

FAMILY WORSHIP

The Kingdom of Heaven Parables

There are seven kingdom of heaven parables in the Matthew 13, telling us about the path to heaven. The first two talk about sowing seeds—seeds of truth—that help us know what is good. The next five parables talk about the following steps on our spiritual journey.

Select one or more of the following parables in Matthew 13 to read aloud (or retell for young children). Here are some discussion ideas for five of them.

The Mustard Seed

(Matthew 13:31-32)

The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed a tiny mustard seed in his field, and it grew to become like a tree, and birds came to nest in its branches.



- A mustard seed is very small. What did parable say about its growth? (It grew as large as a tree and birds nested in it.)
- The truths we have are like a seed that can help us start our spiritual journey. The Lord can use this beginning to help us grow spiritually.
- What are some truths that you might want to “grow” in your life?

Activity: Look at mustard seeds to see how small they are. If you don’t have mustard seeds, look at other tiny seeds and discuss their potential for growth.

Leaven

(Matthew 13:33)

The kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman hid in meal until it leavened all of it.

- In Old Testament times, people saved a portion of unbaked bread dough and used it to leaven the next batch of bread. This is the leaven that the woman hid in the meal until it was all leavened.
- This parable pictures the way that spiritual struggles can help us grow spiritually.

Activity:

If you bake sourdough bread and keep some of the “starter” on hand, show this to your children and compare it to the leaven mentioned in this parable.



An alternative way to illustrate the concept is to sprinkle dry yeast on lukewarm water. When the yeast starts to grow and create bubbles, discuss about the way our evils or bad habits tend to “bubble up” so that we have an opportunity to recognize them and work on overcoming them. This “work” is pictured by the woman mixing the leaven in the three measures of meal.

Treasure

(Matthew 13:44)

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, and a man sells all that he has to buy that field.



- Why did the man sell all that he had to buy the field? (He realized that the treasure hidden in the field was more valuable than anything else.)
- What are some (material) things that you treasure? What do you treasure that can't be seen with the eye?
- We take our spiritual treasures with us to the spiritual world. These spiritual treasures are all the goods and truths that have become an integral part of our lives. That is why the Lord tells us to focus on spiritual treasures rather than worldly treasures.
- This parable pictures a person who finds the precious truths of the Word and recognizes that these are what are truly valuable.

The Pearl of Great Price

(Matthew 13:45-46)

The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant who finds a beautiful pearl and sells all that he has to buy it.



- What was this merchant looking for? (pearls)
- A pearl in the Word symbolizes true ideas about the Lord. How can we “collect” such pearls? (by going to the Lord's Word)
- A pearl grows slowly, and genuine pearls can't be made by human hands. How is this like the way the life of heaven grows within us?
- Like the pearl of great price, acknowledging the Lord and understanding His way is the most precious and beautiful thing in our lives.

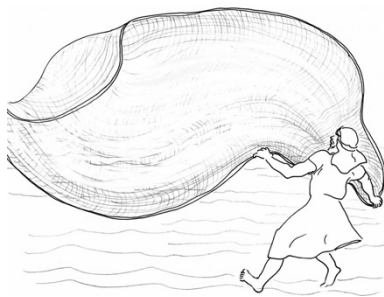
Activity:

Look at a pearl. Learn more about the way pearls are formed.

The Dragnet

(Matthew 13:47-48)

The kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, catching a variety of fish. When the net was full, they drew it to shore and sorted the good fish from the bad.



- What did the fishermen do when the net was full? (They pulled it into the shore and then sorted the good fish from the bad.)
- The Lord wants to gather us all into heaven. He sees each and every one of us as a potential angel. But He gives us the choice of living in heaven or hell.
- The fish gathered into containers picture those who let the Lord lead them into heaven.

Activity: Try using a net the next time you go fishing, whether it is to scoop up minnows for bait or to see what else you might catch.