



# 9

## Jesus Teaches in Parables

### Key Theme

- Jesus teaches His disciples.

### Key Passages

- Matthew 13:3–9, 13:19–23; Luke 15:4–7

### Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain why Jesus taught in parables.
- Describe who the “lost sheep” represents.



## Lesson Overview



### Come On In

Students will practice the memory verse by completing the Memory Verse Review Sheet. If time allows, have them recite the verse to a partner or to the class.



### Activity 1: Jesus Teaches in Parables Class Notes

Students will fill out the Jesus Teaches in Parables Class Notes as you study the lesson.



### Studying God's Word

Jesus taught with parables in order to separate the people who loved Him and wanted the truth from the people who really didn't care about Him or what He had to say. Today you will talk about two of Jesus's parables—the parable of the sower and the parable of the good shepherd.



### Activity 2: Parable Charades

Students will review the lesson by playing a game of “Charades” using words from the lesson.

# Lesson Preparation

## WHAT YOU WILL DO

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED



### COME ON IN

- Print one Memory Verse Review Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.

- Memory Verse Poster
- Memory Verse Review Sheet for each student
- Pencils



### JESUS TEACHES IN PARABLES CLASS NOTES

- Print one Jesus Teaches in Parables Class Notes from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.

- Jesus Teaches in Parables Class Notes for each student
- Jesus Teaches in Parables Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils



### STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.
- Print one set of the Board Work Components from the Resource DVD-ROM. Keep the Lesson Board Work Guide for your use.
- Cut out the 11 Board Work Illustrations. Students will put these on the board during the lesson.

- Student Take Home Sheets
- 11 Board Work Illustrations
- Lesson Board Work Guide



### PARABLE CHARADES

- Print and cut out one set of the Parable Charades Strips from the Resource DVD-ROM.

- Parable Charades Strips
- Basket or bowl for strips



### MEMORY VERSE REVIEW GAME (OPTIONAL)

- Print, preferably onto cardstock, and cut out one copy of the Memory Verse Cards from the Resource DVD-ROM.
- Save the cards for use in future lessons.
- This is an optional activity to use in some or all of the lessons to review the memory verse if time allows.

- Memory Verse Cards printed on cardstock
- Tape or poster putty



## Memory Verse

**John 14:6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."



# Prepare to Share

## SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages along with this background.

One of the hallmarks of the teaching of Jesus was His use of parables. A parable is a fable or allegory to illustrate a truth or lesson. It is a story or narrative drawn from nature or human circumstances from which spiritual lessons can be made by comparison. Or to put it simply, a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Parables help the listener to discover the deeper meaning and underlying truth of the reality being portrayed.

Depending on which ones you include, between 35 and 45 different parables of Jesus are recorded in the Gospels. Some of these were longer stories, including such popular ones as the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37), the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32), and the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14–30). Other parables of Jesus were short, pithy statements, such as, “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened” (Matthew 13:33).

But why did Jesus teach in parables? There are two reasons given in the Bible: to conceal and to reveal.

In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus provided an answer when asked about His use of parables:

And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?”

He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing,

And their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.’

But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.” (Matthew 13:10–16)

Jesus said that He taught in parables to conceal the truth from certain people, and to reveal it to others. By resorting to parables, Jesus effectively separated the truth-seekers from the mere curious. Those seeking the truth would say, “Explain to us the parable . . .” (Matthew 13:36), while the merely curious could easily be dismissed. They would not ask and were unwilling to receive Jesus’s message. The truths were heard by unbelievers, but the meaning was hidden because they did not want to hear.

In this way, Jesus’s use of parables was a form of divine judgment. As Jesus explained in the passage above, “For whoever has [a good heart, listening ears], to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have [a good heart, listening ears], even what he has will be taken away from him” (Matthew 13:12). Then Jesus quoted from Isaiah 6:9–10 and explained that because the people’s hearts had become dull and because they had closed their ears and eyes, God was going to speak to them in a way that they would not understand. So Jesus taught them in parables. In a way only God could contrive, the very things which were useful to reveal and make clear the truths about the kingdom to those willing to hear were also used to conceal truths about the kingdom from those who would not believe.

