



The Sower

Matthew 13:3-11, 18-23

Level B

Ages 7-10

Lesson Focus: Listening to the Lord

Reading Summary: Jesus spoke to a large crowd from a boat on the Sea of Galilee. He told the parable of the sower. As the sower sowed, some seed fell on the road, some fell on stony places, some fell among thorns, and some fell on good ground. The seed was the Word of God. The different kinds of ground on which it fell are different ways in which people receive the Word. Hearing the Word and trying to do what it says leads to a life of fruitfulness.

Lesson 1		Materials Supplied	Materials Needed
1. Welcome Warm-up Activity (2-3 minutes)	Song	The Sower Song directions p. 2 <i>The Sower</i> p. 5	computer, tablet or cell phone to hear and see the song video at bitly.com/GCEDTheSower
2. Focus on the Word Use all activities (5-7 minutes)	Read the Word and Talk About It	see <i>Reading Summary</i> above discussion guide p. 2 teaching picture p. 6	Bible or copy of Matthew 13:3-11, 18-23
3. Learn by Doing Choose 1-2 activities (15-20 minutes)	Take Action children plant seeds to grow at home	Planting Seeds directions p. 3 <i>Plant Seeds</i> p. 7	supplies vary depending on which planting method you choose from <i>Plant Seeds</i> p. 7
	Make children each make a story bag to use in retelling the parable of the sower	Sower Story Bag directions pp. 3-4 <i>Sower Story Bag Cards</i> p. 8	stiff paper for printing, brown paper lunch bags, pencils with erasers, tape, scissors
	Coloring Picture	The Sower p. 9	crayons, markers or colored pencils
4. Wrap It Up (2-3 minutes)	Memory Verse introduce the memory verse for the week	Memory Verse <i>Parent Notes</i> p. 10	

1. Welcome Warm-up Activity

The Sower Song

Supplies: equipment to play song video at bitly.com/GCEDTheSower, copies of *The Sower* p. 5.

The Lord came on earth to teach us how we should live so that we can go to heaven. For the next five lessons we will be talking about parables the Lord told while He was on earth. Parables are stories with a hidden inner meaning. The Lord used parables to teach about the kingdom of heaven and what a person needs to do to prepare for heaven.

Today we are focusing on the parable of the sower. Let's start with singing *The Sower*. Hand out copies of *The Sower* (p. 5). Play the video and invite the children to sing along.

2. Focus on the Word

Read: Matthew 13:3-11, 18-23. A teaching picture is provided on p. 10.

When the Lord was on earth He had an earthly body and could talk to people, and they could talk to Him. As earthly parents love and care for their children, the Lord, our “Heavenly Father”, showed His love for His children—all people. He spoke the truth so people could know how to find heavenly happiness.

The Lord talks to us, too, in His Word. When we read or listen to the Word, the Lord Himself is speaking to us.

What happened when the sower planted seeds on different kinds of ground? (1) Road—birds ate them (2) Rocky soil—withered in the hot sun (3) Thorns—choked growing plants (4) Good ground—bore fruit

Have you ever planted seeds? How did you prepare the soil?

Why is it important to prepare soil? When soil is properly prepared, and the seeds we plant are watered and receive sunlight, they grow into healthy plants that produce fruits and seeds of their own.

The Lord is the Sower. His seeds are the true ideas that are planted in our minds when we listen to His Word. What seeds of truth can you think of? Allow time to think up examples, e.g. “Love the Lord,” “Love your neighbor,” “Do not lie.”

Just as a gardener prepares the soil before planting seeds, it's important for us to prepare our minds to receive the Lord's Word. How can we do this? By recognizing the importance of the Word and paying attention to it, doing what the Lord tells us to, praying for help, *etc.*

Sometimes it is difficult to hear the truth. For example, we may know that we should love others, but if someone hurts us, it is difficult not to want to hurt them back. When we fight back, it is like seeds falling on hard ground. They can't grow.

When we listen to what the Lord teaches our lives become fruitful. What kinds of “fruits” grow in our lives? Acts of useful service such as setting the table, hanging up your coat, doing something helpful or kind for a parent or friend, *etc.*

The Lord wants us to pay attention to the Word so He can lead us to happiness in heaven. This is what it means to be fruitful and multiply like the seeds in good ground.

3. Learn by Doing

Choose one or two activities

Choice Planting Seeds

Help children experience the joy of sowing seeds. Choose healthy seeds that are large enough to watch as they sprout and grow. A choice of growing methods is included in *Plant Seeds* (p. 7). Directions for helping the seeds to grow at home are provided in the *Parent Notes* on p. 10.



