

## Bible background

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

## Aim of lesson

To encourage the children to make room for God's teaching in their lives.

## Preparation required

You will need materials for the children to plant seeds e.g. margarine tubs filled with soil, seeds, water. Have one tub filled with stones and one full of weeds. Alternatively the lesson could be held in a garden, or you could simply have one plant or seed in a pot as an illustration.

## Suggested outline of lesson

1. Have each of the children plant a seed in their pot. Discuss sowing seeds, what sort of soil the plant needs, sending out roots. Ask if a seed would grow in stones, or in the weeds, or on the floor of the room or the path outside.
2. Tell the children about Jesus' story of a farmer who sowed seeds. Give details of what happened to the seeds.
3. Explain that he said we are like the soil. The seed is what God and his Son Jesus teach us. If we do not listen we are like the path (concrete-covered or just trodden down). If we only do what God teaches us when it is easy, then we are like stony ground. If we are too busy doing what we want to do to spend time doing what God wants, we are like the soil with weeds. If we listen and try to do what he says we are like the good soil where the plants can grow.
4. Ask the children to draw the seeds on the activity sheet. They can choose a place to put the weeds and another for the stones. Have them mark the path and draw lovely plants growing on the good soil.
5. Teach the song 'If You Sow'.

## Alternative activities

1. Make a collage picture using different textures of paper or fabric to create the 4 different areas of the seed to fall on. You might want to use dried lentils or real seeds; if so, bear in mind that you will need quite strong glue to get them to stick.
2. If you have a sand tray, divide it into 4 areas. Put down a cardboard path, add some big pebbles for rocks, put in real weeds or make some from cardboard or Plasticine. Have an area of good ground that has been raked really well. Make some Plasticine birds and have a play figure for the farmer or make him from Plasticine or pipe cleaners. The children could take turns to scatter a few seeds and see where they land. (Have a dustpan and brush or vacuum cleaner handy!)
3. Role-play/mime: Someone can be the farmer scattering the seed. Some children can be birds swooping down to peck it up. Some can be the seed that falls amongst the rocks; they start off curled up small and then begin to grow quickly, but before they get very tall they wilt and shrivel away. Some children can be the seed in the thorny ground and some children can be the thorns. They grow up together but the thorns grow taller and block out the light from the good seed, (be prepared to referee if things get too competitive or aggressive!). Some children can be the seed that falls on the good ground and grow up strong and straight and tall. If you only have a small class, everyone can do everything!

## Now something harder

If your children find this exercise difficult you could provide them with a list of the words to help with spelling.

## Relevance to the children's lives

Ask the children if they ever want to play out instead of coming to Sunday School - which soil are they like then? Do they ever think they are too tired to pray to God at night - which soil are they like? Are they ever too fidgety to listen to the lesson - which soil are they like? What sort of fruit can grow in their hearts? - kindness, gentleness and thankfulness.

## Prayer

Ask who wants to pray about being like the good soil.

## Verse

'I am the Lord your God who teaches you what is best for you.' Isaiah 48:17.

# Song

## If You Sow (Tune: Yankee Doodle)

Musical notation for the song 'If You Sow' (Tune: Yankee Doodle). The notation is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are G4, A4, B4, C5, G4, A4, B4, C5, G4, A4, B4, C5, G4, A4, B4, C5. Chords G, D, G, and D7 are indicated above the notes. The second staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The notes are G4, A4, B4, C5, G4, A4, B4, C5, G4, A4, B4, C5, G4, A4, B4, C5. Chords G, C, D7, and G are indicated above the notes. The third staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The notes are G4, A4, B4, C5, G4, A4, B4, C5, G4, A4, B4, C5, G4, A4, B4, C5. Chords C and G are indicated above the notes. The fourth staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The notes are G4, A4, B4, C5, G4, A4, B4, C5, G4, A4, B4, C5, G4, A4, B4, C5. Chords C, D7, and G are indicated above the notes. The piece ends with a double bar line.

If you sow your seed in good ground  
It will grow up tall  
But if you sow in weeds and stones  
It'll have no root and fall.  
Sow the word of God in your heart  
Let it just take root there  
Sow the word of God in your heart  
And it will grow some fruit there.

*Music: Traditional.*