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## “Is this How You Farm?”

### Children’s Sunday School Lesson on the Parable of the Wheat and Tares

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Is This Really How you Farm?

An interesting thing about the parables that Jesus told is that, often, the people in His stories did not act according to expectation. In the story of the wheat and the tares, it seems a bit odd that a farmer would forego pulling up weeds immediately. Shouldn’t things that don’t belong get eradicated immediately? The farmer waits, because God waits. The Lord does not wish to eliminate the enemy instantly, but He wants all men to come to know Him. What does this mean for us? Our role is not to judge or push aside, but to love, serve, and pray for those with whom we may argue.

**Lesson focus:** The farming parable here teaches us that there will be a day of judgment for those who are enemies of God’s kingdom, and that some people will be punished for rejecting Christ. However, we are not the ones to do the judging. This lesson focuses on seeing others as loved by God, and on loving and praying for all people to know and accept Him. We do not and cannot know what is inside the hearts of others, but God does, so we leave it to Him. Meanwhile, we give thanks that we can be adopted into God’s family through Jesus Christ.

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43

**Target Audience:** Kindergarten-6<sup>th</sup> grade (or whoever you might have around!)

**Materials Needed:** Construction paper, decorative materials, toothpicks, paper plates, glue and/or tape, small containers, trail mix ingredients or flower and oats, crayons/markers, scissors, string or yarn, Bible (all optional, depending which activities you choose to use—except for the Bible, you need that for sure).



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# Lesson Introduction Activities

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**Lesson Opening:** The Bible is full of metaphors involving planting or agriculture. As such, there are many coinciding crafts or openers that focus on seeds, plants, or even weeds. For this lesson, we will look at some sorting and discerning ideas. As well.

Here are some activities to get kids thinking...(select the best ones for your audience and age group):

- Sort it out: try a challenging sorting activity to discuss the element of discernment and separation. Place two similar items in a container, and invite students to organize them. The items and method of sorting may vary according to audience: for instance, place beads in dry noodles and have kids pick them out, for something a bit easier. For more of a challenge, put toothpicks with dry rice, and have children try to pluck out with a clothespin! For an added adventure (with more people), do this as a relay race.
- What is wheat, anyway? Identify products that contain or come from wheat.
- Take a nature walk. Go outside and look for flowers and plant parts. Identify weeds, if seen, and discuss the differences between flowers and weeds. Is it always easy to tell?
- Gardening: do you have a garden or plant? This is a great opportunity to discuss the different things that might grow, or how you can grow plants in a garden. Identify some weeds and flowering plants.
- Learn a new song, such as “Inch by Inch” or “Grow, Grow, Grow” to discuss planting and growth principles.

Explain that today you will be discussing one of the parables, or stories, that Jesus told. It is another story that not everyone understood right away, so we will look at how it was explained. We might still have a difficult time interpreting the parable, but we will discuss what it means for us.

**Ask:** Are weeds good for plants? What do we normally do when there are weeds in a garden?



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# Sunday School Lesson (Matthew 13:24-30)

## The Parable of the Wheat and Tares

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**Bible Lesson:** As always, how you choose to experience the story will vary according to the ages and abilities of your children (and how many are participating). For this lesson, Take a look at the parable, and discuss what it means.

Feel free to review the story with video clips, puppet show reenactments, props, children's Bibles, or whatever method works best for you to communicate the story.

*He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, <sup>25</sup> but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds<sup>[c]</sup> among the wheat and went away. <sup>26</sup> So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. <sup>27</sup> And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?' <sup>28</sup> He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' <sup>29</sup> But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. <sup>30</sup> Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, "Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn."'"*

*-Matthew 13:24-30*

Remind children that Jesus often used farming analogies to explain things to people, because a lot of people in His time and place worked with farming. For older students, have them guess what this story might mean.

**Ask:** What might this mean? It seems a little strange, doesn't it? Shouldn't we get rid of weeds in a garden, to help the other things grow?

Explain that we sometimes think we should separate ourselves as Christians. In a way, this is somewhat true. We want to live as people of God, called to be set apart from the world. At the same time, though, sometimes we think that this means we should judge people who are different from us, or that we are the ones who determine who is right or wrong in life, and who might be in and out of God's family.



Maybe people come to church, and we don't think they belong there. Maybe we want to cast aside those who are different from us. That's not our job! We cannot know what people are like on the inside.

This parable might seem strange, because normally you would think that weeds should be pulled up immediately. The man in this story told the workers to wait, and let him decide which plants should be kept and which tossed aside. This might seem a little confusing. The disciples thought so, too!

*Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." <sup>37</sup> He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, <sup>39</sup> and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. <sup>40</sup> Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. <sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, <sup>42</sup> and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. <sup>43</sup> Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. -Matthew 13:36-43*

So what is going on here? Jesus is a unique farmer. Rather than sifting through plants and weeds right away, He tells the workers to wait. God is waiting. God's desire is not to bring us to harm, but to bring everyone into His kingdom. Some people will reject His good news, sadly. He does not force His love on us. But He will ultimately judge. God will decide the state of men's hearts. We might think we know who is right or wrong, good or evil. Only God can truly determine that. Our job is to pray for those who are reluctant to know Him.

