



# Workers in the Vineyard

Level B  
Ages 7-10

**Matthew 20:1-16**

**Lesson Focus:** Serving the Lord

**Reading Summary:** The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who hired workers for his vineyard. In the morning he hired workers for a denarius a day. During the 3rd, 6th, 9th and 11th hours he hired additional workers. All of these workers agreed to accept whatever pay the landowner thought was right. At the end of the day, the workers all received a denarius. Those hired first thought they should have received more, because they had worked longer. The landowner reminded them that they received the agreed amount. The last would be first, and the first last.

Lesson 4		Materials Supplied	Materials Needed
<b>1. Welcome Warm-up Activity</b> (2-3 minutes)	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Fair Share?</b> directions p. 2 <i>Fair Share? Spinners</i> p. 5	
<b>2. Focus on the Word</b> Use all activities (5-7 minutes)	<b>Read the Word and Talk About It</b>	see <i>Reading Summary</i> above discussion guide p. 2 teaching picture p. 6	Bible or copy of Matthew 20:1-16
<b>3. Learn by Doing</b> Choose 1-2 activities (15-20 minutes)	<b>Act It Out</b> students act out the parable and make grape juice as their labor to receive a day's wages	<b>Workers in the Vineyard</b> directions p. 3 <i>Workers in the Vineyard Script</i> pp. 7-8 <i>Vineyard Clock</i> p. 9 <i>Denarius Coins</i> p. 10	stiff paper for printing, brad or split pin, open space for acting, grapes, small plastic bags with strong seals, strainer or sieve, pitcher, small cups <i>optional:</i> grape juice
	<b>Make</b> students make a hanging to show how prioritizing what we care about leads to eternal happiness	<b>Joyful Priorities</b> directions pp. 3-4 <i>JOY Letters Front</i> p. 11 (optional) <i>JOY Letters Back</i> p. 12	stiff paper for printing, scissors, tape, narrow ribbon (about 20" or 50 cm per student), tape <i>optional:</i> decorative pens, other decorations like glitter, glue
	<b>Coloring Picture</b>	<b>In the Vineyard</b> p. 13	crayons, markers or colored pencils
<b>4. Wrap It Up</b> (2-3 minutes)	<b>Memory Verse</b> introduce the memory verse for the week	<b>Memory Verse</b> <i>Parent Notes</i> p. 14	

# 1. Welcome Warm-up Activity

## Fair Share?

*Supplies needed: Fair Share? Spinners p. 5*

Divide the children into two teams—a red team and a blue team. Tell them you’re going to imagine that you are playing a game with spinners. If the spinner stops on the red area of the spinner, the red team takes a turn. If the spinner stops on the blue area of the spinner, the blue team takes a turn.

1. Let’s look at Spinner A (p. 39). Is this a fair spinner? Do the red and blue teams agree on this?
2. Now look at Spinner B. Will this spinner give each team a fair chance? Why or why not?
3. Now look at Spinner C. Does each team have a fair chance at having a turn?
4. What makes something fair or not fair? Does the Lord want things to be fair?

## 2. Focus on the Word

**Read:** Matthew 20:1-16. A teaching picture is available on p. 6.

**Our story is about a landowner who had a vineyard. What do people grow in vineyards? Grapes.**

**Grape vines are planted in rows along fences. They can live for many years—sometimes more than 100 years. They need to be cared for. The landowner in the parable would have hired people to do things like weed around the vines, fix walls to keep harmful animals out, and trim vines so more grapes would grow. In Biblical times vineyards had watchtowers that people could climb to look out and see if dangerous animals were coming. (See coloring picture on p. 13).**

**The first group of workers started their jobs at around 6 a.m. Are you awake at 6 a.m.? Others came at 9 a.m. which was called the 3<sup>rd</sup> hour, 12 p.m.—called the 6<sup>th</sup> hour—and 3 p.m.—the 9<sup>th</sup> hour. What time would it have been by our time when the workers started at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour? 5 p.m.—almost dinner time.**

**Did the landowner treat the workers fairly?** Some of the workers thought the landowner was unfair but he paid the workers the wages he had promised. Those hired first *felt* it was not fair when they discovered that everyone received the same pay even though some had worked fewer hours.

