

LESSON 4: THE PARABLE OF THE LOST TREASURE AND PEARL

Leader Guide for Ages 3-6

Classroom: Monkeys

 Matthew 13:44-46

03/29/2020

Teachers Dig In

Dig In to the Bible

- Read: Matthew 13:44-46
- In This Passage: Jesus tells two very short stories. In one, a man finds a treasure in a field and sells everything to buy the field and get the treasure. In the other, a man finds a valuable pearl and gives up everything to buy the pearl. Joining the kingdom of God is more valuable than anything because God is a treasure.
- Bible Point: God is a treasure...
- Application: ...so we value him more than anything.
- Summary Verse: "For the word of the Lord holds true, and we can trust everything he does" (Psalm 33:4).

Dig Deeper

- You'll Be Teaching: *God is a treasure*. Kids think concretely, so it's a lot easier for them to value tangible rather than abstract things. Most kids will easily agree that God is a treasure, but it's hard for them to know what that means practically. Help kids treasure God by putting him first and loving him more than anything else.
- Think About: What evidence is there that God is *your* treasure?

Dig In to Prayer

- Pray that God would move in kids' hearts to give them a genuine love for him and an authentic desire to value him more than anything.

Quick Tip

- Resist the temptation to guilt kids into treasuring God. Truly treasuring something or someone is a matter of the heart, and kids can't fake it with religious actions. Encourage kids to get to know God more because the more they know him, the more they will fall in love with him!

This Lesson at a Glance



OPENING

Preschoolers share about a topic related to the lesson.

Supplies

- Bible



CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Preschoolers draw pictures, search for a treasure, and learn a fingerplay.

Supplies

- Bible
- paper
- crayons
- exciting rewards or treats to use as treasure (1 per child)
- play money (at least 3 pieces per child)

Easy Prep

- Hide the “treasure” somewhere you can lead kids to on a treasure hunt. The rewards or treats don’t have to be food; anything that the kids would be really excited about will work.



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Preschoolers repeat a fingerplay about how God is a treasure.



OBJECT LESSON

Preschoolers drink water to find treasure.

Supplies

- small, clear disposable cups (1 per child)
- quarters or dimes (1 per child) (you’ll get them back)
- drinking water in a bottle or pitcher



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Preschoolers race to gather pearls.

Supplies

- plastic, preschool-safe pearl beads or white beads (6 per child)
- bucket or large bowl
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)



PRESCHOOL PUPPET SKIT

Recommended for preschoolers.

Supplies

- Theophilus the FaithRetriever™ Puppet (order [here](#))
- dog bone
- paper

Easy Prep

- Hide the dog bone in your room. Draw a detailed map of your room, marking an “X” where the dog bone is hidden. Crumple the paper to make it look worn. Attach the paper to Theo’s paw.



LOW-ENERGY GAME

Preschoolers play a version of *Doggy, Doggy, Where's Your Bone?*

Supplies

- fake coin or a sparkling piece of costume jewelry
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)



CRAFT

Preschoolers make a pearl and oyster craft.

Supplies

- white paper bowls (2 per child)
- ping-pong balls (1 per child)
- Glue Dots
- crayons
- gem stickers (2-3 per child)
- yarn cut into 6-inch lengths (1 length per child)
- hole punch

Easy Prep

- Punch a hole in the rim of each paper bowl.
- Make a sample craft to show kids.
- Find a picture of oyster shells and a picture of a pearl to print and show preschoolers.

**Marked supplies can be reused from Core Bible Discovery*

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



Supplies

- Bible

Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, teach preschoolers how to give “hand hugs” by putting their palms against the palms of a friend and wrapping their thumbs around the other person’s hand.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by having preschoolers sing “Happy Birthday” with their lips tucked over their teeth.
- Collect the offering.

