

Lesson Seven: The Story of the Talents

Main idea: God rewards us when we use the talents he gives us for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven and punishes us when we don't use them.

Teacher preparation:

- Read Scripture references, Ephesians 2:10, 2 Corinthians 3:5-6; 1 Peter 4:10-11
- Gather: Bible; dry erase markers or chart paper and markers; hand out for each child
 - crayons, markers, and colored pencils; scissors, items to be used in talent show
- Take time to meditate on this week's Scripture and think about your own life. How are you using your own talents to glorify God?

Scripture references:

- Matthew 25:14-30
- Romans 12:6-8
- 1 Timothy 4:12
- Colossians 3:23

Game: Talent Show

Give the kids a chance to show off their talents by hosting a simple, non-competitive talent show. Set a timer for two minutes, and let kids stand in front of the group and share something they do well for up to two minutes. They can do partner talents too, if they are more comfortable. Have some things available for the young talents to use, such as a football, basketball and hoop, jump rope, hacky sack, microphone, paper and crayons or dry erase board. Give everyone a chance to shine and encourage everyone to participate, but do not force any child to participate. Be sure that the kids clap at the end of every performance, even if a kid gets up, changes their mind and sits right back down. It takes bravery to stand up for some kids! Some ideas of talents to encourage them to show off: martial arts skills or drills from organized sports, gymnastics/tumbling, throwing a perfect football spiral to a friend, making free throws, singing, telling jokes, drawing, reading a story, or reciting Scripture. End by telling the kids how proud you are of each and every one of

them, even if they didn't perform, and that God has blessed them all with some really amazing talents.

Message:

Open in prayer, then say, This is our seventh week learning all about the parables. I am so proud of you all for sticking with it and working hard to learn lessons from the stories Jesus told. We have learned what Heaven is like, what God is like, and what we should be like as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. Heaven is full of people who love and obey God. It's better than anything we could ever imagine, and worth everything we could ever have in this life. God loves everyone. He patiently waits for people to repent of their sins and follow him, but he will punish those who choose not to follow him. He wants everyone to know the truth about his son Jesus so everyone can love and obey him. As citizens of the Kingdom of God, we tell others about Jesus, forgive those who wrong us, and we obey the commands of the Lord. Today we will learn another thing we are to do as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. We also learn a little bit about what the Kingdom of Heaven is like. Today's story is called the Parable of the Talents. Follow along as I read from Matthew 25:14-30.

“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone. ¹⁵ He gave five bags of silver to one, two bags of silver to another, and one bag of silver to the last—dividing it in proportion to their abilities. He then left on his trip.

¹⁶ “The servant who received the five bags of silver began to invest the money and earned five more. ¹⁷ The servant with two bags of silver also went to work and earned two more. ¹⁸ But the servant who received the one bag of silver dug a hole in the ground and hid the master's money.

¹⁹ “After a long time their master returned from his trip and called them to give an account of how they had used his money. ²⁰ The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came forward with five more and said, ‘Master, you gave me five bags of silver to invest, and I have earned five more.’

²¹ “The master was full of praise. ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’

²² “The servant who had received the two bags of silver came forward and said, ‘Master, you gave me two bags of silver to invest, and I have earned two more.’

²³ “The master said, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’

²⁴ “Then the servant with the one bag of silver came and said, ‘Master, I knew you were a harsh man, harvesting crops you didn’t plant and gathering crops you didn’t cultivate. ²⁵ I was afraid I would lose your money, so I hid it in the earth. Look, here is your money back.’

²⁶ “But the master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy servant! If you knew I harvested crops I didn’t plant and gathered crops I didn’t cultivate, ²⁷ why didn’t you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.’

²⁸ “Then he ordered, ‘Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one with the ten bags of silver. ²⁹ To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away. ³⁰ Now throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

Let’s take a moment to review this parable to be sure we understand what is going on. It starts out with a man going on a trip. (Draw a man on the board. Over his head, draw an arrow showing that he is leaving. It doesn’t have to be artistic. Illustrating the parable will help the kids remember it better.) This man called his servants together and gave them his money to take care of while he was away. (Draw three people with enough space around them and beneath them to draw the bags of silver with which they were entrusted.) How many bags of silver does it say the master gave the first servant? (Allow a student to answer, and then draw five bags under the first servant.) That’s right, it says he received five bags. In the original language, it says the master trusted this servant with five talents. A talent was a measurement of money. It would take

a worker twenty years to earn a talent of money. So five talents is a lot of money! How many bags of silver did the second servant receive to care for? (Allow a student to answer, then draw two bags under the second servant.) He received two bags of silver, or two talents. And what about the last servant, what did he get? (Allow a student to answer, then draw one bag under the last servant.) Yes, he received one bag of silver, or, in the original language of the story, one talent of money.