About the middle of His ministry, after He had begun to receive much opposition from the religious leaders and had been accused of blasphemy, Jesus started teaching the crowds almost exclusively in parables. Mark tells us that He did not speak to them without a parable, and that when He was alone with His disciples, He would explain the meaning of His teachings (Mark 4:33–34). However, those who had persisted in rejecting His message were left in their spiritual blindness. Although they heard the truths of the kingdom of God, they could not understand them; they were unwilling to hear. The Apostle Paul later described those blinded to the truth as “always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:7). They would never hear or understand the words of Jesus (Matthew 13:13). But His disciples (except for Judas Iscariot) accepted His truth and

so were given more to know, understand, and believe (Matthew 13:12).

The parables of Jesus contain great volumes of truth in very few words. The images Christ presents through them are not easily forgotten. And He has promised that for those with eyes to see and ears to hear His truths will be revealed (Matthew 13:16).

## HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND<sup>1</sup>

When we read parables, we must be careful how we interpret their meaning. Sometimes, as in the Parable of the Sower, Jesus Himself provides the explanation (Matthew 13:18–22). However, most of the time, the hearers (and us) are left to discern the meaning.

A parable is really an extended metaphor, or an allegory. In fact, the Bible often uses allegory as a literary device. In the Old Testament God speaks of His people Israel using images of a vineyard (Isaiah 5:6–7) and a flock of sheep (Ezekiel 34). Jesus refers to Himself as a shepherd (John 10:11) and a vine (John 15:1–6). And Paul takes a historical event from the Old Testament (Hagar and Sarah) and uses it as an allegory for law and grace (Galatians 4:21–31). So while the Bible uses allegories to teach truth, we must not confuse the literary device of allegory with the hermeneutic of allegorizing Scripture; the two are not the same.

Soon after the completion of the New Testament, early Christians began interpreting the text allegorically. They proposed many symbolic meanings that neither Jesus nor the biblical authors ever intended.

It wasn't until the time of the Reformation in the 1500s that a return to a more literal, historical-grammatical method of interpretation began to take hold. Luther, Calvin, and some others criticized the excesses of allegorical interpretation, but it still remained popular among many Christian scholars and writers into the 19th century.

More recently, in the 20th and 21st centuries, there has been an increased interest in understanding the parables as the original hearers would have understood them. Interpreters started focusing on the main point of the parables—God's kingdom coming through the reign of the Messiah.

Care must be taken when interpreting these parables. Here are a few basic principles to adapt while trying to understand the parables of Jesus and interpret them properly:

1. **Determine the main point of the parable.** Most parables have one main point, though they may have a couple sub points. To get to the main point, ask yourself a few questions:

Who are the main characters? What occurs at the end? What or who gets the most consideration in the parable? To whom is the parable directed? What is the context in which Jesus gave it?

2. **Recognize standard imagery used in the parables.** For example, God is often symbolized as a master, a father, a judge, or a king. A vineyard or a fig tree usually refers to Israel. The harvest refers to the judgment. An enemy is typically the devil.
3. **Note striking or unexpected details of the parable.** Jesus's parables are filled with striking details, unexpected twists, shocking statements, and surprise outcomes. When such attention-getting components occur, pay attention because an important point is being made.
4. **Do not press every detail for meaning.** The many details in a parable are usually given to make the story memorable and interesting. Typically there is one central figure (or two) and one main point. Attempting to interpret every individual detail will lead one to an allegorical reading.
5. **Pay attention to the literary and historical context of the parable.** The authors of the Gospels often clue us to the meaning of a parable by including information about why Jesus uttered that parable or by grouping together parables on similar topics.

Jesus, the Master Teacher, used many parables in His teaching. By some accounts, about one-third of all of Jesus's words in the Gospels are parables. We are called to be diligent to handle His Word carefully as we read it, interpret it, and teach it to others.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.

1. This material was adapted from Robert L. Plummer, "Parables in the Gospels: History of Interpretation and Hermeneutical Guidelines," *SBJT* 13.3 (2009): 4–11.



