



THE SCOTTISH SLEUTHS

..... and

THE CASE OF THE PUZZLING PARABLES

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM
TEACHER'S MANUAL: 4TH - 5TH GRADES



JUNIOR
VBS02JTM

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JUNIOR TEACHER'S MANUAL

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The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®)

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ESV Text Edition: 2007

Printed in the United States of America



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Scottish Sleuths Vacation Bible School curriculum series. Each year, our Scottish Super Sleuths, Angus McTavish and Professor Dabney Thornwell, are called in to solve a Biblical “case” with the help of the VBS children. The detective characters symbolically portray the message that we want the students to learn to become thoughtful investigators of Biblical truth.

This year, our case presents a study of twelve of Jesus’ “Kingdom” parables. Each daily grouping of parables is arranged in such a way to teach the children a particular aspect of the Kingdom of God. The children will learn how God’s Kingdom rules and operates in this world, and what the response of Kingdom-dwellers should be.

Curriculum Distinctives

1. Focuses on the verbal transmission of Bible stories (The art of storytelling).
2. Emphasizes class discussion in an open question and answer format.
3. Age-appropriate.
4. Maximizes the small amount of time with profound truths without trying to be too theologically elaborate.
5. Reduces the amount of “busy work.”
6. Does not overload with too much content or too many activities.

Vacation Bible School is a ministry of the local church that is intended to be primarily evangelistic in nature. The curriculum presents the gospel message from God’s Word in the context of loving relationships between

teachers and their students. Therefore, it is vital for each teacher to remember that VBS is all about:

- a) Showing the love of Christ to each one of your students;
- b) Faithfully and clearly presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ from God’s Word; and,
- c) Praying for God’s Spirit to do His sovereign work in the lives of the VBS children.

Please feel free to use your creative energy to mold this curriculum to your own personality and the learning styles of your particular students. Remember that the end goal of all our teaching is to bring students face-to-face with the gospel of Jesus Christ with full dependence on His Spirit to change hearts and minds.

On Classroom Setup

The most important thing to remember about your classroom setup is that it should be conducive to learning. Arrange the room in such a way that the students can effectively hear and see the teacher(s) and have classroom discussion. Also, post the Scripture Memory, Application Points and other visual aids that will focus the minds of the children on God’s truths.

Don’t worry about decorating according to the theme—but you are welcome to be as creative as possible. The priority is making the room a place that helps the children learn.



OVERVIEW OF DAILY LESSONS

THE SOWER DAY ONE

Theme: God's Kingdom comes by the **GOSPEL MINISTRY.**

Bible Text: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Scripture Memory: Mark 1:14-15

THE LOST COIN, LOST SHEEP, LOST SON DAY TWO

Theme: God's Kingdom **GOES AFTER THE MISSING.**

Bible Text: Luke 15:1-24

Scripture Memory: Luke 19:9-10

UNFORGIVING SERVANT, VINEYARD WORKERS DAY THREE

Theme: God's Kingdom shows forth His **GRACE AND MERCY.**

Bible Text: Matthew 18:21-35; 20:1-16

Scripture Memory: Ephesians 2:4-5

THE HIDDEN TREASURE, PEARL, GREAT SUPPER DAY FOUR

Theme: God's Kingdom demands **GIVING ALL OF MYSELF.**

Bible Text: Matthew 13:44-46; Luke 14:16-24

Scripture Memory: Matthew 22:37-38

THE SEED, MUSTARD SEED, YEAST DAY FIVE

Theme: God's Kingdom is **GROWING AND MULTIPLYING.**

Bible Text: Mark 4:26-32; Matthew 13:33

Scripture Memory: Review all memory verses



SCRIPTURE MEMORY

DAY ONE: MARK 1:14-15

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

DAY TWO: LUKE 19:9-10

And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

DAY THREE: EPHESIANS 2:4-5

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

DAY FOUR: MATTHEW 22:37-38

And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.”

DAY FIVE: REVIEW ALL MEMORY WORK

Note: All Scripture Memory passages are from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless otherwise noted.



DAILY SCHEDULE

9:00 - 9:15	_____	OPENING PROGRAM
9:15 - 9:45	_____	WELCOME/ICEBREAKER BIBLE LESSON
9:45 - 10:05	_____	MUSIC
10:05 - 10:25	_____	CRAFTS
10:25 - 10:45	_____	BIBLE APPLICATION
10:45 - 11:05	_____	RECREATION
11:05 - 11:25	_____	SNACK TIME
11:25 - 11:45*	_____	BIBLE MEMORY
11:45 - NOON	_____	CLOSING PROGRAM

**Day Five Only: 11:30 - Noon
Closing Celebration*



GOD'S KINGDOM COMES BY THE GOSPEL MINISTRY

DAY ONE

BIBLE TEXT

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

MEMORY VERSE

Mark 1:14-15

SCRIPTURE TRUTH

The faithful proclamation of the gospel never fails to bring forth fruit for the Kingdom of God.

