

The Parables of the Sower and the Wheat and Tares

Lesson
17

Purpose To help each child understand and apply the spiritual messages in two of the parables Jesus told.

Preparation

1. Prayerfully study Matthew 13:1–9, 18–30, 37–43; Mark 4:14–20; Luke 8:11–15; and Doctrine and Covenants 86:1–7. Then study the lesson and decide how you want to teach the children the scripture account. (See “Preparing Your Lessons,” p. vi, and “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii.)
2. Additional reading: Mark 4:1–9, Luke 8:4–8, and Doctrine and Covenants 101:65–66.
3. Select the discussion questions and enrichment activities that will involve the children and best help them achieve the purpose of the lesson.
4. Materials needed:
 - a. A Bible or a New Testament for each child.
 - b. A paper for each child with the “Hidden Message Puzzle” on it or a large puzzle for the class to do together.

Hidden Message Puzzle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4
5	6	W	E	7	8	L	E	A	R	N	9	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	F	R	O	M	8	9	T	H	E	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	P	A	R	A	B	L	E	S	9	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6

**Suggested
Lesson
Development**

Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

Attention Activity

Give the children the papers you have prepared or display the large puzzle and ask them to find the message that is hidden among the numbers.

Explain that when Jesus taught the people, he sometimes taught in parables, which are short stories that have hidden spiritual messages.

Scripture Accounts
and Discussion
and Application
Questions

Teach the children the parable of the sower (a person who plants seeds) and the parable of the wheat and tares. (For suggested ways to teach the scripture accounts, see “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii.) Explain that when Jesus taught in parables, he used things that were familiar to the people to teach spiritual messages. As you discuss these parables, have the children listen for the hidden spiritual messages.

1. The Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23; Mark 4:14–20; Luke 8:11–15)

- In the parable of the sower, what did Jesus talk about that was familiar to the people? (Matthew 13:3–8.)
- Read Matthew 13:18–23, Mark 4:14–20, and Luke 8:11–15 with the class. What do you think the seed is? What do the fowls (birds) that eat the seed represent? What is the rocky ground? What are the thorns? What is the good ground? What are the roots? What are the cares of the world?
- How do we learn the word of God?
- How should we receive the word of God? What kind of “ground” should we be? (Matthew 13:23.)
- What hidden spiritual message is in the parable of the sower?

2. The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares (Matthew 13:24–30)

- What familiar things did Jesus talk about in the parable of the wheat and tares?
- Who do you think the sower is in this parable? What does the wheat represent? Who comes in at night and sows the tares? What are the tares? What does the harvest represent? Read Matthew 13:37–43 and Doctrine and Covenants 86:1–7 with the children and ask these questions again.
- Which do you want to be, the wheat or the tares? Why?
- What is the hidden spiritual message in this parable?

**Enrichment
Activities**

You may use one or more of the following activities any time during the lesson or as a review, summary, or challenge.

1. Make a chart similar to the following one to help the children understand the meaning of the two parables, or write the information on the chalkboard as you discuss the parables. Once you have listed all the information, refer to it again for review. You might have the children make their own copies of these charts.

Parable of the Sower

Seeds	Gospel of Jesus Christ or the word of God
Soil	Hearts of those who hear the word
By the wayside	Do not understand
Upon stony places	Hear but have no root; become offended easily
Among thorns	Choked by worldly cares and riches
Into good ground	Hear and understand
Fowls	Satan
Fruit	Good works

Parable of the Wheat and the Tares

Sower	Jesus Christ and his Apostles
Good seed (wheat)	Followers of Jesus
Field	World
Enemy	Satan
Tares (weeds)	Followers of Satan
Reapers	Angels
Harvest	Jesus' second coming

2. Bring a seed of some type (fruit, vegetable, rice, wheat, bean). Discuss what it takes for a seed to grow and bring forth good fruit. Ask the children what would happen to the seeds if they were planted by the roadside, on stony places, or among thorns. Compare this to planting the word of God in our hearts. Let the children discuss what kind of heart each type of soil represents and what it takes for the gospel to grow and bring forth good fruit in our lives.
3. Write the words *ears*, *eyes*, and *heart* on the chalkboard.
 - What do you do with your ears? eyes? heart? Have the children read Matthew 13:15. What did Jesus say we should do with these parts of our bodies? Apply this verse to the parables and to the gospel. If we really hear the word of God, see the truth in it, and do what Jesus wants us to do, whom will we be like in these parables?
4. Have the children trace, color, or underline the letters in their hidden message puzzles or in the large puzzle so the words stand out. Ask the children to each name one thing they learned from these two parables.
5. Read with the children some of the other parables found in Matthew 13 and help them decide what they mean. For help in understanding these parables, see James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, chapter 19, or "Parables" in the Bible Dictionary in the LDS edition of the Bible.

Conclusion

Testimony	Testify that Jesus Christ is our Savior and that if we learn his words and keep the commandments, we can become like Heavenly Father and be able to live with him again.
Suggested Home Reading	Suggest that the children study Matthew 13:1–9 at home as a review of this lesson. Invite a child to give the closing prayer.