**What reward does the Lord promise if we love and serve Him?** Heaven!

**Some people go to heaven as babies; others go after working hard to be loving and useful during a long life. *Everyone* who does what the Word teaches because they love the Lord receives the reward of heaven. The Lord leads each person in the way that’s best for them.**

**What are the advantages of being first—say, having the first turn, being the first to use a new toy, or getting to school first? Would you always want to be first if you could?**

**What did the Lord mean when He said, “So the last will be first, and the first last”? We should put others first and not ourselves. People who put themselves first are “the first” and people who put others first are “the last”. In the spiritual world, the more angels put others first, the more they become the “first”. This means that the more they put others first, the closer they come to the Lord.**

**We come closer to the Lord as we put others first. We love and serve the Lord by treating others lovingly through helping (serving) them.**

# 3. Learn by Doing

Choose one or two activities

## **Choice** Workers in the Vineyard

Children act out the parable of the workers in the vineyard. Groups of workers are called to work in the vineyard at different times throughout the “day.” Their “work” is squeezing grapes to make grape juice. Finish by sharing a grape juice drink.



1. Explain that you will be acting out the parable, and doing a fun job in the vineyard. Point out the places you have chosen to be the “vineyard” and the “marketplace.” Assign roles or ask for volunteers for the different parts.
2. Show the children the “work”. Squish the grapes inside a bag using your hands until they are thoroughly squashed. Do not open the bag!
3. Have the children act out the story. If you have a small group, have the workers go back to the marketplace after their turn to act out another set of workers.
4. When the story is finished, give the landowner and steward a chance to squeeze a bag of grapes as well. Pour the juice from each bag through a strainer into a pitcher. Give each child a little grape juice. Tell them they are enjoying the fruits of their labors! (*Note*: crushing the grapes does not make much juice. You may want to have additional juice.)
5. As you close the activity, remind students that the landowner is really the Lord. He wants us all to work in His vineyard, that is, do what He asks us to, so that someday we can enter the kingdom of heaven. He wants to give everyone the reward of heaven, and He works with us whenever we are ready to cooperate with Him.

### Materials Needed

Stiff paper for printing pp. 9-10, brad or split pin, open space for acting, grapes, plastic baggies with strong seals (1 per student plus a sample), strainer, pitcher, small cups  
*optional*: grape juice

### Prepare in Advance

Cut grapes in half. Put 7-12 grapes in each bag. Squeeze air out of the bags and seal. Copy the *Script* (pp. 7-8). Print *Vineyard Clock* (p. 9) and *Denarius Coins* (p. 10) on stiff paper. Assemble the clock with a brad (split pin). Cut out coins. Set up room.

### New Church Concept Hours of Work

“Laboring in the vineyard” is acquiring spiritual life by the knowledges of truth and good from the Word applied to the uses of life. Instead of times of day, the angels perceive the states of life of people who die in old age, adulthood, youth or childhood, and who have equally acquired for themselves spiritual life. See *Apocalypse Explained* 194

## **Choice** Joyful Priorities

Today’s parable ends with the statement, “So the last will be first, and the first last.” In this activity, students create a hanging decoration that reminds them how to prioritize the Lord and others in order to prepare for heaven. Depending on the amount of time you have and the age of your group, decide whether to make a one or (*optional*) two sided hanging.

### Materials Needed for Each Student

*JOY Letters Front* p. 11 printed on stiff paper, scissors, tape, 20” (50 cm) of ribbon  
*optional*: *JOY Letters Back* p. 12 printed on stiff paper; decorative pens; glitter, sequins or stickers; glue

## Joyful Priorities *continued*

1. Have students cut out the *JOY Letters Front* (p. 11) while you discuss.
2. Our job in this world is to make the Lord (Jesus) the most important thing in our life, and to make other people the second most important.
3. It is good to care about ourselves. It only becomes selfish when we put ourselves first, above the Lord and other people.
4. What do the letters spell when put in order with the Lord first? (Joy)
5. What does joy have to do with putting what we care about in order? (Doing this prepares us to experience the eternal joy of heaven.)
6. When the letters are all cut out, lay them on the table face down, one on top of another, spaced as shown in the picture. Tape the yarn or ribbon to the back of the letters.
7. *Optional:* Have students cut out and decorate the *JOY Letters Back* (p. 12). **Decorate the printed side.** Tape the letters back-to-back with the *JOY Letters Front* pieces so the ribbon is sandwiched between them.



