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# “Is the Soil Good”

## Children’s Bible Study on the Parable of the Sower & Soils

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The Parable of the Sower and the Seeds might better be called the Parable of soil, as the focus really ought to be on how we receive the Word of God as “good soil.” What does that mean, though, and how do we allow our hearts to be that good soil? If the adults who first heard this parable in the New Testament had a

hard time understanding it, there should be no surprise if it’s tough for kids to swallow. This lesson will review the original story, and explore how we live it out in modern life, as well. The focus is on understanding that God works in and through us, as long as we allow Him to do so.

**Lesson focus:** The parable of the sower invites us to hear God’s Word and respond to the Gospel. We can reject the good news, or get stuck in our distractions, or we can allow Scripture to impact us. The important thing to understand is that God does the work. Soil doesn’t have to work necessarily, in order to produce roots and plants that grow. In the same way, letting the Bible bless our lives is not about us, but about letting the Word influence our lives. We want to let our hearts be like the “good soil” which can produce abundant “crops” of faith and “fruit” for others.

**Passage:** Matthew 13:1-23 (also found in Mark 4 and Luke 8)

**Target Audience:** Kindergarten-6<sup>th</sup> grade (or whoever you might have around!)

**Materials Needed:** Construction paper, decorative materials, tissue paper, cups or pots, soil, seeds, popsicle sticks, pom-poms, coffee filters, scissors, glue or tape, coloring supplies, string or pipe cleaner, Bible (all optional, depending which activities you choose to use—except for the Bible, you need that for sure).

### More Lesson Planning Help for this Parable of the Sower

- See all our resources on [the Parable of Jesus](#)
- See the [video example of this children’s sermon](#) and [playlist on the Parable of the Sower](#)
- Browse our [Parable of the Sower Sunday School lesson](#)



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# Lesson Introduction Activities

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**Lesson Opening:** The Bible is full of metaphors involving planting or agriculture. As such, there are many coinciding crafts or openers that focus on seeds, soil, or plants. As you begin the lesson on the sower and the seeds, consider some elements of soil and plant life.

Here are some activities to get kids thinking...(select the best ones for your audience and age group):

- Seed matching: look at pictures (or actual examples) of various types of seeds. Try to match the seed with the flower or fruit that it grows into.
- Soil: take a “tour” of different regions and the soil that is characteristic of various areas. Discuss what is needed for soil to be healthy, and how important it is for plants to have quality soil.
- Take a nature walk. Go outside and look for flowers and plant parts. Identify weeds, if seen, and discuss the differences between flowers and weeds.
- Gardening: do you have a garden or plant? This is a great opportunity to discuss the different things that might grow, or how you can grow plants in a garden.
- Learn a new song, such as “Inch by Inch” or “Grow, Grow, Grow” to discuss planting and growth principles.

Explain that today you will be discussing one of the parables, or stories, that Jesus told. It is one that was confusing to the people who heard it, so Jesus gave a special explanation. We can think about what it means for us today and how to apply God’s Word to our lives.

**Ask:** What does a plant need in order to grow? How do you think we as Christians might be like plants?



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# Bible Lesson “The Parable of the Sower and Soils” from Matthew 13

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**Bible Lesson:** As always, how you choose to experience the story will vary according to the ages and abilities of your children (and how many are participating). For this lesson, Take a look at the parable, which appears in three of the four Gospels.

Feel free to review the story with video clips, puppet show reenactments, props, children’s Bibles, or whatever method works best for you to communicate the story.

*That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. <sup>2</sup>And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. <sup>3</sup>And he told them many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup>And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. <sup>5</sup>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, <sup>6</sup>but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup>Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup>Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup>He who has ears,<sup>[a]</sup> let him hear.” -Matthew 13:1-9*

Remind children that Jesus often used farming analogies to explain things to people, because a lot of people in His time and place worked with farming. For older students, have them guess what this story might mean.

**Ask:** What do you think this story represents? What could the different seeds and soils be referring to?

*Then the disciples came and said to him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” <sup>11</sup>And he answered them, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. <sup>12</sup>For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>13</sup>This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. <sup>14</sup>Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says:*



*““You will indeed hear but never understand,  
and you will indeed see but never perceive.”*

*<sup>15</sup> For this people's heart has grown dull,  
and with their ears they can barely hear,  
and their eyes they have closed,  
lest they should see with their eyes  
and hear with their ears  
and understand with their heart  
and turn, and I would heal them.’*

*<sup>16</sup> But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. <sup>17</sup> For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. -Matthew 13:10-17*

It seems here that Jesus purposely made His point hard to process. The disciples asked Him why He used parables, and from the sound of it people had a difficult time understanding what the stories meant.

