

Parables of Jesus

Lesson 34a — The Lost Sheep

Lesson 34b — The Prodigal Son

Lesson 34c — The Selfish Rich Man

Lesson 34d — Be Humble in Spirit

OVERVIEW

The focus of this unit is on the parables of Jesus. Your students need to understand what a parable is and why Jesus chose to use this special method of teaching. While Christ did not invent the parable, it is significant that He is the only One who used them in the New Testament.

A parable is a special type of story, different from a fable, that teaches people something they do not know by comparing it to something they do know. Jesus was a master storyteller. He used parables to help the people of His day comprehend things they did not know

about God and His plan for mankind. Jesus knew that these short stories which explained spiritual truths would be enlightening to those who believed in Him and wanted to follow His teachings. To others, the parables would be only stories.

Four well-known parables of Jesus will be explored in this unit: the story of the lost sheep, the prodigal son, the rich man who did not think of others, and the men who chose the chief rooms. In each case, you will want to be sure your students understand the spiritual meaning behind the parable, as well as being able to relate the events of the story.

GAMES FOR REVIEW

Make about ten smiley faces for a flannel board and prepare the same number of questions about the lessons in this unit. Number them from one to ten (or whatever number you decide on) on the back. Place them at random on your flannel board. Have a box filled with individual stickers as prizes for the children to select when the time comes. First, allow a child to choose a smiley face from the flannel board after he answers a question correctly. Then look on the back of the smiley face for a number and follow the directions given for that number. For example:

1. Give one sticker to the oldest boy in your class and keep one for yourself.
2. Give one sticker to each child your age and keep one for yourself.

Prepare a true/false review of this unit. On the left side of your board make two columns. Title one column TRUE and the other FALSE. Use the right side of the board to write the statements given below. Just before each statement is a letter. If the statement is true write that letter in the TRUE column next to that statement. If it is false write the letter in the FALSE column. When this is done, fill in the empty true/false spaces with random letters. Read the statements to the children and

ask them if it is true or false. Circle the letter given for that answer. When they have completed the game they will find the circled letters spell the word PARABLES. Go on to talk about Jesus and His use of parables.

- P — The angels are sad when anyone is born again.
A — Jesus is the Good Shepherd.
R — The prodigal son liked living with the pigs.
A — The father was happy when his son came home.
B — It is best to share with everyone.
L — The selfish rich man died.
E — You should always take the best seat for yourself.
S — God wants everyone to be humble.

Make a butterfly and bee from heavy construction paper or posterboard (see Patterns). Make up questions or use those provided in the four lessons, and place a large flower for each question along the bottom of the board you intend to use for the game. Divide the class or group into two teams, using the butterfly and bee to identify each team. As each question is answered, the butterfly or bee moves from flower to flower for correct answers. The first one to reach the last flower is the winner.

CONTEST IDEAS

Purchase one of the large-sized barns from a Hickory

Farms store. Keep prizes in it that can be earned by the children during this unit of lessons. Tell them that for every five points (or whatever amount you decide) they may choose two things from the barn. But they must share one with somebody. Each time they choose they should share with a different person. Prize ideas: a baggie of animal cookies or fish crackers, pencils, pins, cute erasers, small books, stickers, balloons, pads of paper, candy, tiny cars, plastic animals or people, barrettes, ribbons, combs, bouncy balls.

Before class time, prepare a soup-can card holder for each child (see Patterns). Remove the top and bottom lids with a can opener and wash the cylinder section. Wrap yarn lengthwise around the cylinder to make at least 16 loops (depending on the number of accomplishments you decide to use). Supply folded 4" x 6" pieces of colored paper for the children to use as cards. Use a different colored paper for each accomplishment: attendance, missionary effort, knowing the memory verse, etc. Write the accomplishment inside the cards and have the children sign their name to each of the cards they earn. Let them insert the cards in the loops around the can.

BULLETIN BOARDS

Cover your board with a bright blue background. Use the title, JESUS' PARABLE TRAIN! (see Patterns). Put green paper across the bottom of the board and make it into a mountain. Cut out an engine, two cars, and a caboose. Place them on the green as though they are traveling up the mountain. On the side of each train section put a picture of something that will represent the parables taught in this unit.

Use labels from detergent boxes and bottles as a basis for your bulletin board (see Patterns). The children will probably recognize some of the labels used in their homes. For each of the capitalized words use the detergent label. (You may wish to use this idea as a departmental board, with all the teachers contributing labels. Or use labels from other products in a similar manner.) Title your board, "Jesus Told Some FABulous Stories Called Parables!" Using four pieces of paper, write the following statements about each of the parables — one parable per sheet. Frame each of the sheets of paper with a piece of construction paper. Next to each framed sheet put a picture or a symbol to represent each of the parables.

1. When the little lamb decided to DASH off by himself, he became lost. The shepherd had much JOY when he found the lost lamb.
2. The prodigal son decided to be BOLD and return to his father's house. The father had something to CHEER about when he saw his son again.
3. The selfish rich man wanted to keep his things ALL to himself. God said that before DAWN the rich man would die.

4. God does not want us to have much PRIDE, but to be humble. We will GAIN God's blessing if we love everyone.

Cut out large bubble letters spelling the title words LESSONS FROM LUKE (see Patterns). Center these letters on your board. Enlarge the main illustrations for each story on a copy machine. Color and mount these around the title. Run brightly colored yarn from each picture to the center words.

CHART IDEAS

On the first Sunday of this unit give each student a Ziploc bag in which to keep his puzzle charts (see Patterns). Each Sunday give the students the puzzle chart that goes with that week's lesson. Copy these puzzles onto construction paper or any other heavy paper, cover them with contact paper, and cut them apart. A different colored paper should be used for each week's puzzle so they can be easily identified.

Make a chart on tan construction paper (see Patterns). Color some bees or purchase fuzzy little bees from a craft store. (They come in quantities and many colors and are not expensive.) For each specified behavior the student does, glue on a different colored fuzzy bee. Or, you can make up several of the bees from the pattern and glue them onto the beehive. For example, to "bee" a missionary a student can bring someone to Sunday school.

Give each child a copy of the Stories Jesus Told speech balloon chart (see Patterns). Each week let them color the symbol for that week's lesson.

Prepare a Jesus' Stories activity book for each child (see Patterns). Mount the two activity pages back to back, then staple them to the center of the book picture. Each week let them complete the activity for that lesson. At the end of the unit they will have their own book of stories Jesus told.

SUPPORT MATERIAL

Parables of Jesus — Pict-O-Graph, by Standard Publishing

Acting for God — The Helping Hands Series, Shining Star Publishing

Six Stories of Jesus — Stories That Live, Series 1 Book 5, coloring book (also story and cassette tape), International Cassette Corp.

Parables of Jesus — Arch Book, Concordia Egermeier's Picture-Story Life of Jesus — Warner Press

Jesus — The Friend of Children — Illustrated by Richard and Frances Hook, David C. Cook

100 New Testament Stories — Retold by Norman J. Bull, Abingdon