It seems kind of odd that they would all receive different amounts of talents to care for while their master is away. The Scripture tells us why. Can I have a volunteer read verse 15 of Matthew 25 please? “¹⁵He gave five bags of silver to one, two bags of silver to another, and one bag of silver to the last—dividing it in proportion to their abilities. He then left on his trip.” So why, according to this verse, did the master divide up his money the way he did? (Allow a student to answer.) He divided it according to their abilities. He knew the first servant could handle five talents, and the second servant could handle two talents, and the third servant could handle one talent. Does this mean the first servant was better than the other two? (Allow children to answer.) Of course not. The first servant was no better, no more important in his master’s eyes than the other two servants. He was just able to handle more money.

Now what did the first servant do with the money after his master went on the trip? (Allow a student to answer.) He invested it and doubled his master’s money. He earned five more bags of silver. (Draw five more bags under the first servant.) What about the second servant, what did he do with the money entrusted to him? (Allow a student to answer.) He also doubled his master’s money, earning him two more bags of silver, or two more talents. (Draw two more bags under the second servant.) Tell me about this last servant. What did he do with the one talent the master gave to him to care for? (Allow a student to answer.) Verse 18 of our passage tells us he dug a hole and hid his master’s money.

Let’s look at how the master responded to these servants when he returned from his trip. What did he say to the first servant, who took the five talents and made it ten? Verse 21 says, “The master was full of praise. (He said) ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’” (Draw a smiley face over the first servant.) He says the same thing to the servant who had two talents and earned two more in verse

23. “The master said, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’” (Draw a smiley face over the second servant.) What does the master say to the third servant in verses 26 and 27? (Have a student read.) “But the master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy servant! If you knew I harvested crops I didn’t plant and gathered crops I didn’t cultivate, why didn’t you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.’” (Draw a frowny face over the third servant.)

Clearly, the master was not happy with this servant. Let’s look at what the servant had said to the master in verses 24-25. “Master, I knew you were a harsh man, harvesting crops you didn’t plant and gathering crops you didn’t cultivate. I was afraid I would lose your money, so I hid it in the earth. Look, here is your money back.” The master has a right to be angry with this servant. He had expected the servant to take good care of the talent entrusted to him, but instead the servant was lazy and just buried it, and then made excuses for not doing better. Like the master said, he could have easily put the money in the bank and at least gained a little interest, a little extra money on top of it. It probably would have been easier to go to the bank than to dig a hole, anyway. So how did the master punish this lazy servant? It tells us in Matthew 25:28-30. “Then he ordered, ‘Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one with the ten bags of silver. To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away. Now throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’” The useless servant was thrown out, and the small amount he was supposed to be responsible for was given to the servant who had ten talents.

Now that we fully understand the parable, let’s think about what it means for our lives. Who is the master? (Allow students to answer.) That’s right, the master in the story represents God. (Write “God” above the master on the board.) What about the servants, who are they? (Allow students to answer.) The servants represent us, people. (Write “us” over the servants.) So now these bags of silver, these talents, what do those represent? (Allow students to answer.) The talents are talents. They are the things that we can do well. (Write “talents/abilities” under the bags of silver on the board.)

Does everyone in this room have the same talents? (Let students answer, and spend a few minutes talking about the different talents they shared in the

game. “Timmy had some really funny jokes, and Alice made a great free throw...” God has given us all different talents, but one thing is for sure. All of these talents that God has given us are meant to be used to glorify him. Let’s have a sword drill to show us that. Take all fingers and bookmarks out of your Bible and hold it above your head. When I say go, look up Romans 12:6-8. Go! (Read, or have a student read, Romans 12:6-8.) “In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. ⁷ If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. ⁸ If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.”

Think to yourself. What are some things you do really well? Do you understand that God is the one who makes it possible for you to do those things? I am a teacher because God gives me the ability to study the Bible and present it in a way that makes sense to kids. Without God, there is no way I could ever be a teacher. Everyone is good at something, and in the parable of the talents, we learn that we are supposed to use our talents to glorify God. What happens when we use our talents well, according to this parable? (Allow students to answer.) When we use our talents well, we get better and better at them, and we get even more talents! For example, in being a faithful teacher, I have gained the talent of using a computer to prepare my lessons. Now I know how to use my computer talents for other things, too. When we use our talents to glorify God, he rewards us. What happens if we don’t use our talents, if we choose to be lazy or self-serving? Today’s story teaches us that God will take away those talents and punish us. Last week we learned that people who say they love God but don’t obey him, don’t really love God. Our talents are the same. If we aren’t using our talents to glorify God, we probably don’t really love him. When we love God, we will use the abilities he has given us to serve him.

