Preschool–Grade 6

The Wheat and the Tares

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

Main point: God keeps His wheat safe. God takes care of me.
Bible passage: Matthew 13. Read Matthew 13:24–30 yourself before class.
Memory verse: "gather the wheat into my barn" *Matthew 13:30 (KJV).*
You need: a Bible, 12 yellow paper strips (wheat), 6 green paper strips (tares), a piece of yarn, a box for a barn, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: put a bookmark in your Bible at Matthew 13. Hide the paper strips around the room.

1. Opening game: Grow, Little Seed (5 minutes)

The kids crouch down small like seeds. Tap each head: "I am planting my seed!" Say: "The sun shines!" (grow a little). "The rain falls!" (grow some more). "It's time to pick the grain!" (stand up tall and stretch). Say: "Seeds grow and grow. Today we will hear a true story Jesus told about a field of wheat."

2. Bible story (5 minutes)

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

A man planted good seed in his field (Matthew 13:24). *(Scatter seeds with your hand.)*
The men were sleeping (13:25). *(Hands under your cheek.)*
An enemy came and planted weeds called tares (13:25). *(Tiptoe in place.)*
The wheat grew up, and the weeds grew up too (13:26). *(Grow up tall.)*
The helpers asked if they should pull up the weeds (13:28). *(Pretend to pull.)*
The man said, "Nay." That means no! They might pull up the wheat too (13:29). *(Shake your head.)*
Say it with me: "Let them grow until harvest!"
At harvest, the weeds were tied in bundles (13:30). *(Hug your arms tight.)*
And the wheat went safe into the barn (13:30). *(Make a roof with your arms.)*
Say it with me: "God keeps His wheat safe!"

3. Questions to ask (3 minutes)

1. What did the man plant in his field? *(Good seed, Matthew 13:24)*
2. Who planted the weeds? *(An enemy, 13:25)*
3. Where did the wheat go? *(Into the barn, 13:30)*

4. Memory verse (3 minutes)

Say: "The man said, 'gather the wheat into my barn.'" Teach the motion: sweep your arms together on "gather," hold up your hands like heads of grain on "the wheat," and make a roof over your head on "into my barn." Say it with the motion three times: in a normal voice, in a whisper, and in a happy loud voice. Then say "Matthew 13:30" and clap three times.

5. What this means for us (3 minutes)

Say: "The man took care of his wheat. God takes care of you! 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: Harvest Time (5–10 minutes)

The kids find the hidden strips. Help them tie the green "tares" together with the yarn and put the yellow "wheat" in the box "barn," saying, "Gather the wheat into my barn!" Then they draw the field and the barn on their take-home sheets.

7. Prayer

Say each line, and the kids say it after you:
"Thank You, God, for taking care of me.
Help me grow for You every day.
In Jesus' name, amen."

Tips for little ones: keep it short and happy. If they get wiggly, play the seed game again.

If a child is worried about the enemy: say gently, "The man was not afraid. He knew just what to do, and his wheat was safe in his barn. God takes care of us."

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