LESSON AIM

For the students to understand that (1) the gospel builds the Kingdom of God, and, (2) the gospel of Jesus Christ penetrates hearts that have been made receptive by God's Spirit.



OPENING PROGRAM

The opening program includes a skit to introduce the day's theme, a time of singing, and announcements. After the opening program, go with your students back to your classroom.



WELCOME

Introduce yourself, your co-teacher(s), and your classroom helpers. Greet the boys and girls warmly, working diligently to memorize their names. Make sure each student has a name tag.



ICEBREAKER

[Note: Each day's icebreaker is intended to: 1) help build relationships between leaders and students, and between students themselves; and, 2) help "warm up" the students so that they will engage in conversation about the Bible Lesson.]

Today's question: "What is the best gift you have ever received?"

Have all students answer. Make sure to begin with your own answer to this question. Encourage the students to listen closely to each answer. After everyone has named their favorite gifts, give a couple of students the opportunity to repeat back each person's name and best gift from memory.

Transition: *One of the best gifts we have been given is God's Word. It brings much more joy to our lives than any earthly gift that we can ever receive. We will spend all week enjoying that gift together!*



BIBLE LESSON

[Note: The "Bible Lesson" time is intended to: 1) Allow the students to read and hear God's Word and gain understanding of what it says; 2) Raise questions in their minds that will be discussed during the "Bible Application" time.]

Materials: Bibles, one per student. [All in-text references are from the ESV.] **You will also need a whiteboard to chart this parable with the students' help.**

Introduction: *This week we will be studying some of the parables the Lord Jesus taught while He was on earth. A parable is a verbal picture or story which teaches a lesson. Jesus told these stories, taken from real life situations, to teach his followers lessons about the Kingdom of God. These parables might be easy to understand, but their application to our lives may sometimes be more challenging to grasp. So, let's be good Bible detectives and begin by reading one of Jesus' most foundational parables.*

Have all of the students turn in their Bibles to Matthew 13.

Read Matthew 13:1-3.

¹ That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ² And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat

and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³ And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow.

Discussion: *Who was Jesus speaking to?* [Large crowds.] *How did He manage to teach such a large crowd?* [He got into a boat, while the people sat on the shore.] *What real life situation is Jesus telling a story about?* [A sower (farmer) who is planting his crops.]

Let's continue. Read verses 4-9.

⁴ And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵ Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, ⁶ but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷ Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸ Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹ He who has ears, let him hear."

Discussion: *What four places did seeds fall on? List these on the board.* [The path; rocky places; among thorns; good soil.] *What happened to the seeds that fell on each spot? Write these answers on the board next to each type of soil.* [The Path: Birds ate them; Rocks: Scorched and withered plants; Thorns: Plants were choked; Good Soil: Healthy, abundant crops.] *Where was the only place where seeds produced a healthy crop?* [The good soil.]

Summary: *After Jesus told this parable, His disciples questioned Him concerning what parables were all about. Jesus then took the opportunity to not only teach them about parables, but also explained this one to them (and us). Let's read the meaning of this parable together...*

Read verses 18-21.

¹⁸ "Hear then the parable of the sower: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. ²⁰ As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, ²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away.

Discussion (Write answers on the board, continuing the parable chart): *Who does the seed that falls on the path represent?* [A person who does not understand the gospel.] *Who is the seed that falls on the rocky places?* [A person who falls away because he has no root.]

Read verses 22-23.

²² As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. ²³ As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

Discussion (Answers on the board, finishing the chart): *Who does the seed that fell among the thorns represent?* [Unfruitful person who is choked by the worries of this life.] *Who is the seed that fell on good soil?* [The Christian who produces fruit.]

Conclusion: *We will apply this parable to our own lives during our Bible Application time.*

Close this time with prayer, thanking God for His Word.



MUSIC

Escort your children to the Music Area. The Music Team will lead the class in a time of singing and learning the various VBS songs. **Use this time for a break.**



CRAFTS

Go with your students to the Crafts Area. The VBS Crafts Team will lead your students in a crafts project. You may also use this time to prepare for Bible Application time.



BIBLE APPLICATION

[Note: The Bible Application time is intended to help the students think about how the Bible Lesson applies to their own lives, here and now. The focus is on providing a practical emphasis using the key concepts of the lesson. For visual reminders, post these points in the classroom as you present them.]

Refer to the chart you made during Bible Lesson time.

