



The Pearl of Great Price

Level C

Ages 11-14

Matthew 13:45-46; Revelation 21:21

Lesson Focus: Looking for truth

Reading Summary: “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

“The twelve gates [of the holy city] were twelve pearls; each individual gate was of one pearl.” Revelation 21:21

Lesson 2		Materials Supplied	Materials Needed
1. Welcome Warm-up Activity (2-3 minutes)	Watch a Video	How Pearls Are Made directions p. 2	equipment for showing a video chosen from the playlist at bitly.com/PearlsMade optional: a real pearl
2. Focus on the Word Use all activities (5-7 minutes)	Read the Word and Talk About It	<i>see Reading Summary</i> above discussion guide p. 2	Bible or copy of Matthew 13:45-46 and Revelation 21:21
3. Learn by Doing Choose 1-2 activities (15-20 minutes)	Service Project make savory or sweet snacks that look like oysters with pearls inside them to serve to your congregation	Pearls in the Shell Snacks directions p. 3 <i>Pearl Snack Recipes</i> p. 5	supplies vary depending on which snack you choose (see p. 5); hand washing supplies, serving plates and napkins
	Discuss identify the characteristics of wise sayings and the effects they have when we take them to heart	Pearls of Wisdom directions pp. 3-4 <i>Pearls of Wisdom Cards</i> pp. 6-7	stiff paper for printing; bowl for putting cards in
4. Wrap It Up (2-3 minutes)	Take the Message Home introduce the <i>Take Home Cards</i>	Seeking Heaven p. 8	

1. Welcome Warm-up Activity

How Pearls Are Made

Supplies needed: equipment for watching a video
optional: a real pearl to look at

Choose a video showing how pearls are made from the playlist at bitly.com/PearlsMade. Prepare students for watching by asking them a question or two.



1. Have you ever examined a pearl and wondered how it was made?
2. How would you describe a pearl to someone who is blind?
3. Most gems are formed inside the earth. Some are formed under intense heat. Others are formed under intense pressure or by chemical changes in rocks. What is unique about how pearls are formed?
4. What are some differences between pearls and gemstones?

2. Focus on the Word

Read: Matthew 13:45-46; Revelation 21:21

Is there something that you want more than anything else? To put it another way, what is most important to you? Encourage students to be specific, e.g. good relationships with others, a safe and happy home, friends, a computer, etc.

What steps might you take to obtain your goal?

Today's story is about a merchant—a person who buys and sells things. What kinds of people would we call “merchants” today? Shop keepers, online vendors, etc. They are people who search out and buy things to sell to others.

The merchant was seeking a “pearl of great price”. Why are pearls valuable? The value of a pearl is determined by its roundness, smoothness, color and size. **Unlike gems, which may be cut and polished into beautiful shapes to sparkle and shine in the light, pearls cannot be divided.**

What kind of dedication would it take to sell everything you have for one single wonderful thing? Have you ever met a person with that kind of dedication?

In the Word, pearls mean knowledges of what is good and true. The “pearl of great price” means knowledge of the Lord. What would a person have to “sell” or let go of to truly value this kind of knowledge? The idea that our life is our own, that we are in charge of our life, and that we have the power to do things on our own without the Lord's help.

The book of Revelation says that, “The twelve gates [of the holy city] were twelve pearls; each individual gate was of one pearl” (Revelation 21:21). The holy city is a picture of the Lord's kingdom—of heaven. In what sense are true ideas the “doors” of heaven?

The Lord invites us to search the Word for true and good ideas—just as the merchant searched for the pearl of great price. When we acknowledge Him and lay down our lives to follow Him, the Lord can gift us with lasting heavenly happiness and peace.

3. Learn by Doing

Choose one or two activities

Choice Pearls in the Shell Snacks

Engage students in making “pearl of great price” snacks to offer as refreshments to other Sunday school groups, or for the congregation. Choose sweet and/or savory foods to prepare. See *Pearl Snack Recipes* on p. 5 for a variety of ideas.



1. The story of the pearl of great price is included in a list of parables about the kingdom of heaven. We know that people in heaven focus on serving the neighbor.
2. In doing this activity, we can act in a heavenly way by preparing food to share with our neighbors.
3. Introduce the snack activity you have chosen and show students how to make it.
4. For larger groups, divide students into service teams and give each team responsibility for a specific snack or job.
5. Have students wash their hands in preparation for handling food.
6. Prepare snacks and set up a serving area.
7. Serve snacks for children or adults.
8. Clean up!

