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# “God Gives Second Chances”

## Children’s Sermon on the Parable of the Tenants

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**Main Objective:** This parable can be a tricky one to teach. After all, the wicked vineyard tenants of the story beat and kill the messengers...the story does not quite end on a high note, with the kingdom being taken away and given to others. So what’s in it for us, and how do we communicate it to kids? The goal is to emphasize that God is a God of love, who cares for us enough to offer second chances when things go wrong. God demonstrates mercy through Christ, and He gives the job of building the kingdom to those who will do so responsibly...people like us!

**Law/Gospel Theme:** God is not just angrily standing by, waiting for a chance to punish us for making mistakes. He loves us so much that He offers chance after chance for us to come to Him. All we have to do is believe and accept His Son, who died for our sake. We demonstrate appreciation for God’s mercy by living as His people and growing His church.

**Optional Materials:** Grapes, raisins (optional alternate: ball and something to catch in)

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 21:33-46

### More Teaching Help on the Parable of the Tenants

- Watch the [video demonstration of this Children’s Sermon](#) on our [YouTube page](#)
- Compare our full [Sunday School Lesson on Matthew 21:33-46](#)
- Compare an alternate [kid’s Bible lesson on this same passage](#)
- Watch our [“cornerstone” craft video demonstration](#) on our [YouTube channel](#)



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# Children's Sermon (Matthew 21:33-46)

## The Parable of the Tenants

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*Greet children, with one of two demonstrations. One could be a few small balls, which you attempt to catch all at once, and need help and another person to complete. The other example features grapes, which is what will be described here.*

Hello, children of God! What do I have here? *(Hold up a cluster of grapes)*

That's right, these are grapes. Now, I have a challenge for you here, or really a challenge for myself. Do you think that I could fit twenty of these grapes in the palm of my hand? Let's try it! *(Attempt to count out 20 grapes, stopping when they begin to spill out of your one outstretched hand. If you happen to have a particularly large hand, or extra small grapes, the number may need adjusting).*

Rats! They fell... Well, would you give me a second chance? Maybe if I tried hard to angle my hand differently, I could get it to work. Let's do it again. *(Make another attempt, spilling the grapes once again).* Oh, man... I'll tell you what. I'm going to do this one more time, only this time... *(Pull out raisins)* I'll do it with these! Do you think I'll be successful with raisins? Let's see. *(Count 20 raisins, which should be easy to do.)*

It worked! It was much easier to hold those grapes when they were raisins. Thank you for giving me a second chance. You know, raisins, when you think about it, are almost like grapes that got a second chance. Not all grapes are perfect, after all. But there are some grapes that get dried out, and wind up becoming raisins, which are still great for nutrition and eating. Some grapes also get smashed up and become juice. They get a second chance at being something great (or "grape"! ). Well, today's Gospel lesson has to do with a place that grew grapes, and it also has to do with second chances...

In the story, there was a man who owned a vineyard, which is where grapes are produced. This man hired some renters to take care of his land and pay for it. However, when the rent was due, and the man sent some people to collect the money, the renters decided not to listen. Instead, they beat up the messenger. Another messenger they threw rocks at, and another one they even killed! They were certainly not respecting the land owner. You would think he might



have gotten angry or given up on them, but he gave the renters another chance. Finally, he decided he would send his son to collect the rent. Surely the workers would listen to his son, right? Nope. Instead, they thought maybe they could have the land for good if they got rid of that guy. So they killed him, too! They killed the son to try to keep the land. The owner took the vineyard away from those wicked men, and instead found someone who would take care of it.

Why would Jesus tell a story like this? Well, parables always have a lesson. In this lesson, Jesus was telling the church rulers and teachers that they were missing something, or someONE rather. God is patient, and gives us a lot of second chances. God tried to help His people. He sent prophets to warn them, but a lot of people ignored and hurt the prophets. Finally, God sent His son, and the church leaders still didn't listen. They missed the most important message possible.

Jesus was almost predicting His own death here by describing the killing of the vineyard owner's son. He knew that He would have to die. But He also said that "the stone the builders rejected will become the cornerstone." A cornerstone is a foundational piece of a building. Jesus was explaining that by His own death, He would found and build the church. The church would no longer just be for people who always seemed to say or do the right things and follow rules. The church would be built by other people, like the disciples...and US! We can rejoice in the fact that God gives us second chances, and that He has given Jesus as the greatest second chance. We can also be glad that He lets us be part of His plan to build the church and make disciples. Don't reject the good news of Jesus. Believe it and embrace it as a precious treasure! Why don't we thank God for that right now?

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## Children's Prayer Moment

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(Have kids repeat each line)

Dear God,

Thank you for sending your son Jesus  
Thank you for giving us second chances  
Even when we keep making mistakes  
Help us to show love to one another

Thank you for your love

We love you, God!

In Jesus name, Amen!



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# Bible Verses/story to Reference:

## Matthew 21:33-46

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*“Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. <sup>34</sup> When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants<sup>[c]</sup> to the tenants to get his fruit. <sup>35</sup> And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. <sup>36</sup> Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. <sup>37</sup> Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ <sup>38</sup> But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ <sup>39</sup> And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. <sup>40</sup> When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” <sup>41</sup> They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”*

<sup>42</sup> Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:

*“The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone;<sup>[d]</sup>  
this was the Lord's doing,  
and it is marvelous in our eyes’?*

<sup>43</sup> Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. <sup>44</sup> And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”<sup>[e]</sup>

<sup>45</sup> When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. <sup>46</sup> And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

-Matthew 21:33-46





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