Application Point 1:

Your response to the gospel depends on the state of your heart

In our parable today, remember that the “seed” represents the gospel—the Good News of Jesus Christ—being preached to all different sorts of people. The “soils” represent the various types of human hearts.

*What did the seed that falls “along the path” represent? [A person who does not listen to the gospel.] We might say that this person has a “hard heart.” What does this mean to you? **Allow time for responses.***

*What did the seed that falls on “rocky places” represent? [A person who falls away because he has no root.] We might say that this person has a “shallow heart” with a very “superficial” religion. Why does the “shallow” person not become a true Christian? **Lead the students to talk about how hardships and struggles pull the shallow person away from Christ. The lack of depth prevents any conviction or stability.***

*What did the seed that falls among the “thorns” represent? [A person who is unfruitful due to being choked by the worries of the world.] This person looks like a Christian but cannot truly become one because of the worries of the world. What are some worries that prevent people from committing their lives to Christ? **Allow time for answers.***

So, we see in this parable that the state of our hearts makes all the difference! The gospel stays the same. It is preached to all types of people. But, a hard, shallow, or choked heart will not respond to the gospel!

Application Point 2:

A receptive heart will hear and understand the gospel

*Who here has heard the gospel preached? Where have you heard it preached? **Allow***

answers. *Who has taught you the Good News of what Jesus Christ has done for His people? Allow time for answers (pastors, teachers, parents, etc.).*

Now, remember that all of the different “soils” or “hearts” heard the same gospel. What made the “good soil” different? [Help them understand this key concept: The good soil represents a person who not only heard, but understood the gospel.]

So a heart that properly receives the gospel is one which understands it. To understand the gospel means that your whole being—your mind, will, and emotions—is affected and CHANGED by the gospel.

What happens when a heart truly understands and receives the Good News of Jesus Christ? [Spiritual growth occurs.] So, according to this parable, how do you know if you really understand the gospel? Lead students to discuss the spiritual “fruit” that is produced—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control, perseverance, etc.

Application Point 3:

The faithful proclamation of the gospel never fails to bring forth fruit

This parable teaches us one more important truth about the gospel and God’s Kingdom. Do you remember what happened when the seed fell on good soil? What did it produce? [It produced a huge crop—100, 60, and 30 times what was sown.] So, what does this say about the gospel of Jesus Christ? Lead the students to discuss how powerful the gospel is: how it seems small and insignificant (like a seed), yet produces changed lives, etc.

The important thing to remember, boys and

girls, is that it is God who establishes His Kingdom through the ministry of the gospel.

The essential combination of the gospel being preached AND hearts that have been prepared by the Holy Spirit to receive the gospel produces fruitful Christian lives in the Kingdom! So, what two things are necessary for the Kingdom of God to be produced? [The gospel and a changed heart—good soil.]

Isn’t it great to know that God allows us to hear the gospel and then prepares His children’s hearts to respond and grow in grace? You may also want to take time here to share how the gospel has changed your life.

Close in prayer, thanking God for the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ that penetrates hearts that are ready to hear and understand the truth.



RECREATION

Go with your children to the Recreation Area. The Recreation Team will be responsible for your students during this time. **This is your break.**



SNACK

Have a volunteer lead the class in a prayer of thanks for the food and drink. Make sure the students respect each other while eating and clean up after themselves.



BIBLE MEMORY

Begin by reminding the students the importance of memorizing God's Word:

1. We "hide it in our hearts" so we will turn away from sin and obey God.
2. It changes the way we think—focusing on pleasing God instead of pleasing self.
3. It helps us to know Jesus more and love Jesus more.

If time, relate to the students how Scripture memory has impacted your life.

Say: Today's memory verse reinforces what we learned today about the Kingdom of God coming by the gospel ministry. Jesus preached the gospel of the Kingdom, the Good News, and then commanded the people to do what? [Respond by repenting (turning from their sins) and believing the Good News!]

Write this passage out on poster board on or the whiteboard.

**Today's Scripture Memory is found in
Mark 1:14-15**

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Activity: Memory Stand-up. Divide the class into three groups. Have each group recite one part of the verse by memory, standing when it is their turn:

* ALL: Mark 1:14-15

* Group 1: Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee,

* Group 2: proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled,

* Group 3: and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

* ALL: Mark 1:14-15

Do this until you think that the class has memorized the verse, or until time is up. Switch groups, if time.

Have individual volunteers attempt to say the verses from memory.

Hand out Scripture memory reminder cards and encourage the students to spend time in memorization.



CLOSING PROGRAM

Go with your students back to the area designated for the Closing Program. Remind them to be respectful of others on their way to and during the Closing Program. Afterwards, escort the students to their pick-up location.

END DAY ONE