

# Parable of the Talents

Lesson  
**26**

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**Purpose** To help the children desire to use their talents to benefit others and themselves.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study Matthew 25:14–30 and Doctrine and Covenants 60:2–3, 82:3. 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. Select the discussion questions and enrichment activities that will involve the children and best help them achieve the purpose of the lesson.
3. Materials needed:
  - a. A Bible or a New Testament for each child.
  - b. Slips of paper with a talent written on each one, such as “You have the talent to be a fine violinist,” “You have the talent to make friends,” “You have the talent to be a good speaker,” “You have the talent to be a good soccer player,” “You have the talent to be a peacemaker,” “You have the talent to be a good leader,” “You have the talent to be a good missionary,” “You have the talent to make others happy,” and so on. Before the children come into the classroom, fold the slips of paper and tape them in places around the room where the children can find them. Do not identify the talents as belonging to a particular child.

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**Suggested  
Lesson  
Development**

Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

**Attention Activity** Tell the children that there are special messages for them hidden around the room. Ask a child to find a message and read it aloud. Then ask that child to tell what he or she could do to develop that talent. Give each child a turn, and encourage the rest of the class to think of ways to cultivate each talent. Explain that this lesson will teach them about the importance of developing talents.

**Scripture Account** Review the definition of a parable from lesson 25. Teach the children the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14–30. (For suggested ways to teach the scripture account, see “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii.) In the parable, the talents refer to pieces of money. For us talents mean abilities we can develop to bless and help others.

**Discussion and Application Questions** Study the following questions and the scripture references as you prepare your lesson. Use the questions you feel will best help the children understand the scriptures and apply the principles in their lives. Reading the references with the children in class will help them gain insights into the scriptures.

- Why did the master give different amounts of talents to each servant? (Matthew 25:15.) How do your talents differ from your friends' talents? your family members' talents? Why does Heavenly Father give different gifts to each of us? (D&C 46:12.) How can we show our gratitude to Heavenly Father for the particular gifts he has given to us? (D&C 46:11.)
- What did the servants who were given five and two talents do with their money? (Matthew 25:16–17.) How do you think they were able to double their money? How can hard work be a blessing to us?
- What did the servant who was given one talent do with his money? (Matthew 25:18.) Why do you think he did this? (Matthew 25:24–25.) Why do you think some people don't develop their talents? What happens to people's talents if they do nothing with them?
- When the master returned and asked the servants to report to him, what did he say to the servant who had been given five talents? (Matthew 25:21.) What did he say to the servant who had been given two talents? (Matthew 25:23.) How does working hard to develop talents bless us? How have you been blessed by the talents or abilities of someone else?
- Why did the master give the same reward to the servant who had earned five talents and the servant who had earned two talents? (Matthew 25:21, 23.)
- What did the master say to the servant who had been given one talent? (Matthew 25:26–27.) Why was the master angry with this servant? What punishment did he give him for hiding the talent? (Matthew 25:28, 30.) Why is how we use our abilities and talents more important than how many talents we have and what those talents are?
- Why do you think the master gave the one talent to the servant who had ten? Was this fair? Why? Explain that the more we use our talents, the more talents we develop. If we do nothing with our talents, we will lose them. (See Matthew 25:29; D&C 60:2–3.) Help the children understand that those people who seem to have fewer talents will receive every blessing if they use their talents to the fullest.
- What do you think Jesus was trying to teach us by telling the parable of the talents? Help the children understand that the Lord has given us talents, abilities, and opportunities (such as belonging to his church). He expects us to use all these things to make our lives better and to serve others. He also wants us to show our gratitude by developing our talents.
- What additional expectations does the Lord have for us because we are members of his church? (D&C 82:3.)
- How do people share their talents in the Church? How does accepting responsibilities and assignments in the Church help us increase our talents? (See enrichment activity 5.)
- When and to whom will we give a report about what we have done with the gifts and talents we have been given? What do you want to be able to report? How would you feel if the Lord said to you, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21)?

## 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. Ask the children to name as many talents as they can think of; list the talents on the chalkboard as they are mentioned. Encourage the children to include character traits such as being a good listener, loving others, being cheerful, and so on.
2. Give the children each a piece of paper and a pencil and ask them to make a list of their own talents. Tell them not to let others in the class see the list. Then ask the class members to each name a talent for every other child in the class. As each child's talents are mentioned, suggest that the child add to his or her list any talents identified by the other children that are not already on the list. Then ask the following questions:
  - If class members named something about you that is not on your paper, how can you develop that talent?
  - If class members didn't name something that you wrote down, how can you develop that talent?

Challenge each child to choose one of his or her talents and decide how to further develop it or use it during the coming week.

3. Share the following story about President Heber J. Grant:

"When I joined a baseball club, the boys of my own age and a little older played in the first nine [the best group of players]; those younger than I played in the second, and those still younger in the third, and I played with them. One of the reasons for this was that I could not throw the ball from one base to the other. Another reason was that I lacked physical strength to run or bat well. When I picked up a ball, the boys would generally shout: 'Throw it here sissy!'

"So much fun was engendered on my account by my youthful companions that I solemnly vowed that I would play baseball in the nine that would win the championship of the Territory of Utah.

". . . I saved a dollar which I invested in a baseball. I spent hours and hours throwing the ball at Bishop Edwin D. Woolley's barn. . . . Often my arm would ache so that I could scarcely go to sleep at night. But I kept on practicing and finally succeeded in getting into the second nine of our club. Subsequently I joined a better club, and eventually played in the nine that won the championship of the territory" (*Gospel Standards*, pp. 342–43).

4. The following quotation was one of President Heber J. Grant's favorite sayings. Discuss the meaning of it with the children, and encourage them to memorize it.

"That which we persist in doing becomes easier for us to do; not that the nature of the thing itself is changed, but that our power to do is increased" (*Gospel Standards*, p. 355).

5. Ask the children to think of some of the responsibilities people are given in the Church. Give them slips of paper and pencils and have them write down a responsibility or assignment (each child could contribute more than one). Have them put the slips of paper in a box or jar. Then ask the children to take turns drawing a slip of paper out of the box and telling what talents they could develop by performing this assignment or responsibility. List the talents that are mentioned on the chalkboard to see how many different talents the children can identify.
6. Sing or read the words to “I’m Thankful to Be Me” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 11).

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## Conclusion

Testimony            Bear testimony of the joy that comes when we use the talents God has given us to benefit ourselves and others. Share with the children how much you want to feel the joy of returning to Heavenly Father as one who has used your talents well.

Suggested Home Reading    Suggest that the children study Matthew 25:14–30 at home as a review of this lesson.

Invite a child to give the closing prayer.

Note: An enrichment activity for lesson 27 requires asking a member of the Relief Society presidency or bishopric to come and talk to the children about how the Relief Society gives compassionate service. If you want to use this activity, ask the person in advance and explain what you want him or her to talk about.