

General Church Education



# The Parable of the Net

Matthew 13:47-50

## Lesson 19

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 2: The Lord Is Our Shepherd

For ages 7-8 years

# The Parable of the Net

## Matthew 13:47-50

### Ideas for Parents & Teachers

This lesson is about another parable of heaven. The Lord wants us to know about the realities of the spiritual world, and He uses the things of nature and events from our daily experience to teach us. We can grasp ideas and retain them in our memories especially when they are told as interesting stories. Although these stories are simple, they contain deep meaning for our lives. When we learn them in childhood, they may be nothing more than stories to us. But, kept in our memories, they can be drawn out later in life when we reflect on them and want to see the spiritual meaning the Lord has for us.

The parable of the net demonstrates the importance of ideas we hold in our memories. Nothing is more important than what we think or, as it says in the Writings, “Nothing is more important for a person than to know what is true” (*Arcana Coelestia* 794). All kinds of ideas come into our minds and are gathered up like fish into a net. To a worldly person, knowledge about the Lord does not seem like a treasure. But a person who is trying to understand spiritual things knows that understanding and worshipping the Lord is the greatest treasure in life and it is worth giving up our own selfishness to gain.

### Ideas for Children

- Parables are stories with a hidden message.
- The Lord uses parables to lead people to understand the truth and how it applies to them.
- True thoughts about the Lord are the most important thoughts we can have.

### From the Writings

Evils can not be set aside unless they come to light. We need to look carefully at our actions and our thoughts, at what we would do if it were not for our fear of the law and reputation. We need to look especially at which evils we see as permissible and do not regard as sins, for eventually we do them.

It is for this self-examination that we have been given understanding separate from our will, so that we can know, discern, and recognize what is good and what is evil. It is also so that we can see what the real nature of our will is—that is, what we love and what we desire. It is to enable us to see this that our understanding has been given both higher and lower thought processes, both more inward and more outward thought processes. It is so that we can use the higher or more inward thoughts to see what our will is up to in our lower or outer thoughts. We see this the way we see a face in a mirror; and when we see and recognize what a sin is, then if we want to and ask the Lord for help, we can stop intending it, abstain from it, and later act against it. If we cannot go through this process easily, we can still make it happen by trying to go through it so that we finally reject the evil and detest it. Then for the first time we actually sense and feel that evil is evil and good is good. This is what it means to examine ourselves, to see and acknowledge our evils and to confess them and then refrain from them. See *Divine Providence* 278

## The Parable of the Net

In our last story a great multitude of people had gathered around the Lord to hear His teachings. They wanted to know how to live a good life.

What was the name of the special kind of stories the Lord told? (Parables.)

Parables are wonderful stories because they have heavenly messages in them. We need to hear these messages because they tell us things about the Lord's kingdom and things about ourselves that we need to know.

The Lord wants everyone to come into heaven and be happy. To do this we must choose to follow His commandments. That is why He told parables about heaven when He lived on earth.

### The Dragnet

This story is another parable about heaven. Let's read it first and then see what the heavenly meaning is. As you hear this short parable, try to picture in your mind the fishermen who went



out in their open boats with the nets they had made with their own hands. These nets were made from rope and tied together in knots. The fishermen would throw a net over the side of the boat and drag it along for a while. That is why it is called a dragnet. If they were lucky, the net would fill with fish. The fishermen would haul the heavy net into the boat and take their catch to shore to sort out.

**Read Matthew 13:47-50.** Did the fishermen catch many fish? (Yes, the net was full.)

What did they do with the good fish? (Put them into vessels.)

A vessel is a container. The fishermen saved the good fish because they were useful.

What did they do with the bad fish? (They got rid of them.)

The fish could have been bad because they were sick, injured or not a good kind of fish to eat. They were not useful to the fishermen, and so they were thrown away.

Then the Lord told the heavenly or spiritual meaning of this parable. After we die, all the things we have stored up in our memories are shown to us. Of course, there will be good and bad things because no one is perfect except the Lord. But if we have tried to follow the Lord and keep His commandments, then all the good things in our memory will be saved. These things can be used to eternity in heaven. And all the bad things will be sorted out and put away, like the bad fish, because they will not serve us in heaven. We will not be bothered by these bad thoughts anymore.

