

Rotation 6, 2007 - 2008
Jesus' Kingdom Parables
4 weeks – February 3, 10, 17, 24, 2008

Yearly Theme: Faith in Christ for a New Day

Jesus began his ministry by announcing the arrival of a New Day. Jesus proclaimed, "Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near." What is this Kingdom of Heaven that Jesus preached? Jesus taught the crowds of people who flocked to him for healing, often using parables. These were short stories that carried a spiritual meaning, stories that used familiar things to understand difficult things, stories that packed a punch and took some thought to interpret. Jesus taught the parable of the Sower - God's Kingdom can find or lose a home in your heart! Jesus taught the parable of the workers in the vineyard - God's Kingdom is filled with God's extravagantly generous love! Jesus taught the parable of the 10 Bridesmaids - God's Kingdom comes when we least expect it, so be ready! Jesus taught the parable of the Wedding Feast – God's Kingdom is open to all who want to come!

Scripture References:

- Parable of the Sower – Matthew 13: 1 - 24 (Room 7)
- Parable of the Mustard Seed and Yeast – Matthew 13: 31 – 33 (Room 4)
- Parable of the Good Boss – Matthew 20: 1 -16 (Gym)
- Parable of the 10 Bridesmaids – Matthew 25: 1 – 13 (Video)
- Parable of the Great Feast – Luke 14: 15 - 24 (Room 6)

Memory Verse: Jesus began to preach, "Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near." Matthew 4:17

Learning Goals: The children will learn:

1. Jesus was a master teacher who often used parables to teach people.
2. Parables are short stories about familiar everyday things, and teach an often surprising spiritual lesson.
3. Parables are not always easy to understand because Jesus wants people to think carefully about his words.
4. The Kingdom of Heaven, or God's Kingly reign, is present whenever God's will is done. Sometimes we see the Kingdom of Heaven around us, and other times we do not.
5. The Kingdom of Heaven is the presence of God - filled with God's great love, and is open to all, but it can find or lose a home in people's hearts.
6. The Kingdom of Heaven changes everything completely and grows from small beginnings into something huge!
7. No one knows when Jesus will return to earth, bringing the Kingdom of Heaven to earth. People must always be prepared so they are not left out!

Life Application:

1. I pray that Jesus will open my heart to understand what he wants to teach me through his parables.
2. Jesus wants me to turn around (repent) from my self-centered ways and follow him, because Jesus is bringing God's Kingdom!
3. I see God's Kingdom today when people live in love and obedience to God and service to others. But I know that God's Kingdom does not exist where there is hatred and violence and injustice.
4. Thank you Jesus for changing my heart and my life completely!
5. I pray that I will be ready for Jesus when he comes.
6. I pray "thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven," and may your will be done in my life!

Rotation Overview:

Activity	Room	Description	Teacher 8:45/10:15
Craft	Room 7	View video of Jesus telling parable of Sower, demonstrate, and create seed art	Chris Hobrough / Carrie Berg
Video	Youth Room	View NEST video "The Kingdom of Heaven" and discuss parable of 10 Bridesmaids	/ Bob & Jackie Pavlak
Movement	Gym	Enact parable of Workers in the Vineyard and discuss fairness of God's love	Sandi & Gary Nelson / Kris Bowditch
Baking and Drawing	Room 4	Hear parable of Mustard Seed and Yeast, learn about ELCA world hunger drive, and make cross bread	Barb Steffenson / Diane Erickson and Gale Rick
Drama and Food	Room 6	Enact parable of Wedding Feast, learn about Hunger, and make/eat food packed and sent by Feed My Starving Children	Doris Linnerooth / Dennis & Matisse Murray

Background:

During the three years of Jesus' ministry he walked around the countryside preaching, teaching, and healing. One of the teaching methods Jesus used was the telling of parables, often defined for children as "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning." Jesus used many parables to teach about the Kingdom of Heaven – Kingdom Parables. We call God's Kingdom the Kingdom of Heaven because God's will is done perfectly in heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven came to earth when Jesus lived here in perfect love and obedience to God. And the Kingdom of Heaven comes to earth wherever people live as God wills. Our relationship to the Kingdom of Heaven is a kind of "now but not yet." At times we can see the Holy Spirit working in and through people so that God's will is done, and God's grace is apparent. But at the same time we know that the earth is "not yet" the Kingdom of God since sin and suffering and death still have power. Someday Jesus will return to earth, create a new heaven and earth, and then the Kingdom of God will fill the earth forever. Every time we pray the Lord's Prayer, we pray that God's kingdom will come to earth, also in our own lives. Jesus began his ministry saying, "Repent," which means turn around "for the Kingdom of Heaven is near." Jesus wants us to turn from following our own selfish desires, to follow Him, to love and trust God and put love in action for other people. Every time that happens, God's Kingdom comes to earth.

