

Week 1

The Story of the Farmer

Matthew 13:1-23



“Hello, friends! My name is [*your name*], and I have a question for you. Have you ever planted a seed? You put the seed in the dirt and cover it with more dirt. Then you water the seed and something amazing happens—the seed starts to grow! It grows roots that push down deep into the dirt, and it grows leaves that reach up to feel the warm sunshine. Well, in today’s Bible story, Jesus tells a story about someone who plants some seeds. I can’t wait to tell you this true story from the Bible. So it’s time to turn around (*spin around*) ... sit down (*sit down*) ... shake the wiggles out (*wiggle hands*) ... so we can hear (*cup hands behind ears*) what the story’s all about! Today’s true story from the Bible comes from the book of Matthew, and it begins with Jesus, God’s Son. “One day, Jesus told a story about a farmer who was planting seeds. Jesus said:



A farmer went out to plant his seed. He scattered the seed on the ground. Now, when Jesus was on earth, farmers didn't have big tractors to help them do the work. When it was time to plant, farmers would walk through the field and use their hands to throw the seeds on the ground. Let's pretend to scatter seeds like the farmer. (*Pretend to throw seed on the ground.*) Now make a 'seed' with your hand. (*Claps your hands together.*) The seeds that the farmer planted fell in different places. Let's listen carefully to the story Jesus told to find out if our seeds can grow.



Jesus said that when the farmer threw the seeds, some seeds fell on a hard path where people walk.

Birds came and ate the seeds on the path. Tweet, tweet, tweet! (*Pretend to grab the children's "seeds."*) Oh, no! The birds ate your seeds. Let's make another seed. (*Clasp your hands together.*)



Jesus said some seeds fell on a lot of rocks. The seeds started to grow quickly ... Oh, our seeds get to grow a little! (*Slide one hand above the other as if the "seed" is sprouting.*) But when the sun came up ... (*Hold arms overhead like the sun.*) It burned up the plants! (*Pat the children's "sprout" hands as if it is the sun burning the sprouts.*) Hot, hot, hot, hot! Those seeds couldn't grow because they didn't have roots that were deep in the dirt.



“Jesus said other seeds fell among the spiky thorns. Can you hold up your hands like spiky thorns? (*Hold up your hands, and spread out your fingers.*)

“Good job! Keep them there. I’m going to make another seed with my hands. (*Clasp your hands to make a seed.*) “The seeds in the thorns started to grow. (*Slide one hand above the other as if the “seed” is sprouting.*) “But the thorns grew too! Can you make your thorns grow really tall? (*Encourage children to raise their “thorny” hands above their heads.*) “The thorns grew so big that the seeds didn’t have space to grow into a big, strong plant. Oh, no! (*Let your “sprouting” hand fall over as if it is wilting.*) “You can put your arms down now. So far none of the seeds that the farmer planted have grown into big, healthy plants. But Jesus wasn’t done with his story! Let’s make one more seed with our hands. (*Clasp your hands to make a seed.*)”



“But Jesus said that other seeds fell on good soil. This was really good dirt. These seeds grew and grew. (*Slide one hand above the other as if the “seed” is sprouting. Continue “growing” by spreading your arms out wide. Encourage children to do the same.*) “They grew into big, healthy plants that made big, healthy crops—like fruits and vegetables—that made even more seeds. “You can put your arms down now, and I will tell you what Jesus’ story means. “Jesus is like the farmer planting the seeds. Jesus told everyone about how God loves them and wants them to be a part of God’s kingdom. But some people are like the seeds that do not grow. They don’t listen or understand. “Jesus wants us to be like the good soil. He wants us to listen to Him because Jesus teaches you and me about God’s kingdom. He tells us that

He (*cross arms over chest*) loves us and wants us to be His friend and a part of God’s kingdom. And He wants us to tell other people that He loves them too, and that will help God’s kingdom grow! We can do what Jesus says because Jesus teaches me about God’s kingdom. Who teaches you about God’s kingdom?”

Everyone: “Jesus teaches me about God’s kingdom.”

“Yes, Jesus teaches me about God’s kingdom.”



"Put God's



kingdom



first."



