

THE PARABLE OF THE FARMER

Jesus told this story, "A farmer went out to his field to plant some seeds. First, some of the seeds fell by the side of the road. They were eaten by birds.

Second, some of the seeds fell on rocky dirt. They died because they had no water.

Third, some seeds fell among weeds. They died because they were crowded by the weeds.

Finally, some of the seeds fell on good soil and grew and grew until the whole field was filled with a big crop of healthy plants."

The people asked Jesus what this story meant. He answered them.

"The seeds are like God's lessons. The birds, rocks, and weeds are like some people's hearts. Some people do not really listen to what God is teaching. They do not do what God wants them to. But when the seeds fell on good soil, it grew. The good soil is like the heart of a person who listens carefully to God's lessons, and does what God wants."

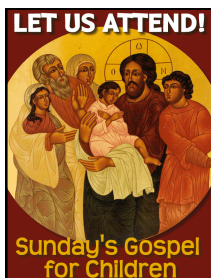
THE SOWER OF GOOD SEEDS



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WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Have you ever planted a seed? What did you need to do after you planted it? What helped it grow?
2. In this parable, a farmer plants seeds four times. Each time something different happens because of the ground. What happened to the seeds that fell by the side of the road? On the rocky dirt? Among the weeds?
3. The last time the farmer sowed seeds, what kind of ground was it?
4. In this parable, the seeds are God's teachings.
5. The good soil is the heart of a person who wants to follow Jesus.
5. Jesus told this parable because He wants us to learn something. What does Jesus want us to know?



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Pre-12



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Materials:

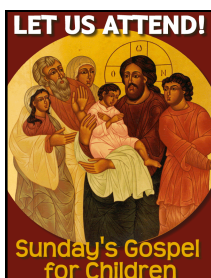
- * birdseed
- * 3 paper/plastic cups
- * soil with lots of rocks
- * soil with weeds
- * "good" quality soil, such as potting soil
- * a marigold seed

Procedure:

1. After reading the gospel story to your child, take time to review the discussion questions following the story.
2. Prior to this lesson, prepare 3 cups of soil: the first cup should contain soil with lots of rocks, the second cup should contain soil with lots of weeds, the third cup should contain a quality potting soil.
3. Remind your child that the seed is like God's word. Give your child a bowl or baggie of birdseed and take it outside. Allow your child to toss it out for the birds. Discuss what happens to the seed as the birds come to eat it. The seed is taken away, just like the path in the story, which stands for the people who hear God's word but allow the Devil to take away God's word in their hearts.
4. Show your child the three containers of soil: the rocky soil, the weed-filled soil, and the potting soil. Give your child the marigold seed and ask your child which cup would be the best one to use to plant their seed so that it grows into a strong, healthy plant.
5. Discuss why the rocky soil and weed-filled soil would be poor choices for planting their seed. In the rocky soil, the plant may sprout and start out growing well, but it will eventually suffer because the soil will not provide what the plant needs to become a beautiful flower. These rocks are like the people who believe God's word, but soon forget. In the weed filled soil, the plant may sprout, but the weeds will quickly take over and the little delicate plant won't have room to grow. These weeds are like the people who hear God's word, but allow the things of the world to be more important.
6. Help your child plant their marigold seed in the potting soil. Discuss how this potting soil stands for those people who hear God's word and obey Him. With patience and care, this seed will grow into a beautiful flower.
7. Over the days and weeks to follow, care for the little plant with your child. Remind your child that in order to allow this plant to grow into a beautiful flower, you must water and care for it. This is just like our life with God. Ask your child what we must do to allow God's word to grow in our hearts - (go to church, pray, do nice things for others, listen to God's word, etc.)



Image courtesy of sxc.hu



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THE PARABLE OF THE FARMER

One day, our Lord Jesus told a parable, a story with special meaning. He said, "A farmer went to plant seeds in his field. Some seeds fell on the path. They were stepped on and the birds ate them. Some seeds fell on rocks. They started to grow, but soon wilted because there wasn't enough water for them. Some seeds fell in weeds. Thorns grew on the weeds and killed the baby plants. Some seeds fell on good soil. They grew well and gave a big crop."

Jesus' disciples asked Him what the parable meant. He said, "The seed is God's words. The places in the story where the seed fell are people who hear God's words. The path in the parable is like people who hear God's words, but the devil comes and takes the words away so the people do not obey God. The rocks are people who hear God's words and are happy. But they only believe God for a little, and then stop. The thorny place is like the people who hear God's words but start thinking about stuff on earth instead of about God. But the good soil is people who hear God's words and obey them."

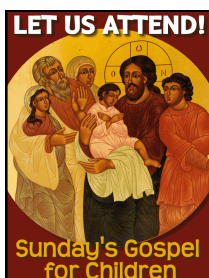
·THE SOWER OF GOOD SEEDS·



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WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Who was this parable about?
2. What did the farmer do? Why do you think he did that?
3. Did it work? Did he get what he wanted? Why or why not?
4. Jesus said we are like the different kinds of soil in the story. What did He say that the seed is?
5. Think of the different kinds of soil. Which one was the best? Which do you want to be like?
6. What can you do today to be like that?