**Ask:** Why would Jesus be explaining things in a confusing way? Are there ever things in our lives that we don't understand right away? Sometimes we need help from others or from the Bible, when we are trying to understand things. (This may require some explanation and assistance.) Fortunately, Jesus was ready to explain the parable, just as He is always ready to help us when we ask:

*“Hear then the parable of the sower: <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, <sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> 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.” -Matthew 13:18-23*

Jesus explained the parable, and it's something that we can apply to how we hear and respond to the Bible. He said that some people don't truly understand or try to grasp the Word of God, and they can be "snatched up" like the seed on the path. Maybe they go to church, but the



teaching goes in one ear and out the other...Other people get excited about God, but don't really focus on what they might read or learn, so when challenges arise, they have no foundation to help them, and like the seeds on the rocks, they just die. We do need to have a solid understanding of Scripture so that we can put our hope in the proper things.

Jesus said that some people get distracted by the world, and their faith can't really flourish. This might be like going to church or Sunday School, but thinking the whole time about what's for lunch. We can become distracted easily and neglect what is truly important.

The final "soil" Jesus described is the good, healthy rich soil: this refers to people who listen to the Word and allow it to impact their hearts and lives. When we really pay attention to the Bible, God can do amazing things through us!

**Ask:** Have you ever seen people that act like these different "soils"? What kind of "soil" would you like to be?

**Close** with a prayer thanking God for His Word. Ask for God's help in cultivating hearts that would be "rich soil" for receiving His blessings and growing spiritual fruits.

**Crafts:** "Flower garden" or "Flower pen"; "Seedy Art" painting; "Planting Pot" decoration

### **Follow up/Additional Activities**

- Make a "growth chart" to track Bible reading.
- Enjoy a "dirt cup" snack with pudding and Oreo crumbles.
- Continue to watch the seed you planted as it grows.
- Explore various types of edible seeds (pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, popcorn kernels, etc.) as well as large "seeds" (pinecones, coconuts).





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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.” -Matthew 13:23 ESV



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# “Be the Good Soil”

## Craft Ideas for the Parable of the Sower

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The Parable of the Sower can be slightly challenging to look at when working with very young children, as far as metaphor explanation goes. However, it is a fun one when it comes to crafts. As with many planting and growth analogies, there are plenty of engaging ways to make items that lend themselves to the story. Here are a few suggestions for crafts that relate to gardening and remind us to let God’s Word produce spiritual “blossoms” in our lives.

### Bible Verses or Captions to Consider...

*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.” -Matthew 13:23*

*As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience. -Luke 8:15*

*A heart of good soil...ready to receive God’s Word!*

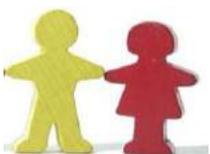
*God plants seeds in our hearts...let’s allow them to grow!*

*Flowering in the love of God*

*Blooming in faith, and growing spiritual fruit*

### More Parable of the Sower Teaching Ideas

- See all our resources on [the Parable of Jesus](#)
- See the [video example of this craft](#) and our [playlist on the Parable of the Sower](#)
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# Craft one: “Paper Flower Garden”

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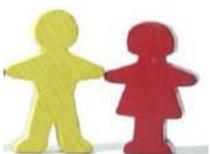
## You will need:

- Tissue paper, coffee filters, and/or cupcake liners
- Markers, stickers, or other decorating materials
- Scissors
- Glue, tape or staples
- Popsicle sticks or pipe cleaners
- Cup or pot for display



## Procedure:

1. Use markers to decorate coffee filters and/or cupcake liners with color. If time and resources allow, consider lightly misting the coffee filters to allow the colors to soak through (if using this method, let the filter dry completely).
2. Fold tissue paper using an “accordion-style” back and forth fold. Carefully arch the paper to create a circular “flower” shape.
3. Add pom-poms, pipe cleaners, or additional decorations as desired.
4. Use pipe cleaners or popsicle sticks for “stems” to attach the flowers onto something sturdy. Display in a cup or pot as desired.



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## Craft Two: “Plant Pot”

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### You will need:

- Small pot or cup
- Small seeds (or lima beans)
- Soil
- Extra decorations (stickers, etc.)
- Caption or verse
- Markers (Sharpies recommended)



### Procedure:

1. Select the vessel for your plant: use a small pot or cup.
2. Using permanent markers, write and/or draw on the pot or cup.
3. Add extra decorations as desired, such as stickers or puffy paint (if feeling adventurous).
4. Place a small amount of soil in the bottom of the cup or pot.
5. Place a bean or seeds into the soil. Add more soil on top.
6. Give the plant a small amount of water. Place a dish or plate underneath it, to catch the excess soil and water. Place in sunshine and enjoy!



## Extra Craft Possibilities:

- **“Seed art”**: Decorate construction paper or card stock with a plant-themed illustration. Drizzle glue (or spread with a glue stick) around selected parts of the picture, and sprinkle various seeds over it.
- **“Bird feed seed”**: Feed the birds! Spread peanut butter or frosting on a pinecone or corn cob, and dust with bird seed. Attach a string or pipe cleaner to hang.

