

Name: _____

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Parables of Jesus

A parable is a short fictitious story that Jesus would tell to teach his disciples and us a lesson about God. These lessons tend to focus on the kingdom of God, the grace and mercy of God, and the judgment of God.

Parables tend to be made up of four components. They are:

Built on similes: In a parable, something always stands for something else. For example, Jesus will often start a parable by saying "The kingdom of God is like..." and then use an image to compare God's kingdom to a mustard seed or a king etc.

Relate to real life: The stories Jesus told made sense to his audience. At the time of Jesus, things like farmers and shepherds were common knowledge. For the most part, they are still relatable today too.

Filled with surprises: A great plot twist makes every story more interesting. In a parable there is usually a part of the story that is shocking or doesn't make sense. In the parable of the lost sheep, the shepherd leaves 99 sheep to find just one! Financially, that is a really bad idea, but from a storytelling perspective it is a beautiful illustration of God's love for us.

Present a Challenge: At the end of a parable, the audience was usually confused or upset. That's because the whole point of a parable is to encourage you to change your life- to be more faithful, more giving, more forgiving. These things are hard! It's difficult to live Jesus's message in our everyday lives.

As you study the parables, understanding and analyzing these four components of a parable will help you to understand and apply the parables more in your own life.

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Parable Graphic Organizer

Name of the Parable and where you can find it in the Bible:

<p><i>Built on Similes</i></p>	<p>Describe what the different people and symbols in the story represent.</p>
<p><i>Relates to Real Life</i></p>	<p>How does this story connect life of the time of Jesus and life in the world today?</p>
<p><i>Filled with Surprises</i></p>	<p>What parts of the story are surprising?</p>
<p><i>Presents a Challenge</i></p>	<p>What is challenging in the story? What is God asking from you in this parable?</p>

Preview

The Parable of the Sower

On that day, Jesus went out of the house and sat down by the sea. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd stood along the shore. And he spoke to them at length in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold. Whoever has ears ought to hear."

Matthew 13: 1-9

The Explanation of the Parable of the Sower.

"Hear then the parable of the sower. The seed sown on the path is the one who hears the word of the kingdom without understanding it, and the evil one comes and steals away what was sown in his heart. The seed sown on rocky ground is the one who hears the word and receives it at once with joy. But he has no root and lasts only for a time. When some tribulation or persecution comes because of the word, he immediately falls away. The seed sown among thorns is the one who hears the word, but then worldly anxiety and the lure of riches choke the word and it bears no fruit. But the seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold."

Matthew 13: 18-23

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The Parable of the Sower Graphic Organizer

In a parable, the story is based on similes. This means that the characters and objects represent something more than they would literally. With that in mind, read the Parable of the Sower found in Matthew 13:1-9. Then fill in each box with what you think that part of the story represents.

Sower

Seeds

Birds

Read the Bible story again. Here's the tricky part—the agent the seeds—we are the soil! With that in mind, try to explain what type of person each soil type represents

Path: _____

Rocky: _____

Thorny: _____

Rich: _____

Review

What is something surprising about this parable? How does the sower act in an unusual way? What is the point of this surprise? (Think about how farmers plant their fields/orchards.)

Read Jesus's explanation of the parable. You can find it in Matthew 13:18 -23. Now that you've heard Jesus's explanation, put what each type of soil represents in your own words.

Path: _____

Rocky: _____

Thorny: _____

Rich: _____

All parables present a challenge. Obviously a challenge can be to be the rich soil, but another challenge can be taking an honest look at our own realities.

Which soil are you most like right now? Why?

What are 3 things you can do to become more like the rich soil?

The Parable of the Talents

"It will be as when a man who was going on a journey called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five talents; to another, two; to a third, one—to each according to his ability. Then he went away.

Immediately the one who received five talents went and traded with them, and made another five. Likewise, the one who received two made another two. But the man who received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and buried his master's money.

After a long time the master of those servants came back and settled accounts with them. The one who had received five talents came forward bringing the additional five. He said, 'Master, you gave me five talents. See, I have made five more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy.'

[Then] the one who had received two talents also came forward and said, 'Master, you gave me two talents. See, I have made two more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy.'