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THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

The Lord spoke this parable, “A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell along the path, and was trodden under foot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew, and yielded a hundredfold.” And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, Jesus said, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but for others they are in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.

“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, that they may not believe and be saved. And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy; but these have no root, they believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.

“And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but

as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature.

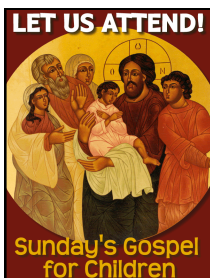
“And for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience.” As Jesus said this, he called out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”



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WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. What does a plant need to grow? What kind of soil does a plant need? Does it need water? How much? Does it need sunshine? How much? Does it need warm weather or cold weather? How do you know this about plants?
2. Do you think it is easy to grow a plant or difficult to grow a plant? Why do you say that?
3. If someone tells me my heart is like a hard rock what does he mean? If someone tells you your heart is like soft fertile soil what does she mean?
4. At school your teacher tries to plant seeds of information in you like the sower in this Gospel. How can you make your mind fertile soil for that seed? What kinds of things do you do at school to help learn the things your teacher is teaching you? (Examples: practice, homework, take time to think about it, be patient when it is hard to understand, listen to the teacher, pay attention to the teacher.)
5. If God is our teacher, sowing seeds of his message in us, how can we make our minds and souls fertile soil for his teachings? What kinds of things do we do at church to practice being good gardeners tending the plant God has planted in us? What do we do at home to practice being good gardeners? (Examples: pray, read scripture, be merciful the way God is merciful, help others, etc.)



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Characters: Narrator, Jesus

Narrator: The Lord spoke this parable,

Jesus: A sower went out to sow his seed;
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the path, and was trodden under
foot, and the birds of the air de-
voured it.

And some fell on the rock; and as it
grew up, it withered away, because
it had no moisture.

And some fell among thorns; and
the thorns grew with it and choked
it.

And some fell into good soil and
grew, and yielded a hundredfold.

Narrator: And when his disciples asked him
what this parable meant, Jesus said,

Jesus: To you it has been given to know
the secrets of the kingdom of God;
but for other they are in parables,
so that seeing they may not see,
and hearing they may not under-
stand.

Now the parable is this: The seed is
the word of God. The ones along
the path are those who have heard;
then the devil comes and takes
away the word from their hearts,
that they may not believe and be
saved.

And the ones on the rock those
who, when they hear the word, re-
ceive it with joy; but these have no

root, they believe for a while and in
time of temptation fall away.

And as for what fell among the
thorns, they are those who hear,
but as they go on their way they are
choked by the cares and riches and
pleasures of life, and their fruit does
not mature.

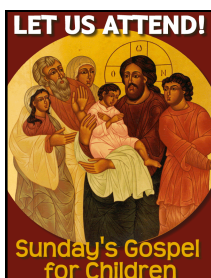
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are those who, hearing the word,
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heart, and bring forth fruit with pa-
tience.

Narrator: As Jesus said this, he called out,

Jesus: He who has ears to hear, let him
hear.



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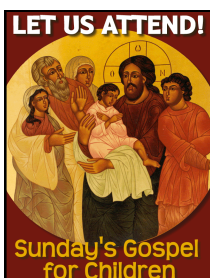
“And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature.

“And for that in the good soil, they are those who,

hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience.” As Jesus said this, he called out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. What do you think Jesus meant when He said: “Let anyone with ears to hear listen?” Is He referring to actual ears? What do you think He is referring to? How can a person hear something but not listen to it? What does that mean?
2. Why is fertile soil a good place for a plant to grow? Why is a rock a bad place for a plant to grow? What is your heart like if I say it is soft like fertile soil? What makes a soft heart a good place for God’s word to grow? What is my heart like if I say it is hard like a rock? What makes a hard heart a difficult place for God’s word to grow? How might a hard heart cause me to hear God’s word but not listen to it?
3. What kinds of things do we do at home or at church to help make our hearts fertile soil for God’s word? What does the parable tell us we have to do in order to hear and keep God’s word?



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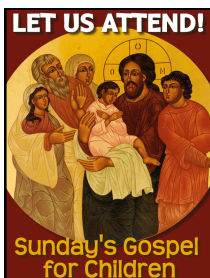


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WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. What do you think Jesus meant when He said: “I speak in parables, so that looking they may not perceive, and listening they may not understand?” How could some people listen to the parable and not understand it?
2. What allows the disciples to understand the parable? What allows us to understand it?
3. Listen carefully to the prayer the priest says after the Epistle reading and before the Gospel during the Divine Liturgy. What does the priest ask God to do for us there? Why do you think he does that? What does this prayer claim we need in order to understand the Word of God?



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