### Prepare in Advance

Print *JOY Letters Front* p. 11 on stiff paper. Cut ribbon into 20" (50 cm) pieces.

*Optional:* Print *JOY Letters Back* p. 12 on stiff paper.

### New Church Concept

#### First Will Be Last

People who place merit in their actions wish to be saved not because of the Lord's righteousness, but because of their own. Some like this, after death, say they worked in the Lord's vineyard, but they continually had in mind their own superiority and gain and thought that they might become greatest in heaven. They have no mutual love but only love of self and do not know what heaven is. They wish to be first, but become last. See *Arcana Coelestia* 2027

### Materials Needed

copies of *In the Vineyard* p. 13; crayons, markers, or colored pencils

**Choice**

## Coloring Picture: In the Vineyard

Hand out copies of *In the Vineyard* (p. 13) and invite students to color it.

# 4. Wrap It Up

## Memory Verse

Help children learn the memory verse by saying the first phrase and inviting the children to repeat it after you. Follow up with the second phrase. Repeat the verse until children can say it with confidence.

**The last will be first, and the first last.**

**Matthew 20:16**

## Closing

The Lord provides what's best for each of us. We can trust that He is leading and guiding each person in the best way possible toward heaven.

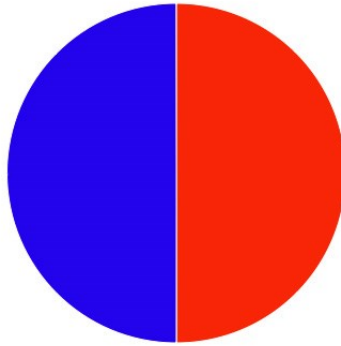
**Give Parent Notes (p. 14) to children as they leave.**

# Fair Share? Spinners

These spinners determine whether the red or blue team have a chance to play. If the spinner lands on the red area, the red team plays. If the spinner lands on the blue area, the blue team plays.

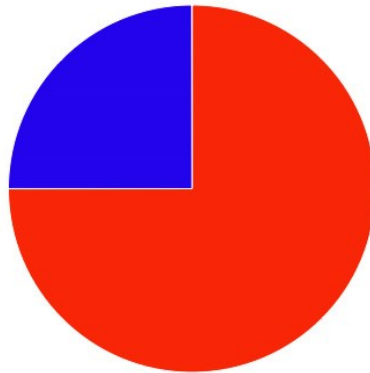
## Spinner A

Does the red or blue team have a better chance of taking a turn? Is this spinner fair?



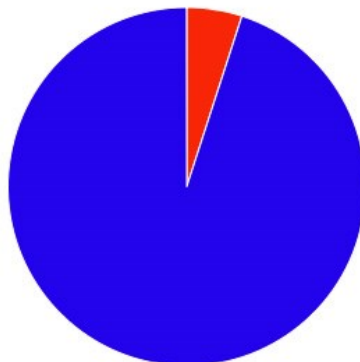
## Spinner B

Does the red or blue team have a better chance of taking a turn? Is this spinner fair?



## Spinner C

Does the red or blue team have a better chance of taking a turn? Is this spinner fair?





# Workers in the Vineyard Script

Adapted from Matthew 20:1-16

**Characters:** Narrator (reading part for teacher or student), landowner (reading), 1st hour workers (reading), 3rd hour workers, 6th hour workers, 9th hour workers, 11th hour workers (reading), steward, clock-keeper

**Props:** Basket with plastic bags containing grapes, strainer, pitcher, small cups, *Vineyard Clock*, *Denarius Coins*

**Optional Costumes:** large t-shirts, scarves, etc.

**Set-up:** Place the basket with grapes at one end of the room to represent the vineyard. Place the clock at the other end of the room to represent the marketplace. Give the Steward the denarius coins to hand out at the end.