Introduce the Lesson

Say: **Today we’ll find out that God is a treasure. Let’s start by thinking about any fun treasures we’ve found outside.**

Share

- Share about the coolest thing *you’ve* ever found outside. You might share about a flower, a bug, or even something someone was giving away on the curb.
- In leader-led small groups, have preschoolers share about the coolest things *they’ve* ever found outside. Preschoolers can share about anything they think is cool, but they might share about a toy they found at the playground or an interesting rock they found at the beach.
- After small groups have discussed, have adult or teen helpers share with the whole group what they talked about in their small groups.

Summarize

Open a Bible, and say: **We’ve all found some treasures! Today we’ll read in the Bible about some people who also found some amazing treasures. And we’ll learn from Jesus about how God is the greatest treasure of all! When we’re friends with God, it’s easy to see how amazing he is, and he shows us how to make him our number-one friend!**

Pray, thanking God that he’s a treasure.



Supplies

- Bible
- paper
- crayons
- exciting rewards or treats to use as treasure (1 per child)
- play money (at least 3 pieces per child)

Easy Prep

- Hide the “treasure” somewhere you can lead kids to on a treasure hunt. The rewards or treats don’t have to be food; anything that the kids would be really excited about will work.

Draw Treasures

Give each child some paper and crayons. Say: **Today we’ll find out that God is a treasure, so let’s start by talking about our favorite people or things we think are treasures. What’s one of your very favorite things? Maybe you have a blanket that you take with you everywhere you go. Or maybe you have a toy you play with every single day because you love to play with it so much. Or maybe you just love your mommy so much that being with her makes you wonderfully happy. Draw some things or people on your paper that are your very favorite.**

Allow time for kids to think of treasures to draw. Encourage kids to talk about what they’re drawing as they work, and help them think of ideas if needed.

After about five minutes, have kids sit in small groups with an adult or teen helper and take turns showing the pictures they drew and sharing about their treasures.

Say: **All those things you shared about are very important to you, so we might call them treasures. We all have things that are important to us, and today we’re going to find out that God is the greatest treasure of all!**

Look for a Treasure

Show the Bible. Say: **In the Bible, Jesus tells a story about some people who found treasures.** Read aloud Matthew 13:44-46.

Say: **Let’s go on our own treasure hunt to help us understand what this means.** Give each child some play money. **In the Bible story, the people found a treasure and used all their money so they could keep the treasure they found. One man found a pearl, which is a special treasure in the ocean. Today I hid something special in this room that you’re going to be excited about, so let’s work together to find this treasure! When we find it, we’ll decide if we want to give up our play money for the treasure.**

Lead the children around the room, looking under tables, chairs, toys, area rugs, and behind other objects. Really ham it up; have kids look thoroughly for this special treasure, drawing it out so the search lasts a few minutes. You can even have them pretend they’re searching the whole world for this treasure by “climbing” up tall mountains and “swimming” across the ocean.

Lead kids to find the treasure, and then invite them to cheer for themselves. Say: **You all found our special treasure!** Invite kids to share whether they’re excited about the treat or reward. It’s okay if they’re not—just ask the children who do think it’s exciting to talk about why they’re excited.

Say: **In the Bible, Jesus told about some people who found a very special treasure, but he was just telling a story. His story helped his friends understand something. Jesus wanted his friends to think about things *they* treasured...things or people important to them. Jesus wanted them to know that being friends with God is an even greater treasure than anything else they could imagine. Being friends with God is the greatest treasure of all!**

Learn a Fingerplay

Say: **God loves us more than anyone else. God will take care of us better than anyone else. God can bring us more happiness than anyone else. And God is the best friend we could ever have. That’s**

why God is such a treasure. And because he's a treasure, we can remember how important our friendship with him is. Let's learn something to remind us of that.

Teach kids this fingerplay:

God is my best friend; *(hug self)*

Love to him, I send. *(blow kisses)*

I treasure God in my heart, *(pat heart)*

From him I never want to part. *(lock two pointer fingers together)*

He loves me more than anyone; *(show #1 with finger)*

Being with him means joy and fun. *(make jazz hands)*

He takes care of all my needs; *(pretend to pass something from one hand to the other)*

Even blesses me and leads. *(point straight forward)*

I can show he's important to me *(nod head)*

When I pray on my knees, *(touch knees)*

When I listen to his Word, *(cup ear)*

And when I share what I heard. *(point around the room)*

Repeat this fingerplay several times. Kids won't be able to remember all of it, but they'll be reminded of what it means that God is a treasure as they repeat after you through the fingerplay.



