

## NEW CHURCH SHEPHERD SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM

### **Matthew 25 – The Parable of the Talents**

#### **Overview of Lesson**

The goal the Lord sets for us is to put our inborn talents and spiritual gifts to use in serving others and in living a good and productive life according to His Word.

#### **Theme**

Faithful servants are those who use the Lord's gifts to serve or help other people from love.

#### **Underlying New Church Ideas for the Teacher**

- We show our love to the Lord by loving the neighbor and obeying the Lord's Commandments.
- The Lord gives us special talents that we can use to serve the neighbor.
- Heavenly joy comes from serving others—without counting on a reward.
- By learning truths from the Word, we are better able to help people and to be useful members of society.
- Charity consists of acting sincerely, justly, and faithfully in everyday work and duties.

#### **Core Knowledges**

- The master gave each of the servants a large amount of money, according to his abilities.
- Two of the servants used the money wisely while their master was away, trading and doubling the amount of money.
- One of the servants buried his talent in the earth and never used what he had been given.
- The Lord gives us special talents or abilities that we can use to serve the neighbor.

#### **Concepts**

talent                      trading                      use

### **LESSON FROM THE WORD**

Read Matthew 25:14-30.

Also read these quotes from the Heavenly Doctrine:

*Serving the Lord is performing uses (Heaven and Hell 112).*

#### **Discussion Ideas**

- What is a talent? (It is a measurement and refers to a huge amount of money.)
- Who does the man (or master) symbolize? (the Lord)
- Who are meant by the servants? (people)
- What do the talents symbolize in this story? (The gifts that the Lord gives to us—especially goods and truths that we can use in our lives.)
- How can we be good and faithful servants of the Lord?
- The good and faithful servants used their talents for trading and doubled them. What does this teach us about the importance and rewards of using what the Lord gives us?
- What is meant by burying the talent? (Knowing truths but not applying them to life. If we don't use the truths and the abilities that the Lord gives us, then we are like the servant who hid the talent in the earth.)

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### *Activities for All Ages*

#### *Recitation (Choose 1)*

“Well done, good and faithful servant.... Enter into the joy of your lord” (Matt. 25:21).

“I will give to each one of you according to your works” (Rev. 2:23).

Charity is an inward affection for doing what is true (*Last Judgment* 39:11).

*Song* “The Talents” by Lori Odhner

### *Closure*

How can we be good and faithful servants of the Lord, using all of the gifts that He blesses us with?

## ACTIVITIES FOR VARIED AGE LEVELS

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### *Preschool Activities*

#### *Dramatization*

Dramatize the parable of the talents. Props could include silver “talents” (see primary project or substitute large silver coins such as silver dollars), a bathrobe for the master, 4 little sacks or pouches for holding the silver talents, a pot of dirt for burying the single talent, *etc.*

#### *Silver Coins*

Although the talents were a measurement rather than a coin, children will be able to understand the parable more easily if you show them silver coins (such as U.S. silver dollars) or make “coins” by covering cardboard with aluminum foil.)

#### *When I Grow Up*

Talk with the children about a variety of uses or occupations and then have each child make a picture of what they might want to do when they grow up.

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### *Primary Activities*

#### *Make Silver Coins*

Help the children make silver coins. Make shiny, silver coins with circles of cardboard covered with aluminum foil. You could also roll out a modeling compound and cut circles to dry and then spray paint a metallic silver color. Tell the children that the talents given to the servants would really equal thousands of silver coins.

#### *Dramatization (see preschool)*

#### *When I Grow Up (see attached sheet)*

Talk with the children about a variety of uses or occupations and then have each child write about or make a picture of what they might want to do when they grow up.

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### *Intermediate Activities*

#### *Dramatization (see preschool)*

#### *Silver Coins*

Make silver coins (as described in primary activities) or have ready a supply of large silver coins (such as U.S. silver dollars). Explain that a talent was a large amount of money that would equal the amount of money a laborer could earn if he worked for fifteen years.

For this activity, use silver coins to represent the talents given to the servants. Ask the students to pretend that they are the servants and give each one of them a silver “talent.” How can they multiply it? How can they bear fruit or be useful with what they have been given? Allow the discussion to include both the spiritual meaning of talents as knowledge from the Word and the current use of the word “talents” as meaning the specific abilities given to us by the Lord. How could we use our talents in a way that multiplies them? How would we bury them?

#### *I Was Born to... (see attached sheet)*

Think about what you enjoy doing or think that you would like to do when you are an adult and then finish this sentence: “I was born to....” Answers could range from helping take care of younger brothers and sisters, playing soccer, or writing stories to future goals such as being a wife and mother, being a concert pianist, or becoming a doctor.

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### *For Teens*

#### *The Five Anchors of a Charitable Life—A Card Game (see attached)*

This card game can help teens explore various aspects of charity. If we do our best to learn the Lord’s will (by reading the Word and reflecting on it) and then use our abilities to live according to His commandments, we will be living a life of charity. But the Lord’s Word teaches that there are five kinds of activities which make for a balanced life: daily work, benefactions, duties, signs of charity (or piety), and recreations (see *Doctrine of Charity* 129).

The five talents of the parable symbolize the spiritual enrichment we should seek. And the five kinds of charitable activities are like five anchors that we should try to have in our lives. If we spend all of our time working and forget to take time for recreation, we will cease to have the energy to be useful. If we spend all of our time recreating, we will eventually be bored and unhappy, because a useful life brings us true happiness. The goal of the game is to acquire one card from each category while learning about the five aspects of a balanced life.

#### *The Meaning of the Parable of the Talents (see attached sheet)*

Use the activity sheet to choose statements that you think might be ideas that the Lord is trying to convey in this parable, then discuss with others.

#### *The Numbers Five and Ten*

In the parable of the talents, one of the servants is given five talents and then doubles them. What are some other stories of the Word that use the number five or the number ten?