**Ask:** Why would Jesus be explaining things in a confusing way? Are there ever things in our lives that we don't understand right away? Sometimes we need help from others or from the Bible, when we are trying to understand things. Jesus explained His parables, and He is there to help us when we need understanding.

In a way, we are all "weeds." We are all sinful, and only saved by the grace of God. Because of the work of Jesus, we are forgiven and made new. He can turn weeds into flowers! We are grateful for the blessing of forgiveness. And because we know that God has forgiven us, undeserving as we are, we want to have mercy on others.



We might think we know better than other people, or that we can judge who should be in or out of the Kingdom of Heaven. It's important to realize that God will make those decisions. We can love one another, and pray for those who have not yet accepted the Gospel.

**Ask:** Do you know someone who needs prayer? Do you think you need to pray for a more accepting heart?

**Close** with a prayer thanking God for His wisdom and love. Ask for help in loving others without judgment, and recognize His control in our lives.

**Crafts:** "Sewing Wheat Around Weeds Plate"; "Mixed together Jar"; "Memory Game"

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## More Sunday School Lesson Activities

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- Have kids make a list of "weeds": people in life that seem frustrating or unlove-able. Pray specifically for them on a regular basis.
- Unlike the parable, weeds do need pulled for healthy yards and gardens. If you don't have one at home, find a place that you can weed for a kind act of service.
- God wants all to know Him...write a letter to an overseas missionary and thank them for their work in spreading the Gospel.



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# “Be Good Soil”

## Craft Ideas for the Parable of the Wheat and Weeds

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The Parable of the wheat and the weeds might seem like an admonition to get rid of the “bad seed” or unsavory characters...however, the real message behind the metaphor is one that reminds us to let God be the judge of men’s hearts. These simple crafts seek to remind students of the story itself, as well as the moral it relates.

### Bible Verses or Craft Captions to Consider...

*But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, “Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.”’” -Matthew 13:29-30*

*God judges hearts!*

*All have sinned...let the Lord determine who’s who.*

*Weeds among the wheat*

*The farmer will separate...we are not to judge!*

*All mixed together...all made with purpose!*

### More teaching ideas for this parable

- See all our ministry ideas based on the [Parable of the Wheat and the tares](#)
- Watch our [craft example video](#) or view our [Wheat and Tares playlist](#)





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# Craft one: “Sewing Weeds Plate”

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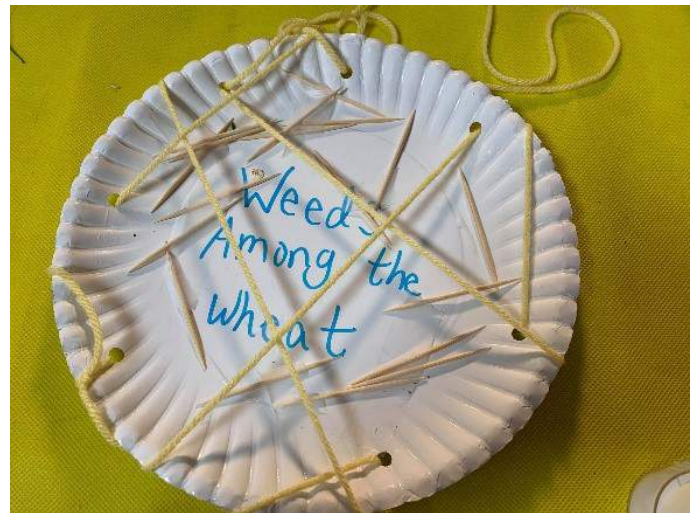
## You will need:

- Paper plates
- Markers, stickers, or other decorating materials
- Scissors
- Glue, tape or staples
- Hole punch
- Yarn/string
- Toothpicks



## Procedure:

1. Use markers to decorate the paper plate, adding a written or glued on verse/caption.
2. Use a hole punch to punch holes around the plate, roughly an inch or two apart.
3. Use glue and/or tape to attach the toothpick “weeds” to the plate.
4. String the yarn in and out of the holes, creating “wheat” to compete with the “weeds” already on the plate. Leave a bit of string to hang up, if desired.



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# Craft Two: “Inside the Heart Memory Game”

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## You will need:

- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Tape and/or glue
- Extra decorations (stickers, etc.)
- Caption or verse
- Markers or crayons



## Procedure:

1. Cut small hearts out of one piece of construction paper.
2. On a larger paper or cardstock, add decorations, captions, and verses.
3. Glue or tape the hearts onto the larger paper in rows.
4. Place a sticker or drawn image underneath each paper heart. There should be two matches for each image.



5. To play the game, find a partner and take turns looking underneath the hearts to find matching elements. Have fun!





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# Craft Three: “Mixed-up Jar”

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## You will need:

- Small jar or container
- Flour, oats, glitter, and other similar but unique ingredients; if desired, create a “recipe” to make these usable, or make a trail mix of sorts with naturally edible elements.
- Extra decorations (stickers, etc.)
- Caption or verse
- Markers (Sharpies recommended)
- String, pipe cleaner, or ribbon.