Materials Needed

Ingredients to make one or more snacks from *Pearl Snack Recipes* p. 5, hand washing supplies, serving plates and napkins

Prepare in Advance

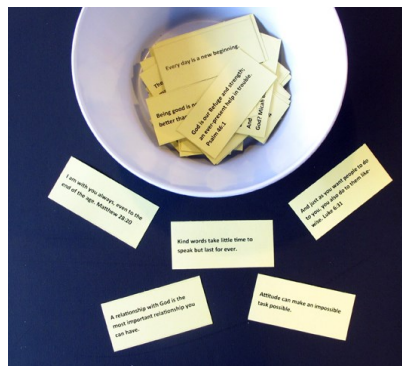
Buy the ingredients and gather the supplies that you need.

New Church Concept Pearl of Great Price

“Pearls” stand for the knowledges of good and truth, for these are the truths of a natural person. “The one precious pearl” means the knowledge about the Lord and His Divine [nature]. “Going away he sold all that he had and bought it” means to reject what is one’s own (proprium) in order to receive life from the Lord. See *Apocalypse Explained* 1044

Choice Pearls of Wisdom

People sometimes refer to wise sayings as “pearls of wisdom”. Many sayings like this come from popular books or famous people, but some come from the Word. This activity invites group discussion and reflection on sayings from a variety of sources. The purpose is to help students learn to identify sayings that are truly valuable—like the “pearl of great price” in the gospel of Matthew.



1. Does your family have wise sayings you like to use? E.g. An apple a day keeps the doctor away.
2. What characteristics of wise sayings make them “wise”?

Materials Needed

Pearls of Wisdom pp. 6-7 printed on stiff paper, paper cutter or scissors, bowl for sayings

Prepare in Advance

Print *Pearls of Wisdom* pp. 6-7 on stiff paper and cut them apart with a paper cutter or scissors. Put the cards in a bowl to pass.

Pearls of Wisdom *continued*

3. How do wise sayings come into being?
4. The Word is full of “wise sayings”. In fact it is a book of wisdom unlike any other in the world. This is because it contains the “pearl of great price”—true knowledge of the Lord.
5. This bowl is filled with wise sayings. We’re going to pass it around the room. When it comes to you, take a saying out of the bowl and read it aloud.
6. As you read or hear each saying, ask yourself, “Why is this wise?” “What effect would living by this saying have on my life?” and, “Does this saying help me find the ‘pearl of great price’?”
7. Pass the bowl around. Encourage students to think about each saying in relation to their own lives.
8. Finish the activity by asking students to share an insight about one of the pearls of wisdom with the group. (Students can also choose to pass.)

New Church Concept: Buying and Selling

‘Buying and selling’ means acquiring for oneself the knowledges of truth and good from the Word and communicating them, or what is the same, learning and teaching them. This is because ‘wealth and riches’ in the Word stand for knowledges of truth and good; and ‘silver and gold,’ by means of which buying and selling are transacted, mean the truths and goods of heaven and the church. This is why ‘buying and selling’, and also ‘doing business and trading’ are spoken of in the Word here and there, and why they mean spiritual buying and selling and doing business and trading. *Apocalypse Explained* 840

New Church Concept Gates of Pearl

The reason why “each of the gates was of one pearl” is that all the knowledges of truth have relation to one knowledge, which is their containant. This one knowledge is the knowledge of the Lord. Acknowledgement and knowledge of the Lord conjoin into one all the knowledges of truth and good from the Word because there is a connection in all spiritual truths. See *Apocalypse Revealed* 916



4. Wrap It Up

Take the Message Home

Choose one or two questions to help bring the message home.

- Is it possible to possess the “pearl of great price” without selling everything else?
- In what sense is a person a spiritual “merchant”? How could being a merchant help others?
- What difference does knowing the Lord make in a person’s life?
- How much time and energy do most people use in looking for what is true? What difference could it make if people spent more time doing this?

Give *Take Home Cards* (two per page, p. 8) on “Seeking Heaven” to the students as they leave and suggest they put them up where they will see them this week.

Pearl Snack Recipes

Choose a snack recipe and gather ingredients and supplies for the snack(s) of your choice. You will also need cooking equipment (given with each recipe), serving plates, serving equipment if needed, and napkins. Have fun!

Cucumber, Cream Cheese and Olive Pearl Snacks

Ingredients and Supplies

- English (burpless) cucumber
- whipped (for easy spreading) cream cheese or hummus (dairy free)
- can of small olives
- spreader for cream cheese or hummus
- can opener
- cutting board, sharp knives, paper towels



Directions

Wash cucumber. Slice into thin rounds and pat dry with a paper towel. Open can of olives and drain. Cut each olive in half. Assemble the snack by laying down one cucumber slice, putting a generous dollop of cream cheese or hummus on it, placing half an olive on top and covering it with a second cucumber slice.



