

Lesson 1

Parable - The Four Soils

Objective

Learn what parables are and their purpose. Study Matthew 13: The parable of the Sower and the four types of soils. See that all get the same seed (the Word of God) but it is what our hearts do with it that matters.

Supplies

Teachers and/or Coordinators ensure supplies are ready prior to each class.

Print From the Site:

- Attendance Chart
- Sower & Soils Visual Aid – one for class
- Different Soils Sheet – one for every 3-4 students
- Words to Describe Soil – one for every 3-4 students (cut out before class)
- Sower & Soils Activities – one per student
- Take Home Sheet – one per student
- Songs about Parables Sheets – one per every 2-3 students and for teacher
- Bibles – enough for everyone to have one
- Pens/Pencils/Crayons/Pencil Crayons
- Stickers (for attendance)
- Scissors – for teacher to cut out Words to Describe Sheet

Optional Supplies

- Seeds – enough for each student to get a few to glue onto their activity sheet
- Glue Sticks to share
- Snack: Sunflower or Pumpkin Seeds – enough to share
- Paper Cups or Napkins – to hold the seeds

Teacher Tips

- ★ Use lots of visuals and actions to keep student’s attention.
- ★ Allow them to color while you read the story to keep them focused if needed
- ★ Sit beside children who can be fidgety or who might distract others

- ★ Learn their names - calling a student by name, gets them back on track
- ★ Break up the lesson if needed with a different activity to keep their attention
- ★ Remember to promote “please and thank you”

1) Introduction to Lesson

As students enter, welcome them and help them find a chair to sit at. Thank them for coming. Take attendance (using the supplied chart or your own). Let each student put a sticker beside their name for this week.


Share with students: **This quarter we will continue to study the New Testament in the Gospels to learn about the parables of Jesus. A parable literally means to throw down beside in the Greek. It is a simple story with a spiritual meaning. Jesus used these simple stories to help teach people about the kingdom of God and other spiritually important topics. In fact, 30-33% of Jesus’ teaching were in parables! A parable then is a story to be put beside a teaching to help us remember an important lesson.**

Let’s sing a song to get us started! Hand out one Songs about Parables to every 2-3 students so they can follow along. Ensure you have learned the tunes by checking the links on the sheet that will take you to our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@Sunday-School-Kids>. Sing song once or twice while waiting for any other students to arrive.

Sowing the Seeds of Love

Songs about Parables


Sowing the Seeds of Love
(Tune: See)



Sowing the seeds of love,
Into a soil that's good,
By willing to make my heart,
Ready for God's word.

Sowing the seeds of love,
Patiently learning truth,
Happy that God will help,
Which kind of soil are you?

The Wise Man Built His House on the Rock
(Tune: See)



The wise man built his house upon the rock,
(Make two fists and put one on top of the other over and over.
Then hold hands flat and flex for "rock".)
The wise man built his house upon the rock,
The wise man built his house upon the rock,
And the rains came tumbling down,
(Have fingers wiggle with arms up high then going low to represent rain falling.)

The rains came down and the floods came up,
(Fingers wiggle down for rain, turn palms up and lift them for flood.)
The rains came down and the floods came up,
The rains came down and the floods came up,
And the wise man's house stood firm, (hold hands flat and firm.)

The foolish man built his house upon the sand,
(Make two fists and put one on top of the other over and over.
Then hold hands flat and wiggle for "sand").
The foolish man built his house upon the sand,
The foolish man built his house upon the sand,
And the rains came tumbling down,
(Have fingers wiggle with arms up high then going low to represent rain falling.)

The rains came down and the floods came up,
(Fingers wiggle down for rain, turn palms up and lift them for flood.)
The rains came down and the floods came up,
The rains came down and the floods came up,
And the foolish man's house went splat! (Snack hands together.)

2) Class Time – Parable of the Soils

10-15 minutes

Hand out Bibles to any student who did not bring theirs. Thank students who brought their own. *If possible see why the other students didn't bring a Bible. If they do not have one, give them a Bible as a gift for next time. Have visual aid ready and show it through the reading of the Bible. You or a student can point to the the correct pictures.