Matthew 6:33 NIrV

Prayer Time

Journal Prompt: "Since Jesus teaches us how to help God's kingdom grow, let's make a list in our journal of all the 'good soil' things we can do! These are things that show we are listening to Jesus and putting Him first. When I say your name, tell me one good thing we can do to help God's kingdom grow, and I will write it in our journal." *(If a child gets stuck, offer one of these suggestions: We can pray and talk to God. We can read the Bible and listen to His stories. We can sing songs to God. We can share our toys. We can help our friends. Remember to print, as you write in the journal, so the children can recognize their names and the letters.)*

Quiet Time Leader Prayer: *(Play instrumental worship music here if wanted. Try to work up to 2 minutes by starting with 30 seconds the first few weeks.)*

Holy Spirit what are you saying to us, we are listening. Speak to us.

Leader Prayer: This is a wonderful list of ways we can be like good soil! Let's pray and talk to God about it. Would anyone like to pray before I pray? *(Give each child who wants to pray the opportunity to do so.)* Dear God, thank You for teaching us about Your kingdom in the Bible. Thank You that Jesus teaches me about God's kingdom. Please help us have hearts like good soil. Help us to hear what You say and then DO it. Help us to *(read the list the children made: pray, read the Bible, sing songs, share, and help)*. Please help my friends *(say each child's name)* to grow big and strong for You this week, just like the seeds in the good soil. We love You, God.

In Jesus' name, Amen."

GOOD SOIL...

Journal Free Space

Week 2

The Parable of the Bags of Gold

Matthew 25:14-30



“Hello, friends! I’m [*your name*], and I can’t wait to tell you a true story from the Bible. So it’s time to turn around (*spin around*) ... sit down (*sit down*) ... shake the wiggles out (*wiggle hands*) ... so we can hear (*cup hands behind ears*) what the story’s all about! “Today’s true story from the Bible comes from the book of Matthew, and it begins with Jesus. One day, Jesus told a story to His friends, the disciples.”



“There was a rich man who was going away on a big trip. He had a lot of money, and he was going to be gone for a long time. He wanted his helpers to take care of his money, and he wanted them to use that money to earn even more money. “He gave five bags of gold to one helper. Let’s count to five. *(Hold up your fingers as you count.)*”

Everyone: “One ... two ... three ... four ... five.”

“Then he gave two bags to another helper. Let’s count to two.” *(Hold up your fingers as you count.)*

Everyone: “One ... two.”

“But he only gave one (hold up one finger) bag to the third helper. “Then, the man left on his trip.”



“The helper with five (*hold up five fingers on one hand*) bags of gold used the money to earn five (*hold up five fingers on both hands*) more. “Everybody, say: (*Two thumbs up.*) Good job!”

Everyone: (*Two thumbs up.*) “Good job!”

“The helper with two (*hold up two fingers on one hand*) bags of gold used the money to earn two (*hold up two fingers on both hands*) more. “Everybody, say: (*Two thumbs up.*) Good job!”

Everyone: (*Two thumbs up.*) “Good job!”



“But the helper with one (*hold up one finger*) bag of gold dug a hole in the ground and hid the bag of gold. “Can you pretend to dig a hole in the ground with me? (*Pretend to dig a hole.*)

“Now hide your bag of gold in the hole and cover it up with dirt. (*Pretend to put a bag in the hole and bury it with dirt.*)

“Wow! The third helper didn’t even try to earn more money.

“When the rich man came back, he wanted to collect all the money from his helpers.”



“The helper with five (*hold up five fingers on one hand*) bags of gold said: You trusted me with five bags of gold. I used those five bags of gold and have earned five (*hold up five fingers on both hands*) more!” “The man told his helper: You did a great job!” “The helper with two (*hold up two fingers on one hand*) bags of gold said: You trusted me with two bags of gold. I used those two bags of gold and have earned two (*hold up two fingers on both hands*) more!” “The rich man told his helper: You also did a great job!” He was so happy and wanted his helpers to be happy too.”