Then the one who had received the one talent came forward and said, 'Master, I know you were a demanding person, harvesting where you did not plant and gathering where you did not scatter; so out of fear I went off and buried your talent in the ground. Here it is back.' His master said to him in reply, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I did not plant and gather where I did not scatter? Should you not then have put my money in the bank so that I could have got it back with interest on my return? Now then! Take the talent from him and give it to the one with ten. For to everyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And throw this useless servant into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.'

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The Talents Graphic Organizer

Read the Parable of the Talents found in Matthew 25: 14-30. Then answer the following questions.

Parables are built on similes. In this parable who do the master and the servants represent?

At the time of Jesus, a talent was a huge amount of money. Explain why you think each servant did what they did with the talents they received.

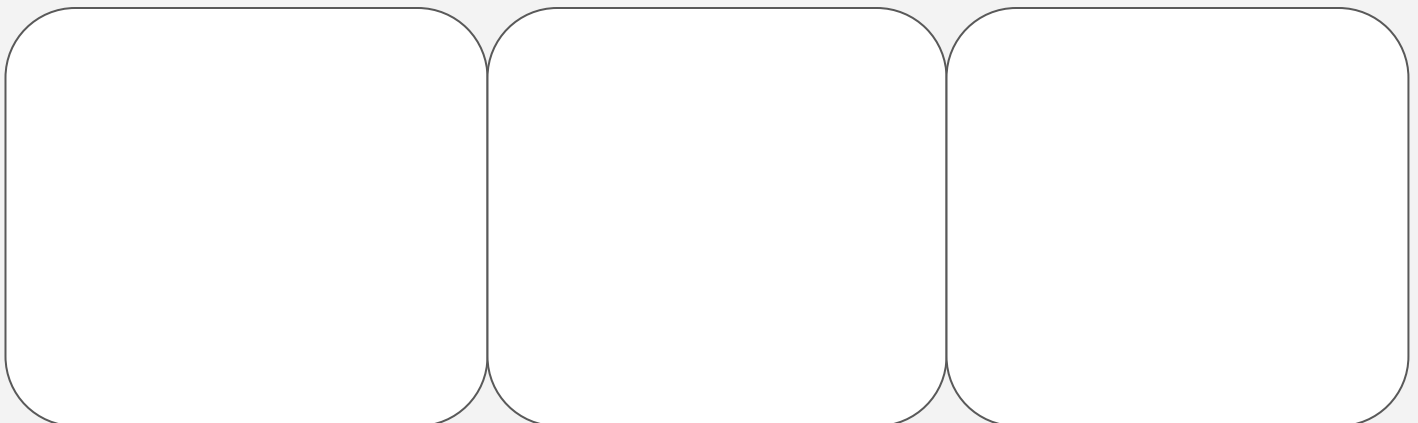
servant 1

servant 2

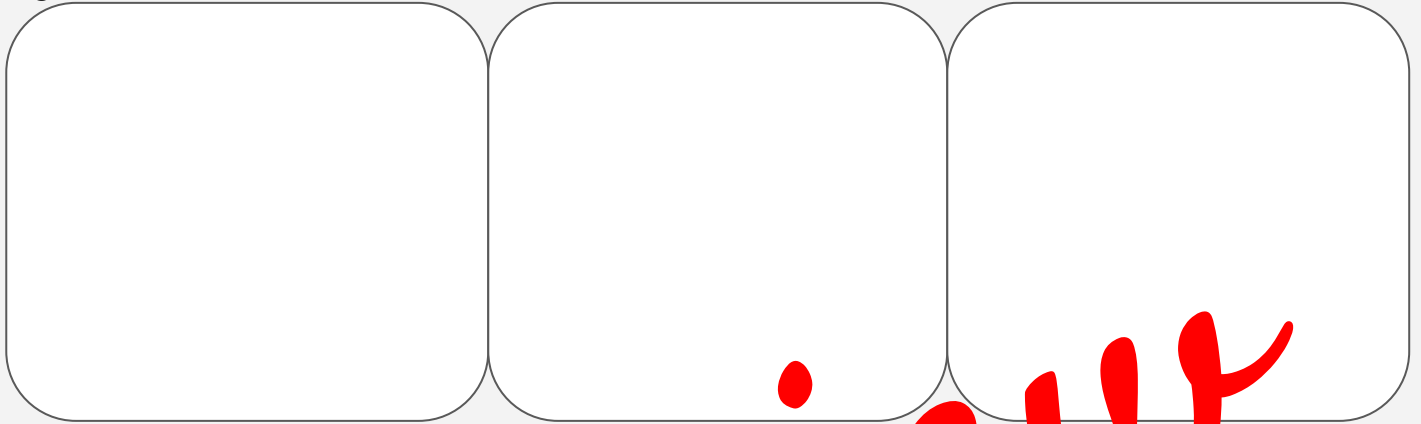
servant 3

Why was the master so mad at the 3rd servant? Do you think his response was fair? Why or why not?

Imagine 3 different people (servants) coming before the master (God) at the end of their lives. What would the scene look like with real talents and people? Draw a comic depicting the scene for each person and God. Have 2 people who multiplied talents and 1 who did not.



Think about your own life. Write or draw about three talents or gifts God has given to you. These can be things you are good at, like singing or science, or blessings in your life, like awesome friends, or a great school.



What would it look like to multiply your gifts? For example, if you are great at math, you could help a younger student with their math homework. If you have a great friend, you could invite a new student to sit with you. Pick one of the things you wrote or drew about above and come up with 2 ways you could multiply that gift.