1. What do seeds need to grow? (water, light, heat and good soil) Discuss ways in which each of these things helps the seeds to grow.
2. What happens if seeds only have some of these things? (They may start to grow but later on they may wither and die.)
3. The Lord plants “seeds” of truth from His Word in our minds. What do these seeds need so they can grow strong in our minds? (We must work on having loving attitudes and developing good habits, such as reading the Word, praying, putting others first, *etc.*)
4. Today we will be planting seeds. (Follow directions for your chosen method from *Plant Seeds* on p. 7).
5. Discuss where the seeds should be placed at home so they can have light, heat and water to grow.

Choice Sower Story Bag

In the parable of the Sower, seed is sown on four different kinds of ground with varying results. Children will create a sower story bag filled with cards to help them retell the story as it is told in the Word. The picture of a seed has the Word on it to reinforce the idea that the meaning of the parable is about receiving the Word.



1. Show children your sample bag and pull the story cards out of it. As you hold the cards up in order, invite the children to retell the story. Note that the seed card is used multiple times: (1) sower (2) seed (3)

Materials Needed

Supplies will vary depending on which planting method you choose from *Plant Seeds* p. 7.

Prepare in Advance

Purchase seeds and gather supplies. Note: some seeds, e.g. beans, will germinate faster if soaked overnight.

New Church Concept Good Made Fruitful

Goodness continually flows in from the Lord. But when it comes through the inner or spiritual person to the outer or natural person, it is there either perverted, turned back, or suffocated. But when the things which belong to the love of self and love of the world are removed from the outer person, then goodness is received there and is made fruitful. See *Arcana Coelestia* 3147.2

Materials Needed for Each Child

Copy of *Sower Story Bag Cards* p. 8 printed on stiff paper, brown paper lunch bag, pencil with eraser, tape, scissors

Prepare in Advance

Print the *Sower Story Bag Cards* p. 8 on stiff paper. Make a sample sower’s bag out of a lunch bag.

Sower Story Bag *continued*

wayside (4) birds (5) seed (6) stones (7) seed (8) thorns (9) seed (10) good ground (11) growing plants.

2. Give each child a paper bag and a pencil. Demonstrate how to draw two simple lines on a flat, folded bag to make a handle strap for the sower's bag. (See picture on right.) Children can erase and redraw the lines until they are satisfied.
3. Have children cut along the lines and discard the paper bag scraps. Open the bag and cut off the extra flap where it was folded. (See picture below).
4. Fold the two ends of the bag handle over each other and tape together. (See picture on p. 3.)
5. Distribute a copy of *Sower Story Bag Cards* (p. 8) to each child and have them cut the pieces apart.
6. If time allows, divide the children into pairs and have them take turns retelling the story in order with the cards.
7. Have children put the cards in the sower bag to take home. Encourage them to retell the story to their family using the cards.



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

Materials Needed

copies of *The Sower* p. 9; crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Choice

Coloring Picture: The Sower

Hand out copies of *The Sower* (p. 9) for children to color.

4. Wrap It Up

Memory Verse

We will be learning a Memory Verse with each lesson. Read one phrase from the verse and invite the children to repeat it after you. Repeat the entire verse until the children can say it with confidence.

Whoever hears the word and understands it...bears fruit.

Matthew 13:23

Closing

The Lord sows the seeds of His truth in our minds each time we hear the Word. We can listen carefully and do what He teaches. If we do this, our lives will be fruitful.

Give Parent Notes (p. 10) to children as they leave.

The Sower

Matthew 13: 3-8

Lori Odhner

D A D

1. A sow - er went out to sow seeds on the ground, And
2. And some of the seeds fell up - on a hard rock, And
3. And some of the seeds fell in this - tles and thorns, And
4. And some of the seeds fell up - on the good ground, And

The first system of music features a treble and bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (D major) and a 6/8 time signature. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are aligned with the notes.

G A D A

some of the fell on the road.— And they were all tram-pled and
then when they start-ed to try— To grow straight and tall they all
then when they start-ed to bloom,— The thorns and the this - tles all
then when they start-ed to root,— Those seeds all grew up to be

The second system continues the melody and bass line. The lyrics are aligned with the notes.

D G A D

eat - en by birds. And so those seeds could nev - er grow.—
with - ered a - way, Be - cause they were thirst - y and dry.—
choked them to death And left them with - out an - y room.—
health - y and strong And blos - somed with hun - dreds of fruit.—

The third system concludes the piece. The lyrics are aligned with the notes.

