out what He meant.

Weddings were a big deal when Jesus was telling this story. A lot of work went into wedding preparations. Food, clothing, timing, space, music...everything was important and weddings often lasted five days!

Ten young girls took their oil lamps and went to greet the groom. It was a custom to walk from the groom's house to the bride's house to get the party started. No one knew when the groom would arrive so everyone left early to get a good spot on the street and get into the party early.

Five were silly girls and five were smart girls. The silly girls took lamps but no extra oil. The groom would come soon. No extra oil needed. The smart girls took jars of oil to keep their lamps lit. The groom didn't show up and they all fell asleep.

In the middle of the night someone yelled, "Hey! Here comes the groom! Go out and greet him!" The ten girls got up and lit their lamps. The silly girls said, "Our lamps are going out; lend us your oil." The smart girls said, "There won't be enough oil for all of us. Go buy your own."

While they were busy going to the store the groom arrived. When everyone greeted him, the guests danced into the wedding hall and locked the door.

Much later the silly girls showed up and knocked on the door. "We're here! Let us in!" The person in charge called back, "Do I know you? I don't think I know you." He would not let them in the door and they missed the whole wedding. What a great disappointment for those silly girls.

We Get It!

One promise Jesus made is that someday He is coming back to take all believers to Heaven. His promise has not happened yet. Instead of dying, there will be a day with a trumpet will sound and Jesus will show up in the clouds to get all of us! Wow!



There is one little thing He didn't mention. He didn't tell us the year, the month, the day, the hour, the moment when this would happen. Everyone expects Jesus to return at any moment. Not knowing the day or the hour He is coming certainly makes us be prepared every day.

Some people say, "I'll get around to serving Jesus another day. I'm too busy right now". Then they discover the time for getting ready is done. They have not made their lives count for God and they are left out of Heaven.

Smart people know Jesus promised to come back someday and they do everything they can to be ready. They accept Jesus as their Savior. They read God's Word, pray and serve Him every day with their whole heart. When Jesus comes, they are totally ready to go with Him to the party in Heaven!

"Stay alert as if the Lord will come tomorrow, but prepare as if he will not come in your lifetime."

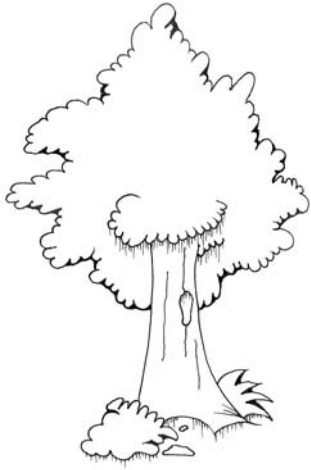
Don't stop living a full, happy life.
Get an education.
Serve the Lord.
Do what you always do.
Keep your ears and eyes open for His return.
It will be a happy day!

Close In Prayer



Week #12:

Snacks and Memory Verse



Up A Tree Café Snacks and Memory Verse

Memory Verse

*“Be on the alert for you do not know
which day your Lord is coming.”*

Matthew 24:42

Snack Idea:

Wedding Snack

Serve a snack that reminds the students of going to a wedding.

White cake with white frosting and flower decorations.

Or, a colorful fruit salad in clear cups.

Or, fancy tea sandwiches and cool drinks.

Memory Verse:

Be Prepared

Be on the alert
For you do not know
Which day
Your Lord is coming.
Matthew 24:42

Say the verse until everyone can say it by themselves. Reward them with one Hershey Kiss or similar happy treat.

Notes:



Week #12:

Games and Crafts



Leaf It To Me Games and Crafts

Memory Verse

*“Be on the alert for you do not know
which day your Lord is coming.”*

Matthew 24:42

Game Idea:

Hokey Pokey

One fun dance game people play at weddings is to sing and dance the “Hokey Pokey”. If you are familiar with this tradition, put your left arm, right arm, left leg, right leg, back side and whole self in and out while having a joyful party atmosphere just like a wedding.

Craft Idea:

Paper Lantern

www.swww.com A great reminder of today’s parable is to make neon paper lanterns from the craft kits at s&S arts and crafts online store.

Video Idea:

Parable of the Ten Virgins

www.youtube.com Choose one of the many child friendly options available. There are animated clips.