Crackers and Cheese Pearl Snacks

Ingredients and Supplies

- round crackers (wheat or gluten free)
- small mozzarella balls, or string cheese to cut up, or white cannellini beans
- cheese spread
- spreader for cheese spread, knife to cut string cheese into pearl slices

Directions

Lay down one cracker, put a dollop of cheese spread on it, place a small mozzarella ball or slice of string cheese or cannellini bean on top, and cover it with a second cracker.

Cookies and Frosting Pearl Snacks

Ingredients and Supplies

- round cookies (wheat or gluten free)
- can of white frosting
- round white candy for pearls (e.g. yoghurt covered raisins, malt balls, mini marshmallows, etc.)
- spreader for frosting

Directions

Assemble the snack by laying down one cookie, putting a generous dollop of frosting on it, placing a white candy on top and covering it with a second cookie.



Pearls of Wisdom Cards

Print on thick paper and cut out. Select sayings to include in the activity from the ones provided.

<p>Doing the right thing is more important than having the right things.</p>	<p>We do not see things as they are. We see them as we are.</p>	<p>The difference between a flower and a weed is a judgement.</p>
<p>It's not them, it's you. It's not there, it's here. It's not then, it's now.</p>	<p>I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Matthew 28:20</p>	<p>Kind words take little time to speak but last for ever.</p>
<p>I am the way, the truth and the life. John 14:6</p>	<p>Life is the movie you see through your own eyes. It's how you take it that counts.</p>	<p>Our minds need to be fed just like our stomachs.</p>
<p>Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you will receive it, and it will be yours. Mark 11:24</p>	<p>Beginning a task is the fastest way to get it done.</p>	<p>I can learn what I do not know.</p>
<p>People might doubt what we say, but they usually believe what we do.</p>	<p>Admitting we need to learn more is the beginning of wisdom.</p>	<p>Kind actions begin with kind thoughts.</p>
<p>Progress has more to do with the path I take than with the speed I go.</p>	<p>Just as you want people to do to you, do likewise to them. Luke 6:31</p>	<p>The essence of love is to love others and through love to be joined with them. See <i>Divine Love and Wisdom 47</i></p>
<p>At any moment I could start being a better person. But, which moment should I choose?</p>	<p>What we think, or what we know, or what we believe, is, in the end, of little consequence. The only consequence is what we do.</p>	<p>Telling the truth is easier than hiding a lie.</p>
<p>Whispering in kindness means more than shouting in anger.</p>	<p>The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new landscapes, but in having new eyes.</p>	<p>Being positive can make the worst situation seem better.</p>

Pearls of Wisdom Cards

Print on thick paper and cut out. Select sayings to include in the activity from the ones provided.

Sometimes, silence is golden.	Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in Him. Psalm 34:8	Improving myself is one way to make the world better.
Counting time is not as important as making time count.	Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. Isaiah 40:31	The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. Psalm 23:1
God is our Refuge and strength; an ever-present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1	Attitude can make an impossible task possible.	What does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8
All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth. Psalm 25:10	The choices I make in this world make a difference to eternity.	You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you have.
I am thankful for all of those who said NO to me. Its because of them that I'm doing it myself.	No matter how hard the past has been, you can always begin again.	Humility is royalty without a crown.
The love we have is God's gift to us, what we do with it is our gift to God.	The only time you should look down on people is when you are helping them up!	You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. John 8:32
The best apology is changing your behavior.	Love and kindness move mountains.	Don't trust what you see. Even salt looks like sugar.
A relationship with God is the most important relationship you can have.	Being good is not good enough. Be better than you were yesterday.	Every day is a new beginning.

Seeking Heaven

Read: One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. Psalm 27:4

Reflect: When the merchant seeking pearls found one pearl of great price, he sold everything in order to buy it because he wanted (desired) that pearl more than everything else. Psalm 27 is spoken from the point of view of a person who also desires one thing above all others—to dwell in the house of the Lord, which is to enter heaven.

Preparing ourselves for heaven is the key thing the Lord asks us to do on earth. We will have many important and worthwhile goals at different times—but entering the Lord's kingdom is the one goal we should seek throughout our lives.

Respond: Take a minute to think about the fact that you are a spiritual being as well as a natural one. You *will* live to eternity. What can you do today to work for the one great goal of living to eternity *in heaven*?

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