

The Wise and Foolish Builders

UNIT
8
LESSON
2

Bible Reference

Matthew 7:24–27

To the Teacher

Today's lesson is filled with action. The lesson begins with students helping to construct a sandcastle and then watching as water destroys the base of the structure. As you present the parable of the two builders, have students participate by acting out the story.

Preparation/Materials

- * A sand table
- * Watering can or small bucket of water
- * Activity sheet, one per student
- * Crayons
- * Scissors
- * Tape

Lesson Highlights

- * Jesus told the parable of the wise and foolish builders.
- * Jesus' words are the rock on which we can build our lives.

Background

A parable is a story that equates a scene from the familiar, everyday world with the kingdom of God. Jesus' parables were about things and events familiar to his Jewish listeners. To understand them, the listener had to be open to kingdom values that turned commonly accepted values upside down.

Jesus' parables, however, are not allegories in which each item stands for something else. They must be understood first of all in the context of their original historical setting, then in the context of the early church that recorded them (probably many years after Jesus first spoke them), and finally in relation to our own contemporary Christian walk. Parables can be understood and taught on all three levels.

The parables must have been more startling than comforting to most of Jesus' audience. Their notion of the kingdom centered on political salvation for all the Jews brought about by a powerful messiah/king. But Jesus was saying that not everyone would recognize the beginnings of the kingdom because it wouldn't be observable for some time. Jesus' parables were confrontational, asking the listeners (especially the Pharisees) to give up their own expectations of the kingdom and to accept the reality of Jesus' teaching about his kingdom.

Lesson Steps



Bridge

1. Build a sandcastle at the sand table. You may want to have students help you.
2. Ask students what they think would happen if water started coming toward the sandcastle. (Allow for individual responses.)
3. Have a student pour some water toward the base of the castle until it collapses.
4. Tell students that Jesus told a story about sand and water.



Scripture Link

1. Tell the following story.

Jesus told a story about two men who were building houses. One man was building his house on a rock. This house was hard to build. He had to stand on the rock and dig down into that hard rock to make his house strong. (Act this out with students.) He had to work many, many days before his new house was finished. It was a long time before he and his family could move in. (Finish building the house before continuing the story.)

The other man built his house on the sand. This house was easy to build. Sand is soft, easy to stand on, and easy to dig into. (Pretend to build a house on sand. Act out how easy it is to dig and build this house.) This house went up quickly. Soon the man and his family were living happily in their new house.

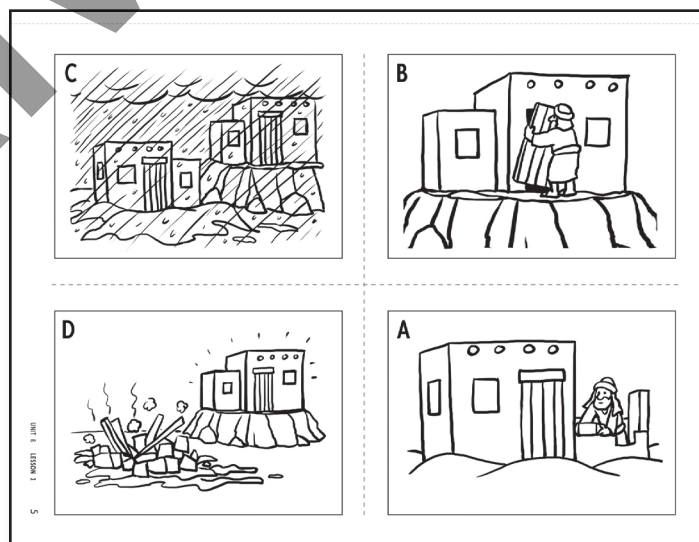
One day it started to rain. It didn't rain gently—it poured. The wind blew and blew. (Have everyone make wind noises.) What do you suppose happened to the two houses? The one on the rock was fine. It didn't move, and everyone inside was safe. But when the rain poured and the wind blew on the house on the sand, it fell over. CRASH! (Let students fall on the floor like a crashed house.)