Ask students to turn to **Matthew 13**. Then ask for volunteers who are able to read well or read yourself.

Matthew 13:1-9

Jesus tells them a story about someone who planted seeds. Some of the seeds landed on the hard path, some in rocky soil, some in thorn-filled soil and some in good soil. Jesus will explain what the story meant.

Read **Matthew 13:10-13**.

The disciples asked Jesus when they were no longer with the crowd what the story meant. There are always those who want to hear and listen to Jesus. I hope you are one of those people! Jesus said the parable was so the disciples could understand but to those who refused to hear, see, or understand, the parable wouldn't make sense to them. They would ignore the lesson being taught.

Jesus said those who follow Jesus and ask Him will know the secrets of the Kingdom. This phrase didn't mean it couldn't be understood, but was something that could be understood if explained. Today we have all the secrets that God has revealed. We can understand them. These secrets are in His Word the Bible! And they are a secret He wants everyone to know about! We can know God by studying His Word.

Read **Matthew 13:14-16**.

Jesus said it was not because God didn't want the people to learn, but it was because they had closed their eyes and dulled their hearts and ears. They chose to ignore the messages and stories Jesus was telling. We can choose to ignore God and His Word (and face the consequences for it) or we can choose to listen to Jesus and the Words in the Bible that are from God. Everything good we need is found in the Bible.

Read **Matthew 13:17**

Who did Jesus say are the blessed people? Those who look and listen to God's Word!

You can be blessed too if you look at and listen to God's Word.

Now let's be good listeners and lookers and be blessed by seeing what Jesus meant when He told the parable. He will explain that the sower (the person throwing the seeds) is Jesus and any of us who share the Word of God with

others. The seed that is shared is the Bible. And the soils are the different hearts of people who hear God's Word.

Let's read Matthew 13:18-19.

The seed fell on the hard path. This person had a hard heart. Because of that, the seed couldn't go into the soil and so the devil took it away. It wasn't that the person didn't get a chance to hear before the devil took it, but it was because their heart was too hard and would not listen and hear the message God was sharing.

Let's read Matthew 13:20-21.

What kind of heart did this person have? A rocky heart.

It was shallow and didn't have good roots, they heard the good news of Jesus but then stopped following and learning more because people made things harder for that person. When things got "rocky" the person stopped following Jesus. So the second type of soil/person is the one that has a shallow rocky heart and stops following Jesus as soon as any trouble comes. They didn't count the costs of being a Christian, they thought it was going to be easy with no issues. We need to know that trouble will come and not be surprised so that we don't give up on Jesus when it does. Sometimes we share the good news with someone and they are excited to hear it, but as they study more they realize being a Christian is hard work and they stop.

Read Matthew 13:22

What kind of heart did this person have? A thorn-filled heart.

Many times farmers cut only the tops off or even burn off the field of weeds, but by never removing the roots, the weeds come back stronger than ever.

The cares of the world, the pleasures of life, the desire for money, entertainment, power, a great career, etc. was more important than following Jesus. This person let these desires and worries stop them from following Jesus and their heart was choked out by the thorns. Sometimes we share the good news with someone and then they stop wanting to learn and study because other things become more important to them.

Read Matthew 13:23

What kind of heart did this person have? A good heart!

Why was their heart/soil good? They heard and understood Jesus’ words and were willing to do something with what they heard.

They were willing to listen to Jesus and the Bible and were willing to follow what Jesus said. By doing so they produced many good things, much more than what they started with. Their good deeds and actions and love helped many, many more people!

We can choose what kind of heart we have. I pray you all choose to have a good heart and are willing to prepare your soil to be good. Let’s do our first activities and if during that time you have any questions you can ask then.

3) Sower and Soils Activities

15-20 minutes

Prep

Hand out one activity sheet per student with crayons and pencils. Have students write their name on the page.

