Learn by Doing

Choice Cultivating Good Ground

In this activity, students explore the message of the parable of the sower in terms of routine tasks by considering what it might be like to have attitudes like the different kinds of ground—and the actions and results that follow.

1. Like natural seeds in the ground, seeds of truth from the Word have the potential to sprout, blossom and bear fruit in people's lives. But each individual must be willing to receive and nurture the truth in "good ground."



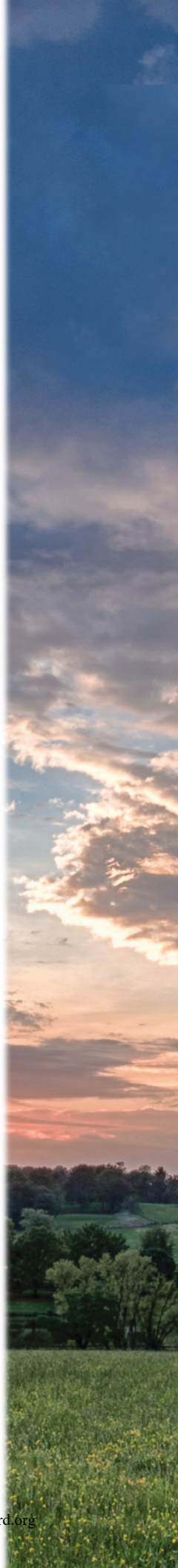
2. Attitudes are a lot of what makes for "good ground". Let's see how this might work out in an example of a daily activity.
3. Hand out *Cultivating Good Ground Charts* (p. 2) and read through the sample activity of cleaning up a storage area together.
4. Working alone, or in pairs, have students choose a new activity and fill out the blank chart. (If needed, remind students what the differ-ent types of ground mean--see sidebar on right.) Possible activities include going to a party, doing homework, a family vacation, sports training, practicing a musical instrument, etc.
5. Once the charts are filled out, get everyone together for discussion.
    - What did doing this exercise tell you about how much the results depend on your attitude?
    - What difficulties come up when you try to change your attitude toward something?
    - Even though it is difficult to change how you feel, you can control your actions. Can changing your actions change your attitude?
6. The Lord works with us in this way to help the kingdom of heaven grow within us. He asks us to work on changing what's outside—what we do—so that He can work on changing what's inside—our feelings —at the same time.
7. If you cultivate good ground by really listening and paying attention to the Word, the Lord will help good loves grow inside you. When you partner with the Lord, He can make your life yield good fruit.

Materials Needed for Each Student

Copy of *Cultivating Good Ground Charts* p. 2, pen or pencil

New Church Concept Kinds of Ground

A "field" means the good of life in which are to be implanted the things of faith, that is, spiritual truths which are of the church. This is evident from the Lord's parable of the sower. That the "seed" is the Word of the Lord, or truth, which is said to be of faith, and that the "good ground" is the good which is of charity, is evident, for it is the good in a person that receives the Word. The "hard way" is falsity. A "stony place" is truth that has no root in good. "Thorns" are evils. See *Arcana Coelestia* 3310



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Activity: Your dad asks you to clean up a storage area so your family can use it as a game room. Right now it is full of tools, paint cans, old toys, etc.

Your dad explains what he wants you to do with all the stuff.

	Attitude	Actions	Results
Wayside or Road *seeds eaten by birds*	You listen to your dad at first, but soon start thinking about what you want to do with your friends later.	You can't do much, because you don't know where to put different things since you weren't listening.	The space is still a mess. Your dad is disappointed with the job you did.
Stony Ground *plants wither in sun*	You listen to the instructions, but feel annoyed that you are being asked to help.	You start working but it's tiring. You get mad and tell your dad you won't finish unless he pays you.	The space is only partly clean because you argued about the job instead of doing it.
Thorny Ground *plants choked*	You want your dad to think you are helpful so you can win an argument about going out later.	You work hard at first, but get bored and start shoving all the stuff around randomly so you can finish fast.	The space looks cleaner, but no one can find what they need. Your dad is upset because his tools got thrown out along with the old paint.
Good Ground *plants produce fruit*	You want to help and realize that a game room will be fun for the family. You listen carefully.	You do the job carefully and thoroughly, paying attention to what you are doing.	The space is clean. Your dad is happy and you can soon enjoy the game room. You feel good about helping out.

Activity:

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Wayside or Road *seeds eaten by birds*			
Stony Ground *plants wither in sun*			
Thorny Ground *plants choked*			
Good Ground *plants produce fruit*			

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