

6-8 Years:

Opening prayer: To welcome students to class and introduce the theme. Keep the prayer simple and easy for the children to learn so that it can be said as a group prayer rather than one that the leader says. For example:

"Dear God. We thank you for the chance to meet once again in your presence. Help us to learn more about your work and to understand how we can follow in your footsteps. Amen"

Bible Story:

Tell the parable of the sower to the children in the class.

A picture book version isn't necessary but a simplified version of the story will put it into the understand level of the age group. If you have a children's bible that you use with your class, then this ought to be appropriate.

Drama:

Have the children divide up into the three soil groups. Walk to each group in turn and have them act as a seed planted in that type of soil would act. At the end of this, only the seeds planted in the good soil should still be on their feet.

Discussion 1:

The story tells of a farmer planting seeds, but a parable is a story that is told to help people understand something else a little better. If Jesus is the sower in the parable, what is the seed and what is the soil?

Activity:

Show the children different types of soil - for example good soil, soil that's dry, soil that's sandy, soil that's stony, etc. Which soil do the children think that seeds would grow best in.

Next show the children different types of seeds. You could prepare in advance by gluing some of each seed type on a piece of construction paper alongside a picture of what it will grow into.

Give each child a plastic cup, and 2-3 seeds which will grow quickly and with a small amount of attention. Put some soil in a bucket and ask the children to first half-fill their cup with soil and then plant their seeds by making a hole with their finger and then placing in the seed before covering the soil back over it.

As they do this, explain that there are many different types of soil and many different types of seed. Use an apple as an example to show how from one piece of fruit many seeds will come if they are cared for - for example one apple may have 4 seeds to from which 4 apple trees could grow, these trees could give 4 apples each, making 16 seeds, so that there could be 16 new trees each with 4 apples - and so on. If the seed went into rocky, uncared for ground, no tree would grow.

Discussion 2:

What kind of soil are they? Does the seed of God's word fall on good soil and grow? Or does it fall on rocky ground and be ignored. Or does it fall on thorny ground where friends who do not believe the word of God pull them away from it? Even though it sometimes isn't easy, we should always be like the good soil, and show how living with God is so that like the apple, we plant more seeds so that others come to know God through us.

Closing Prayer: Thanking God for the parable of the sower, and asking for help to become more like the good soil so that his work can grow here on earth. For example:

"Dear God, thank you the parable of the sower. Help me become like the good soil so that the seed of your love may grow through me. Amen"