



Date: _____

Series: Greatest Stories Ever Told
Summer Year 1, Lesson 11

Sower and the Soils

Take Home Point: *Plant God's word in your heart and bear fruit. *Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Key Verse: Colossians 2:7a, "Sink your roots in him and build on him."

We will help kids know:

- We need to sink our roots into Christ and build on him by reading and understanding his word.
- Jesus tells the parable of the sower and the soils to illustrate how some people may not grow in Christ. Those that do are the ones who hear, understand and do his word.
- It is vitally important to take time every day to read and apply God's word.




We will help kids feel:

- Excited to be part of the creative expression of the story—particularly a story that Jesus told.
- Inspired to spend time in God's word daily.

We will help kids do:

- Talk about areas of success in their lives and how to be successful growing in Christ.
- Volunteer to take part in acting out a contemporary version of the parable of the sower and the soils and learning the version Jesus told.
- Take home a seed in soil to remind them to daily water and nurture their faith as they spend time in God's word.

THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up 	4	Kids discuss their successes and what made them successful. They then think about what they want to be successful at in the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none
Large Group 	5 8 12	Overview Audience Participation Drama: "Touchdown, Touchdown, Touchdown"—Volunteers from the audience participate in a contemporary version of Jesus' sower and soil parable. Teaching Point: Parable of the Sower and the Seed from Matthew 13 told with student interaction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a director's costume and props such as: a megaphone, a director's beret for a hat and a director's chair • a football helmet • coach's cap • whistle • masking tape
Small Group Application 	5	Kids discuss the application for both the Biblical parable and the contemporary version.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some kind of vegetable or fruit seed for each student

Greatest Stories Ever Told

Jesus' Parables

Series Introduction

This four-week series takes a quick glimpse at Jesus' parables. A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Each parable has one clear teaching point.

Though Jesus makes up the stories, they are taken from slices of real life—such as farming, family, or debt repayment. In other words, they are real life characters. This series will challenge kids to see afresh the truth of these parables by experiencing a parable in a contemporary context. The large group presenter will take the persona of a director of a small theater company called “Great Stories Theater.” The director’s name can be Pembroke Punchline or Penelope Punchline. They can even have a megaphone, a director’s beret for a hat and a director’s chair. Certain costume and props will be needed, as kids will be drawn from the audience to play act roles extemporaneously.

Series lessons:

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|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Lesson #11 | Sower and the Soils |
| Lesson #12 | Lost Son |
| Lesson #13 | Unmerciful Servant |
| Lesson #14 | The Rich Man and Lazarus |

Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



Purpose: *Get pointed in the right direction!* Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.

Summertime Options

Easier Summer Option: Instead of having kids in small groups with an assigned shepherd, the kids can meet all together and divide themselves into triads (groups of three). This allows for larger ratios between students and shepherds. Shepherds will monitor the kids' activity as needed by roaming from group to group. The questions and directions for all the kids and their groups are by the large group presenter. If this is used, go to the introduction of large group to introduce the main character used in this series.

Regular Shepherd Option: Do the Warm-Up activity as a small group. If you like, you can still divide into triads within your small group. This helps each child participate more.

To begin discussion, say:

Tell about a time when you achieved or were successful at something. For example, maybe you did very well on a project at school. Or, maybe you played a certain position on a sports team. Maybe you had a great piano recital. Think about something that made you feel successful when you accomplished it. Would you please share it with those in your group?

After allowing some time for kids to discuss, continue with:

What were some of the things that you did that helped you become successful in what you did? For example, share how long and hard you had to work to achieve your success.

Next question:

If you could choose one thing for success in the future, what would that be?

Have triads regroup into a larger group(s). Collect some of the answers kids shared regarding future successes. Share the answers. Then say:

Consider this. One of the most successful things you could accomplish in your future is to grow in your faith.

The Bible says in Colossians 2:6-7, “You received Christ Jesus the Lord, so continue to live as Christ’s people. Sink your roots in him and build on him.”

Why do you think it is important to be successful in our Christian faith? *(Through faith in Christ, we can live forever. Our faith in him helps us to live in a godly way. There is true joy and fulfillment when we live for Christ.)*

Today we will learn to **plant God’s word in your heart and bear fruit.* This is the greatest success you could ever have. When you do this, you will sink your roots deeply in Christ and be built on him. This is true success.

Large Group Overview: 20-30 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

Audience Participation Drama: “Touchdown, Touchdown, Touchdown”—Volunteers from the audience participate in a contemporary version of Jesus’ sower and soil parable.

Teaching Point: Parable of the sower and the seed from Matthew 13 told with student interaction.

Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion, but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.

Observation Questions: What happened?

Have kids refer to Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 in their Bibles for the following questions:

Name the four types of soil and what type of person they represent.