"Then the helper with one (*hold up one finger*) bag of gold said: I did not use what you gave me. I went out and hid your gold in the ground.' (*Quickly pretend to dig up the bag of gold.*) "And the helper gave the rich man the one bag of gold. (*Pretend to offer it to the rich man.*) "The rich man was not (*shake head no*) happy with the helper who had hidden his bag of gold. He took the bag of gold away from him, and the helper who had done nothing had to leave. (*Point away from the children.*) "Jesus told this story because He wants us to use what we have to help God's kingdom grow. You may not have bags of gold, but you are wonderfully made by God! You can show God's love to others in many ways. Maybe you are good at using kind words to cheer someone up. Or maybe you help clean up a mess that you didn't make. Or maybe you like playing in the dirt, so you help your neighbor plant flowers in the garden. "There are many things we can do to show God's love to others and help God's kingdom grow. And if we ever need help knowing what to do, we can pray and ask Jesus to show us, because Jesus teaches me about God's kingdom. Who teaches you about God's kingdom?"

Everyone: "Jesus teaches me about God's kingdom."

"Yes, Jesus teaches me about God's kingdom."



"Put God's



kingdom



first."



Matthew 6:33 NIrV

Prayer Time

Journal Prompt: “You are wonderfully made by God, and you can show God’s love to others in many ways. Let’s make a list of ways we could use our hands, or feet, or our mouths to help others and show God’s love.” *(Remember to print, as you write in the journal, so the children can recognize their names and the letters.)*

Quiet Time Leader Prayer: *(Play instrumental worship music here if wanted. Try to work up to 2 minutes by starting with 30 seconds the first few weeks.)*

Holy Spirit what are you saying to us, we are listening. Speak to us.

Leader Prayer: “Look at all the ways we can use what God gave us! We can help, share, speak kind words, and show love. Let’s pray and talk to God. Would anyone like to pray before I pray? *(Give each child who wants to pray the opportunity to do so.)* Let’s pray. Dear God, thank You for giving us hands to help, feet to go, and mouths to speak kind words. Help us use what You have given us to grow Your kingdom. Show us how to love others the way You love us. Thank You for Jesus, who teaches us about Your kingdom. We love You, God. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

**WAYS TO HELP OTHERS
AND SHOW GOD'S LOVE...**

Journal Free Space

Week 3

The Servant Who Had No Mercy

Matthew 18:21-35

*journal time needs a
stamp pad for fingerprints*



“Hello, friends! I’m [*your name*], and I can’t wait to tell you a true story from the Bible. (*Open the Bible for children to see, then set it down.*) “So it’s time to turn around (*spin around*) ... sit down (*sit down*) ... shake the wiggles out (*wiggle hands*) ... so we can hear (*cup hands behind ears*) what the story’s all about! “Today’s true story from the Bible comes from the book of Matthew, and it begins with Jesus.”



“One day, Jesus was teaching His friends, the disciples, about how to treat other people. Peter asked Jesus: How many times do I have to forgive someone who does something wrong to me? Do I have to forgive him seven (*hold up seven fingers*) times?’ Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but 77 times”. “Whoa! That’s a really big number!



“Then Jesus told Peter a story about a king who wanted to collect the money that some people owed him. “One man owed the king a lot (*spread arms wide*) of money, so the man fell on his knees and begged the king. (*Clasp your hands in front of you, like you are begging.*) “He said:

Give me time. I’ll pay it back!” Can you say that with me?”

Everyone: “Give me time. I’ll pay it back!”

“The king felt sorry for the man, so he decided to be kind to him. The king forgave the man. He chose not to be angry with the man, and he told him he didn’t have to pay back any of the money he owed him!

Everyone, say: Wow!”

Everyone: “Wow!”



“But then the man went and found a person who owed him just a little bit (*hold thumb and index finger close together*) of money. The person begged the man: Give me time. I’ll pay it back!”

Everyone: “Give me time. I’ll pay it back!”

“But the man wasn’t kind like the king. He was mean! He had the person put in jail, even though it was only a little bit (*hold thumb and index finger close together*) of money.



“Some people told the king everything that happened, and the king became very upset. He told the man: “I forgave you because I was kind. You should have been kind to that person too.” The king was so angry that he had the man put in jail. Everyone, say: Oh, no!”

Everyone: “Oh, no!”

“Jesus told Peter this story because he wanted Peter to know that God is kind and forgiving, like the king. And since God forgives us, then we should forgive other people too. Jesus taught Peter about God and His kingdom, and He teaches us about God’s kingdom too. “We can forgive others when they break our favorite toy. We can forgive others when they won’t share. When we forgive others, we are helping others see how good God is. “We can help God’s kingdom grow because Jesus teaches you and me about God’s kingdom. Who teaches you about God’s kingdom?”

