
 **Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23; Luke 8:4-15**

Leader Guide

Teachers Dig In

Dig In to the Bible

- Read: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23; Luke 8:4-15
- In This Passage: Jesus tells a story about a farmer scattering seeds. Some fall on the path and get eaten by birds. Some fall in rocky soil and die quickly in the hot sun. Some fall among thorns, so they grow but then get choked by thorns. And some fall in good soil and grow into great plants. Jesus told this story to show that he grows us.
- Bible Point: Jesus grows us.
- Summary Verse: “Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother!” (Matthew 12:50).

Dig Deeper

- You’ll Be Teaching: *Jesus grows us*. Kids are still growing physically, so they can relate to the idea of growth. This lesson will help them see that there’s another kind of growing that’s really important—spiritual growth. That happens when we stay close to Jesus!
- Think About: Looking back at your life so far, when did you grow the most? How would you like Jesus to help you grow now?

Dig In to Prayer

- Today you’ll be discovering questions kids have about Jesus and the Bible. After class, pray for kids based on the questions they ask.

Quick Tip

- Just as Jesus talked about four different types of soil, there may be several different types of kids in your class. Some may not have heard about Jesus before, some may be searching for a friendship with Jesus, some may be new to a relationship with Jesus, and some may be uncertain about their relationship with Jesus. Be prepared to help kids with questions no matter where they are in their faith.

This Lesson at a Glance



BIBLE MESSAGE

Kids act like seeds that fell in different soils.

Supplies

- Bible



PRAYER

Kids each receive a blessing.



JESUS CONNECTION

Kids fold papers as they share questions they have about God.

Supplies

- paper



SCRIPTURE SKILLS

Kids talk about people who help them grow.

Supplies

- Bibles
- “Hands-On Bible: Books of the Bible Poster Set” (purchase [here](#))



BIBLE MEMORY

Kids play Charades to explore God’s will.

Supplies

- “Life of Jesus Bible Verse Posters” (optional) (purchase [here](#))

Easy Prep

- Tape the Matthew 12:50 poster on a wall so kids will be able to see it. If you don’t have the posters, you’ll need to write the verse in big letters.



ACTIVITY PAGES WITH A POINT

Older kids fold and unfold a page to make a plant grow; younger kids color a picture of the Bible story.

Supplies

- “Parable of the Farmer and the Seed” Activity Page (1 per reader) (download [here](#))
- “Parable of the Farmer and the Seed” Coloring Page (1 per non-reader) (download [here](#))
- crayons
- mini dot stickers (optional)
- three-hole punch and binders (optional)



OVERTIME

Kids aim shoe “seeds” at the good soil.

**Marked supplies can be reused from Core Bible Discovery*

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



BIBLE MESSAGE

Parable of the Farmer and the Seed (Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23; Luke 8:4-15)

[10 min]

Supplies

- Bible

Discuss

Say: **Today's Bible story is about planting seeds. And seeds grow into plants.**

Ask: • **Tell about a cool plant you've seen.** Have kids turn to a partner to share. Then ask a few kids to share with everyone.

Say: **Just as plants grow, Jesus grows us. Let's find out more.**

Grow Like Seeds

Open your Bible to Matthew 13, and show kids the words.

Say: **Sometimes in the Bible, Jesus told parables. Parables are short stories used to make a point. Let's learn the parable Jesus told about planting seeds.**

Read Matthew 13:3-4.

Say: **Let's be the seeds that the birds ate.** Have kids form pairs. The younger partner in each pair will curl up on the floor to be a seed. The older partners will "fly" toward them like birds. Then kids swap roles.

Have kids sit back up, and then read Matthew 13:5-6.

Have kids curl up like seeds, quickly begin to grow, and then wither when you say so.

Read Matthew 13:7.

Have kids curl up like seeds, grow slowly, then make "choking" sounds and fall over.

Read Matthew 13:8.

Have kids curl up like seeds, then grow all the way until they are big and tall. Give everyone a round of applause for their acting.