Now here’s something important to remember. Just because you are young, it does not mean you don’t have talents to share with the world right now. ¹ Timothy 4:12 says, “Don’t let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.” You, even as a kid, can be an example to every citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven when you serve God by doing things you are good at. Remember Colossians 3:23, where it says, “Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.” Whatever talent you have, it is from God and for God. Let’s think of

some of our talents and work out how we can use them to serve the Lord. (In the last few minutes before beginning the craft, make a list on the board of the talents the kids mention, and how that talent is a service to the Lord. For example, telling jokes brightens people's moods and makes them laugh, playing basketball takes practice and diligence and teamwork, and drawing can be used to draw pictures that teach about the Bible.)

End in prayer.

Craft: Mini Book

Every week, students will make a mini book that retells the parable in very basic terms. This seventh mini book in their library reminds the kids use their God-given talents to glorify God. To begin, demonstrate how to fold the book. Fold along the solid lines. Start by folding the long side to the long side. Crease well. Keep it folded, then fold in half, crease well, and fold in half again, creasing well. Now unfold it all the way and fold it in half short side to short side, so the dotted line in the center is folded in half. Cut along this dotted line. Do not overcut! Now unfold the paper and fold it in half again, this time long side to long side. Now for the tricky part. Pinch both short ends of the paper, with the crease facing up. Bring your hands together, causing the cut in the middle of the paper to open up. You should have a plus sign now. The last step is to press all the pages down so the cover is on top. Mush the pages down and crease all the folds. You may need to use a marker or pencil for these creases, as they are all now stacked up on each other. Now that you have a little book, have the kids write their name on the cover. Read each page and have the children illustrate it accordingly.

The master came back and told the first and second servants, "well done!" But the third servant he kicked out. The third servant tried to make excuses for not doing anything with his talent, but the master did not listen.

God is like the master in the story. He gives his servants, us, different kinds of talents to use to serve him. The Kingdom of Heaven is a place where everyone uses their abilities to glorify God. God rewards us when we serve him in our own special ways, and punishes us when we refuse to use the gifts he has given us to glorify him.

The first servant invested the five bags of money and made five more bags. The second servant also worked with the money and made two more bags. But the third servant was lazy. He just buried the one bag of silver. He didn't even bother to put it in the bank!

Matthew 25:14-30.

"Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone. 15 He gave five bags of silver to one, two bags of silver to another, and one bag of silver to the last—dividing it in proportion to their abilities. He then left on his trip.

16 "The servant who received the five bags of silver began to invest the money and earned five more. 17 The servant with two bags of silver also went to work and earned two more. 18 But the servant who received the one bag of silver dug a hole in the ground and hid the master's money. 19 "After a long time their master returned from his trip and called them to give an account of how they had used his money. 20 The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came forward with five more and said, 'Master, you gave me five bags of silver to invest, and I have earned five more.' 21 "The master was full of praise. 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'

There once was a man who went on a trip and left his three servants in charge of his money. To the first servant he gave five bags of silver. To the second servant he gave two bags of silver and to the third servant he gave one bag of silver. These bags of silver were also called talents.

22 "The servant who had received the two bags of silver came forward and said, 'Master, you gave me two bags of silver to invest, and I have earned two more.' 23 "The master said, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'

24 "Then the servant with the one bag of silver came and said, 'Master, I knew you were a harsh man, harvesting crops you didn't plant and gathering crops you didn't cultivate. 25 I was afraid I would lose your money, so I hid it in the earth. Look, here is your money back.' 26 "But the master replied, 'You wicked and lazy servant! If you knew I harvested crops I didn't plant and gathered crops I didn't cultivate, 27 why didn't you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.' 28 "Then he ordered, 'Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one with the ten bags of silver. 29 To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away. 30 Now throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

God rewards when we use the talents he gives us for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven and punishes us when we don't use them.

Story Time with Jesus

Lesson 8

The Parable of The Talents

Name: _____

Parable of the Talents Word Search

S V A L U A B L E E O P A W A
F E O W N L D J L T M A H J F
D Z I O K E A U S A O R U N Q
Z O L T I M F I S R R A S N A
V Z U R I H A E C B E B T T A
U M U B T L R S T E F L N W Z
E B S I L V I A T L P E E C L
L H A N A E K B R E I S L A F
J F L N R E D T A C R K A N A
Y H T R O W T S U R T A T E B

abilities

buried

celebrate

doubled

faithful

master

more

parable

servant

special

take

talents

trustworthy

valuable