## BEFORE THE THRONE

Good Shepherd, you have scattered your seeds of truth upon my heart; I praise you. Thank you for the truth of your Word. Keep my heart soft, so I will produce good fruit. And Lord, please prepare the hearts of my students so they will hear your truth, repent of their sins, trust you, and bear good fruit for your kingdom.



## COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will complete the Memory Verse Review Sheet. If time allows, have the students recite the verse together, to each other, or to you.

*This time at the beginning of class should be used to review the memory verse. We have provided an activity sheet on the Resource DVD-ROM for you to use. You may have other ideas and ways to encourage your students to memorize the verse.*



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



## REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson, quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



## Jesus Teaches in Parables Class Notes

### MATERIALS

- Jesus Teaches in Parables Class Notes for each student
- Jesus Teaches in Parables Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils

### INSTRUCTIONS

*Print one class notes for each student. Pass them out at the beginning of class. Have students fill in the blanks as you study the lesson.*

We will be completing these class notes as we study the Bible passages. Do not work ahead. We will finish these together.

### CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As we complete the class notes today, we will talk about two of Jesus's parables and find out why Jesus used parables to teach.



## Studying God's Word

### READ THE WORD

*Refer to Lesson 8 Lesson Theme Poster.* Jesus defended God's honor while He was on earth. Jesus went to the Temple in Jerusalem during the Passover celebration. He saw that God's Temple—that beautiful place of worship—had been turned into a marketplace. He was furious, so He did something about it. Jesus made a whip and drove out those who weren't supposed to be there. He was right to defend God's honor when He told the sellers and the money changers to get out. They were wrong to do these things in the Temple of God.

➤ The class notes are designed and written simply. Please encourage and help your students to read them as the class progresses. They are an excellent means to review important lesson principles.

► Because of the age and ability of 1st and 2nd graders to read and comprehend, we have written these lessons for you to read the Scriptures to the students. However, please encourage your students to bring Bibles to class. And if you have strong readers, by all means have them participate by reading God's Word.

**Parable:** a fable or short story that uses everyday things to teach a lesson.

**Matthew 13:3–9**

► Re-read the verses or the portion of the verse(s) that answer the questions you are asking of the text.

Jesus also defended God's honor when He told the Pharisees they were wrong. These men were religious leaders and teachers. Yet, they were not pleasing God at all. They were pretending to be good on the outside. But their good works were no good because in their hearts they did not love God or the people.

We know that Jesus spent a lot of time teaching His disciples while He was on earth. He wanted them to know the truth. He often taught the people using parables. Say that word "parable" with me. *Repeat "parable" together.*

? Have you ever heard of a parable? *Yes/no.*

? What is a parable? *Allow discussion.*

A parable is a story that uses everyday things in the world like nature, farming, food, or animals to teach a lesson. And a parable teaches a lesson that has a deeper, spiritual meaning.

You see, even though Jesus did miracles, lived a perfect life, and taught the truth, there were still many people who did not believe what He said. In fact, many people hated Him and were planning how to kill Him. This is what led Jesus to begin teaching in parables.

Now before we get started today, I will pass out these pictures. *Pass the 11 Board Work Illustrations out to the students before you begin the lesson. They will bring them up and put them on the board as you teach the lesson.* I am going to call on you to come up and put the picture you have on the board when we get to it in today's lesson. So pay close attention.

We are going to start with one of Jesus's parables from Matthew 13:3–9. This is about a sower who sowed seed. Another word for "sower" is "farmer." Sometimes Jesus used farmers and animals in His parables. I'm going to read the whole thing to you. Listen carefully, and we'll answer some questions about it when I'm finished. *Read Matthew 13:3–9 enthusiastically.*

## EXAMINE THE WORD

### Observe the Text

? What was this parable about? *Matthew 13:3. A sower.*

? Who has picture #1 of the farmer or sower? Bring that up and put it on the board for us. *Have student bring Board Work Illustration #1 up and attach to the board according to the Lesson Board Work Guide.*

A sower is a farmer who sows, or plants, seeds by tossing handfuls of them around as he walks through his field. That's what this parable is about. The sower is a farmer planting seeds. Now Jesus said the seeds fell on four different types of ground. Listen and tell me what they are.

