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## “Foolish Rich Builder”

Sunday School Lesson on the Parable of the Rich & Foolish Builders (Luke 12:13-21)

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***It's not all about the Toys...***and the Ferrari won't take you to Heaven -- Sunday School Lesson on Proper Priorities

Students are often bombarded with messages that proclaim the glory of “stuff.” It is easy to see others with fine clothes, cars, and toys, and want what they have. Even as adults we struggle with prioritizing worship and what we put first in our lives. This story seeks to remind students that God should always be number one, and if we don't place Him in that priority spot, negative things can happen. We never know what God has for our lives, and we can't cling to “stuff” for our happiness.

**Lesson focus:** We should put God first in our lives and avoid greed by being grateful for the blessings He has already provided.

**Passage:** Luke 12:13-21 (continuing into verses 22-34 as well)

**Target Audience:** Kindergarten-6<sup>th</sup> grade

**Materials Needed:** Catalogs or pictures of items to purchase, pencils, small candies or toys, paper bags, decorative materials, paper plates, string, magnets, envelopes, small boxes, papers, Bibles



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# Activities to Introduce the Lesson

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Some activities are better for older or younger students. Depending on your audience, timing, and available resources, the suggestions here can be switched around or easily adjusted:

- “What would you get?” (Good for older students) provide students with a catalog or list of potential items. Give them an imaginary amount of money and have them select a list of items they would purchase if they had that money. Talk about why they chose certain things.
- “How much can you hold?” challenge...provide children with paper sacks (the flimsier the better!) and spread small toys and/or candy items on the floor. Encourage them to see how much they can stuff into the bags, but there’s a catch: they cannot support the bag underneath, but must hold with one hand. If the bag rips, they don’t get a new one to start over.
- “Will it fit?” Have students split into teams. Provide each team with a small or medium box. Have them relay race across the room to pick up items and stuff them into the boxes. See which team can hold the most items in their boxes. Is it hard to fit more items in the box?
- Store the grain: Also relay style, let two groups relay race to pick up rice (or cereal or beans) from a large box across the room. The catch is that one team can use a cup, and the other can only use a spoon (or smaller cup). Which team picked up more? After measuring, have teams swap so that the losers become the winners!

Explain that today’s story will feature a man who thought he could be happy if he had a lot of things. Jesus reminded him of what should be the most important priorities. We should also remember what’s key in our lives, and always put God first.



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# Sunday School Lesson on the Foolish Rich Man (Luke 12)

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Ask students to describe their most valuable things. What do they have that they love the most? If they had to leave home and only take a few things, what would they want? Explain that in today's Bible story, we are looking at someone who was concerned about things and wanted to make sure he got all of the stuff he thought was coming to him. It started with a real question that someone brought to Jesus:

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*Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."<sup>14</sup> Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?"<sup>15</sup> Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions." -Luke 12:13-15*

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Someone was trying to get Jesus to settle an argument. They were wanting to make sure they got a share of money, and felt angry that they weren't receiving it. This person asked Jesus to force the money on him. But Jesus gave an interesting answer. He wanted to make sure people did not prioritize material things, and told a story about that:

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*And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest.<sup>17</sup> He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'<sup>18</sup> "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain.<sup>19</sup> And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.""*

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*<sup>20</sup> “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ <sup>21</sup> “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.” -Luke 12:16-21*

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Have you ever moved? It seems like when we have to pack up everything we own, we often find things that we had forgotten about, or things that we don't really even need. Some people manage to acquire so many things that they need to get bigger houses, or get boxes or storage units to put their things into. In this story, the man had so many things that he had to build a bigger barn. He thought he could relax and enjoy life, but before the day was done his life was over! We can't take anything with us when we die. None of our material things will last forever. Jesus knew this and wanted to remind His listeners of how important it was. Our lives cannot rely on our stuff, but on the maker of all things, on God. Jesus reminded His people that God handles everything we need. We might not always have every little thing we think we want, but we will have what we NEED. God promises this!

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*Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. <sup>23</sup> For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.<sup>24</sup> Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! <sup>25</sup> Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life<sup>[b]</sup>? <sup>26</sup> Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?*

*<sup>27</sup> “Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. <sup>28</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here*

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*today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! <sup>29</sup> And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. <sup>30</sup> For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. <sup>31</sup> But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.*

*<sup>32</sup> “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. <sup>33</sup> Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. <sup>34</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. -  
Luke 12:22-34*

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How can we build up treasures in Heaven? For one thing, we recognize that this world is not our home. There isn't a problem with having nice things. It's only an issue when we make those things the most important part of our lives. We want to recall all that God has blessed us with. We want to put Him first and foremost. We need to place priority on God and His people. And we can use our money to further that, too. We need a certain amount of money, but it's all mobile and flexible. It will pass away. Heaven and the Kingdom of God will last forever!

