

3-6 | July 5

Bible Story: The Story of the Farmer • *Matthew 13:1-23*

Bottom Line: God's kingdom grows when you hear and do what He says.

Monthly Memory Verse: *God's kingdom is not about eating or drinking. It is about doing what is right and having peace and joy. All this comes through the Holy Spirit.* • Romans 14:17 NIV

1. Opening Activity

What You Need:

- ☐ Offering container
- ☐ Hardcover books

EveryChild Supplies:

- ☐ Beanbag or tissue

What You Do:

- Greet each kid by name with a fist bump, high-five, smile, or wave as they arrive.
- Invite any kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
- Line kids up on one side of the room.
- Challenge them to try walking from one side of the room to the other while balancing the book on their head.
- Once everyone has had a turn, let the kids try again.
- Encourage kids to walk slowly and keep their head very still.
- Cheer for everyone who tries, whether the book stays on their head or falls off.

What You Say:

"That was tough! You had to really listen to your body and focus to balance that book. Do you like to read books? *(Pause for responses.)* What kind of books do you like? *(Pause for responses.)* I love stories! Today's Bible Story is a special kind of story called a parable. Jesus told parables to help people learn about God and His kingdom. Today, we're going to hear a story Jesus told to help us understand something very important. Let's go hear it!"

EveryChild Pro-Tips

- Offer a beanbag or a tissue to balance in place of a book.

2. Video on Jellyfin

Lead the children in worship to one song and then watch today's video lesson.

3. Prayer

“Let’s open up today with prayer. Dear God, thank You for giving us Jesus to teach us. We want to have soft hearts, like the good soil, that are ready to listen to You. Help us to hear what You say and then do it, so Your kingdom can grow in us and all around us. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

4. Growing Good Fruit

What You Need:

- ☐ “Growing Good Fruit Tree” Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock or construction paper
- ☐ Crayons or markers
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Glue sticks

What You Do:

Before the Activity:

- Print one “Growing Good Fruit Tree” page per child.
- The page should include a tree with leaves but no fruit, along with separate apple cutouts labeled with different Fruit of the Spirit words.

During the Activity:

- Invite the kids to sit at the table with their supplies.
- Show the children the tree and explain that healthy trees grow good fruit.
- Explain that when our hearts are like “good soil” and we listen to God, the Holy Spirit grows good fruit in our lives.
- Have the kids cut out the apples.
- Read the words on the apples together:
 - o Love
 - o Joy
 - o Peace
 - o Patience
 - o Kindness
 - o Goodness
 - o Faithfulness
 - o Gentleness
 - o Self-control
- Invite the kids to glue the apples onto the tree branches.
- Encourage the children to color and decorate their trees.
- As they work, ask simple questions like:

- o “What fruit do you want God to grow in your life?”
- o “How can you show kindness this week?”
- o “What helps us become good soil?”
- When finished, invite a few kids to share which “fruit” they chose and why.

What You Say:

“When we listen to God and follow Jesus, our hearts become like good soil. And just like healthy trees grow good fruit, God grows good things in us! The Holy Spirit helps us grow fruit like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

“These fruits show others what God is like. When you are kind, loving, patient, or peaceful, people can see God’s love through you. That’s one way God’s kingdom grows!

“Every time you hear God’s Word and choose to obey Him, you are growing good fruit for God’s kingdom. [Bottom Line] God’s kingdom grows when you hear and do what He says.”

5. Take a Snapshot

What You Need:

- ☐ Plastic cups

What You Do:

During the Activity:

- Group the kids into pairs, and instruct them to stand or sit face-to-face with the cup on the floor in between them.
- Call out an action: “Head!” “Shoulders!” “Knees!” or “Cup!”
- The kids are to listen carefully and touch their head, shoulders, knees, or grab the cup.
- When you say, “Cup,” the kids try to be the first one to grab the cup.
- The kid who grabs the cup first wins the round.
- Reset cups, and continue to call out the actions: “Head!” “Shoulders!” “Knees!” or “Cup!”
- Increase the speed at which you call out the actions, making it more difficult.
- Repeat as time and interest allow.

What You Say:

“That game takes serious listening skills! You couldn’t just guess; you had to wait for me to say, ‘Cup’ before you could act. It’s like that with our faith. Jesus asks us to be people who don’t just hear what He says, but who actually do what He says. It takes practice to be a good listener and an obedient follower. You can ask God to soften your heart so His words will take root and grow in your life. When you’re sad or afraid or frustrated, you can ask God for help and trust that He’s always with you so your heart doesn’t become hard or bitter. Over time, as you continue to listen to and follow Jesus, the Holy Spirit will grow good fruit, the good fruit of God’s kingdom, in your life.

“God, the King of the kingdom, is loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and He has self-control. As you stay close to Him, He will grow His fruit in you. And as God grows

His fruit in you, the Holy Spirit can work through you to point to God's kingdom in the world around you.

"And as you live out that fruit God will grow in you—as you're kind, or loving, or honest—you're saying: 'Hey, look! This kingdom is awesome! The King who reigns over it is kind, loving, and honest—just like I was. He loves you and wants you to follow Him as King and be your friend. Do you want to be a part of God's kingdom too? You can! The Bible says that everyone who accepts what Jesus did on the cross for their sins is welcomed into God's kingdom—and God's family—with open arms!

"You can point to God's kingdom as you live out the fruit He will grow in you! Remember, **[Bottom Line] God's kingdom grows when you hear and do what He says.**"

[Make It Personal] (Share how you do what you can to make your heart "good soil." You can say something like: "Sometimes when I read the Bible, God shows me something I need to do, like apologize to someone. It's easy to just close my Bible and forget about it. But I've learned that when I actually do what I heard, that's when my faith really grows. It's not always easy, but it's always worth it.")