Notes:



Week #13:

Story Time

Between Heaven and Earth Story Time

Tiny Beginnings:

Mustard is Yellow

Memory Verse

*“If you have faith like a grain of a mustard seed,
you can say to this mountain,
‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move.
Nothing will be impossible for you.”*

Matthew 17:20

Introduction

Supplies: Mustard seeds. Let every student hold several seeds.

Look what I brought! Mustard seeds. Do you know anything about mustard seeds? Hold out your hand. I will carefully give you a few seeds so you can see for yourself. So tiny...1/64th of an inch. The leaves are ground into, you guessed it, mustard. The tree makes salts. People use the branches as toothbrushes. It prevents tooth decay and helps tooth aches.

Whether you love it or hate it, everyone knows about mustard. We enjoy mustard on our hot dog, mustard in our potato and macaroni salads, mustard on our bologna sandwich. There is yellow mustard, brown mustard, dijon mustard, spicy mustard.

The tiny seed is planted in the ground. As time goes by, the seed sprouts and grows to be a tree over 20 feet tall and over 20 feet wide. It grows all over the world. Now that is amazing!



Tiny Beginnings:

Matthew 13:31: Jesus spoke to a group of people as they sat with Him on the Mount of Olives. His short, short story began: "The kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field."

Imagine the people looking up to the sky, nodding their heads. "Yes, yes. We have planted those tiny seeds. Our mustard tree is about 10 feet tall today and still growing." They understood Jesus' word picture.

The people around Him had so little faith in God. He said if they only knew it took just the amount of faith as a **tiny grain of mustard**, they could look at a mountain, say 'move' and it would move! That is a huge statement. Folks still didn't get it so Jesus said, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you." Luke 17:6

We Get It!

Look at our mustard seeds. Think about your own faith in God. Is your faith a tiny beginning? Are you just now learning how to pray? Are you thinking about what it means to believe in Jesus as your Savior? That is where everyone begins...young or old.

Trust that God is **ALL POWERFUL** (Omnipotent), **ALWAYS PRESENT** (Omnipresent) and **ALL KNOWING** (Omniscient). That's the God we serve! You can depend on Him. That is Faith.

"Faith is the confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Hebrews 11:1

Remember this the next time you are tempted to forget God is willing to answer prayer:

"I've got a mustard seed and I'm not afraid to use it!"

Close In Prayer.



Week #13:

Snacks and Memory Verse

Up A Tree Café Snacks and Memory Verse

Memory Verse

*“If you have faith like a grain of a mustard seed,
you can say to this mountain,
‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move.
Nothing will be impossible for you.”*

Matthew 17:20

Snack Idea: Choose this snack or make your own treat.

Hot dogs or large, soft pretzels cut into small pieces. Provide dishes of mustard, ketchup, ranch dip and other dipping options as desired.

Add potato chips and a cold drink.

Even if mustard is not a favorite, they can eat the hot dog/pretzel pieces and see the mustard.

Memory Verse: **A Mustard Seed Faith**

Give everyone samples of mustard seed.

See if they can isolate just one seed.

Talk about how small one mustard seed it and how tiny faith can make a difference when we pray. God wants to answer our prayers.

We must have enough faith to pray!

As time allows, review all scripture verses from the WILD THINGS series.

Notes:



Week #13:

Games and Crafts



Leaf It To Me Games and Crafts

Memory Verse

*“If you have faith like a grain of a mustard seed,
you can say to this mountain,
‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move.
Nothing will be impossible for you.”*

Matthew 17:20

Choose a game, craft or video
featuring the story of the vineyard workers.

Game Idea:

Faith Isn't A Game

Team students in pairs. Blindfold one and ask the other student to guide the blindfolded friend through an obstacle course of chairs, tables and other available items. After a few minutes, trade places.

Craft Idea:

Sand Art

www.ssw.com Consider a colorful sand art project. While not mustard seeds, sand grains are small. Students fill small containers with layers of colored sand.

www.orientaltrading.com

Check out Mustard Seed Necklaces and Parable of the Mustard Seed Beads

Video Idea:

Mustard Seed Faith

www.youtube.com Find a child friendly short video that tells the short story of the tiny mustard seed that teaches about faith. There are many great choices.