Preview

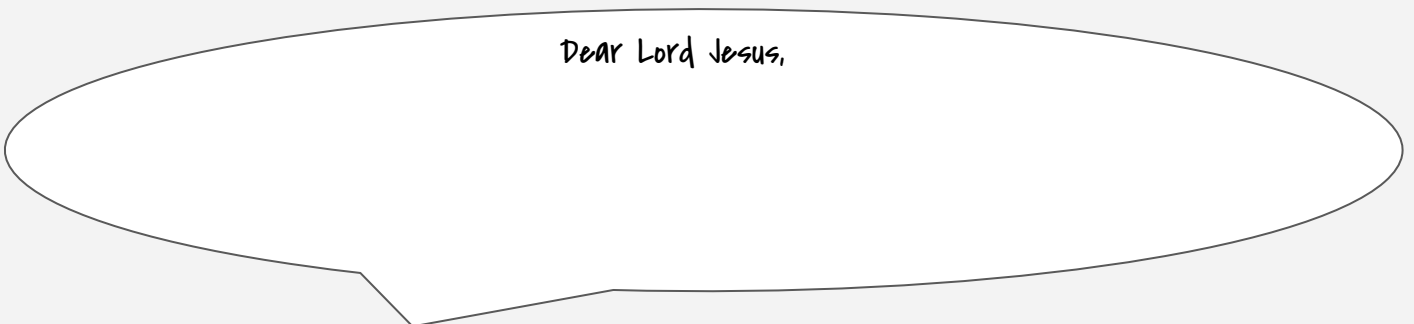
To multiply my _____ of _____ I can _____

_____.

At the end of the parable, the servant who didn't use or add to his talent is sent away to be alone and sad. How can burying your gifts leave you isolated or lonely?

Parables challenge us to change something about our lives to live more like Jesus did. Take a moment to think about the ways this parable challenges you. Then write a prayer asking God for the graces you need to meet that challenge this week.

Dear Lord Jesus,



The Parable of the Lost Son.

Then he said, "A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.' So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation.

When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. Coming to himself he thought, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers."

So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you and no longer deserve to be called your son.' But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring me the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began.

Now the older son had been out in the field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean. The servant said to him, 'Your brother has returned and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him.

He said to his father in reply, 'Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.' He said to him, 'My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.'

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The Lost Son Graphic Organizer

Read the story of The Lost Son in Luke 15: 11-32. Then list adjectives that describe each person in the story.

Younger Son

Father

Older Son

Preview

Tell a story of a time when you acted like the YOUNGER son:

Tell a story of a time when you acted like the Father:

Tell a story of a time when you acted like the OLDER son:

Which character are you most like? Use three reasons from your life and three reasons from the parable. Be sure to cite verses!

Reasons from my life

Reasons and verses from the parable

On a separate sheet of paper, write a reflection on which character from The Lost Son you are most like and why. How might God be calling you to change?