**Start:** Landowner and Steward are in the Vineyard. Everyone else is in the marketplace. The clock is set to 1.

**Narrator:** The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.

*Landowner*

*Landowner walks from the vineyard to the marketplace.*

**Narrator:** Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

*Landowner*

*1st Hour Workers*

*Clock-keeper*

*Landowner gestures to 1st hour workers. He leads them to the "vineyard" where they are given a bag of grapes to squeeze.*

*Clock-keeper changes clock to 3.*

**Narrator:** And he went out about the 3rd hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and said to them,

*Landowner*

*Landowner walks back to the marketplace.*

**Landowner:** "You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you."

*Landowner*

*Landowner gestures to 3rd hour workers.*

**Narrator:** So they went.

*Landowner*

*3rd hour workers*

*Clock-keeper*

*Landowner leads 3rd hour workers to the vineyard to start squeezing grapes.*

*Clock-keeper changes clock to 6.*

**Narrator:** Again he went out about the 6th and the 9th hour, and did likewise.

*Landowner*

*6th hour workers*

*Clock-keeper*

*9th hour workers*

*Landowner goes to marketplace leads the 6th hour workers to the vineyard.*

*Clock-keeper changes clock to 9.*

*Landowner leads the 9th hour workers to the vineyard to squeeze grapes.*

*Clock-keeper changes clock to 11*

**Narrator:** And about the 11th hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them,

*Landowner*

*Landowner walks to marketplace.*

# Workers in the Vineyard Script *continued*

**Landowner:** Why have you been standing here idle all day?

**11th Hour Workers:** Because no one hired us.

**Landowner:** You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.

*11th hour workers  
Clock-keeper*

*Landowner gestures toward vineyard. 11th hour workers nod and walk to Vineyard to squeeze grapes.  
Clock-keeper changes clock to 12.*

**Narrator:**

*Landowner  
Steward*

So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward,  
*Landowner and steward step forward.*

**Landowner:** Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.

**Narrator:**

*Steward  
11th hour workers*

And when those came who were hired about the 11th hour, they each received a denarius.  
*11th hour workers walk to steward. Steward hands each a denarius coin.*

**Narrator:**

*Steward  
3rd, 6th, 9th workers*

But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius.  
*3rd, 6th and 9th hour workers are each given a denarius by the steward.*

**Narrator:**

*Steward  
1st hour workers*

And when they had received it, they complained against the landowner, saying,  
*Steward gives each 1st hour workers a denarius. They turn to landowner in anger.*

**1st hour workers:**

These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.

