

THE HIDDEN TREASURE

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: MATTHEW 13:31-46

*Christ, our treasure, is worth everything we have.***The STORY**

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

The parables of the mustard seed and the yeast – Jesus was teaching parable after parable. In the parable of the mustard seed and the yeast, we have stories of things that are very small that multiply and grow to make something much larger. The kingdom of God was introduced to men by Jesus. He called 12 disciples, who in turn spread the message of the kingdom across the land. Others like the apostle Paul were called to proclaim the gospel, and it spread mightily. Now we also are called to share the gospel to those who have not heard it. We are a part of that mustard tree growing to reach people from every tribe, language, and nation.

The parable of the hidden treasure – Imagine if you found treasure in a field. You couldn't take the treasure because it belonged to the owner of the field. Therefore you sell everything you have to buy the field so you can become the owner of the treasure. If you knew that the treasure was worth well more than you had, you would not mind exchanging everything you had to purchase it.

The parable of the pearl - Directly following the parable of the hidden treasure is the parable of the pearl of great value. This time we see that the man in the parable was looking for valuable pearls. When he found this one pearl of great value, he was so caught up with that pearl that he sold everything he had so he could buy the pearl. Many people are searching for true happiness. It is only in laying hold of Jesus and the forgiveness of sins that we will know lasting, eternal joy. Receiving this gift of eternal joy is certainly worth forsaking all the temporary joys that sin uses to lure us into bondage and eternal doom.

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WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

Jesus quoted Psalm 78:2 in Matthew 13:35 to explain why He was speaking in parables. These parables reveal the secrets of the gospel that lay hidden since the creation of the world. The treasure in the field and the pearl of great price have great value because of the gospel. The gospel is an invaluable treasure because it makes a way for us to become children of God and enter His kingdom.

ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

Bible Passage: Amos 9:11-15

Connecting the passage to Christ:

Through the prophet Amos, God declared that a day would come when he would repair David's fallen tent. This would be a unique restoration. All the nations will bear his name, and they will never be uprooted again. This restoration of Israel and the blessing of all nations is a prophetic vision of the salvation that comes to all nations through Jesus and His life, death, and resurrection. Jesus is a king in the line of David. Jesus restored David's throne forever. In Acts 15 the apostle James quoted this passage to explain why the Gentiles were receiving the gospel (see Acts 15:13-18).

Questions for reflection:

- How is Amos' prophecy like God's promise to Abraham? (God promised to bless all nations through Abraham. Through Amos, God repeats that all nations will bear His name. The theme of God blessing all nations is consistent throughout the whole Bible.)
- Do we bear God's name? (One way we bear God's name is that we call ourselves Christians. More importantly, we are now children in God's family, and the name "Christian" properly describes our position as a part of God's heavenly family.)

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SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

OF GREATER WORTH THAN GOLD

Supplies:

Choose ten objects with different values. Here are a few suggestions in order of value from least to greatest: rock, penny, stick of gum, quarter, candy bar, gold dollar coin (modern), pack of sports cards, crystal glass, gold earring, gold ring with a precious stone

Randomly bring out your objects one at a time and ask the class to tell you what they are worth and to direct you to place them on the table in the order of their worth. Some objects will be easy but others will be more difficult to place. When they have placed them in order, let the class know if they have correctly ordered the items. If not, tell them where they went wrong. Then ask them to list objects which would be worth more. See how far they get before someone mentions Jesus. If no one mentions Christ, ask them to name something money cannot buy that is worth more than all the treasure in the world. The only answer of course is our Lord. Then read the passage assigned and draw them out about why Jesus is our greatest treasure.

STRING OF PEARLS

Supplies:

String of fake pearls

Purchase an inexpensive string of fake pearls and give one to each member of your class to remind them that Jesus is the pearl of great price.



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THE EFFECTS OF THE KINGDOM

Supplies:

two batches of dough,
one with yeast and one
without

Make two batches of dough. Make the first one without yeast and wrap it in wax paper and then place it in a sealed container. (Remember, even if a little yeast gets in it will multiply, so make this batch first.)

Make a second batch with yeast and then refrigerate. Take out the batch with yeast and allow it to rise before class in a warm place.

