Learn by Doing

Choice

How Are You Listening?



Students role-play and observe different kinds of listening as a way to deepen their understanding of the parable of the sower.

1. The parable of the sower is about different ways of receiving truth from the Word. The four kinds of ground depict ways of listening and responding to the Lord's messages.
2. Hand each student a copy of the *Listening Cards* (p. 3) printed on regular paper and a pen or pencil. Together, read through the different types of listening described there.
3. Explain that students will take turns acting out the different kinds of listening. The rest of the group will guess what kind of listening the person is acting out. When it is your turn to act, remember to think about eye movements, facial expressions, body language and any words or vocalizations, like "uh huh", etc.
4. Ask for two volunteers. One is the reader, and the other is the listener.
5. Give the reader a copy of *Listening Stories* (p. 2) to look over. Place the *Listening Cards* you printed and cut apart face down on the table. Have the listener choose one card without revealing what it says.
6. Allow the listener 30 seconds to think about how to act out the kind of listening they selected while the reader looks over one of the fables.
7. The reader and listener sit or stand at the front of the room for the demonstration, including giving the listener a few seconds to respond once the fable is finished.
8. Ask the other students to guess what kind of listening was demonstrated. What clues (body language, etc.) led them to that decision? Did people get the answer the actor was going for?
9. Choose other readers and listeners and run steps 4-6 again as many times as desired. (It's fine to repeat fables as needed.)
10. In what ways did this activity help you understand how you listen to other people or to the Word?

Materials Needed

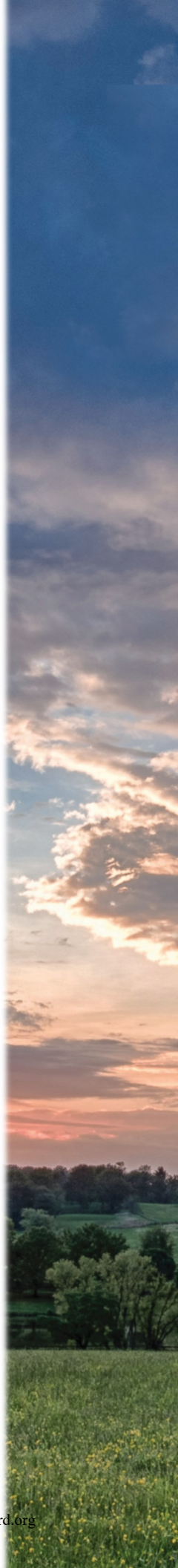
Open space for acting, one copy of *Listening Stories* p. 2 and *Listening Cards* p. 3 printed on stiff paper, *Listening Cards* printed on regular paper (1 per student)

Prepare in Advance

Print a copy of *Listening Cards* p. 3 on stiff paper and cut apart the four cards. Print other pages as needed.

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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The Wolf and His Shadow

A wolf left his lair one evening in fine spirits and an excellent appetite. As he ran, the setting sun cast his shadow far out on the ground, and it looked as if the wolf were a hundred times bigger than he really was.

"Why," exclaimed the Wolf proudly, "see how big I am! Fancy *me* running away from a puny lion! I'll show him who is fit to be king of the beasts, he or I."

Just then an immense shadow blotted him out entirely, and the next instant a lion struck him down with a single blow.

Do not let your fancy make you forget reality.

Adapted from Aesop's Fables

Belling the Cat

The mice once called a meeting to decide on a plan to free themselves of their enemy, the cat. At the very least they wished to find some way of knowing when she was coming, so they would have time to run away. Something had to be done, for they lived in constant fear of her claws and hardly dared leave their dens by night or day.

Many plans were discussed, but none of them was thought good enough. At last a young mouse got up and said, "All we have to do is to hang a bell around the cat's neck. When we hear the bell ringing we will know that our enemy is coming."

All the mice were surprised that no one had thought of such a simple plan before. They were sure it would succeed. But in the middle of their rejoicing, an old mouse got up and said, "I will say that the plan of the young mouse is very good. But let me ask one question: who will bell the cat?"

It is one thing to say that something should be done, but quite a different matter to do it.

Adapted from Aesop's Fables

The Crow and the Pitcher

In a spell of dry weather, when the birds could find very little to drink, a thirsty crow found a pitcher with a little water in it.

But the pitcher was tall and had a narrow neck. No matter how hard he tried, the crow could not reach the water. The poor thing felt as if he would die of thirst.

Then an idea came to him. Picking up some small pebbles, he dropped them into the pitcher one by one. With each pebble the water rose a little higher until at last it was close enough to the top of the pitcher that the crow could drink.

In a pinch a good use of our wits may help us out.

Adapted from Aesop's Fables

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Not Listening

Wayside Listening

The listener does not pay attention to the speaker.

The listener hears but does not take anything in.

The listener is thinking about other things—perhaps day dreaming, looking at a phone, etc.



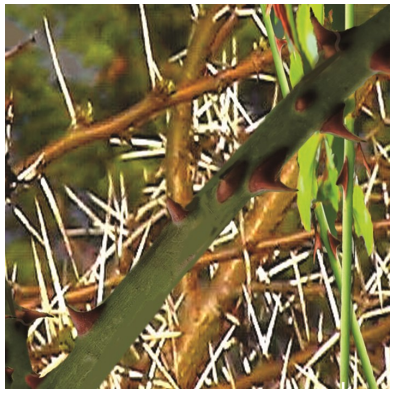
Fake Listening

Stony Ground Listening

The listener acts as if he/she is listening but is not.

The listener wants to do something else.

The listener cares about what they want to do, but not about the speaker.



Partial Listening

Thorny Ground Listening

The listener is paying careful attention, but with the goal of eventually winning an argument or making the speaker look foolish.

The listener doesn't really care about the speaker or the story.



Active Listening

Good Ground Listening

The listener is interested in what the speaker is saying.

The listener wants to understand what they are hearing.

The listener thinks about the story and reacts or responds to it.