Everyone: “Jesus teaches me about God’s kingdom.”

“Yes, Jesus teaches me about God’s kingdom.”



"Put God's



kingdom



first."



Matthew 6:33 NIrV

Prayer Time: Needs stamp pad and wipes for fingerprints

Journal Prompt: "God is kind and God is forgiving so we can be kind and forgive too. I'm going to draw a heart inside our journal. *(Draw a heart.)* Let's each put our fingerprint inside the heart to show that God forgives us. *(Allow time for the leader and each child to add their fingerprint.)* Now, let's all put a fingerprint outside of the heart to show that we can forgive others."

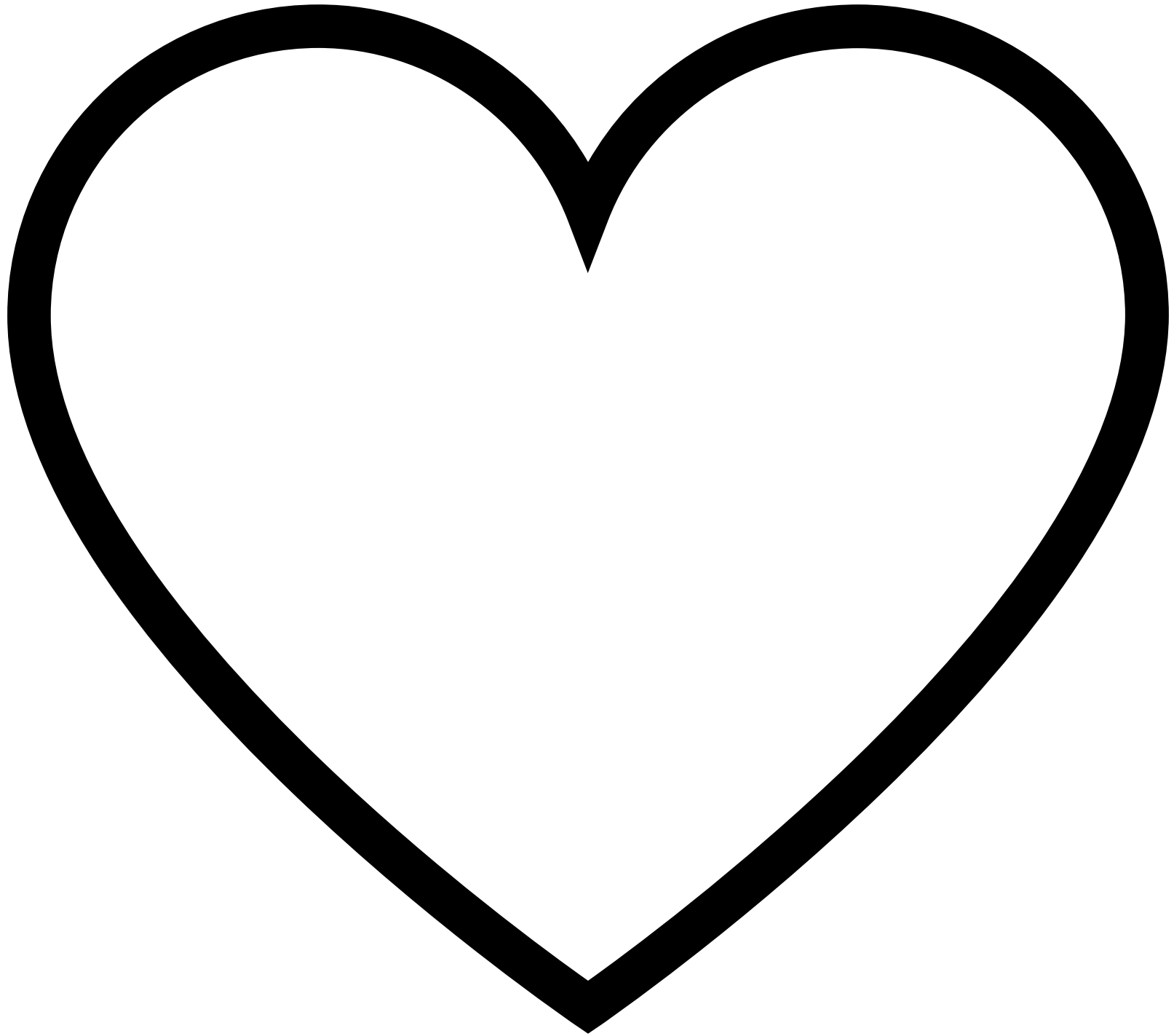
Quiet Time Leader Prayer: *(Play instrumental worship music here if wanted. Try to work up to 2 minutes by starting with 30 seconds the first few weeks.)*

