Preschool–Grade 6

The Wheat and the Tares

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

Main point: God keeps His wheat safe. We can trust Him and wait for His harvest.
Bible passage: Matthew 13:24–30. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." *Matthew 13:30 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible, 6 index cards, a marker, 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: write the memory verse on the 6 cards (see part 4). Put a bookmark in your Bible at Matthew 13:24.

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

The kids crouch down small like seeds in the ground. Walk past and gently tap each head: "I am sowing my seed!" Then call out: "The sun shines!" (they grow a little), "The rain falls!" (they grow a little more), "Harvest time!" (they stand tall and stretch their arms up like heads of grain). Play twice. Ask: *When a seed is still under the ground, can you tell what it will grow into?* Say: "Not yet! Today Jesus tells a story about a field where something else got planted while men slept."

2. Bible story: The Wheat and the Tares (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Matthew 13, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Say: "Jesus told stories called **parables**. A parable is a story that teaches us about God's kingdom." Tell it in your own words:

Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is like a man who **sowed** good seed in his field (Matthew 13:24). To sow means to plant seeds by scattering them on the ground.

But while men slept, his **enemy** came. The enemy sowed **tares** among the wheat, and went his way (13:25). Tares are weeds.

The wheat grew up. When the **blade**, the green leaf, had sprung up and brought forth fruit, the grain, then the tares could be seen too (13:26)!

The servants of the **householder**, the man who owned the field, came to him. They said, "Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from **whence** then hath it tares?" (13:27). Whence means where from. He said, "An enemy hath done this" (13:28).

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The story continues: The servants asked, "Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?" (13:28). Should they pull up the tares right away?

The man said, "**Nay**," which means no. "Lest while ye gather up the tares, ye **root up** also the wheat with them" (13:29). If they pulled up the weeds, they might pull up the good wheat by its roots too! He cared about every bit of his wheat.

Read Matthew 13:30 from your Bible: "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

Say: "The man waited. At harvest time the **reapers**, the workers who gather the crop, would tie the tares in **bundles**, and the wheat would go safe into his **barn** (13:30). God keeps His wheat safe!"

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. What did the man sow in his field? *(Good seed, Matthew 13:24)*
2. When did the enemy come? *(While men slept, 13:25)*
3. What did the enemy sow among the wheat? *(Tares, weeds, 13:25)*
4. Why did the man say "Nay" to pulling up the tares? *(They might root up the wheat too, 13:29)*
5. Where did the wheat go at harvest time? *(Into his barn, 13:30)*

4. Memory verse: Rows of Wheat (5 minutes)

Write one part on each card: *Let both grow together until the harvest: / and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, / Gather ye together first the tares, / and bind them in bundles to burn them: / but gather the wheat into my barn. / Matthew 13:30.* Explain the old words: **reapers** are the workers who gather the crop, and **bundles** are bunches tied together. Read the verse together. Then give the 6 cards to 6 kids, mixed up. They are a "row of wheat," and the class helps them stand in the right order. Read it again. Mix the cards and play again with 6 new kids.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "The man in Jesus' story cared about his wheat. He would not let even a little of it be pulled up by mistake (Matthew 13:29), and at harvest he gathered it safe into his barn (13:30). God cares about you even more! 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: when you see a weed growing, remember: God knows His wheat, and He keeps it safe. Keep growing for Jesus!

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Wheat and the Tares word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/wheat-and-the-tares-word-search), crossword (vbshq.com/puzzles/wheat-and-the-tares-crossword), maze (vbshq.com/puzzles/wheat-and-the-tares-maze) or worksheet (vbshq.com/worksheets/wheat-and-the-tares-worksheet), the coloring page or craft (vbshq.com/bible-stories/wheat-and-the-tares), or **Harvest Time:** before class, hide the 12 yellow wheat strips and 6 green tare strips around the room. The kids are the reapers. They find them all, then sort them: tie the green tares together with the yarn in a bundle, and put the yellow wheat in the box "barn" while everyone says, "Gather the wheat into my barn!"

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for caring about us and keeping us safe. Help us to keep growing for You, even when wrong things grow around us. Help us to trust You and wait for Your time. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks why the man didn't pull the weeds right away: say, "He didn't want to pull up any of his good wheat by mistake (Matthew 13:29). He waited until harvest, when the reapers could gather everything the right way."

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