Review a Fingerplay

Say: Today we learned that **God is a treasure, and we can make him our number-one friend. Let's say our special rhyme again to help us remember these things.**

Review the fingerplay from the Core Bible Discovery activity:

God is my best friend; *(hug self)*

Love to him, I send. *(blow kisses)*

I treasure God in my heart, *(pat heart)*

From him I never want to part. *(lock two pointer fingers together)*

He loves me more than anyone; *(show #1 with finger)*

Being with him means joy and fun. *(make jazz hands)*

He takes care of all my needs; *(pretend to pass something from one hand to the other)*

Even blesses me and leads. *(point straight forward)*

I can show he's important to me *(nod head)*

When I pray on my knees, *(touch knees)*

When I listen to his Word, *(cup ear)*

And when I share what I heard. *(point around the room)*

Repeat this fingerplay several times.

Pray

Say: **It's so great to have God as a friend; he's such a treasure! Let's thank God and ask him to help us make him our number-one friend.** Lead kids in a brief prayer.

Say: **It's been a treasure to have you here today, and I hope to see you next week. Remember that God is our best friend, and he's a treasure!**



Supplies

- small, clear disposable cups (1 per child)
- quarters or dimes (1 per child) (you'll get them back)
- drinking water in a bottle or pitcher

Put Coins Under Cups

Say: **I brought some money to show you. Money is a treasure because we can buy things we want with it.**

Tell about something *you'd* like to buy with your money. Perhaps you're saving for something big and special or you'd like to buy an ice cream treat.

Ask: • **What's something *you'd* like to buy with money?** Preschoolers might have candy or a toy in mind.

Say: **We won't buy anything with this money today, but let's use it to try something that's pretty cool.**

- Give each child a coin and a cup. Remind preschoolers not to put the coins in their mouths.
- Have each child put a coin on the table and place a cup on top of the coin.
- Have kids sit in chairs about a foot away from the table, and ask them if they can see the coins.

Pour Water Into the Cups

Say: **We can see the coins under the cups. Now let's "bury" the coins with water!**

- Have kids remain seated, watching as an adult or teen helper pours water into the cups until they're about three-quarters full. From the kids' perspective, the coins will disappear.
- Ask kids if they still see the coins, and explain that the water has covered up the coins.

Drink the Water

Say: **In our Bible story, a man found buried treasure in a field, and he bought the *whole* field so he could have the treasure. Let's drink all our water so we can see the coins again.**

- Have kids drink the water.
- Then have kids put their empty cups back on the coins, and ask if they can see the coins through the cups again.
- Celebrate that they've "found the treasure"!

Talk About It

Exaggerate taking a refreshing drink, and then say: **Finding the treasure again was refreshing! Jesus is a treasure. He's even more precious and special than money.** Collect the coins, and have kids throw away their cups.



Pearl Pick Up

Supplies

- plastic, preschool-safe pearl beads or white beads (6 per child)
- bucket or large bowl
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).

Gather Pearls

Say: **Today we heard a story from the Bible about a man who was looking for pearls, which is a kind of treasure. When he found an amazing pearl, he sold everything he had to be able to buy it. Let's play a game where you'll try to gather pearls, too!**

- Place the bucket in the center of your room.
- Divide the pearl beads among your adult and teen helpers, and have the helpers spread out around the room and sit on the floor.
- Helpers will each place a pearl bead in one hand and then put their hands together at the wrists to mimic an open oyster with a pearl in it.
- Kids will run to the "Oysters" and try to get the pearl out of each Oyster before it closes (before the helper clasps the child's hand).
- If a child gets caught by an Oyster, he or she has to leave the pearl and try again with a different Oyster.
- If a child *does* get a pearl, he or she will run to put it in the bucket.
- Encourage helpers to have fun with it and be gentle when they clasp a preschooler's hand so it's silly and not scary.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play. Reset the pearls for another round if you have time.