Activity

Read the instructions out loud. Go through the “Did You Know” section. Then allow students to do the maze and color the different soils. Tell them they will have 5-10 minutes (depending on the time you know is needed to finish all activities today) to color the different soils and discuss the following while they do:

Ask the students:

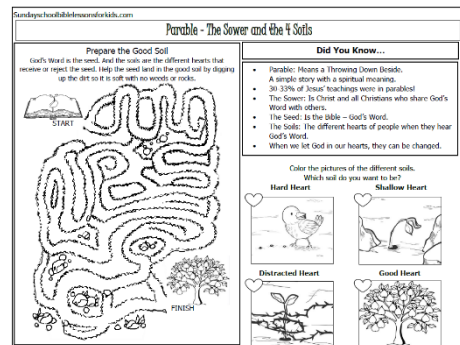
What did Jesus say was the seed? The Word of God/The Bible.

Everyone received seed, and everyone received the same seed. All had a chance to hear the Word of God.

Who had hard soil? Someone with a hard heart. Not willing to listen or learn.

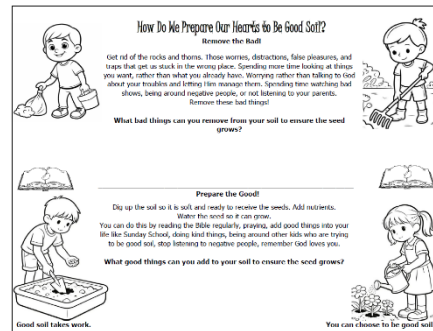
Who had rocky soil? Someone with a shallow heart – easily turned away when troubles came.

What did the thorny soil represent? Someone with a heart distracted by worries, riches, and pleasures rather than focused on Jesus.



What did the good soil represent? Someone with a heart willing to follow Jesus and by doing so produces many good things in their life.

Let’s look at page 2 of our activity sheet and go through it together. Tell students to follow along on their sheet as you read aloud. When you get to the questions allow students to either write their answers or say them in class.



What bad things can you remove from your soil to ensure the seed grows?

Write them down on the sheet or say them now. Let students write or say some things they can remove that are bad from their life.

What good things can you add to your soil to ensure the seed grows? Let students answer.

Remember good soil takes work. You can choose to be good soil by removing the bad and replacing it with the good things it needs. Reading the Bible, prayer, learning about Jesus at Sunday School, etc. Choose to be good soil!

God tells us that people are free to choose and people can choose to change. Listen while I read these verses from the Bible:

Joshua 24:15: *"But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve..."*

The Bible says people can choose to follow God or not.

Deuteronomy 30:19: *"...I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live"*

The Bible says we can choose between life and consequences.

Galatians 5:13: *"You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love"*

The Bible says we have been given freedom but should use it responsibly.

Revelation 3:20: *"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in..."*

Jesus says He knocks on every door (everyone at some point hears or knows Jesus exists), we have the choice to open the door and let Him in!

Some people may be hard-hearted now, but with prayer and their decision to open the door to Jesus, they can soften their heart and become good soil. So let’s not give up on family and friends who seem hard, rocky, or thorny. Let’s not give up on ourselves when we might feel that way at times. Instead pray that God will help you and others be good soil. Good soil who understands, is honest with a good heart, and is able to produce many fruitful things from their life thanks to allowing the seed – the Word of God into their heart.

May you all choose to be good soil and let the Bible’s Words grow in your heart more and more so that you can produce 30, 60, or 100 times more than what you started with, because of Christ working in your life. Remember all received the same seed, which is the Word of God, but there were four different responses that happened based on the person’s heart. It is what our hearts do that matters and we can choose to make our heart good by listening and following Jesus.

Allow for questions, state that you will come back next week with answers if the questions are too big for you to deal with this week and address the person next week if appropriate. You can contact Sundayschoolbiblelessonsforkids@protonmail.com if you need help with any questions. Then, move on to the next activity.