Ask: • **A parable is a story that makes a point. What point do you think Jesus was trying to make?**

Say: **It's okay if you're not sure what Jesus' point was. Even his adult friends didn't understand. So Jesus explained it.**

Read Matthew 13:19. Have kids repeat the bird action. Say: **This soil is like people who don't understand the good news about Jesus.**

Read Matthew 13:20-21. Have kids repeat the growing and wilting action. Say: **This soil is like people who say they love Jesus but don't grow close enough to him to last when times get tough.**

Read Matthew 13:22. Have kids repeat the growing and choking action. Say: **This soil is like people who get too focused on worries or stuff to grow close to Jesus.**

Read Matthew 13:23. Have kids repeat the growing action. Say: **This soil is like people who love and follow Jesus!**

Ask: • **Here's a question just to think about—don't answer aloud. Which soil is most like your friendship with Jesus? Remember, the different types of soil represent not understanding, turning from God in tough times, focusing on other things, or growing closer to God.** Allow a moment for kids to think.

Say: Jesus is like the farmer in this story. Jesus grows us! Jesus told the message about God's kingdom to everyone he could. And he invites his friends to do the same! Not everyone follows Jesus, though. Some people are like the path, the rocky soil, or the thorny soil. But Jesus grows us. He plants some seeds in hearts that are good soil—ready to hear, believe, and follow him!



PRAYER

Prayer of Blessing

[5 min]

Stand Strong and Receive a Blessing

Say: I'm so glad Jesus grows us. I'd like to pray a blessing over each of you, asking Jesus to help you grow closer and closer to him.

A blessing is a prayer that asks God to prepare something or someone for special work. You might bless food before you eat it and ask God to use the food to help you stay healthy and strong. You could ask God to bless our church leaders and help them do God's special work.

Today I'd like to pray a blessing over each of you. I'll ask Jesus to help you grow closer to him this week.

Everyone will crouch down low to the ground. When I call each of you by name, please stand slowly like you're growing. Then stand tall while I pray a blessing for you. Keep standing while I call the next person.

Walk to each child, calling the child by name. As you bless each child, place your hand on the child's shoulder to start their "growing." Then move to the next person. If you have a lot of kids, bless a couple of kids as an example, and then invite other leaders to help you.

Pray: **Dear Jesus, please bless** [child's name]. **Help** [child's name] **grow closer to you.**

Say: Jesus grows us. May we all keep growing closer to Jesus every day.



JESUS CONNECTION Starting Small

[10 min]

Supplies

- paper

Tip

- You may want to connect with adult or teen helpers ahead of time to have them be thinking of some kid-appropriate questions they have about God.

Fold Papers

Say: **Jesus told a story about a farmer planting seeds. He said that the seed on the path was like people who hear about God but don't understand. We *all* have questions about God—things that seem difficult to understand or figure out. Let's share some of those with an activity and see if we can make sure Jesus' seeds fall on the fertile soil in our hearts.**

- Hand each person a sheet of paper.
- Begin by telling a question *you* have about God, such as "How could God *always* exist?" or "How could God just speak and make mountains?" After saying your question, fold your paper in half and lead kids to do the same thing.
- Then have one or two leaders share *their* questions about God. This gives kids a chance to think, plus shows them that even grown-ups don't understand everything about God! Each time a question is asked, lead kids in folding their papers in half.
- Let kids call out their questions about God, folding their papers each time they hear or speak a question. (Note: An 8½x11-inch sheet of paper can be folded in half only about six times. So if you have a large group and want more kids to share their questions, you may want to do this in smaller groups.)
- Hold up your folded paper.

Ask: • **What happened to our papers?**

Say: **Our papers started out this big** (hold up an unfolded sheet), **but now they're so small! Let's think about the story Jesus told. He talked about seeds. Seeds are pretty small, too. But they contain all they need to grow into something big and strong—like a tree! Hmm, I wonder what that can teach us about Jesus.**

Unfold Papers

Say: **Today we're exploring what it means that Jesus grows us. Jesus knows that things about God can be hard to understand. That's why he used stories to help people know God better. Let's think about other ways Jesus can grow our faith in God.**

Ask: • **Jesus, God's Son, healed people. What does *that* show us about God?** Kids might share that it showed God's power or his care for people. Unfold your paper one time and lead kids in doing the same.