**Close** with prayer and thank God for His amazing gifts and provision in our lives. Ask for help in placing Him first and foremost in our priorities.

*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. -Luke 12:34*



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# Treasure in Heaven Craft Idea

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Count your blessings magnet/decoration...have students create a decoration to remind themselves of God's provision and blessings, and to consider the importance of putting Him first in life and putting treasure in Heaven. Provide card stock or paper plates, and help students identify positive blessings in their lives to write down or represent in pictures. Help students attach ribbons to hang the decorations, or place magnets on the back to attach to a magnetic surface. Place the verse (Luke 12:34) on the decoration to remember the lesson.

Alternately (or in addition), help students create special tithing envelopes or boxes. Remind them that money isn't everything, and that God asks us to use our money in wise ways. Making donations to charity or tithing to the church can be helpful in this pursuit. Provide decorative materials (coloring, stickers) and envelopes and/or boxes. Encourage students to add personal flair to their boxes, and to keep them handy for extra change or spare cash.



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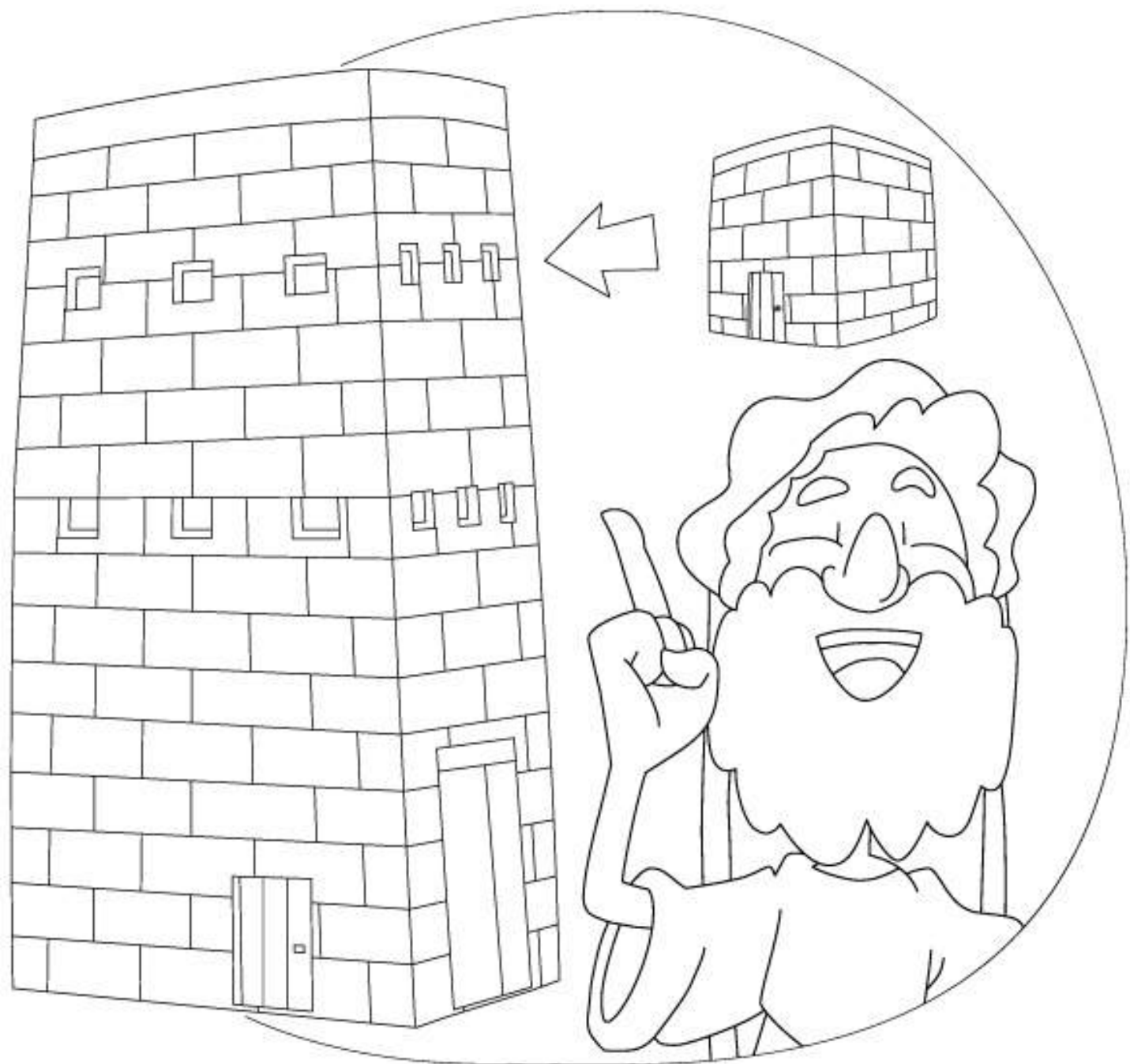
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