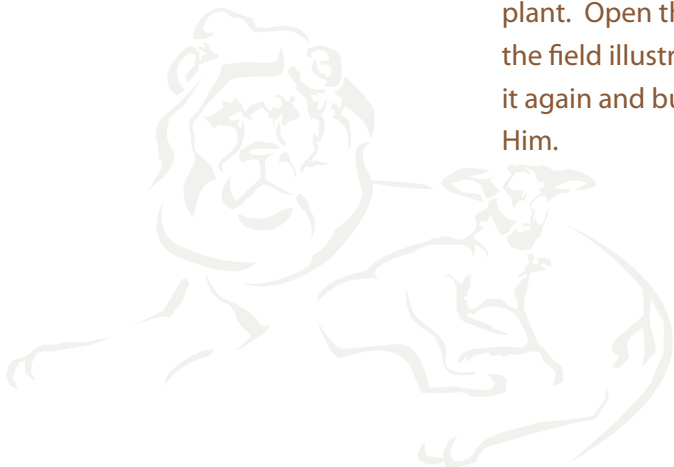
Keep the batch without yeast hidden for drama. Tell the class what you did. Show them the bread without yeast and allow them to come up and touch it. Then show them the difference in the batch with the yeast. They will be amazed that it is the same amount of dough. Use this as an illustration to talk about God's advancing kingdom. You may want to bring in some testimonies of how people are still being reached with the Gospel today. You can use testimonies from your church locally and from mission initiatives your church supports abroad. Read the parable of the yeast and mustard seed and take time to thank God that His kingdom is still advancing.

HIDDEN TREASURE

Supplies:

Ten golden dollar coins
or golden foil covered
chocolate coins, small
sack or bandanna

Prior to class pick up ten golden dollar coins at a local bank or even use fake child's money or foil covered chocolate coins. Place the coins in a pouch or bandanna and then hide them in an artificial plant (You can substitute a desk or other object for the plant) in your class. When you talk about the treasure hidden in the field pretend to think of an illustration. Tell the class: "Let's say I knew there was a treasure in that plastic plant. The plastic plant itself is not worth much but if it had a treasure hidden in it, then I would look to buy it." Walk over to the plan and repeat the point only this time find the treasure in the plant. Open the pouch and pour out the golden coins. Then move on back to the field illustration. If you found a priceless treasure in a field you would bury it again and buy the field. Jesus is our treasure, worth giving up everything for Him.



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THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

Supplies:

- a pack of six ping pong balls
- a gold dollar coin (a folded up dollar bill will do)
- 6 – 8 snack size chocolate bars

Carefully cut a slot in one ping pong ball and insert a dollar coin and tape it securely with clear tape. Hide the balls in your classroom. Read the parable of the pearl of great price and then tell the class that there are pearls (ping pong balls) hidden in the classroom and that you are going to pick six volunteers to find them. (Choose volunteers from among those who can best recite this month's scripture memory verse.) Tell the treasure hunters that you will exchange any ping pong ball for a chocolate candy. Allow only one ping pong ball per person. Then let them know that there is one very special ping pong ball that has a greater value.

Release them to hunt for the balls and watch their excitement looking for the more valuable pearl.

Read the parable and then ask the following questions:

- How was this exercise like the parable? (The treasure hunters really wanted to find the pearl with the greater value.)
- What did you want more, the pearl of great value or the others? (The pearl of great value.)
- What made you want the ping pong ball with the greater value? (We knew that it was more valuable so we wanted it more.)
- Who is the pearl of great price represented in the parable? (Jesus is the pearl of great price.)
- What can this parable and our exercise teach us about our love for God compared to the other things in the world? (We should love and seek after God more than anything else in the world.)



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PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

AN ACTIVITY

Supplies:
pencil and paper

Draw a picture of one of the two treasure parables.

FOR THE OLDER GRADES

REVIEW THE PARABLE OF THE WEEDS IN MATTHEW 13:24-29

Without looking at the interpretation in Matthew 13:36-43, see how close the children can get to the correct interpretation based on what they already have been taught. Then ask them to apply the parable to their lives and how it should challenge them.

The sobering reality is that the wheat is allowed to grow up with the weeds. There are believers and unbelievers in the church at the same time. It won't be until judgment day that those who have been faking their Christianity will be exposed.

Challenge the class to not assume they are followers of Christ if the fruit of being a believer is not present in their lives. Remind them of the lesson from a few weeks ago about the tree and its fruit.



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A LITTLE BIT MORE

Yeast or leaven - Yeast is actually a living creature that feeds off the sugars in bread dough. The little yeast organisms give off a gas when they eat which is captured in the bread dough. This causes the dough to rise and make the holes and pockets that you see when you slice a piece of bread. A little bit of yeast will work through a whole batch of dough. A small portion of the dough was often saved as a starter for the next day's bread. When added to a new batch of flour the yeast would spread through the entire batch. Just as yeast grows and spreads in a lump of dough, so did Jesus say the kingdom of God would spread, touching the whole world.