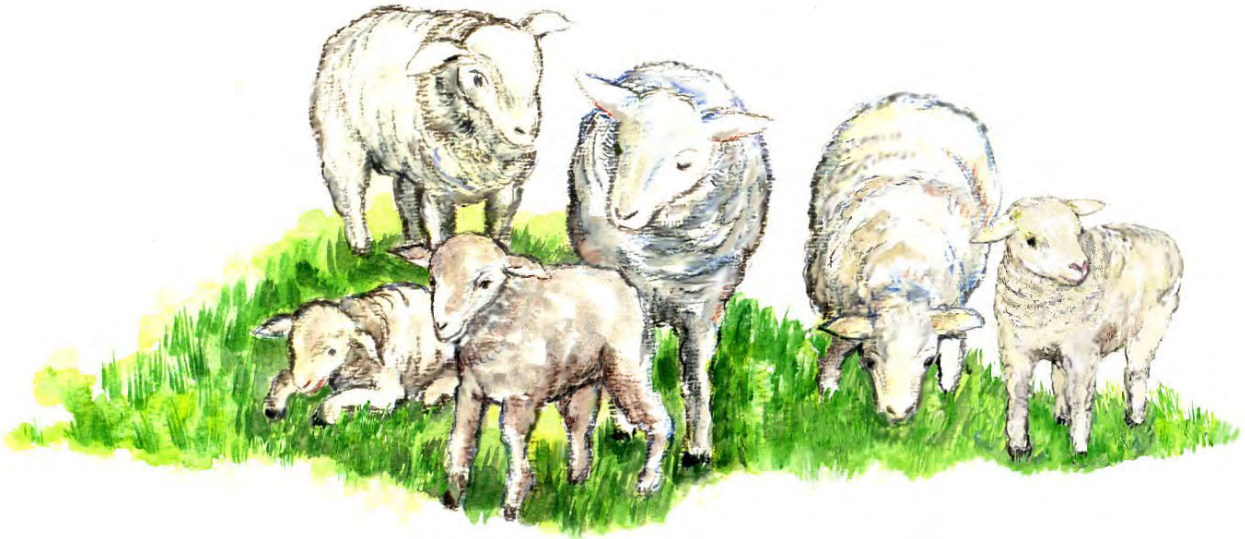


### **The Pearl of Great Price**

We have been learning from the parables that our minds contain both good and bad thoughts. And we have learned that we choose which thoughts will stay with us.

This pearl of great price stands for the most valuable thought of all. It is the idea that the Lord God Jesus Christ is the One God of heaven and earth. If we believe this thought, then we will want to know as much as we can about the Lord. We will want to choose the path to heaven so that we can be happy with the Lord forever. That is what the recitation means when it says that the merchant sold all that he had and bought this most valuable pearl. Learning about the Lord is the most important thing we can do.

It is not too soon to start sorting out your thoughts. You can start on your path to heaven right now. In fact, it is a good habit to begin recognizing and throwing out harmful thoughts. The good ones we can act on and treasure. As we found out, sometimes we do not know which ones are really good and which ones are bad until later in life. But if we try to be aware, we can start sorting the bad from the good at any time.



### Discussion Questions

- How can you tell which thoughts you have are good and which ones are bad? (Good thoughts agree with what the Lord tells us in His Word. Bad thoughts are harmful. They can make us suffer or bring unhappiness to others.)
- Why do you think that knowledge of the Lord is the most important thing for us to learn? (Because knowledge about things of this world is only valuable in our earthly life, but knowledge about the Lord and heaven is useful to eternity.)
- What are some examples of good thoughts that people might have? (Answers will vary.)
- What are some examples of bad thoughts that people might have? (Answers will vary.)
- What are some good things you have in your memory?
- In one of the parables we read, a merchant looked and looked for a special pearl of great price until he found it. Have you ever looked for something very special that you wanted? What was it? Did you find it?

# Activity Overview | The Parable of the Net

## Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. Matthew 13:45, 46

## Songs

*You Are the Vine*

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-you-are-the-vine/>

*Trust and Obey*

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-trust-and-obey/>

## Activities

Choose one or two.

