Grades K–5

The Wise and Foolish Builders

Object Lesson · Matthew 7:24–27 · Ages 5–10 · 10 minutes

Main point: Hearing Jesus' words is good, but doing them is what makes our lives strong.
Bible verse: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." *Matthew 7:24 (KJV)*
You need: 2 baking pans or trays with sides, a flat rock, about 2 cups of loose, dry play sand, 2 small "houses" (paper cups turned upside down, or a few toy blocks), a pitcher of water, a towel and your Bible.
Before class: read Matthew 7:24–27. Set the rock in one pan and pile the sand into a mound in the other. Try the water once at home: dry, loose sand washes away best, and packed, damp sand may hold the house up.

The lesson

Do: set the two pans in front of the kids. Put one house on the rock and one house on the sand.
Say: "Here are two houses. Which one do you think is stronger? *(Let kids guess.)* Right now they both look fine. Jesus told a story about two men who built houses."

Do: open your Bible and read Matthew 7:24–27.
Say: "Listen to this: **both** men heard Jesus' sayings. The wise man heard them and did them. The foolish man heard them and did not do them."

Do: slowly pour water over the house on the rock.
Say: "The rain came down, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house. Did it fall? *(No!)* Jesus said it 'fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.'"

Do: slowly pour water over the house on the sand until the sand washes out and the house falls.
Say: "The same rain, floods and winds beat upon this house. What happened? *(It fell!)* Jesus said, 'it fell: and great was the fall of it.'"

Say: "Both men heard the same words, and both houses had the same rain, floods and winds. The difference was **doing** what Jesus said. Every one of us will have hard days when we're scared, sad or tempted. When we do what Jesus says, like forgiving, telling the truth and loving others, we're building on the rock."

Questions to ask

1. What did the wise man do with Jesus' sayings? *(He heard them and did them, Matthew 7:24)*
2. What happened to the house on the sand when the rain, floods and winds came? *(It fell, and great was the fall of it, Matthew 7:27)*
3. What is one thing Jesus says that you can **do** this week, not just hear?

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Building on the rock

Say: "The wise man heard Jesus' words and did them, and his house stood strong on the rock. God loves you, and everyone has sinned (Romans 3:23). Jesus is God who came in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16). He died for our sins, was buried and rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). The Bible tells us how to 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) We turn away from our sin, we are buried with Jesus in baptism in His name so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16), and God fills us with the Holy Ghost, and we speak in other tongues like the believers did (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.

Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for giving us Jesus' words. Help us not just hear them but do them, so we are like the wise man who built on the rock. Help us stand strong when hard days come. In Jesus' name, amen."

Preschool (ages 3–5): let kids pat the rock ("hard!") and squish the sand ("soft!") before you start. Pour the water while everyone makes rain sounds by patting their knees. Ask only: *Which house stood up? Which house fell down?* Then say together, "Do what Jesus says!"

Tips

- **Mess control:** pour slowly from a low height, and keep the towel under the pans. Do it on a table, not carpet.
- **Let kids help:** two helpers can pour the "rain." Count down together before each pour.
- **If the sand house won't fall:** the sand is packed too tight. Loosen it with your fingers or pour a little longer.
- **Older kids:** ask them to name a time they heard what was right but didn't do it. What would building on the rock have looked like?
- **Memory verse:** teach Matthew 7:24 by having kids stomp on "rock" each time you say it.

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