? Re-read Matthew 13:4. Where did this seed fall? *By the wayside.*

? Who has picture #2 of the wayside? Bring it up and put it on the board for us. *Have student bring Board Work Illustration #2 up and attach to the board under the sower.*

? And what happened to those seeds? *Re-read Matthew 13:4. The birds came and ate them.*

Ok. Now let's find out the second place the seeds fell. *Re-read Matthew 13:5.*

? Where did these seeds fall? *Stony places.*

Yes. These seeds fell on ground that had lots of stones in it but not much dirt.

? Now we need picture #3 of the stony ground. Bring it up and put it on the board for us. *Have student bring Board Work Illustration #3 up and attach to the board next to Illustration #2.*

? What happened to those seeds? Did they grow? *Re-read Matthew 13:5. Yes. They grew up quickly.*

? Yes, they did. But what happened when the sun came up? *Re-read Matthew 13:6. They died because there were no roots.*

That's right. The stony ground was not good soil to grow the plants—they couldn't grow good roots there, so they died.

? Where was the third place the seeds landed? Listen for the answer. *Re-read Matthew 13:7. Among thorns.*

? Who has picture #4 of the thorny ground? Bring it up and put it on the board for us. *Have student bring Board Work Illustration #4 up and attach to the board.*

? What happened to those seeds? *Re-read Matthew 13:7. The thorns choked out the seeds.*

? Now, listen again. Where was the last place the seeds fell? *Re-read Matthew 13:8. The good ground.*

? Bring up picture #5 of the good ground and put it on the board for us. *Have student bring Board Work Illustration #5 up and attach to the board.*

? What happened to the seeds that fell on the good ground? *Re-read Matthew 13:8. They yielded a crop.*

So the seeds that fell on good ground grew up and produced a crop of good stuff like wheat or fruit!

? Now, Jesus ends this parable in an odd way. Listen to Matthew 13:9. What did Jesus say? *Re-read Matthew 13:9. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*

? Hmm. That is a funny thing to say. What did He mean? *Allow discussion.*

Jesus explained that He spoke in parables because He knew His followers would understand the things He taught about the kingdom of heaven. They were the people with "ears to hear." They wanted to know more about Jesus and wanted to learn from Him. But those who were not His

► Use the New Testament History Poster included with your teacher kit as you teach the lesson. Emphasize that Jesus ministered only 3 years, and He lived only about 35 years. Yet His life changed the world forever and brought eternal life to all who believe.

followers would never understand these things—these people “had ears, yet DID NOT hear.”

## Discover the Truth

The disciples wanted to know why Jesus spoke in parables. Jesus told them that many had rejected Him and would never accept Him. So those who did not want to follow Jesus would not understand the meanings of these stories. But those who truly wanted to know God would get the real meaning of the parable that Jesus was trying to give. By using parables, Jesus separated the people who loved Him and wanted the truth from the people who really didn't care about who He was, or why He had come. The people who loved Jesus wanted to know the meaning of the parables! The people who didn't care about Jesus didn't understand the parables and usually walked away from Jesus.

- ? Let's do a little review now. Let's go to the class notes. Will someone read #1 for us on the class notes? What is the answer to that? *Assign a reader. Teach. Have students complete #1.*
- ? And how about #2? *Assign a reader. Get. Have students complete #2.*
- ? Next on our class notes are the pictures of the four different kinds of soil or ground. What are they? Someone read those for us. *Wayside, stony, thorny, good.*



## READ THE WORD

Matthew 13:19

Good. Let's move on. So, what was the spiritual truth Jesus was teaching in this parable? His followers asked Him to explain the parable of the sower to them. Let's read how Jesus explained. We'll move further in Matthew 13. *Read Matthew 13:19.*

## EXAMINE THE WORD

### Observe the Text

- ? What was the seed in Jesus's parable? It stood for something. Did you hear it? Listen again. *Re-read Matthew 13:19. Allow discussion.*

The seed Jesus was talking about is the Word of God. He called it the “word of the kingdom” in that verse.

