

The Parable of the Sower

The Parable of the Sower is an ideal basis for a Sunday school lesson at harvest time.

The following text introduces the parable to the children.

Jesus often told stories to teach people things. We call his stories parables. One of his stories is called 'The Parable of the Sower'. It's about a farmer who sowed seeds in his fields.



Children's version of the parable:

Read the parable aloud to the children, pausing to explain where necessary. You can use the version below, or one from a children's Bible.

The farmer's tale

A farmer sowed some seeds in his field. As he scattered the seeds, they fell in different areas of the field. Some seeds fell onto the path and the birds quickly ate them. Some seeds fell onto rocky ground, where there wasn't much soil. The seeds grew quickly into plants. But because the roots were not in good, deep soil, the plants couldn't get enough water. When the sun shone down they got too thirsty and the plants died. Some seeds fell into an area that was full of weeds. As the plants tried to grow, the weeds got in the way, and the plants died. But some seeds fell onto good ground, so the plants grew well. When they were grown, the farmer harvested lots of plants.

Jesus' interpretation

Jesus explained to the people who had gathered to hear his story what the parable means.

The farmer is like Jesus and the seed is like the message of God. Jesus sows the seed of the good news in different places, and different people react differently to God's message.

When seeds fall on the path and are eaten by the birds it's like when people who hear the good news pay no attention. They carry on living their lives without Jesus.

The seeds that fall on the rocky ground grow quickly but then die because they can't take root. This teaches us that some people listen to the good news at first, but their interest has no real root. When these people come across problems, they give up on Jesus.

The seeds that fall amid the weeds are choked and the plants die. Some people accept God's message, but they don't fully commit to Jesus. They let other things – like money and worries – get in the way of their faith. Like the weeds choke the plants, so these people's faith is smothered.

But the seeds that fall on good ground grow into big, healthy plants. The good soil is like the hearts of people who love Jesus, who hear the good news and rejoice. God's word takes root in their lives, and they remain faithful to God. Their faith grows and grows.



What can we learn from this story?

Ask children to share what they think they can learn from the story. You can use the following as summaries:

Farming

This story teaches us that plants need good soil to root in that contains water and no weeds, as well as sunshine. It shows us that good harvests rely on good growing conditions.

Spiritual

This story teaches us that God blesses those who love and trust him. If we don't listen to God's message, or we give up on it when things are tough, we will lose our faith and feel sad and lonely. But if we listen to the good news and do our best to follow God's word, then we will be rewarded.

Relating this parable to FARM-Africa

Farmers in Africa often struggle to reap good harvests. Their seeds are like the ones that fell on the path and on the rocky and weed-choked ground.

As good Christians, we can pray for farmers in Africa. We can pray that the farmers have rich soil, sunshine and rain, and that they reap good harvests. By saying prayers for farmers in Africa, we are following God's word. We are loving other people, and praying that they are safe, well and happy. We can also say thank you to God for giving us plentiful harvests – for the food we eat that farmers grow for us.

Finally, we can help farmers in Africa in practical ways – by raising funds so that FARM-Africa can provide seeds, tools, livestock and valuable help and training.



Activities

Colouring

A colouring activity (colouring sheet attached) can be a good way to involve all age groups. As they colour, go around the room asking children to explain the symbolism of each drawing – for example, what does the seed on the path teach us?

Drama

This activity will be particularly good for engaging smaller children. Read the following lines aloud one at a time, and encourage the children to become the farmer/seeds/plants. You may need to lead by example and show the children the kind of movements they can do.

A farmer sowed some seeds in his field.

Show the action of scattering seeds

Some seeds fell onto the path and the birds quickly ate them.

Some of the children can be birds; some seeds.

Some seeds fell onto rocky ground, where there wasn't much soil. The seeds grew quickly into plants. But because the roots were not in good, deep soil, the plants couldn't get enough water. When the sun shone down they got too thirsty and they died.

The children can act out the growth of the seeds, the sun's hot rays, and then the plants' collapse.

Some seeds fell into an area that was full of weeds. As the plants tried to grow, the weeds got in the way, and the plants died.

Some of the children can be weeds; some plants.

But some seeds fell onto good ground, so the plants grew well.

The children can be tall, strong plants.

When they had grown, the farmer harvested lots of plants.

You can show how a farmer harvests a crop.

