Preschool–Grade 6

The Parable of the Sower

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: Listen to God's Word, understand it and keep it, and it will grow and bear fruit in your life.
Bible passage: Matthew 13:1–23. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." *Luke 8:15 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible, 4 sheets of paper, a marker, tape, a few small paper balls, 6 paper strips, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write one of these on each sheet of paper: *way side*, *stony places*, *thorns*, *good ground*. Tape the four sheets on the floor, a few steps apart. Write the memory verse on the 6 paper strips (see part 4). Put a bookmark in your Bible at Matthew 13.

1. Opening game: Where Did It Land? (5 minutes)

Kids stand behind a line and take turns tossing a paper ball "seed" toward the four sheets on the floor. Read out loud where each seed lands: by the way side, on the stony places, among the thorns or on the good ground. Cheer for every toss. Ask: *Where would a seed grow best?* Say: "Today Jesus tells a story about a man who threw seed, and it landed in four different places."

2. Bible story: Four Kinds of Ground (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Matthew 13, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

One day Jesus went out and sat by the sea side (Matthew 13:1). So many people came to hear Him that He got into a **ship**, a boat, and sat in it. All the people stood on the shore to listen (13:2).

Jesus taught them with **parables** (13:3). A parable is a story Jesus told to teach a lesson. Jesus said, "Behold, a **sower** went forth to sow" (13:3). A sower is a man who plants seed by throwing it out over his field. **Behold** means look!

Some seeds fell **by the way side**, the hard path beside the field. The **fowls**, the birds, came and **devoured** them up. Devoured means ate (13:4). *(Flap your arms like birds.)*

Some seeds fell on **stony places**, where there was only a little dirt. They sprang up fast (13:5). But when the sun came up, they were **scorched**, burned by the hot sun. They had no root, so they **withered**, dried up (13:6). *(Droop down low.)*

Some seeds fell **among thorns**, sharp, prickly plants. The thorns grew up and **choked** the little plants, so they could not grow (13:7). *(Hug yourself tight.)*

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post

The story continues: But some seeds fell into **good ground**, and they brought forth fruit: "some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold" (13:8). That means some seeds made a hundred times as much, some sixty times and some thirty times! *(Stretch up tall like a plant.)*

Then Jesus said, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (13:9). That means: if you have ears, listen!

Later, Jesus told His disciples what the parable means: "Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower" (13:18). The **seed** is "the word of the kingdom" (13:19), God's Word (Luke 8:11).

- **The path:** someone hears God's Word but does not understand it. Then the **wicked one**, the devil, catches it away, like the birds took the seed (Matthew 13:19; Luke 8:12).
- **The stones:** someone hears the word and is glad, but it has no root in them. When trouble comes, they give up (Matthew 13:20–21).
- **The thorns:** someone hears the word, but worries and wanting money **choke** it, like thorns, so it bears no fruit (13:22).
- **The good ground:** someone hears the word and **understands** it, and it bears fruit (13:23).

Ask: *Which ground do you want your heart to be like?* Say: "God wants our hearts to be good ground. We listen to His Word, we understand it, and we keep it (Luke 8:15)."

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. Where did Jesus sit to teach the people? *(In a ship, Matthew 13:2)*
2. What happened to the seeds by the way side? *(The fowls came and ate them, 13:4)*
3. Why did the seeds on the stony places wither? *(They had no root, 13:6)*
4. What happened to the seeds among the thorns? *(The thorns choked them, 13:7)*
5. What is the seed in Jesus' parable? *(The word of the kingdom, God's Word, 13:19; Luke 8:11)*

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post

4. Memory verse: Plant the Seeds (5 minutes)

Tape the 6 paper strips up in order: *But that on the good ground are they, / which in an honest and good heart, / having heard the word, / keep it, / and bring forth fruit with patience. / Luke 8:15.* Explain the old words: **honest** means true and real, **keep it** means hold on to it and do it, **bring forth fruit** means grow good things in your life, and **patience** means not giving up. Read the verse together. Then mix up the strips and hand them out as "seeds." The kids "plant" them back on the wall in the right order and read the verse again. Play twice.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "The best word we can ever hear is the good news about Jesus. God loves you very much. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (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.
This week: listen carefully to one Bible story or verse, then tell your family what it means.

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Parable of the Sower word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/parable-of-the-sower-word-search), crossword (vbshq.com/puzzles/parable-of-the-sower-crossword), maze (vbshq.com/puzzles/parable-of-the-sower-maze) or worksheet (vbshq.com/worksheets/parable-of-the-sower-worksheet), the coloring page or craft (vbshq.com/bible-stories/parable-of-the-sower), or **Grow or Wither:** the kids crouch down low like little seeds. Read a sentence about the story. If it is true, they grow: stand up and stretch tall. If it is false, they wither: droop back down. Try these: "Jesus sat in a ship to teach" (true, 13:2). "The fowls ate the seeds by the way side" (true, 13:4). "The seeds on the stones had deep roots" (false, 13:6). "The thorns helped the plants grow" (false, 13:7). "The good ground brought forth fruit" (true, 13:8). "The seed is God's Word" (true, Luke 8:11).

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for Your Word. Make our hearts like good ground. Help us listen to Your Word, understand it and keep it, so it grows in us and bears fruit. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks, "Who is the sower?": in this parable Jesus says the seed is the word (Matthew 13:19; Luke 8:11) and "the sower soweth the word" (Mark 4:14). Keep the focus on the seed and the ground, the way Jesus explained it.
If a child asks, "Is my heart bad ground?": answer gently. Jesus told this story so we would listen well, not to make us afraid. Anyone can listen to God's Word, ask questions until they understand it, and keep it (Luke 8:15). Encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor.

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post