- ? Who has Illustration #6 of the seeds and the Bible? Bring that up here, please. The seeds stood for God's Word. *Have student attach Board Work Illustration #6 to the board.*

*Refer to Lesson Board Work.* Now remember, the seed—or the Word of God—fell on four different kinds of ground. It fell on the wayside, on rocky soil, on thorny soil, and on good soil.

- ? What do you suppose the different soils, or ground, stood for in Jesus’s parable? *Allow discussion.*
- ? Who has Illustration #7 of the heart? Bring that up here, please. *Have student attach Board Work Illustration #7 to the board.*

The ground stood for people’s hearts. Jesus knew that not all hearts are the same. Remember, some people loved Jesus and believed, but others hated Him.

First, Jesus told about the seeds that fell on the hard, packed ground of the wayside. And then the birds came and ate the seeds! These are people who hear the Word, but they do not listen.

- ? Take a look at #3 on your class notes. Will someone read that for us? What is the answer to that? *Assign a reader. Not. Have students complete #3.*
- ? What did the birds stand for in that verse? Who snatches the Word away from the seed on the wayside? *Re-read Matthew 13:19. The wicked one.*
- ? And who is the wicked one? *The devil. Satan.*

The wicked one doesn’t want anyone to hear the Word of God. And the seed on the wayside is snatched away, and they never hear the Word or understand the truth.

- ? What is the next “heart” Jesus’s parable spoke of? Remember, the different types of ground stood for people’s hearts. Look on your class notes or here at the board. *Stony.*

Now I’ll read about the “stony” heart. Listen to this. *Read Matthew 13:20–21.*

Matthew 13:20–21

- ? What happens immediately to the seed that lands on the stony ground—or the stony heart? *Matthew 13:20. He immediately receives the truth with joy.*
- ? But what soon happens to this person who receives the Word with joy and has a stony heart? *Matthew 13:21. Allow discussion.*

The stony heart hears the Word and receives it with joy. But it lasts only a little while. When hard things happen like suffering or troubles, this person forgets about the Word.

- ? Let’s fill in #4 on your class notes. This is the man with the stony heart. What happens to him when he hears the Word? How will you answer that? *Assign a reader. Little. Have students complete #4.*

- ? The next heart is “thorny.” What happened to the seeds that landed on the ground with thorns? Listen to this. *Read Matthew 13:22. Allow discussion.*

Matthew 13:22

This person hears the Word, but the worries of the world and riches and wealth become more important to him and choke out the Word. The person with a thorny heart loves the world and money more than Jesus and His Word.

## Matthew 13:23

- ? Now go to #5 on your class notes. How will you answer that? This is what happens when the Word lands on thorny ground. *Assign a reader. Chokes. Have students complete #5.*
- ? Good job! There is one more ground to cover. Which soil is left? *The good soil.*  
Yes. Listen as I read Matthew 13:23. *Read the verse.*
- ? What does the good ground stand for? *Matthew 13:23. He who hears the Word and understands it.*  
That's right. The good ground stands for the person with a heart that wants to receive and understand God's Word. He is one who "has ears to hear." He hears the Word, understands it, and lives for God's glory! Jesus said this person would grow fruit. This person will live a life that honors God!
- ? How will you answer #6 on your class notes? *Assign a reader. Fruit. Have students complete #6.*

### Discover the Truth

*Refer to Lesson Board Work.* In this parable, the seeds are the Word of God. The ground, or soil, stood for different types of hearts. The birds stood for the wicked one, or the devil. The fruit stood for the things in the lives of believers that are done for God's glory!

Do you see how the parables worked? Jesus told about everyday things that everyone knew about. But a parable always had a deeper, spiritual meaning that not everyone could understand. Like Jesus said, those who had "ears to hear" would be interested in the meaning and would understand it.