• **Jesus, God's Son, fed people. What does *that* tell us about God?**

After a few kids respond, unfold your paper one time and lead kids in doing the same.

- **God's Son, Jesus, was a friend to people who didn't have many friends. What does that teach us about God?** After a few kids respond, unfold your paper one time and lead kids in doing the same.

- **Jesus, God's Son, calmed a storm—saving his frightened friends from drowning. What does that show you about God?** After a few kids respond, unfold your paper one time and lead kids in doing the same.

- **God sent his Son, Jesus, to die for our sins. What does that tell us about God?** After a few kids respond, unfold your paper one time and lead kids in doing the same.

- **Jesus didn't stay dead! He came back to life and appeared again and again to his friends. What does that show us about God?** After a few kids respond, unfold your paper one time and lead kids in doing the same.

Hold up your completely unfolded paper.

Say: **Jesus grows us. As we learn more about things Jesus did and said, our faith in God grows—and our friendship with God grows! We may feel small, like a little seedling. But as we keep getting to know him, Jesus helps us grow into mighty followers!**



SCRIPTURE SKILLS

Help Us Grow

[10 min]

Supplies

- Bibles
- “Hands-On Bible: Books of the Bible Poster Set” (purchase [here](#))

Tips

- It may take a while for kids to find the Bible verse. That’s okay! This activity is primarily about building Bible navigation skills.
- If you have a lot of non-readers, have some picture Bibles on hand for them to flip through as older kids look up verses. They won’t look for anything specific, but they can look at the pictures to practice paging through Bibles.
- To help kids learn how to dig into the Bible on their own, consider giving them *How to Read the Bible* as a gift. You can find the book [here](#).

Explore 1 Corinthians 3:7

Say: **Jesus told a story about a farmer planting seeds. He wanted us to understand that Jesus grows us. Let’s see what else the Bible has to say about God’s seeds growing in our hearts.**

Make sure kids all have Bibles. Younger kids can sit with older kids so they can observe the skills of using their Bibles even before being able to read.

Say: **Our Bible verse is in the book of 1 Corinthians, chapter 3, verse 7. Let’s find the book of 1 Corinthians. That’s in the New Testament—which is the later part of the Bible. Open your Bible kind of near the back.** Allow time.

- Point to the book of 1 Corinthians on the poster so kids can see the name and what books come before and after it.
- Mention that the chapter numbers are the big numbers, and help kids find the big 3 in 1 Corinthians.
- Mention that the verse numbers are the small numbers, and help kids find the small 7 in 1 Corinthians 3.
- When everyone has found the verse, ask someone to read 1 Corinthians 3:7 aloud.

Talk About Growing

Say: **Jesus grows us in all kinds of different ways. Often, he puts people in our lives who help us grow and become more like him. It’s as if they’re planting seeds in our hearts or watering seeds to help them grow.**

Ask: • **Planting is just the beginning of growing a seed. Who are some people who first told you about Jesus? Talk about them.**

• **Watering helps plants grow. Who helps you grow in your friendship with Jesus? How do they do that?**

Say: **The verse we read tells us that even though people help plant and water seeds of faith in our hearts, it’s God that gets the credit for making them grow. Let’s pray and thank God for the people who help plant and water as Jesus grows us. I’ll start the prayer, and you’ll call out names.**

Pray: God, thank you for the people who help plant and water seeds of faith in our hearts. Thank you for (pause for kids to fill in names). Thank you for using those people to help us grow. Keep us rooted deeply so we grow strong in you. In Jesus' name, amen.



BIBLE MEMORY

The Will of My Father

[10 min]

Supplies

- “Life of Jesus Bible Verse Posters” (optional) (purchase [here](#))

Easy Prep

- Tape the Matthew 12:50 poster on a wall so kids will be able to see it. If you don’t have the posters, you’ll need to write the verse in big letters.

Tip

- If you have a large group, form smaller groups to play Charades. You’ll need an adult or teen helper who can give the commands to the Actor in each group.

Play Charades

Say: **The Bible is a book that’s been helping people grow closer to Jesus for thousands of years and helps us today, too! Learning Bible verses is one way that Jesus grows us. So let’s learn a Bible verse that Jesus said.**

In Matthew 12:50 Jesus said, “Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother!”

