

Lower Elementary

WEEK 1 - STARTER



Activity Name: Book Balance

What You Need: ☐ Book

What You Do:

During the Activity:

- 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!”

Lead your group to the Large Group area.



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

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why did Jesus tell a story about seeds?
- What do the seeds mean?
- What happened when the seeds grew in good soil?
- What will you do with what you learned?

Activity Name: What Kind of Soil Are You?

What You Need: ☐ Soil Pictures

What You Do:

- Invite the kids to sit in a circle.
- Place the four pictures in the middle of your group: two on the top, two on the bottom.
- Review what each picture means from the Bible Story.
- Explain that you will read a short sentence, and they need to slap the picture that matches the “heart” in the story.
- Read the following simple scenarios:
 - “Jayden isn’t listening to his mom.” (*Hard path*)
 - “June shares her toy with a friend.” (*Good soil*)
 - “Zoe starts to clean her room, but then stops to play.” (*Rocky soil*)
 - “Amari gives his dad a big hug.” (*Good soil*)
 - “Carson is distracted by worries instead of relying on God to help.” (*Thorny soil*)
 - “Luke is honest when it would be easier to lie.” (*Good soil*)
- After each one, briefly and simply explain why it matches.
- End by asking: “Which soil do we WANT to be? Slap the picture of the soil we want to be!”
(*Have everyone slap the “good soil” picture!*)

What You Say:

“The good news is that each of us can become good soil! 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 in your life. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. As you have soft hearts and listen to God, He will grow His good fruit in 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!’

When you live like Jesus, you are showing the world God’s good kingdom! **God's kingdom grows when you hear and do what He says.**

Close in prayer/Invite kids to pray.