

Unit 25 • Session 1 \* Kingdom Parables

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Matthew 13

**STORY POINT:** Jesus taught about God's kingdom.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Colossians 1:13

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over all He made.

**Describe pictures**

**You will need:** paper; crayons or markers

**What to do:** Invite preschoolers to draw pictures. Ask them to tell you about their pictures.

**SAY •** Two people can look at the same picture and see two different things. Not everyone understood the stories that Jesus taught in our Bible story today either. Jesus used stories about trees and things that people could look at, but they didn't see how it explained God's kingdom.

**TEACH THE BIBLE STORY**

Invite preschoolers to cup their hands around their ears as if listening closely while walking to Bible study.

**Introduce the Bible story**

Place a bookmark at Matthew 13 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY •** Where do we read God's words? In the Bible! We know that all God's words are true. Today's Bible story comes from the Book of Matthew. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

**Watch or tell the Bible story**

If you purchased the app, you may show the video. If you are telling the Bible story, use the story printed below.

**Kingdom Parables**

*Matthew 13*

**One day, Jesus went out and sat by the sea. Many people came to hear Him teach, so Jesus got into a boat and sat down. The people stood on the shore, and Jesus told them *parables*, or stories, to teach them about God's kingdom.**

**Jesus' disciples asked Him, "Why do you tell stories to teach?"**

**Jesus said, "Not everyone will understand what is true about God's kingdom."** In the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah said, "Some people look, but they do not see. They hear, but they do not listen or understand." Through Jesus, Isaiah's words came true. Jesus told the disciples, **"You are blessed because you understand."**

**Then Jesus told a parable: "God's kingdom is like a mustard seed that a man planted in his field. It is the smallest seed, but it grows taller than the garden plants. The seed becomes a tree, and the birds build nests in its branches."**

Then Jesus said, "God's kingdom is like leaven, or yeast, that a woman mixed into flour. The leaven makes the dough rise."

**Jesus told another parable: "God's kingdom is like a treasure buried in a field. A man found the treasure and buried it again. Then he joyfully sold everything he had and bought that field."**

Then Jesus said, "God's kingdom is like a man looking for beautiful pearls. When he found one very valuable pearl, he sold everything he had and bought it."

**When Jesus finished teaching the crowds, He left that place and went to His hometown.**

*Christ Connection: God's kingdom is growing in the world. His kingdom is valuable and worth giving everything for. While we wait for Jesus to come back and set up His kingdom, we obey Him and tell others about King Jesus, who rescues sinners.*

**SAY •** Today, we heard that **Jesus taught about God's kingdom** using *parables*, or stories, to help people understand what the kingdom is like. God's kingdom is growing in the world, like the mustard seed or the yeast. His kingdom is valuable and worth giving everything for, like the buried treasure or the very valuable pearl. While we wait for Jesus to come back and set up His kingdom, we obey Him and tell others about King Jesus, who rescues sinners.

**Practice the key passage**

Place the key passage marker at Colossians 1:13. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Create motions for preschoolers to use as they say the key passage. Use the key passage song video for inspiration. Practice saying the verse with the motions.

**SAY •** Our key passage teaches that when Jesus rescues us, He brings us into God's kingdom. Jesus' parables show what it looks like to live in God's kingdom where Jesus reigns supreme. One day, Jesus will come back and make everything right that sin messed up. While we wait for Jesus to come back and set up His kingdom, we obey Him and tell others about King Jesus, who rescues sinners. Sing the key passage song, "He Has Rescued Us," and the theme song, "Jesus Reigns Forever."

**Learn the big picture question**

**SAY • Jesus taught about God’s kingdom** using stories the people could understand. He said His kingdom grows like a mustard seed and is valuable like a pearl. Even the way that God loves and rules over creation shows us His care! ***How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over all He made.***

## **APPLY THE BIBLE STORY**

### **Praise King Jesus**

Announce the rules of this game regally, as if an ambassador of a king. Explain that when a king wants to send a message to a faraway kingdom, he sends a messenger called an ambassador. Once the people hear the message, they praise the king who sent it. Proclaim that you are an ambassador of King Jesus with many important messages to share! Open your Bible to Colossians 1:13 and read the key passage. When you finish, invite children to cheer, “Praise King Jesus!” Give preschoolers a chance to be ambassadors. Invite each child to stand in front of the group with an open Bible, whisper a short message into the child’s ear for him to say, and lead the children in praising King Jesus after each message.

**SAY • Jesus taught about God’s kingdom.** While we wait for Jesus to come back and set up His kingdom, we obey Him and tell others about King Jesus, who rescues sinners. We are like ambassadors for King Jesus, sharing the good news of His growing kingdom!

### **Proof yeast**

**You will need:** • measuring cup • measuring spoon • thermometer • timer • sugar • water • active dry yeast • marker or tape • paper • marker

**What to do:** Post an allergy alert. Dissolve one teaspoon of sugar into ¼ cup of lukewarm water in a liquid measuring cup. Stir in one package of active dry yeast. Mark the top line of the mixture with a marker or line of tape. Guide children to make observations about the yeast and take notes. Set a timer for ten minutes and then make more observations, noting how the mixture rises and changes.

Repeat as time allows.

**SAY • Jesus taught about God’s kingdom.** He said it is like leaven, or yeast, that a woman mixed into flour. A little bit of leaven makes the dough rise and grow larger. God’s kingdom is growing in the world, too. While we wait for Jesus to come back and set up His kingdom, we obey Him and tell others about King Jesus, who rescues sinners. We act like yeast in helping to make God’s kingdom grow!

### **Trade pearls**

**You will need:** • plastic eggs • candy • bags or buckets • rocks (optional)

**What to do:** Fill plastic eggs with candy or another small prize. Hide the filled eggs in the room along with several more plastic eggs that are empty or filled with rocks. Provide bags or buckets for children to collect the eggs they find. Once children find all the eggs, gather together and investigate the contents of each egg. Allow each child to choose only one egg to keep and to give up the rest. Offer a child an egg that someone else has given up in exchange for all of his eggs. Ensure every child gets one valuable treat.

**SAY •** Pearls grow inside of oysters, so people have to find the oysters and pry open their shells to see what’s inside. Most of the time, there’s nothing special in there! Nice pearls are very expensive because they are so hard to find. **Jesus taught about God’s kingdom.** He said it is like a man looking for beautiful pearls. When he found one very valuable pearl, he sold everything he had and bought it. God’s kingdom is valuable and worth giving everything for.

## **REVIEW**

Talk about how **Jesus taught about God’s kingdom** using stories people could understand. Many people were farmers and knew that seeds grow into plants. These seeds you are eating would have grown into pumpkins! Jesus compared God’s kingdom to a mustard seed because it also started small but it is still growing and spreading in the world. Ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. Who used stories to teach people about God’s kingdom? (*Jesus*)
2. What were these stories called? (*parables*)
3. Did everyone understand the parables? (*no*)
4. How is God’s kingdom like a mustard seed? (*It started small but grew large.*)
5. Is God’s kingdom worth giving everything for? (*yes*)
6. ***How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over all He made.***