Holy Spirit what are you saying to us, we are listening. Speak to us.

Leader Prayer: "Look at all of our fingerprints! We can forgive just like God forgives us. Let's pray and talk to God. Would anyone like to pray before I pray? *(Give each child who wants to pray the opportunity to do so.)* Let's pray. Dear God, thank You that You are kind and forgiving. Thank You for loving us so much. Help us forgive when someone bumps us, takes our crayon, or won't share. Help us put Your kingdom first. Thank You for Jesus, who teaches us about Your kingdom.

We love You. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Journal Free Space



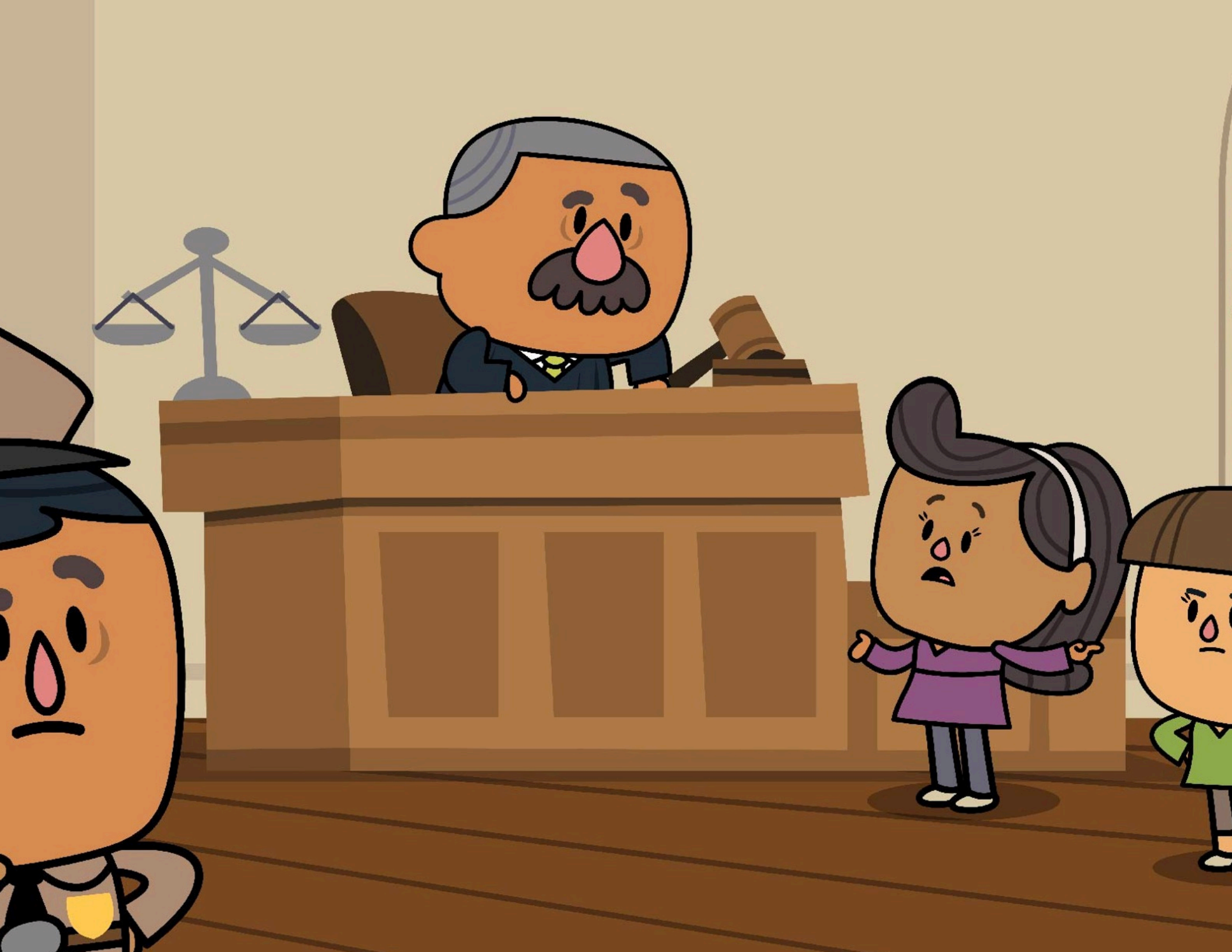
Week 4

The Story of the Widow Who Would Not Give Up

Luke 18:1-8



Hello, friends! I'm [*your name*], and I can't wait to tell you a true story from the Bible. (*Open the Bible for children to see, then set it down.*) "So it's time to turn around (*spin around*) ... sit down (*sit down*) ... shake the wiggles out (*wiggle hands*) ... so we can hear (*cup hands behind ears*) what the story's all about! "Today's true story from the Bible comes from the book of Luke, and it begins with God's Son, Jesus. Jesus told many stories about God, because He wanted people to know who God is. Jesus wanted us to know that God is good and that God always loves (*cross arms over chest*) us. "Can you make the sign for love?" (*Make the ASL sign for *love' by crossing your arms over your chest.*) "Yes, God (*cross arms over chest*) you! But in today's Bible story, Jesus tells a story about some people who were NOT loving. Let's listen to Jesus' story and see if we can figure out who isn't being kind and loving.



The story Jesus told begins with a woman. Someone was treating her badly. Was that someone being kind and loving (*cross arms over chest*) to the woman? (*Listen.*) No! They were not kind and loving. They were treating her badly, so the woman asked a judge to help her. “A judge is someone who makes sure that everyone follows the rules. If a person does not follow the rules—like if someone steals your favorite toy—then a judge makes things right. A judge makes sure you get your toy back.