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This song is taken from *Songs from the Word* by John and Lori Odhner. Order the complete book online at <http://tinyurl.com/johnandlori>. Used by permission.

Watch a video of *The Sower* at bitly.com/GCEDTheSower.



Plant Seeds

Witness the miracle of growing plants from seed. Choose seeds that sprout easily such as sunflowers, beans, pumpkins, radishes, tomatoes, lettuce, spinach or wild flowers. Choose fresh seeds since older seeds do not always germinate successfully. Select a planting method from the choices below. Note that some seeds, such as beans, will germinate faster if they are soaked overnight before planting.

Clear Plastic Cup, Glass Jar or Plastic Bag

Plant seeds in a clear container so children can watch the roots and shoots grow.

Supplies Needed

- clear plastic cup or glass jar for each child
- large seeds such as beans, sunflower seeds, pumpkins (soak ahead of time to speed up germination)
- paper towels
- newspaper to crumple
- water
- scissors



Directions

1. Line the inside of a cup or jar with a paper towel. Trim to top of cup using scissors.
2. Crumple newspaper. Put 1-2” (3-5cm) inside the center of the cup to keep the paper towel up.
3. Place seeds between the jar and the paper towel so they are visible on the outside of the jar.
4. Add water—enough to be absorbed by the paper towel, but not so much that the seeds are soaking.
5. Send the completed project home with a *Parent Note* (p. 10) with directions to care for the seeds at home.

Egg Carton, Yoghurt Carton or Disposable Cup

Teach children how to plant seeds in good soil.

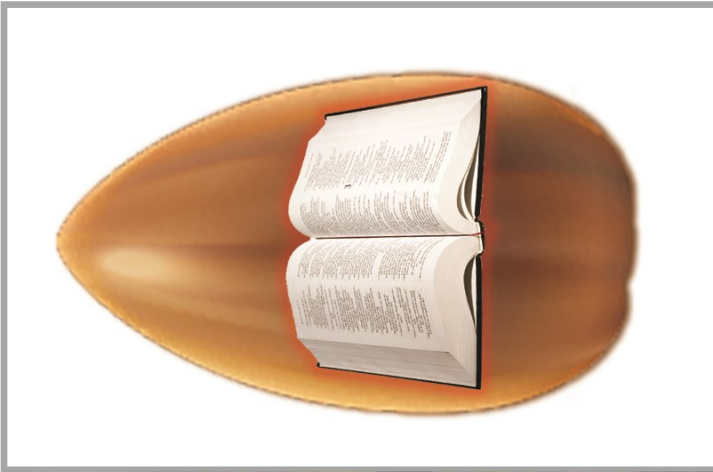
Supplies Needed

- section(s) of egg carton, yoghurt carton or disposable cup
- seeds
- potting soil
- water
- spoons to scoop potting soil into cups



Directions

1. Fill sections of your chosen container about half to three-quarters full with potting soil.
2. Give children seeds to plant. (If using egg cartons, you could give children a variety of seeds. Plant each kind of seed in a different section. Recommend that they watch to see which seeds sprout first, are biggest, etc.)
3. Cover the seeds with more soil. Pat down gently.
4. Water. Seeds should be moist but not water-logged.
5. Send the completed project home with a *Parent Note* (p. 10) with directions to care for the seeds at home.



Sower Story Bag Cards



The Sower

Parent Notes

Make a copy for each child. Hand out as children leave.

PARENT NOTE

Dear Parents,

We are starting to learn about five parables of heaven. Today we learned about the sower. Ask your child what happened to the seeds.

Teachers had a choice of activities for this lesson.

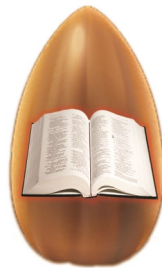
If your child planted seeds, please help him or her place them in a sunny spot and water them. Water enough to be moist, but not soaked.

We will be introducing a new memory verse each week. We encourage you to help your child remember this week's verse by saying it once or twice a day—in the morning, at mealtime, or before bed.

Memory Verse

Whoever hears the word and understands it...bears fruit.

Matthew 13:23



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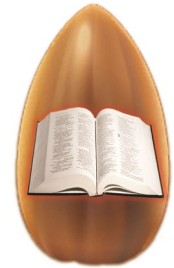
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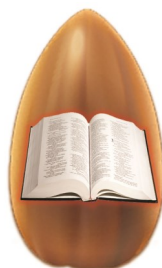
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