Preschool–Grade 6

The Parable of the Sower

Sunday School Lesson for Preschool (Ages 3–5), 20–30 minutes

Main point: God wants us to listen to His Word and keep it.
Bible passage: Matthew 13:1–23. Read it yourself before class.
Memory verse: "having heard the word, keep it" *Luke 8:15 (KJV)*. The old words **keep it** mean hold on to it and do it.
You need: a Bible, 4 pictures or signs for the four kinds of ground (a path, stones, thorns and good ground with plants), crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: put a bookmark in your Bible at Matthew 13. Put the four pictures in four corners of the room.

1. Opening game: Walk to the Ground (5 minutes)

Walk around the room with the kids, pretending to throw seed from your hand. Then name one of the pictures: "Walk to the path!" "Walk to the good ground!" Everyone walks there together. Play until you have visited all four corners twice. Say: "Today we will hear a story Jesus told about seeds that fell in four places."

2. Bible story (5 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Matthew 13. Say: "This story is in God's Word. Jesus told it." Read each line slowly and do the motion. When you see **Say it with me**, the kids say the line back to you.

Many people came to hear Jesus by the sea (Matthew 13:1–2). *(Make waves with your hand.)*
Jesus told them a story (13:3). *(Open your hands like a book.)*
A man went out to throw seed in his field (13:3). *(Pretend to throw seed.)*
Some seeds fell on the path. Birds ate them up! (13:4) *(Flap your arms.)*
Some fell on stones. The sun was hot, and they dried up (13:5–6). *(Droop down low.)*
Some fell in thorns. The thorns squeezed them (13:7). *(Hug yourself tight.)*
Some fell on good ground. They grew and grew! (13:8) *(Stand up and stretch tall.)*
Say it with me: "They grew and grew!"
Jesus said, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (13:9). That means, "If you have ears, listen!" *(Cup your hands by your ears.)*
Jesus said the seed is God's Word (Luke 8:11). *(Hold up your Bible.)*
Good ground is a heart that hears God's Word and keeps it (Luke 8:15). *(Hands on your heart.)*
Say it with me: "I will listen to God's Word!"

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3. Questions to ask (3 minutes)

1. Who ate the seeds on the path? *(The birds, Matthew 13:4)*
2. Where did the seeds grow and grow? *(On the good ground, 13:8)*
3. What is the seed? *(God's Word, Luke 8:11)*

4. Memory verse (3 minutes)

Say: "Good ground is a heart 'having heard the word, keep it.' Keep it means hold on to it and do it." Teach the motions: on "having heard," cup your hands by your ears. On "the word," open your hands like a book. On "keep it," hug yourself. Say the verse with the motions three times: in a normal voice, in a whisper, and in a happy loud voice. Then say "Luke 8:15" and clap three times.

5. What this means for us (3 minutes)

Say: "God loves you! Everyone has done wrong things. That is called sin (Romans 3:23). Jesus is God. He came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins. He was buried. Then He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us what to do (Acts 2:38). We repent: we tell God we are sorry, and we stop doing wrong. We are baptized in Jesus' name, down under the water, and our sins are washed away. And God gives us the Holy Ghost. That is God's own Spirit in us. When people are filled with the Holy Ghost, they speak in other tongues, words God gives them (Acts 2:4)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

6. Activity: Draw the Good Ground (5–10 minutes)

Give each child a take-home sheet. In the drawing box, help them draw brown dirt along the bottom and tall green plants growing up out of it. They can add a yellow sun. While they color, ask: "Who ate the seeds on the path? Where did the seeds grow? What is the seed?" Kids who finish early can play Walk to the Ground again.

7. Prayer

Say each line, and the kids say it after you:
"Thank You, God, for Your Word.
Help me listen and keep it. In Jesus' name, amen."

Tips for little ones: keep the story moving and let the kids do every motion. If they get wiggly, play Walk to the Ground again. Send the take-home sheet home so parents can tell the story again this week.

If a child asks, "Is my heart good ground?": answer simply and gently. Say, "When we listen to God's Word and do what it says, we are like good ground. God will help you." Encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor.

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