Talk About It

Ask: • **What did you like about collecting the pearl treasure?**

Say: **In the game, we pretended the beads were valuable pearls that we cared a lot about. But the things in our lives that we care a lot about don't have to be pearls or money. We all have special things or people we care about, and sometimes we'll work really hard to get those things.**

Share about something *you* really wanted that you worked to get when you were younger. Maybe you saved up money for a neat toy or did an extra chore so your parents would take you to get ice cream.

Ask: • **What would you be willing to do to get something really special?** Help kids think of chores or other things they might do to earn something special.

Say: **Sometimes we have to work hard to get things we treasure, like we did in our game. But we don't have to do anything at all to be friends with God; all we have to do is trust in him, and he'll be the best friend we could ever imagine. He really is a treasure!**



Supplies

- Theophilus the FaithRetriever™ Puppet (order [here](#))
- dog bone
- paper

Easy Prep

- Hide the dog bone in your room. Draw a detailed map of your room, marking an “X” where the dog bone is hidden. Crumple the paper to make it look worn. Attach the paper to Theo’s paw.

Tip

- Before printing, turn on page numbering in Word to keep the pages in order (or simply hand-number each page after printing). You may also find it helpful to highlight your part and set the script on a music stand nearby during the skit.

Leader: **It’s time for our puppy friend, Theo, to come for a visit. Let’s call him to our class with a “woof, woof.” Ready?** *(Leads kids to bark until Theo is brought into view.)*

Theo: **Hooowwloo, friends!** *(Howls.)* **I have an itchy-itch, right here.** *(Points to his head.)* **Would you give me a scratch?** *(Circulates among kids so each child can pet him.)*

Leader: **Thanks for giving a friendly welcome to Theo, kids!** *(Looks to Theo.)* **What do you have there, Theo?**

Theo: **What?** *(Looks at the map and then holds it up.)* **Oh, this? It’s a treasure map.**

Leader: **A treasure map? That sounds fun!**

Theo: **It’s very fun!**

Leader: **Did you make it?**

Theo: **No, my friend Sylvia Setter made it for me. I can’t wait to find my treasure!**

Leader: **Do you know what the treasure is?**

Theo: *(Nods.)* **Yep! Want to guess?**

Leader: **Is it a Nutter Butter bar?**

Theo: **Nope, but good guess!** *(Looks to kids.)* **I bet you can’t guess what the treasure is that Sylvia Setter hid for me.** *(Invites kids to guess. He waits for each child to make a guess, and then reveals that it’s a bone.)*

Leader: **Great guessing, friends! Theo, did you know we’re learning about treasures today?**

Theo: *(Looks confused.)* **Jesus talks about dog bones in the Bible?**

Leader: *(Chuckles.)* **Not that I know of. Jesus tells us about the best treasure of all!**

Theo: *(Acts like he’s pondering what it could be.)* **Is it a hot dog?**

Leader: **You have food on your mind today, don't you?**

Theo: *(Giggles.) I guess I do! So what's the best treasure of all?*

Leader: **God is a treasure—and he's the best treasure of all!**

Theo: *(Hops excitedly.) I love God!*

Leader: **We do, too!**

Theo: *(Looks confused.) So does that mean we need a map to find him? (Holds up his map.)*

Leader: **You can look in the Bible to learn about God.**

Theo: *(Ponders a moment.) I think God is a treasure to me because he loves me so much! (Looks to kids.) **Why is God a treasure to you?** (Invites kids to share reasons God is a treasure and responds enthusiastically to each answer. Kids might share that God is powerful, God takes care of us, and God made the whole world.)*

Leader: **There are so many reasons God is a treasure!**

Theo: **There sure are! I'm so thankful for God.**

Leader: *(Points to the map in Theo's hand.) So do you want help with finding that treasure of yours?*