(1. The seed planted along the road and the bird comes and eats it is like someone who hears the word about the kingdom but doesn't understand it. The evil one comes and snatches away what was planted in him. 2. The seed planted on rocky ground is like the person who hears the word and accepts it right away but since he doesn't continue to grow, it lasts only a while and he falls from faith. 3. The seed planted among thorn bushes is like another person who hears the word but the worries of life and the pleasures of the world choke the word so that it can't produce anything. 4. The seed planted on good ground is the person who hears and understands the word. This person produces fruit.)

Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

Which character in the football story is like the seed planted along the rock? (Clueless McGee.) How is he a good example of this type of soil? (He doesn't understand so he doesn't do anything.)

Which character is like the seed planted on rocky soil? (Flash McPan.) How is he like this soil? (He knew the information but didn't see the importance of following the coach for the sake of the team. He decided his way was the best.)

Which character is like the seed planted in the thorn bushes? (Rich McRich.) Why? (He saw all the obstacles and, instead, wanted to sit in the comfort of his living room drinking cool drinks and playing video games.)

Which character is like the seed planted in good soil? (Eddie McSteady.) Why? (He understood the plan and worked hard at doing what the coach wanted him to do.)

What was the result for Eddie McSteady? (He made several touchdowns and helped the team win the game.)

Who does the coach in the football story represent? (God.)

What does the play I-29 represent? (The seed in the parable or God's word.)

Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

Application Activity:

Supplies needed: some kind of vegetable or fruit seed for each student

How can we be like the good soil or Eddie McSteady? *(Read God's word over and over to understand it and then to obey it so we can produce what the Bible calls fruit or evidence that God's word has taken root and something good comes from it.)*

Hand each kid a seed and ask:

What will you have to do in order for this seed to grow into a plant that produces a fruit or vegetable? *(Plant it in good soil and water it regularly.)*

How like this seed can we nourish our faith in Jesus? *(We must feed on God's word daily.)*

The key verse from Colossians 2:7 says, "Sink your roots in him and build on him."

Take this seed home as a reminder that God's word is like a seed that needs to be nourished in order to grow and produce something good. When we read and study God's word, our faith grows and we understand what God wants us to do in life.

When we obey God, he produces good works that bring others into God's kingdom. Then one person added to God's kingdom can bring a harvest of 30, 60 or even 100 times as many more. So **plant God's word in your heart and bear fruit.*

Closing Prayer:

Thank God for his word and the plan of salvation that through the death and resurrection of Jesus, believers will come into God's eternal kingdom. Pray that kids will plant God's word in their hearts, that they may grow in knowledge and faith and that they would bear fruit bringing others into God's kingdom also.

Safety and Security: Safety and security procedures are important for each church to carefully define and implement according to their unique needs. The security, safety, illness and accident procedures described in this curriculum are provided for example purposes only and may not be appropriate, applicable or adequate for every situation. Each church is responsible for determining whether any security, safety, illness and accident procedures contained in the curriculum are appropriate, applicable or adequate for its unique situation. The activities described in this curriculum require adult supervision and may not be suitable for each child and each situation. Each church is responsible for ensuring that adequate adult supervision is provided for all activities and for determining whether an activity is appropriate for each child and each situation. Kids Kount Publishing disclaims all liability for the implementation of any procedures or the performance of any activities described in this curriculum.

Large Group Presentation: 20-30 minutes

Great Stories Theater

Touchdown! Touchdown! Touchdown!

Audience Participation Drama

Though Jesus makes up the stories, they are taken from slices of real life such as farming, family, or debt repayment. In other words, Jesus' parables had real life characters. This series will challenge kids to see afresh the truth of these parables by experiencing them in a contemporary context. The large group presenter will take the persona of a director of a small theater company called "Great Stories Theater." The director's name can be Pembroke Punchline or Penelope Punchline. He/she might even have a megaphone, a director's beret for a hat and a director's chair.

Characters from audience:

<i>Flabber McGaster</i>	<i>Coach</i>
<i>Clueless McGee</i>	<i>1st player</i>
<i>Flash McPan</i>	<i>2nd player</i>
<i>Rich McRich</i>	<i>3rd player</i>
<i>Eddie McSteady</i>	<i>4th player</i>

Props:

Football helmet, coach's cap, whistle, masking tape

In advance, place some strips of masking tape on the floor that show where the actors will stand so that they are facing the audience.

Hint: Keep things moving along so the story doesn't drag.

The large group presenter begins by saying:

Please welcome Coach Flabber McGaster. Here he comes now.

Pull a kid out of the audience and put a hat and whistle on him.

In the town of Pigskin, Pennsylvania, football was a big deal. Not just football at the college level or with the pros, but football in grade schools and middle schools. Hundreds of fans would come out to see football because, well, that's just what they did. After all, they lived in Pigskin, Pennsylvania.