2. Tell students that Jesus wants us to follow him and obey him. If we follow Jesus and obey him, he will help us with our problems. We will be strong like the house built on the rock. If we don't follow him, we'll feel weak like the house built on the sand.



Student Activities

1. Distribute the activity sheet.
2. Have students color the pictures, cut them apart, and arrange them in sequence from left to right.
3. Check that the pictures are arranged correctly. Give students pieces of tape to tape the pictures together.



Enrichment

- * **Art.** Have students create sand pictures by drawing with crayons on sandpaper or by drawing with glue and sprinkling sand on the glue.
- * **Art.** Have students draw pictures comparing and contrasting the wise man's house and the foolish man's house.
- * **Art.** Let students build houses—all kinds. (Suggested construction materials: clay, wood, craft sticks or tongue depressors, blocks, blankets, or Tinkertoys.)
- * **Music.** "God Is the Rock," "The Wise and Foolish Man," "Sandy Land," and "Stand on the Rock" from *Sing with Me*.
- * **Social Studies.** Have a builder speak to the class about how to construct a house.
- * **Social Studies.** Take students to a nearby construction site.

SAMPLE

Giving Thanks

UNIT
9
LESSON
3

Bible Reference

Luke 17:11–19

To the Teacher

This lesson on giving thanks centers on the story of the 10 lepers who approached Jesus for healing. Only one of the lepers, a Samaritan, returned to thank Jesus. This lesson also connects with what students learned about leprosy in their study of Elisha and Naaman as well as Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman, where students learned of the secondary status of Samaritans in Jewish society. The next lesson is the parable of the Good Samaritan; students will be able to relate what they learn about Samaritans in this lesson with the next.

As you present the lesson, help students identify things that others do for them for which they should give thanks. Encourage students to give thanks to others for the little and big things people do for them every day.

Preparation/Materials

- * Activity sheet, one per student
- * Scissors
- * Crayons

Lesson Highlights

- * We need to thank Jesus for his gifts to us.
- * We should thank people who care for our needs.

Background

Jesus' encounter with the 10 lepers took place as he traveled for the last time to Jerusalem for the Passover. Jesus was accompanied by a large group of followers as he journeyed through the border area between Samaria and Galilee.

The 10 lepers called to Jesus but did not approach him. Lepers were to keep their distance from healthy people. There were both Jewish and Samaritan lepers, which is in keeping with the area through which Jesus was traveling. The lepers probably put aside their ethnic differences as they were united by this devastating and isolating disease. Jesus did not approach the lepers to heal them; he instructed them to go to the priests, who would declare them clean.

The lepers immediately left Jesus to speak with the priests, who could declare them clean so that they could return to their families. As they walked, the lepers may have felt Jesus' healing power coursing through their bodies. Their sores disappeared, their bodies no longer ached, and their breathing became normal. While the nine Jews continued to follow Jesus' instructions and go to the priests, the Samaritan turned around to fall before Jesus in thanksgiving.

Although all 10 men believed that Jesus could heal them, only the Samaritan returned with thanksgiving for that gift. It is possible that Jewish purification laws nudged the Jews to continue toward their destination. It is also possible that while they believed Jesus could heal them, they were not prepared to make a commitment to follow him. Similarly, the nine Jewish lepers may have been content to have the Samaritan stay behind; no longer were they united through a common disease. Whatever the reason, the Samaritan returned, and Jesus not only healed him of his physical disease but also granted him spiritual cleansing.

Lesson Steps



Bridge

1. Ask, “Do you remember the story of Naaman and Elisha?” (Remind students of Naaman, who had leprosy and traveled to Israel to be healed. God’s prophet Elisha told Naaman that he had to bathe in the dirty Jordan River in order to be healed of his leprosy.)
2. Tell students that today’s lesson is about 10 people who had leprosy. Recall that leprosy was an incurable disease in which sores spread over a person’s body.
3. Explain that in Jesus’ day people were very afraid of leprosy. People who had the disease lived apart from others. When they did go out among people who didn’t have the disease, they had to shout “Unclean!” so that people could stay away from them. People who had leprosy had very hard lives.



