Preschool–Grade 6

The Parable of the Talents

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Be faithful. Use what God gives you for Him, whether it seems big or small.
Bible passage: Matthew 25:14–30. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." *Matthew 25:21 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board. Draw three columns on the other side of the board, with the numbers 5, 2 and 1 at the top.

1. Opening game: Gift Sort (5–10 minutes)

Name a gift God gives people, and the kids call out a way to use it for God. Start easy: a singing voice, fast feet, being good at drawing, being kind to new kids, being good at math, a good memory. Then ask: *Is any of these gifts too small to use for God? What if someone only has one?* Say: "Jesus told a story about three servants who got different amounts. Watch what each one does with his."

2. Bible story: Faithful Over a Few Things (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Matthew 25. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words. Fill in the three columns on the board as you go.

The master leaves. Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is like a man travelling into a far country, who called his servants and **delivered** (handed over) his goods to them (Matthew 25:14). **Look up Matthew 25:15.** He gave five talents, two talents and one talent, "to every man according to his several ability," which means each one as much as he was able to handle. Then he left at once. A **talent** was a heavy weight of silver or gold, a very large amount of money. In 2 Kings 5:23, two talents of silver were carried in two bags by two servants!

Two servants get to work. The servant with five talents **traded** (bought and sold) with them and made five more (25:16). The servant with two gained two more (25:17). **Look up Matthew 25:18.** The servant with one talent dug in the earth and hid his lord's money.

The master comes back. Look up Matthew 25:19. After a long time the master came back and **reckoneth** with them, which means he settled up and saw what each one had done. The first servant brought five more talents (25:20). **Look up Matthew 25:21.** "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Because he was faithful over a few things, the master made him ruler over many things. The second servant had gained two more, and he heard the very same words (25:22–23).

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

The servant who hid it. The last servant said he knew his master was a **hard man**, which means strict, "reaping where thou hast not sown" (25:24). **Reaping** means harvesting. **Look up Matthew 25:25.** He said, "I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth." The master called him "wicked and slothful" (25:26). **Slothful** means lazy. If he was afraid, he should at least have put the money with the **exchangers**, the money keepers, so it would come back with **usury**, a little extra money that grows on it (25:27). **Look up Matthew 25:28.** The talent was taken from him and given to the servant who had ten.

Why Jesus told it. The two faithful servants did not get the same amount, and they did not end with the same amount. But they heard the same words: "Well done." God doesn't ask us to have what someone else has. He asks us to be faithful with what He gives us.

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. The servant with two talents heard the same "Well done" as the servant with five (25:21, 25:23). Why do you think that is?
2. The last servant said, "I was afraid" (25:25). How can being afraid keep us from using what God gave us?
3. What gifts has God given you? How could you use one of them for Him this week?
4. Jesus said the faithful servant was "faithful over a few things" (25:21). What are some "few things" a kid can be faithful in?
5. The master was gone "a long time" (25:19). Why is it important to be faithful even when no one is checking?

Recall questions

1. How many talents did each servant get? *(Five, two and one, Matthew 25:15)*
2. Where did the third servant hide his talent? *(In the earth, 25:18, 25:25)*
3. Who got the talent that was taken away? *(The servant who had ten talents, 25:28)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **lord** here means master; **thou** and **thee** mean you; **ruler over many things** means in charge of much more; **enter thou into the joy of thy lord** means come and share your master's happiness. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

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

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "God has given every one of us gifts, and He wants us to use them for Him. But the greatest gift is Jesus. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? '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 to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."
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: pick one gift God gave you and use it for Him on purpose: help, sing, encourage, or do a job all the way without being asked.

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Matthew 25:14: Where was the man travelling? *(Into a far country)*
2. Matthew 25:15: How did the man decide how much to give each one? *(According to his several ability)*
3. Matthew 25:16: What did the servant with five talents do with them? *(He traded with them)*
4. Matthew 25:18: Whose money did the third servant hide? *(His lord's money)*
5. Matthew 25:19: When did the lord come back? *(After a long time)*
6. Matthew 25:21: What did the lord make the faithful servant? *(Ruler over many things)*
7. Matthew 25:26: What two words did the lord use for the servant who hid it? *(Wicked and slothful)*
8. 1 Peter 4:10: How should we use the gift we have received? *(Minister it one to another, as good stewards)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for every gift You have given us. Help us not to hide them because we're afraid, but to use them for You. Make us faithful in the little things, even when no one is watching. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks about the end of the story (Matthew 25:30): answer simply and gently. Jesus told this story as a warning to be faithful, and the servant who hid his talent lost it (25:28). Keep the focus on being faithful and on God's "Well done."

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