- Activity 1 | Sorting the Fish
- Activity 2 | Pearl of Great Price Book
- Picture to color

## Additional Activity Ideas

- Examine a pearl.
- See how pearls are made. Choose a video to watch from a playlist online at [bitly.com/PearlsMade](https://bitly.com/PearlsMade). (Put this case sensitive link in the web browser at the top of your screen. Bitly links will not work if used in the search bar in the center of your screen.)

## Activity 1 | Sorting the Fish

Play a fishing game in which fish with good and bad ideas written on them are sorted and separated.


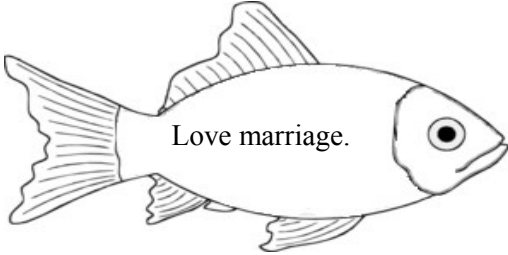
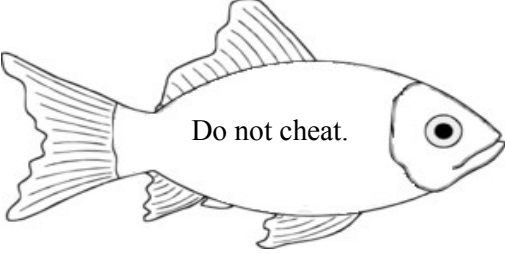
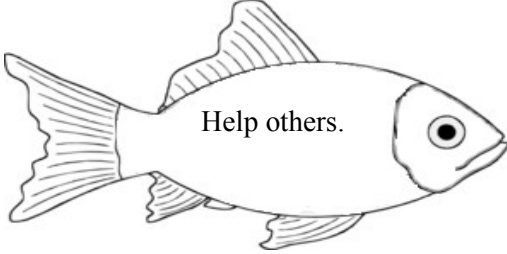
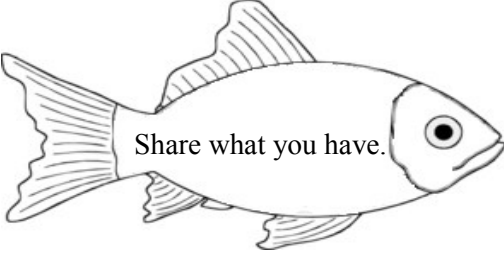
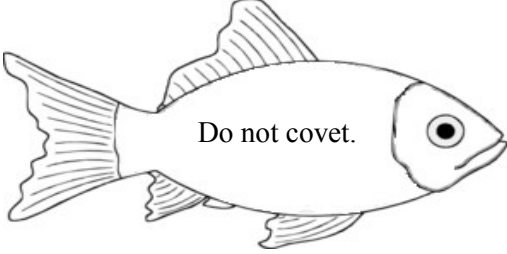
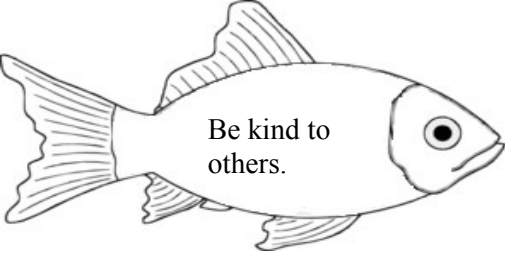
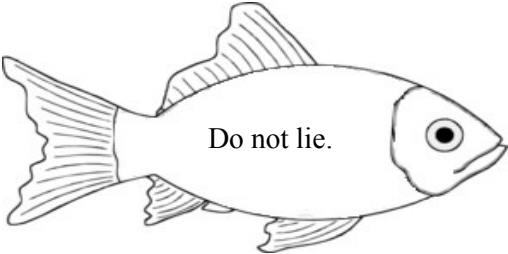
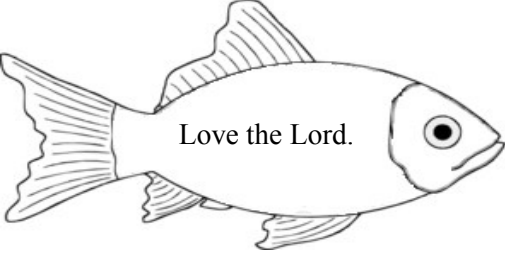
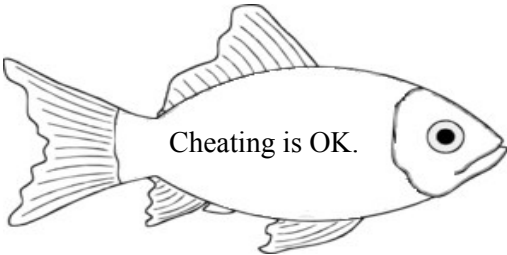
### Materials