### READ THE WORD

Jesus liked teaching in parables and told a lot of them. Let's take a look at one more. In this parable Jesus talks about a shepherd and his sheep. Listen carefully to see if you can figure out what the sheep and the shepherd stand for.

## Luke 15:4-6

I'm going to read from the Gospel of Luke. *Read Luke 15:4-6.*

### EXAMINE THE WORD

#### Observe the Text

► Re-read the text as you ask the questions so your students can answer themselves.

- ? This is about a shepherd. How many sheep did the shepherd have? *Luke 15:4. 100 sheep.*
- ? And how many sheep did he lose? *Luke 15:4. One.*
- ? Who has Illustration #8 of the shepherd? Bring it up now and put it on the board. *Have student attach Board Work Illustration #8.*

- ? What did the man do when he realized he lost the one sheep? *Re-read Luke 15:4. He left the 99 sheep and went into the wilderness to find the one he had lost.*
- ? Did he find the lost sheep? *Re-read Luke 15:5. Yes.*
- ? What did he do after he found it? Where did he put the lost sheep? *Luke 15:5. He laid it on his shoulders and rejoiced!*
- ? Who has picture #9 of the shepherd with his sheep? Bring it up now and put it on the board. *Have student attach Board Work Illustration #9.*

The man was very happy! He had 99 other sheep still in his pasture. But he rejoiced that he found this one lost one!

- ? The Bible tells us what the man did when he got home with his sheep. What was that? *Re-read Luke 15:6. He called his friends and neighbors together and said, "Rejoice with me. I found my sheep which was lost!"*

The shepherd was so excited that he had found his sheep! But remember, this is a parable, so it has a deeper meaning. The sheep stood for something. And the Bible tells us what it is. Listen very carefully. This is how Jesus explained this parable. I'm going to read Luke 15:7. *Read Luke 15:7 emphasizing "sinner who repents."*

Luke 15:7

- ? Who does that one sheep stand for? *A sinner who repents.*
- ? Right! And who do you think the shepherd was? *Allow discussion.*

### Discover the Truth

- ? Who has picture #10 of Jesus looking for the lost sinner? Bring that up and put it on the board. *Have student attach Board Work Illustration #10.*

*Refer to Board Work Illustrations.* In this parable, the shepherd stands for Jesus! He came to earth to seek and save the lost. The lost sheep stands for a sinner who is lost without Jesus. The shepherd in the parable rejoiced because he found his one lost sheep. Jesus was teaching that He is the good shepherd, and He will rejoice, too, whenever one sinner repents. In fact, the Bible says that all of heaven will rejoice when that happens!

- ? And who has picture #11 of Jesus and the sinner? Will you put that on the board, please? *Have student attach Board Work Illustration #11.*
- ? Do you remember what it means to repent? *Allow discussion.*

When someone repents, it means he is truly sorry for the sins he has done against our holy God. And because he's honestly sorry, he chooses to turn away from sin and turn to Jesus and believe in Him.

*Refer to Lesson Board Work.* This parable has a spiritual meaning. The lost sheep stands for a sinner who is not following Jesus. The shepherd stands for Jesus. He came looking for that sinner. Jesus came to seek and save the

lost. And when a lost person is found, there is great joy in heaven because he has repented of his sins.

? Let's review by completing our class notes. Will someone read #7 for us? What is the answer? *Assign a reader. Sinner. Have students complete #7.*

? And what about #8? Who does the shepherd in the parable stand for? Here's a hint: He came to seek and save the lost. *Assign a reader. Jesus. Have students complete #8.*

? And #9? What happens when someone repents and turns to Jesus? *Assign a reader. Joy. Have students complete #9.*

► If time allows, do a quick review of each point on the class notes.