What does the Kingdom of Heaven look like? Jesus told many stories to show what the Kingdom of Heaven is like. These stories, called parables, are a powerful teaching tool because they:

- Make truth concrete by talking about familiar things.
- Begin with things one can understand to teach something difficult to understand.
- Catch interest.
- Let someone discover truth for himself.
- Reveal truth to someone who wants to see it and hides truth from someone who doesn't want to see it. Someone must think to understand parables.
- Were originally spoken, so they jarred an immediate reaction in people.
- Contain one main point, and are not to be interpreted with many symbols and meanings.

All of the parables we will study have their beginning in the normal everyday life of people in Jesus' time. When Jesus taught the parable of the sower, he probably looked up and saw a man sowing seed in his field. Both Jesus and the people he taught probably saw Jesus' story unfolding as he spoke. The mustard seed was planted and grown in home herbal gardens, and yeast was worked into bread dough and baked every day in every home. When grapes ripened in September, it was necessary to pick the grapes as quickly as possible before the rainy season began when they would be ruined. Weddings were times of great celebration for an entire village. The approximate date of a wedding was set, but the bridegroom would arrive at any time of the day or night, always preceded by someone who shouted the good news of his arrival. The brides' friends waited to welcome her groom

and usher him, in the glow of their lamps, to the place of the festivities. No one was allowed in the procession without a lamp. And finally, if someone planned a dinner banquet, invitations were given stating the day of the party but not the time. When the food was ready, servants were sent to those who had accepted the invitation. If they refused to come when everything was prepared, it was a great insult!

This everyday way of life was the setting of each of Jesus' parables. But these familiar settings were given a surprise meaning in Jesus' teaching! They often gave a jolt! And they were not always simple; one had to listen and think to understand them. That was Jesus' intention!

All the parables that we will study teach us about the Kingdom of Heaven that Jesus was bringing to earth. The parable of the sower sowing seed on different types of soil teaches us that God's Kingdom can find or lose a home in people's hearts! But one thing is sure – there will be a rich harvest! The mustard seed and yeast both illustrate that God's Kingdom has transforming power! Like the mustard seed, a very small beginning will grow into something very big, with room for many in its spread. Like a tiny bit of yeast that invisibly permeates a large portion of dough and causes it to expand, the Kingdom of God enters a person's heart and transforms it, or changes the world so it is never the same. Like a generous boss, God rewards all who come into his Kingdom with the exact same gift of God's extravagantly generous love! Like the 10 bridesmaids who did not know when the groom would arrive, no one knows when Jesus will return. So, like the 5 wise maidens, people must always be ready so they are not excluded from his Kingdom! And like a great feast set for guests who do not come, the Kingdom of Heaven is offered to everyone who wants to dine with the generous Master!

Although our modern farming, baking, banquet, and wedding traditions are not the same as in Jesus' time, we can learn about them and begin to understand how Jesus' parables were first heard. We see Jesus as a master teacher! He engaged the people around him and made them think. They were challenged. Some did not understand and walked away, some thought him absurd and walked away, but others saw wisdom, truth, and authority in Jesus' teaching, and they followed him. Jesus speaks to us today with these same short stories. Let us pray that we have ears that are open to hear the truth of God's Kingdom, to heed the warnings Jesus gives, and to rejoice in the transforming power of God's Kingdom in our lives and in the world!

Multiple Intelligence Check List

	Verbal / Ling	Logic/ Math	Spatial/ Visual	Bodily/kin	Musical	Interpersl	Intraper sl	Naturalist
Craft	x	x	x	x			x	x
Video	x				x		x	
Movement	x	x	x	x		x		x
Cooking	x	x	x	x		x		x
Drama	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x

Rotation 6, 2007-8: Jesus' Kingdom Parables

Workshop	Feb 3	Feb 10	Feb 17	Feb 24
Room 7 – Craft	2	1	3	5
Youth Room - Video	3	5	4	1
Gym - Movement	4	2	1	3
Room 6 – Drama	5	3	2	4
Room 4 - Cooking	1	4	5	2

Text of the Kingdom Parables **NLT**

Parable of the Sower – Matthew 13: 1 – 9, 18 - 23

1 Later that same day Jesus left the house and sat beside the lake. 2 A large crowd soon gathered around him, so he got into a boat. Then he sat there and taught as the people stood on the shore. 3 He told many stories in the form of parables, such as this one:

“Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seeds. 4 As he scattered them across his field, some seeds fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate them. 5 Other seeds fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. 6 But the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn’t have deep roots, they died. 7 Other seeds fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants. 8 Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted! 9 Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.”