But when the woman asked the judge to help her, he did nothing! Is the judge being kind and loving (*cross arms over chest*) to the woman? (*Listen.*) No! This judge did not love God. He wasn't good, and he didn't care for the people in his town. So, He didn't help the woman at all.



“But the woman did not give up! She went to the judge again
... and again ... and again. She begged the judge to make
things right. “Finally, the judge had had enough! He knew this
woman was not giving up! She was going to keep asking him
for help until he made things right for her.”



“So, the judge finally helped the woman. “Jesus told this story because He wants us to know that God is not like the judge in the story. God is good, and God always cares for His people. (*Cross arms over chest.*) “God loves us, and God loves to help us! We can pray and talk to God, and never give up, and He will help us. And we know this because Jesus teaches me about God’s kingdom. Who teaches you about God’s kingdom?”

Everyone: “Jesus teaches me about God’s kingdom.”

“Yes, Jesus teaches me about God’s kingdom.”



"Put God's



kingdom



first."



Matthew 6:33 NIrV

Prayer Time

Journal Prompt: The woman in the story kept asking for help. She did not give up. What is something you want to keep praying for? I'll write your name and your answer. *(Remember to print so the children can recognize their names and the letters.)* Those are wonderful things to pray for. We can talk to God anytime, and we never have to give up."

Quiet Time Leader Prayer: *(Play instrumental worship music here if wanted. Try to work up to 2 minutes by starting with 30 seconds the first few weeks.)*

Holy Spirit what are you saying to us, we are listening. Speak to us.

Leader Prayer: "Look at all the things we want to keep praying for! God hears every prayer. God loves us and loves to help us. God wants us to keep praying and not give up. Let's pray and talk to God. Would anyone like to pray before I pray? *(Give each child who wants to pray the opportunity to do so.)* Dear God, thank You that You are good and that You always love us. Thank You that we can pray and never give up. Please help (read child's name and what they listed from the journal). Help us put Your kingdom first. Thank You for Jesus, who teaches us about Your kingdom. We love You. In Jesus' name, Amen."

**SMALL THINGS THAT
GROW BIG...**

Journal Free Space