## Parable Charades

### MATERIALS

- Parable Charades Strips
- Basket or bowl for strips

### INSTRUCTIONS

*Cut out and fold the charade strips and put them in a basket or bowl. Divide the students into two teams.*

*Have teams take turns drawing a charade strip from the basket and acting it out for their team. Keep track of points for each team. 10 points for each correct guess. If the team does not guess correctly, put the strip back for another try.*

*You may need to give hints if students need help acting out the types of soil. Hint suggestions: Wayside—stomp around as if packing down the soil. Stony ground—pretend to stub his toe on a stone, or pick up a stone and throw it. Thorny ground—pretend to poke his finger on a thorn. Good soil—get on hands and knees and pretend to put in a plant, water it, and look happy that it's growing.*

We're going to play "Charades" today. First we'll get into teams. Then you'll take turns taking a strip of paper out of this basket/bowl. All of the words have something to do with our lesson today. Read the words

and act them out without talking—no words! Your team will have to try and guess what you're acting out from the lesson. Every time your team guesses correctly, your team will get 10 points. Ready? Let's play. *Bring a timer or watch. Give them only so much time to guess what is being acted out.*

### CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

This game was a fun way to review what we've heard about parables.

People listened to Jesus as He taught the parables. I wonder if some of those people went home or to the market or to their friend's home and talked about what Jesus said and what He meant.

There is so much to learn from God's Word. He wants us to study it. But more than that, He wants us to use it to live our lives to His glory and honor.





## Memory Verse Review (Optional)

**John 14:6** Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

*If you find you have extra time, please consider reviewing the memory verse with your class.*

### MATERIALS

- Memory Verse Poster
- Memory Verse Cards printed on cardstock
- Tape or poster putty

### INSTRUCTIONS

*Print, preferably onto cardstock, and cut out one copy of the Memory Verse Cards. Tape the cards in order on the wall or board as you recite the verse together. Review the verse as you point to each card. Choose a student to remove one card of his choice. Recite the verse again. You can use these cards for Lessons 7–12.*

We’re going to practice our memory verse. Let’s say the verse together as I place these

cards onto the board. *Show each card as you read it, post it on the board, and have the students repeat.*

Good job! But wait! I’m going to ask one of you to come up and take one of the cards down. Then we’ll say the verse without that card! Are you ready? *Continue to choose students to remove cards one at a time, reciting the whole verse between each one.*

### CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Jesus is the only way to the Father. He promises eternal life to those who believe in Him and know Him as their Savior. Jesus is the truth; we can trust everything He says—we can believe Him! Jesus is the life; He alone can give eternal life. It is only through Jesus that any of us can get to the Father and spend forever in heaven.



## Applying God’s Word

### WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

*Refer to Lesson 9 Lesson Theme Poster.* Jesus taught in parables—short stories—about things the people would have been familiar with like planting seeds and shepherding. These parables taught spiritual lessons to those with “ears to hear.” And those who loved Jesus and wanted to learn more about Him did understand His parables. The people who couldn’t understand the parables didn’t want to follow Jesus and didn’t believe Him.

*Refer to Board Work.* One of the parables that Jesus told was about a sower who scattered seeds. Jesus wasn’t giving a lesson on farming. His parable had a deeper meaning.

The different soils stand for different kinds of hearts and the seed stands for God's Word. The seed that lands on good soil—a "good" heart—will grow and bear fruit. That heart really loves Jesus and wants to live for Him.

The second parable was about the shepherd who went to find his lost sheep. This parable had a spiritual meaning as well. The lost sheep stands for a sinner who is not following Jesus. The shepherd stands for Jesus who came looking for that sinner. And Jesus explained that there is joy in heaven when He finds a sinner, and that sinner repents.

## GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children to practice the memory verse this week.

We should all want to have the "good soil" heart. That is the heart that hears the Word of God and gladly receives it. That is the heart that repents of sin, turns to Jesus, and follows Him. If your heart isn't soft, good soil, where the Word of God can grow, then pray about it! Ask God to soften your heart and get it ready so it can receive and understand the seed of His Word. He alone can make our hearts into good soil!



### MEMORY VERSE

**John 14:6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."



### GROUP PRAYER TIME

- Praise God because He is the good shepherd who seeks lost sinners and forgives them when they repent.
- Ask God to soften our hearts so we receive the Word of God when we hear it.
- Thank God for His Word that grows and bears fruit in our lives when we receive it by faith.