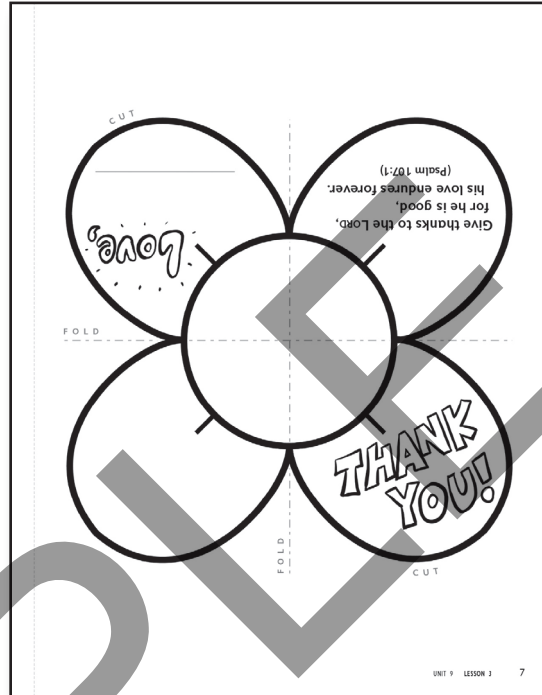
Scripture Link

1. Luke’s account of the healing of the 10 lepers is clear with compelling dialogue. Read the story directly from the Bible.
2. Ask the following questions.
 - What did the lepers call out to Jesus? (They asked Jesus to have pity on them.)
 - Why did they ask for Jesus’ pity? (Answers include they wanted to be healed from leprosy or they felt sad and alone because they had leprosy.)
 - What happened after Jesus healed them from their leprosy? (Only one came back to say thank you to Jesus.)
3. Explain that the one man who came back was a Samaritan. Ask if students remember the story of Jesus talking to the Samaritan woman at the well. You may need to remind students that the Jews did not like the Samaritans and did not treat them well. Jesus, however, showed love to all people. He cured the Samaritan of his leprosy, and the man returned to thank him.
4. Ask, “Why is it important that we say thank you to Jesus and others?” (Reasons may include that this lets other people know that we appreciate them and what they do for us. It shows that we recognize their kindness. People like to be thanked for what they have done.)



Student Activities

1. Distribute the activity sheet.
2. Have students cut out the shape of the card and fold it in half.
3. On the inside of the card have students draw pictures of things the card's recipients do for them. You may want to brainstorm ideas before you begin. (Students may be thankful to people who feed them, tuck them in bed, bring them to school, or play with them.)
4. Have students sign the inside of the card.
5. Have students decorate the fronts of their cards. As they do this, go around the room and write down the descriptions of the pictures students drew.
6. Instruct students to give their cards to the appropriate people after class.



Enrichment

- * **Foreign language.** Teach students how to say “thank you” in other languages.
- * **Life skills.** If this lesson falls near Mother’s Day, you may want to make thank-you gifts for mothers or grandmothers. You could also organize a mother’s tea in the classroom. (Be sensitive to students from single-parent families or whose parents are divorced.)
- * **Music.** “Just Say Thanks,” “Praise and Thanksgiving,” or “Thank You, Jesus” from *Sing with Me*.
- * **Science/Devotional.** Have students make a list of things for which they can thank God. Use the senses as a way of creating the list. Think of items they hear, taste, smell, see, and touch.

God's Children around the World

UNIT
11
LESSON
6

Bible Reference

Selected passages

To the Teacher

In this final lesson of both the unit and the year, students will be asked to think about how God calls people from throughout the world to follow him. Students will reflect on the diversity God created to bring praise and honor to him; students will be introduced to a few of the ways that Christians worship that may be different than their own customs, and students will experience some of these ways in the lesson.