4) Activity Time – Different Soils Game 10 minutes

Prep


- Before class, print one Words to Describe sheet for every 3-4 students. You will need scissors.
- Cut out sheets before class.
- Print one Different Soils Sheet for every 3-4 students as well.
- Have Bibles for each student.
- Optional: Have seeds and glue available so students at the end can glue seeds onto all four pictures to remind them that all soils received seed, but only one soil was ready for it.

Words to Describe Different Soils

*Print and cut out before class for students to use as descriptors for the Different Soils Game. One sheet for every 3-4 students.

*Note there are four seeds. They will need to put one on each section for all received seed. This is to show the seed was always the same, it was the hearts of the people receiving that were different. They will also receive 4 "you" seeds. These are so each student can put where they think they are currently on the soils.

Hard Heart	Thorny	Rocky
Worries	Riches	Troubles
Good	Fruitful	Produces
Multiplies	Choked	Path
Taken	Sun	Dried Out
Quick	Worldly Cares	Money
Unfruitful	Understands	No Root
Pleasures	Honest	Heart
Seed	Seed	Seed
Seed	Hard	You?
Pharisees	Rich Man	Blindman's Parents
Mark 3:5-6	Mark 10:17-22	John 9:11,18-23
You?	You?	You?


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Activity

- Put students into groups. Make sure there is at least one student who can read well in each group. If not, you will read each word out loud and have students find that same word in their list and put it where they think best.
- Place one Different Soils sheet in front of each group of students so all of them can see.
- Take the cut out words and dump them into a pile in front of each group of students as well. One group of students = one set of words and one different soils sheets.
- Have students in their groups take turns finding a word and putting it with right soil – Hard, Rocky, Thorny, or Good. You may have to read each word chosen aloud for students who can't read or you might need to define the word or phrase.
- For the Bible verses, have students look up the story and see if the person's heart was hard, rocky, or thorny.



For example:

Mark 3:5-6 – Pharisees – Hard Hearted

John 9:11, 18-23 – Blind Man's Parents – Rocky

Mark 10:17-22 – Rich Man – Thorny

- The words "You" are so that each student can put themselves where they think they are currently on the soils. Are they currently hard-hearted? Rocky? Thorny? Or good? Remind any who say they are not "good soil" that with time and a willing heart and with prayer that can change.

When finished, check to make sure the right attributes are put with the soils.

Answers:

Hard Path Soil: Hard Heart, Path, Taken, Seed, Hard, Pharisees, Mark 3:5-6

Rocky Soil: Rocky, Troubles, Sun, Dried Out, Quick, No Root, Seed, Blindman's Parents, John 9:11,18-23

Thorn-Filled Soil: Thorny, Worries, Riches, Choked, Worldly Cares, Money, Unfruitful, Pleasures, Seed, Rich Man, Mark 10:17-22

Good Soil: Good, Fruitful, Produces, Multiplies, Understands, Honest, Heart, Seed

*"You?" Students will place where they think they are now.

Optional: If time, hand out seeds and glue and allow all students to glue some seeds on the different soils.

Tell them that: **All soils received seed, but only one soil was ready for it. Let's make sure we are good soil and ready for the Word of God by praying for**

help, studying God’s Word, attending Sunday School, and doing kind and loving things for others.

5) Optional: Memory Verse

5 minutes

This month students will be learning two memory verses, which they can also practice at home. **Matthew 13:23 and Matthew 7:21.**

Practice the verses by going through them a few times out loud as a class. Then have each student say one of the words in the verse until the whole verse is read. Have them keep going around the room faster and faster until it has been said a few times for fun. Come up with actions for each phrase as a class. *If you choose, bring treats for those who remember the verses over the coming week.

6) Closing Prayer

**Before the prayer, make sure the activities have been cleaned up. Ask if there are any prayers the students want to share and if so write them down.

Dear God we pray that we will all be good soil. That we will hear and be willing to listen to what You say and do it. We pray that You will help us remove the bad things in our lives that will harden our hearts and add the good things in our lives that will make our hearts good and pure. We pray that we and everyone we know or meet will choose to turn their hard, rocky, thorn-filled hearts into good hearts by listening and following Your Son Jesus.