Theo: *(Hops excitedly.) Oh! Would you help me? I forgot about my treasure thinking about how amazing God is! (Pants.) But I am hungry for a dog bone. (Invites kids to look at his treasure map and guides them as they figure out where the bone is by looking at the "X." Once kids figure it out from the map, they all go to the spot to discover the actual bone.)*

Leader: **Great job working together!**

Theo: **Yeah, I don't know if I could've found it without you all!** *(Places the bone in his mouth and then begins to speak unintelligibly because of the bone in his mouth.) Ilwahmaba.*

Leader: **What?**

Theo: *(Removes the bone.) I said it's time for me to go bury my bone in the backyard now. (Places the bone back in his mouth.)*

Leader: *(Chuckles.) Okay, Theo. Give Theo a quick "woof, woof, goodbye," friends! (Leads kids to say "woof, woof, goodbye," and then places Theo out of sight.)*



LOW-ENERGY GAME

[10 min]

Track the Treasure

Supplies

- fake coin or a sparkling piece of costume jewelry
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).

Play a Version of Doggy, Doggy, Where's Your Bone?

Say: **We read in the Bible today about how God is a treasure. Treasures are very special, and our best friend, God, has even more amazing treasures in heaven! Let's play a game where we'll try to find a treasure.**

- Have everyone sit close together in a circle.
- Invite a willing teen or adult helper to be the first person to sit in the center of the circle. He or she will try to track the "treasure" as kids pass the coin around the circle behind their backs.
- The person in the center will say, "Treasure, treasure, where are you? Treasure, treasure, I see you!" and then guess who has the coin.
- If the guess is correct, the person who had the coin will become the new Guesser.
- If the guess is incorrect, then a new round will start and the Guesser can try again.
- Allow each person three tries as the Guesser; then he or she can swap out with a new person who'd like to try to guess where the treasure is.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while everyone plays as many rounds as time allows.

Talk About It

Ask: • **Why did you want to find the treasure?**

Say: **Treasures are special and valuable. Treasures aren't always things like money or jewelry, and sometimes they're not even *things*. A lot of times treasures are people—our friends and families and others we love and care about. You're all treasures to God, and that's why God made a home in heaven for everyone who believes in him. God wants to be with us always because he loves us so much. God is a treasure because of his amazing love for us, and that means we can treasure God more than anything or anyone else.**



CRAFT

Oyster Shell Treasure Bank

[20 min]

Supplies

- white paper bowls (2 per child)
- ping-pong balls (1 per child)
- Glue Dots
- crayons
- gem stickers (2-3 per child)
- yarn cut into 6-inch lengths (1 length per child)
- hole punch

Easy Prep

- Punch a hole in the rim of each paper bowl.
- Make a sample craft to show kids.
- Find a picture of oyster shells and a picture of a pearl to print and show preschoolers.



Decorate “Shells”

Say: **Earlier we heard a story Jesus told his friends to help them know that God is a treasure! In the story, a man sold everything he had to buy a pearl. A pearl is a special treasure found in between the shells of an oyster in the ocean.** Show preschoolers the sample craft. **Let’s make a craft that looks like a pearl inside an oyster to remind us of Jesus’ story!**

- Give each preschooler two paper bowls.
- Have preschoolers color the insides of the bowls.
- Give each child a ping-pong ball, and help glue it in the middle of one of the bowls.
- Then let preschoolers finish decorating the inside of both bowls with gem stickers.

Make Treasure Banks

- Once preschoolers have finished decorating, give them each a length of yarn to loop through each hole in the rims of their bowls.
- Loosely tie the bowls together.



- Have preschoolers set one bowl on top of the other, with the ping-pong ball “pearl” in the bottom bowl.

Say: **Our craft looks pretty plain on the outside, just like an oyster does.** Show preschoolers the picture of oyster shells. **Oysters don’t have pretty shells on the outside, and they don’t look like anything special. But when you look inside the shells, you’ll find the beautiful pearls that are worth so much!**

Have preschoolers open their treasure banks, and show preschoolers the picture of a pearl.

Say: **These treasure banks can remind us that God is more special than we can ever understand or know. And the more time we spend with God, the more God helps us discover that God is a treasure!**

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