Remind students of the words of their memory work. They are to be God's witnesses in the world.

Preparation/Materials

- * A box of all green crayons
- * A picture to color
- * Globe
- * Unit activity booklets
- * Crayons

Lesson Highlights

- * We are God's witnesses to people throughout the world.
- * God calls people from around the world to follow him.
- * Christians worship and praise God in a variety of ways.

Lesson Steps



Bridge

1. Show students a box of all green crayons.
2. Ask, "What would it be like if you could color only with green crayons?" (Students may respond that the picture wouldn't be very pretty or that you could not tell the different parts of the picture.) Color a picture with only green crayons.
3. Tell students that God doesn't want his followers to all look alike. God has created people with different heights, hair color, skin color, languages, and personalities. God wants all people from every part of the world to be part of his church.
4. Have students talk about ways that God has made them special and unique members of his kingdom.



Scripture Link

1. Review the memory work. “You are witnesses of these things” (Luke 24:48). Remind students of what it means to be Jesus’ witnesses to the world. Tell students that Peter, Philip, Paul, and other early Christians spread the message of Jesus’ love to everyone they met.
2. Tell students that God also wants us to tell others about his message of salvation. Tell students that today millions of people around the world meet together to worship God.
3. Use a globe to show students where they live. Then point to Egypt. Tell students that Egypt has very few Christians. In this country Sunday is not a day to worship God but a day of work. Most Christians in Egypt gather to worship on Sunday night because they have to work during the day. Jesus once said to his disciples, “Where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them” (Matthew 18:20). Even though Christians in Egypt are only a small part of the nation’s population, they faithfully gather to worship God.
4. Show students again where they live and then point to Mexico. Tell students that Christians in Mexico bring their own Bibles and song books to church. Memorizing Scripture is very important to Christians in Mexico. Prizes are given to both children and adults for memorizing Bible verses. Together recite the memory verse for this unit. “You are witnesses of these things” (Luke 24:48). In Mexico, and in many other countries, the congregation stands up and reads Scripture passages together. Ask students to stand as you read Jesus’ words about being a light to the world. “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14–16). Discuss how as Jesus’ witnesses, Christians are God’s light to the world.
5. Again use the globe to show students where they live. Then point to Ghana. Explain that in Ghana Christians dance single file up the aisles as they put their offerings to God in a basket. Have students sing the song “This Little Light of Mine” while doing the actions or dancing.
6. Show students on the globe where they live. Then point to the Philippines. Explain that Christians in the Philippines often hold hands during the worship service. When they pray they lift their hands with their palms facing up. Have the class stand with their palms facing up. Offer a prayer of thanks to God for Christians around the world. Pray that God would continue to bless believers as they serve as his witnesses in the world.

Information regarding Christian worship around the world is taken from Calvin College’s Institute of Worship—Worship Worldwide Web site. www.calvin.edu/worship/global.



Student Activities

1. Return the unit activity booklet to students.
2. Together read through the poems, and recall the stories of the unit.
3. Go over the poem for this lesson. Have students repeat the lines after you.
4. Have students color the last picture of the booklet.
5. Encourage students to take the booklets home to show their families.

Enrichment

- * **Art.** Ask students to draw pictures of people around the world gathered to worship God.
- * **Bible.** Review this year's Bible stories.
- * **Foreign language.** Teach students one of their memory verses from the year in another language.
- * **Foreign language.** If you have parents who speak other languages, invite them in to read Bible stories to the class in another language.
- * **Music.** Sing or listen to songs from believers around the world. *Sing with Me* has the following songs from different Christian traditions: "Yesu Azali Awa/Jesus Christ Is with Us," "Thuma Mina/Send Me Lord," "Hine Ma Tov," and "Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love."
- * **Social studies.** Have a missionary speak to the class about what Sunday school or church is like in the area in which he or she served.