Thank You for Your help, Your love and for being our Father. Thank You for Your Word the Bible. Be with those who were not able to attend today. Be with our families, friends, and those in the church. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

7) Optional Snack: Word of God Seeds 5 minutes

You’ve all done a great job this morning learning about what happens when the same seed is thrown onto different soil, or when the Word of God is shared with people who have different hearts. To help us remember, we are going to have a snack. Hand out a paper cup or napkin with sunflower and/or pumpkin seeds to each student. Explain that **God’s seed, the Word of God, is**

shared with everyone but not everyone is willing to listen or follow faithfully. To be good soil, to be willing and able to understand, we must keep our hearts and soil soft, good, and ready for God’s Word by listening to and following Jesus. Let’s eat our seeds and remember that we need to “eat” the Words of God by reading them daily just like we eat food. Provide a napkin for children to clean their hands. Discuss and review questions while snacking.

How can we remove the bad things from our hearts so our hearts are good?

Let students answer.

What are some ways we can prepare our hearts to be good soil? What good things can we do? Let students answer.

Any questions about today’s story?

What was the favorite thing you learned or did today? Why?

8) Take Home Sheet

2 minutes

Hand out one sheet to each student and tell them to share this with their parents and go through a section each week.

Parables	Bible Reading	Lesson
1. Four Soils	Matthew 13: 1-23, Mark 4: 1-20, Luke 8: 1-18	All hear the Word but only good soil accepts it.
2. Wheat and Tares	Matthew 7: 21-23, Luke 11: 19-21	Good soil is sown by effective Christ.
3. Good and Bad Seed	Matthew 13: 24-30	Who good soil sows seed is its control.
4. Hidden Treasures & the Pearl	Matthew 13: 44-46	Who good soil recognizes the value of God's Kingdom.
5. Enduring Suffering	Matthew 13: 21-23	Who good soil forgives since forgiven.
6. Yeasts and True Salt	Matthew 21: 28-32, 13: 33, 13: 33-35	Who good soil admits its errors.
7. Luke and Early Laborers	Matthew 20: 1-16	Who good soil shares and find joy in others.
8. Ten Virgins & Scribes	Matthew 25	Who good soil is prepared.

Memory Verses: Matthew 13: 23, Matthew 13: 23, Luke 8: 15, Matthew 13: 23

Prayer: Dear God will help you and your family to understand the parables and be the good soil that is pure in heart, who obedient to God, remembers the warnings, values the Kingdom, forgives and seeks forgiveness, repent, submits, shares in the joy of others being added to the Kingdom, is willing to bring others into the Kingdom, and is prepared by abiding His Word and doing it all the days of your life.

Dir: Each week look at the lesson in the parable and pray and do things that relate to it.

- Pray that you and others will be the good soil.
- Do things that show good soil each week related to the parable you are learning. Preparing for Sunday School, reading Bible, being kind, remembering the warnings God gives, forgiving, repenting, etc.
- Share it with someone what you learned during Sunday School and tell them about it. Tell a friend, family member, teacher, or someone else what you learned from Jesus each week!
- Find a way to help remember what good soil is and what good soil does. Know your activity sheets, pick an activity each week that help you remember the lesson you learned. Practice your memory verses, draw pictures of the Kingdom and all it includes in it = the King, others who obey the King, and all the good values and love the Kingdom has, etc.

9) Optional Songs

5 minutes

Sing **Old or New Testament Books of the Bible** to remind us of all we can read to in God’s Word. Hear the songs on our YouTube channel here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RleMthHOT_ZY&list=PLKggHdWzVzVzoDWWgS0QHvc_pQ5n6is2riin

Or sing songs from the **Song Sheet**.

10) Things to Remember

Thank students for coming.
Remind them to take their activity sheets home.
Make sure students leave with a responsible person.
Thank you for serving Christ in this way!