18 “Now listen to the explanation of the parable about the farmer planting seeds: 19 The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message about the Kingdom and don’t understand it. Then the evil one comes and snatches away the seed that was planted in their hearts. 20 The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. 21 But since they don’t have deep roots, they don’t last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God’s word. 22 The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who hear God’s word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life and the lure of wealth, so no fruit is produced. 23 The seed that fell on good soil represents those who truly hear and understand God’s word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!”

Parable of the Mustard Seed and Yeast – Matthew 13: 31 – 33

31 Here is another illustration Jesus used: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed planted in a field. 32 It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of garden plants; it grows into a tree, and birds come and make nests in its branches.”

33 Jesus also used this illustration: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like the yeast a woman used in making bread. Even though she put only a little yeast in three measures of flour, it permeated every part of the dough.”

Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard – Matthew 20: 1 - 16

“For the Kingdom of Heaven is like the landowner who went out early one morning to hire workers for his vineyard. 2 He agreed to pay the normal daily wage^[a] and sent them out to work.

3 “At nine o’clock in the morning he was passing through the marketplace and saw some people standing around doing nothing. 4 So he hired them, telling them he would pay them whatever was right at the end of the day. 5 So they went to work in the vineyard. At noon and again at three o’clock he did the same thing.

6 “At five o’clock that afternoon he was in town again and saw some more people standing around. He asked them, ‘Why haven’t you been working today?’

7 “They replied, ‘Because no one hired us.’

“The landowner told them, ‘Then go out and join the others in my vineyard.’

8 “That evening he told the foreman to call the workers in and pay them, beginning with the last workers first. 9 When those hired at five o’clock were paid, each received a full day’s wage. 10 When those hired first came to get their pay, they assumed they would receive more. But they, too, were paid a day’s wage. 11 When they received their pay, they protested to the owner, 12 ‘Those people worked only one hour, and yet you’ve paid them just as much as you paid us who worked all day in the scorching heat.’

13 “He answered one of them, ‘Friend, I haven’t been unfair! Didn’t you agree to work all day for the usual wage? 14 Take your money and go. I wanted to pay this last worker the same as you. 15 Is it against the law for me to do what I want with my money? Should you be jealous because I am kind to others?’

16 “So those who are last now will be first then, and those who are first will be last.”

Parable of the 10 Bridesmaids – Matthew 25: 1 - 13

“Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 The five who were foolish didn’t take enough olive oil for their lamps, 4 but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil. 5 When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

6 “At midnight they were roused by the shout, ‘Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!’

7 “All the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps. 8 Then the five foolish ones asked the others, ‘Please give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out.’

9 “But the others replied, ‘We don’t have enough for all of us. Go to a shop and buy some for yourselves.’

10 “But while they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came. Then those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked. 11 Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, ‘Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!’

12 “But he called back, ‘Believe me, I don’t know you!’

13 “So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return.”

Parable of the Wedding Feast – Luke 14: 15 - 24

15 Hearing this, a man sitting at the table with Jesus exclaimed, “What a blessing it will be to attend a banquet in the Kingdom of God!”

16 Jesus replied with this story: “A man prepared a great feast and sent out many invitations. 17 When the banquet was ready, he sent his servant to tell the guests, ‘Come, the banquet is ready.’ 18 But they all began making excuses. One said, ‘I have just bought a field and must inspect it. Please excuse me.’ 19 Another said, ‘I have just bought five pairs of oxen, and I want to try them out. Please excuse me.’ 20 Another said, ‘I now have a wife, so I can’t come.’

21 "The servant returned and told his master what they had said. His master was furious and said, 'Go quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and invite the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.' 22 After the servant had done this, he reported, 'There is still room for more.' 23 So his master said, 'Go out into the country lanes and behind the hedges and urge anyone you find to come, so that the house will be full. 24 For none of those I first invited will get even the smallest taste of my banquet.'"