This is what happened one day when the Quest 56ers took on the defending champs, the Middle School Marauders. For many, it seemed that the Quest 56ers didn't have a chance. Their players were smaller and slower. They didn't seem to have the reputation or

experience of a great football team but they did have one thing—a great coach. That’s McGaster. Flabber is his first name—Flabber McGaster! Notice how Coach Flabber McGaster gets your attention with his whistle.

Wait for the actor to whistle.

Notice the determined look in his eye. Notice the certainty he has as he points to the players and gives them their instructions. I said, as he points to the players...

Prompt “Coach McGaster” to point to the audience as if they were players.

Long and hard he has trained his players. And now that the game has begun, he looks to the bench...(The bench is out there in the audience) ...and selects a player to go on the field and substitute as a running back. Here comes the player now.

Have “Coach” point to a student and have him/her come up on stage. Give the first player a helmet. Pass the helmet on to the other players as they enter the game.

Let me introduce this player. This is Clueless McGee. He seems eager enough to get into the game. Coach gave him his directions. He told him to run *I-29 power right* and sent him into the game. Clueless McGee runs onto the field.

Have the actor run in place.

Clueless called in the play *I-29 power right* and went to his position...

Have Clueless go to a different location on stage.

... and waited for the snap of the ball, stood up, but didn’t do anything. The quarterback tried to hand him the ball but he didn’t take it. The quarterback tried to run, but Clueless McGee was in the way. It was a disaster. Clueless McGee was certainly clueless. The Coach called him off the field.

Have Clueless walk back to Coach.

“What is the matter?” Coach asked.

“I just didn’t understand what I was supposed to do, so I didn’t do anything,” replied Clueless.

Coach Flabber McGaster looked to the next person on the bench. He saw Flash McPan.

Have Coach pick another volunteer from the audience. Put the helmet on his/her head.

Flash McPan was the most eager of all the players on the team. Maybe he could run the play.

“Sure, sure,” he jumped and exclaimed. He ran over to Coach and said, “What do you want me to do?”

Prompt the new volunteer to continue the actions described.

“Go into the game,” said Coach. Tell the team I want to run *I-29 power right*.

“Fantastic,” said Flash McPan. He ran out to the field and gave the team the play. But when he got to his position, he realized he didn’t like that play. He would much rather go down field for a long, forward pass. So when the ball was hiked, instead of taking the ball and running, he tore off down the field.

“I’m open, I’m open,” he called. But the quarterback wasn’t ready to throw it. Everyone else on the field was still trying to implement the *I-29 power right* play. Soon the quarterback was sacked and Flash McPan was pulled out of the game.

The coach was flabbergasted when he heard Flash McPan say, “Sorry, Coach. You called a running play and I wanted to go long for a pass.”

The Coach looked at his bench for another player. Rich McRich.

Have coach select a new volunteer from the audience.

He’d work. He is a big guy. He could knock some people down if he would carry the ball. So Coach called Rich McRich forward. “Rich tell the team to play *I-29 power right*.”

So Rich went to the team and said, “Play *I-29 power right*.”

He got in position and they handed him the ball. He went three steps forward and stopped when he saw the other team’s linebacker charging at him. Rich ducked his head and turned to the side as he was plowed over.

Rich got up from the pile and said, “That’s too hard. It’s too hot. This is too much.” Then he thought, “I don’t think I like football anymore. All I can think about is sitting in my living room, drinking a tall glass of soda and playing video games.”

With that, he didn't even return to the bench. He just dropped the football and walked off the field.

Coach Flabber McGaster was, indeed, flabbergasted. Who else can I send? On the bench was a small player who was determined and had lots of heart. It was Eddie McSteady.

Select another volunteer to play Eddie.

“Eddie, go in and have them run *I-29 power right*. Give it your best.”

Eddie charged onto the field and said, **“It’s *I-29 power right*. Give me the ball. It’s fourth and long and I’m sure we can do it.”**

The ball was handed to Eddie and Eddie took off. He hit one defender and bounced away. He got near another and dodged him. Left... right...soon he was in the clearing. He cut back once and cut back a second time. Eddie McSteady was on his way! He made it! Touchdown!

The fans went wild, the players went wild, and the coach went wild. The next time they had the ball, who do you think carried it? You’re right. Eddie McSteady. And how did he do? Touchdown after touchdown. Six touchdowns that afternoon. Each time he followed the coach’s instructions and put his whole heart into it. The final score that day was the Quest 56ers, 42, and the Middle School Marauders, 21. It was a blowout.

Applaud the volunteer actors and have them return to their seats.