**Landowner:**

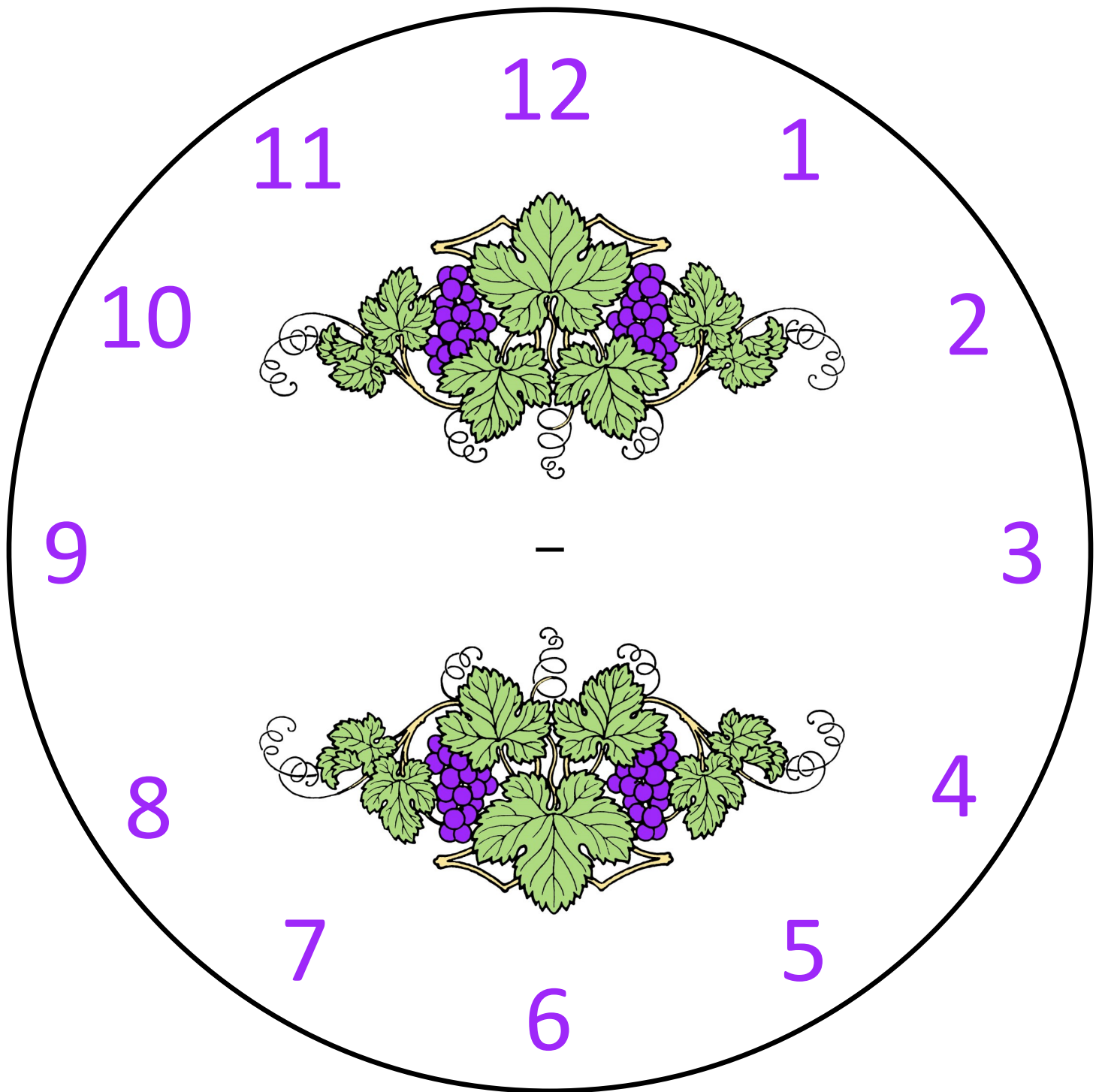
Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things?

**Narrator:**

So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.”

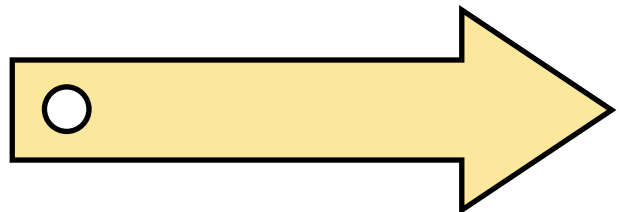
See directions on p. 3 for completing the activity.