## Procedure:

1. Select the vessel for your mix, as well as the type of mix you’d like to make.
2. Using permanent markers, write and/or draw on the jar, and/or add stickers and a caption.
3. Layer the ingredients in the jar, whether a trail mix, recipe, or random elements.
4. Add a ribbon or string to the outside of the jar.
5. If needed, attach a recipe or ingredient list.





These craft ideas were prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#), who serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO.

She has shared her teaching gifts through *Ministry-To-Children* since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.

Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May

2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader.


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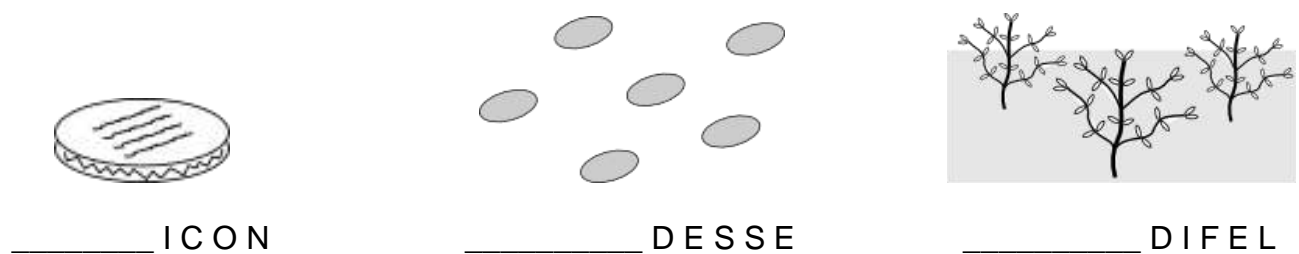


# Learn About Parables

Parables are stories told by Jesus. In these stories he used everyday objects to help us understand more about God.

## Everyday Things

Unscramble the names of some things Jesus talked about in his parables.



Word List: COIN, FIELD, SEEDS, SHEEP, TREE

## Lost Things

Luke 15 contains three stories about lost things. Read each verse, and find out what was lost and who was looking for it.

**Luke 15:6** (for the whole story read Luke 15:4-7)

Lost Thing \_\_\_\_\_ Person Looking \_\_\_\_\_

**Luke 15:9** (for the whole story read Luke 15:8-10)

Lost Thing \_\_\_\_\_ Person Looking \_\_\_\_\_

**Luke 15:20** (for the whole story read Luke 15:11-24)

Lost Thing \_\_\_\_\_ Person Looking \_\_\_\_\_

In each story the lost thing represents a person who doesn't know God, and the person looking represents God. God wants to find every person who doesn't know him and bring all of them to himself.

Word List: coin, father, man (or shepherd), sheep, son, woman

## The Good Samaritan

When Jesus said, "Love your neighbor as yourself," a man asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus told a story. In this parable a man who had a problem was helped by a Samaritan, a man he thought was his enemy.

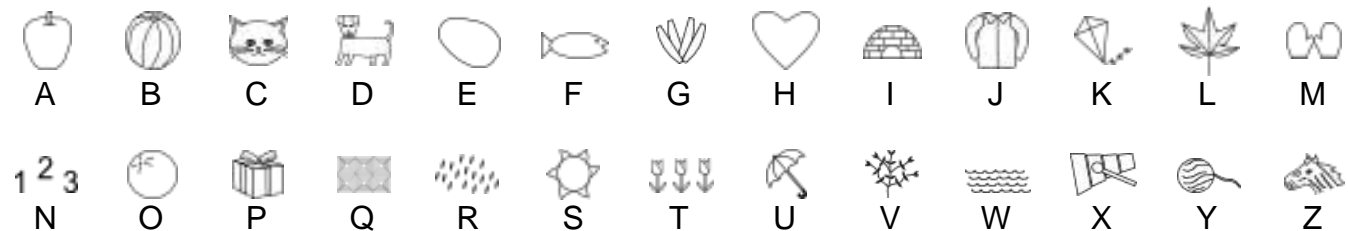
Read each verse, and number the events of the story in the right order.

- |          |            |       |  |
|----------|------------|-------|--|
| <b>1</b> | Luke 10:30 | _____ | A Samaritan was sorry for the man and stopped to help.                   |
| <b>2</b> | Luke 10:31 | _____ | A man was robbed, beaten up, and left by the side of the road.           |
| <b>3</b> | Luke 10:32 | _____ | He bandaged the man and put him on his own donkey.                       |
| <b>4</b> | Luke 10:33 | _____ | A priest (temple leader) passed by the man and didn't stop to help.      |
| <b>5</b> | Luke 10:34 | _____ | He took the man to an inn (hotel) and left money to take care of him.    |
| <b>6</b> | Luke 10:35 | _____ | A Levite (temple helper) stopped to look at the man but didn't help him. |

## The Meaning of the Story



Code:



As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.” -Matthew 13:23 ESV