In this verse, the word *will* means what someone wants. People who do what God wants are part of Jesus’ growing family!

Let’s play a game to help us understand what it means to do someone’s will.

- Choose a child to be the first Actor.
- Tell kids you’ll whisper your will for the Actor, and that child will silently act out what you said.
- Everyone else will guess what the Actor is miming.
- When kids guess correctly, have everyone say the verse together, referring to the poster as needed.
- Continue calling up new Actors and using the list below to tell them what to do. (If the Actor is struggling to act out the command silently, allow them to speak without using the words you said.)
 - Obey your parents.
 - Share your toy.
 - Tell the truth.
 - Love others.
 - Worship God.
 - Serve others.
 - Read the Bible.
 - Forgive others.
 - Pray.
 - Be thankful.
 - Tell about Jesus.
 - Take care of God’s creation.

Talk About It

Ask: • **In this game, how did you know what my will was?** (If kids are answering from the perspective of only the Actor, prompt them to think about how they knew when they were guessing.)

• **How do we know what God's will is?**

Say: **Sometimes we know God's will because we read the Bible and we know what God says to do. Or we might feel God leading our hearts toward the right thing. That's like me telling the Actor what to do.**

Other times we know God's will because we see how other people who love Jesus act. When we're in God's family, people can tell it by how we act! That's because Jesus grows us. Joining God's family is like the seed getting planted in good soil; soon we grow into an awesome plant that does God's will—and spreads more seeds to help others know Jesus!



ACTIVITY PAGES WITH A POINT

Growing, Growing, Grown!

[10 min]

Supplies

- “Parable of the Farmer and the Seed” Activity Page (1 per reader) (download [here](#))
- “Parable of the Farmer and the Seed” Coloring Page (1 per non-reader) (download [here](#))
- crayons
- mini dot stickers (optional)
- three-hole punch and binders (optional)

Tip

- **WARNING!** Don’t just print and distribute! [Here’s why.](#)

Older Kids: Do an Activity Page

Say: **Jesus grows us.** In his story, some seeds didn’t grow because they didn’t fall on good soil. When our hearts are healthy soil for Jesus, he grows us to be more loving and kind! Let’s make a plant that grows well.

Distribute the activity pages. Kids will accordion-fold the page and then stretch it to make the plant grow. Once kids see how it works, they can also color the flower.

Ask: • **Have you ever planted anything in a pot or outside? Talk about that.**

- **What do plants need to grow?**
- **What does it look like to be “good soil” when we hear God’s Word?**

Say: **Plants need good soil for nutrients, plus water and sun to help them grow. Jesus gives us everything we need to grow: his peace to shine down on our hearts and God’s Word to water us. Jesus grows us.**

Younger Kids: Color a Coloring Page

Distribute the coloring pages and crayons. Say: **Jesus told a story about a farmer planting seeds to make the point that Jesus grows us. Let’s color the farmer planting seeds all over.**

Allow time for kids to color. If you have mini dot stickers, kids can add them as additional seeds.

When kids finish coloring, three-hole-punch their pages and put them into binders, if desired.



[10 min]

Aim Shoes

Say: **Jesus told a story about a farmer planting seeds to show that he wants our hearts to be good soil that hears and accepts his words! Then Jesus grows us strong in him.**

But the farmer also got some seed in some not-so-good soil. Let's see how well you can aim for the good soil!

- You and an adult or teen helper will stand facing each other, feet spread apart, with about 4 feet between you. The square made by your four feet will be the Garden.
- Everywhere outside of the Garden is Rocky Soil.
- Have kids stand back, remove their shoes, and try to toss them so they land in the Garden.
- If kids are doing well, have them move farther back to toss.
- You can also add a variation where kids place their shoes loosely on their toes and try to kick them into the Garden.
- Other variations include tossing backward through the legs, throwing with elbows, or throwing while jumping.
- Congratulate kids whenever they successfully plant their shoe seeds in the good soil of the Garden.
- Let the game keep going as long as needed to fill time until parents begin to arrive.