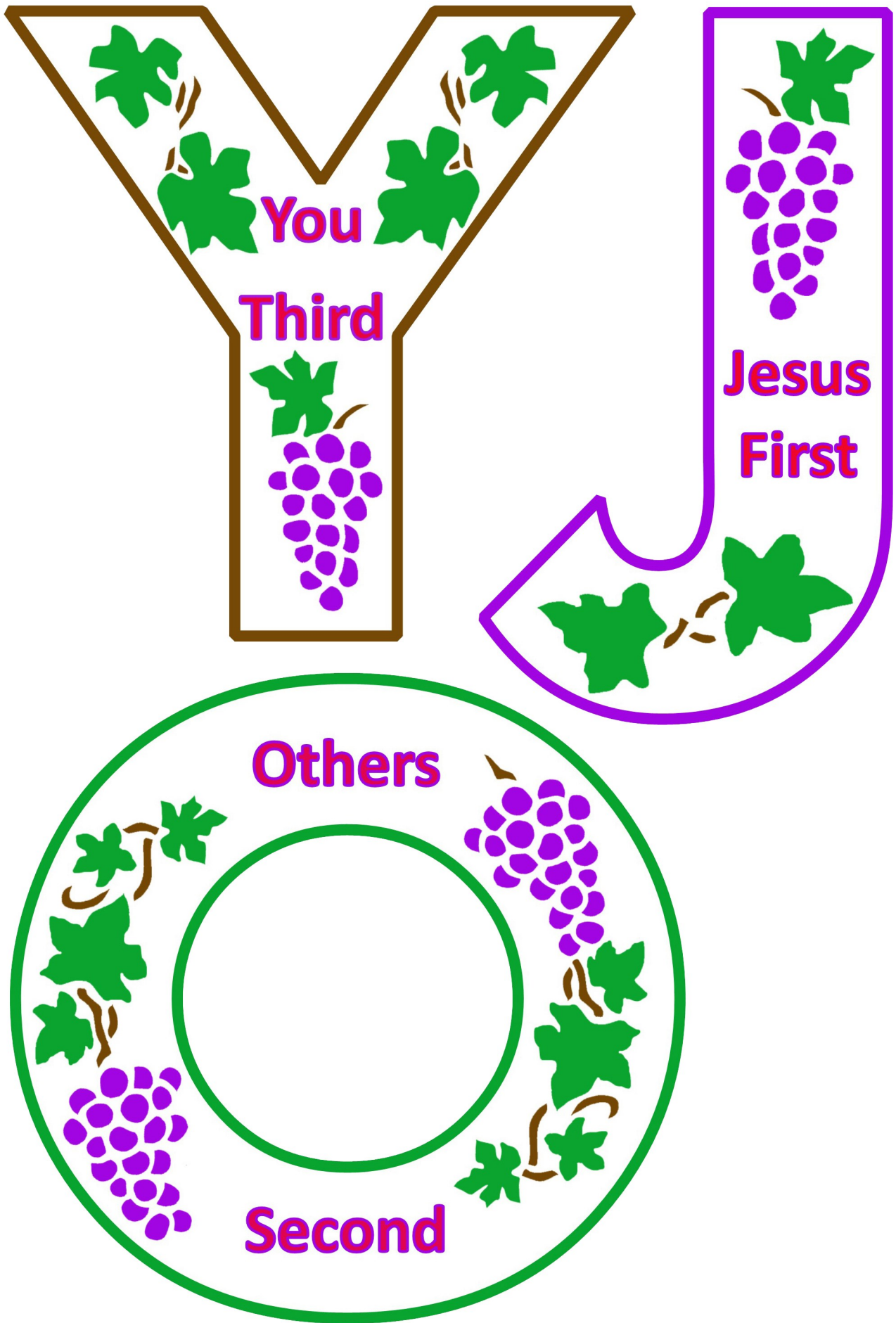
### Vineyard Clock Directions

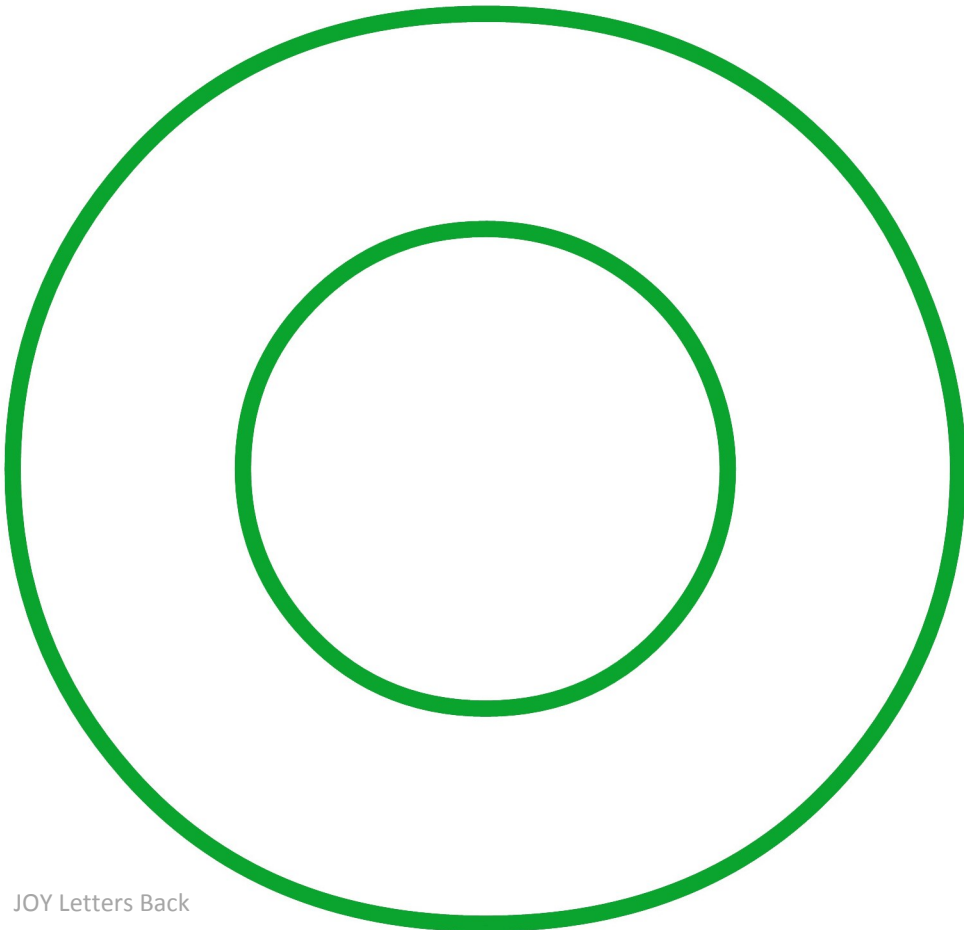
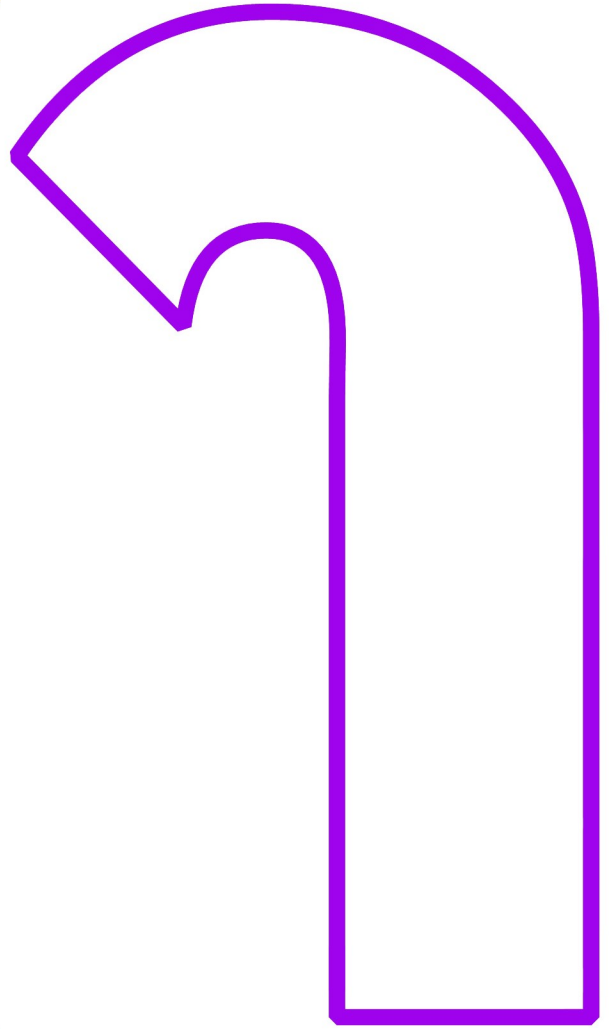
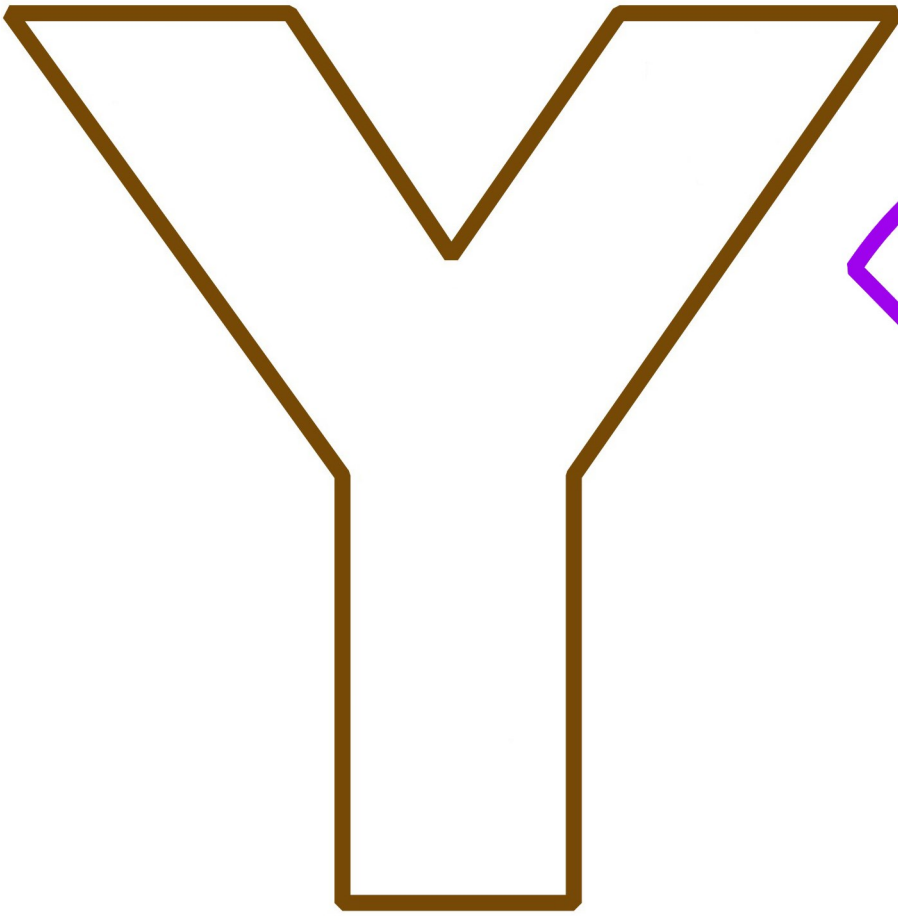
1. Cut out the clock pieces.
2. Punch a hole in the hand.
3. Attach the hand to the face using a brad or split pin.
4. Turn the hand to indicate different hours of the day.





Denarius Coins







In the Vineyard

## Parent Notes

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

### PARENT NOTE

Dear Parents,

Today we learned about people who were working in a vineyard. Ask your child why some of the workers were unhappy.

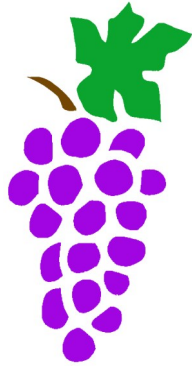
We learned that the Lord loves each of us and is guiding us toward heaven in the way that is best for us.

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

#### Memory Verse

The last will be first,  
and the first last.

Matthew 20:16



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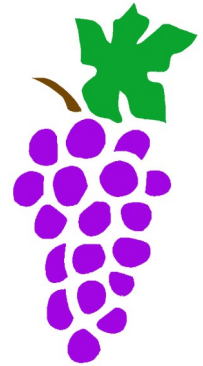
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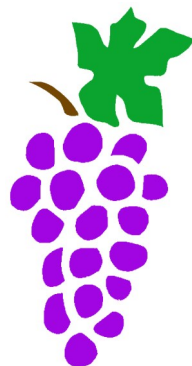
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