a copy of the *Good Fish Bad Fish* pages (*optional*: printed on stiff paper)  
scissors  
paper clips to put on fish  
bowl to put fish in  
chopstick or pencil  
string or yarn approx. 16” (40cm) long  
magnet that can be attached to the string through a hole or with tape

### Instructions

1. Cut apart the *Good Fish Bad Fish*. If you are pressed for time, cut the fish apart on the straight lines.
2. Fasten a paperclip to the head of each fish.
3. Put the fish into a bowl.
4. Make a fishing pole by tying string to a chopstick or pencil. Attach a magnet to the end of the string.
5. Fish for fish. Read each fish as you catch it. Sort the fish into two piles: fish to keep, and fish to throw back into the sea.
6. Choose a place to put the good fish where you can see them.

## Good Fish Bad Fish

 <p>Do not steal.</p>	 <p>Love marriage.</p>
 <p>Do not cheat.</p>	 <p>Help others.</p>
 <p>Share what you have.</p>	 <p>Do not covet.</p>
 <p>Be kind to others.</p>	 <p>Do not lie.</p>
 <p>Love the Lord.</p>	 <p>Cheating is OK.</p>



## Activity 2 | Pearl of Great Price Book

Make a book with a cover shaped like an oyster and pages in the shape of a pearl of great price. The pages show the Lord and His Word. The final page in the book is blank for children to draw themselves doing something useful in service to the Lord.

### Materials

*Pearl of Great Price Book Cover* (optional: printed on stiff paper)

*Pearl of Great Price Book Pages*

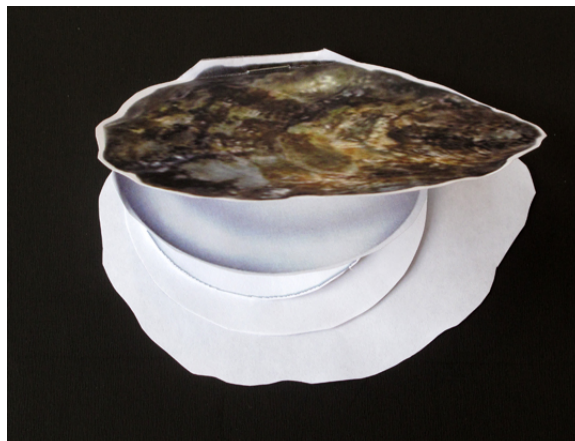
scissors

stapler

crayons, colored pencils or markers

### Instructions

1. Cut out the *Pearl of Great Price Book Cover* and *Pearl of Great price Book Pages*. Cutting around the shapes does not need to be exact. Some white edges are fine.
2. Start assembling the book by folding the *Pearl of Great Price Book Cover* in half. Re-open it, and place it on the table with the pictures face down.
3. Stack the *Pearl of Great Price Book Pages* in the following order: pearl, Lord, Word, blank page and pearl. Arrange the pages so that the first and last pages show the pearl picture on the outside.
4. Put the pages in the shell, so the edges are along the fold. Re-fold the shell and staple the book together at the side of the shell, as shown in the picture above. Making sure all the pages are held by the staple.
5. Color the pictures of the Lord and the Word.
6. Complete the last page of the book by having child(ren) draw a picture of themselves doing something helpful.



Pearl of Great Price Book Cover