So, is there another meaning to this story? Let’s review our characters. Clueless McGee... what was his problem? He knew the play but didn’t really understand it. What was Flash McPan? He was eager, but he didn’t follow through with his instructions. He wanted to do it his own way—run for a long pass instead of carrying the ball on a running play. What about Rich McRich? He gave up. There were too many obstacles for him. What about Eddie McSteady? He knew the playbook, understood it, and did it. This story is very much like another story that Jesus told.

Who can guess what it is?

Teaching Point: Interactive Bible story

Let's conclude our teaching time today by listening to Jesus tell us a story about his word. To do this, I need some volunteer actors from the audience:

- Four students who can roll up into a ball and pretend to grow like a plant
- Three birds
- Three or four thorn bushes
- A farmer
- A narrator

Select the volunteers and position them onstage.

Option: If time is running short, story-tell the Bible event without having kids act it out.

A narrator (*lines in italics*) can tell the following story from Matthew 13 while the presenter prompts the actors (lines with bullets). He can sit in his director's chair and use the megaphone to give directions.

The narrator should place the script in his/her Bible to give the effect of reading God's word.

Jesus used stories as illustrations to tell many things. Listen to what he said about a farmer who went to plant seeds.

- Okay, farmer, pretend that you have an imaginary seed bag. Reach into it and toss some seeds out there.

Some seeds were planted along the road.

- Can I have the seeds curl up into a ball and roll out here please? Let's see what happens to you guys.

Then some birds come to devour them.

- Birds, fly in here and carry them off. Now, let's get ready for some seeds to come out again.

Other seeds were planted on rocky ground where there was little soil.

- Farmer, reach into your imaginary bag and toss some more seeds. Okay seeds, let's see you roll out here again.

Now, the plant sprouted quickly, because the soil wasn't deep.

- Seeds, grow some branches.

But when the sun came up, they were scorched.

- Can I see you guys get hot? Let's have a meltdown!

They withered because their roots weren't deep enough.

- Okay, seeds go back offstage for a moment.

Other seeds were planted among thorn bushes.

- Thorn bushes, would you come out here? Farmer, reach into your imaginary bag and toss some more seeds. Seeds, roll out here again.

But growing among thorn bushes is crowded and painful.

- Okay, seeds, start growing. Thorn bushes, you can pretend to poke them and choke them without really hurting our friends. Okay, now all seeds go offstage.

Once again, the farmer is going to sow some other seeds. These were planted on good ground and they produced grain.

- Farmer, reach into your imaginary bag and toss some more seeds. Seeds, please roll out here again.

They produced 100, 60, or 30 times as much as was planted. Watch them grow.

- Let me see you pop your hands open and start producing some grain. Very good!

Story Review:(Presenter)

Jesus says, let the person who has ears, listen. This is what the story of the farmer means. (Matthew 13:19) Someone may hear about the word of the kingdom but doesn't understand it. The evil one comes at once and snatches away what was planted in him. This is the seed planted along the road.

Invite one seed out to illustrate this point.

Do you know what that means? If you *only* listen to God's word on Sunday, you won't grow to understand much about God or what he

has done for us by giving us his Son. Then the devil takes away what was planted inside.

Invite another seed out to illustrate this point.

Now the other seed was planted on rocky ground. This is the person who hears the word of God and accepts it at once with joy. Since he doesn't have any root, he lasts only a little while. When suffering or persecution comes along because of the word, he immediately falls from faith.

Invite another seed and a thorn bush out to illustrate this point.

The next seed planted among thorn bushes is another person who hears the word, but the worries of life and the deceitful pleasures of riches choke the word so that it cannot produce anything. This might be like the person who never stops to read the Bible because he/she is too busy chasing after the pleasures of this world that don't really satisfy the heart.

Invite the last seed out to illustrate this point.

But here is the final seed. It is the seed planted in good soil. This represents the person who hears God's word, understands it and responds to it. This person produces crops. He/she may produce 100, 60 or 30 times as much as was planted.

When you hear, understand and follow God's word, God works through you to help others. This produces a big crop for God's kingdom. This can only happen when you are like the good soil eager to love God's word, understand it and live it when it is planted inside you. ** God's word is planted in your heart and you bear fruit.*

Have actors return to their seats.

The key verse for today is Colossians 2:7a, "*Sink your roots in him and build on him.*" We sink our roots into Christ by hearing his word, understanding it, and then doing what it says. When we do, we bear fruit for him. Another way of saying it is, we score touchdowns for his team. We do things that honor him and bring others into his Kingdom.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of your Son Jesus. Thank you for his life and death for us so that by trusting him we are now your people. Help us sink our roots deeply into Christ. Help us love your word so that we read it daily and plant God's word in our hearts. Help us bear fruit for your Kingdom. In Jesus' name, Amen.