

General Church Education



The Sower

Matthew 13:1-9, 19-23

Lesson 21

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 2: The Lord Is Our Shepherd

For ages 7-8 years

The Sower

Matthew 13:1-9, 19-23

Ideas for Parents & Teachers

We can learn an important lesson by taking a deeper look at the setting for the telling of the parable of the Sower. The Lord left the house and went to sit by the sea where He met the multitude. The sea stands for a body of knowledge about heaven and the church. It represents knowledge of what is good and true—the kind of knowledge that exists in heaven and the church on earth. So here we have a picture of what the Lord constantly tries to do, that is, lead people out of their natural ways of thinking and into a higher understanding of spiritual things.

The Lord sat in a boat to teach the crowds that came to learn from Him. A boat stands for doctrine from the Word. Doctrine organizes the information given in the Word and enables us to navigate the vast sea of knowledge there. Lastly, the people stood to see the Lord. Sight represents our understanding. So these people were looking to the Lord, trying to understand the message He came to earth to bring. They wanted to learn and change their lives for the better. This attitude is vital to understanding spiritual teachings. Adults are able to compel themselves. For our children, we can make learning the stories of the Word as pleasant as possible so they will want to learn and remember what they are taught.

Ideas for Children

- Parables are stories with a hidden message.
- The Lord uses parables to lead people to understand the truth and how it applies to them.
- We need to keep our minds ready to learn the Lord's truth.

From the Writings

Some seed “fell upon the way, which was trodden underfoot” (Luke 8:5). The seed means Divine Truth, or the truth of the Word. By falling upon the way and being trodden under foot is to be received only by our outer thought, and not interiorly. For what is received in the spirit and heart is meant by the seed which fell into the good ground. *Apocalypse Explained* 632

Some seed fell on good ground, and when it had grown up it brought forth fruit a hundredfold (Luke 8:8; Matthew 13:8,23; Mark 4:20). People cannot be regenerated except in adult years, for not until then are they able to exercise reason and judgment and in so doing to receive good and truth from the Lord. Before this they are being prepared by the Lord through the implantation of such things as can serve them as the soil for receiving the seeds of truth and good. This includes many states of innocence and charity, also concepts of good and truth, and consequently thoughts. This implantation occurs during many years before regeneration takes place. When people have been endowed with these things and so have been prepared, their state is now said to be complete, for the things that are interior have been arranged, ready to receive. All those things with people which the Lord grants prior to regeneration and by means of which they are regenerated are called remains. *Arcana Coelestia* 2636

The Sower

The Lord Teaches the Multitudes

In this story the Lord once again taught a large crowd of people. Let's read the beginning and find out where this happened.

Read Matthew 13:1-2. Where did Jesus go when He came out of the house? (He sat by the sea. When the people came, He sat in a boat.)

Yes, Jesus sat in a boat so all could see and hear Him. The large crowd or multitude of people stood on the shore and listened eagerly to what He said. Once again He spoke in parables. This parable may be familiar to you. It is about a sower or a farmer who was planting seed. In those times, farmers prepared the earth and planted seed by hand. Remember that they had no modern machinery to help them plant. A farmer would take a cloth bag filled with seeds and



then walk along the ground sowing or spreading the seed on top of the earth by handfuls. Read on to find out what kinds of ground the seed fell on.

Read Matthew 13:3-9. What was the first kind of ground where the seed fell? (The wayside.)

The “wayside” is hard-packed earth where people walked on the paths at the edge of the field. The seed just sat on top of the hard earth and so the birds came and ate it.

What was the next kind of ground? (Stony places.)

You can imagine earth filled with stones. There would not be much ground for the seeds to take root in, would there?

Healthy plants have deep roots so they can get water when the sun is hot. Without good roots, plants wither and die.

Other seeds fell on what kind of ground? (Some fell among thorns.)

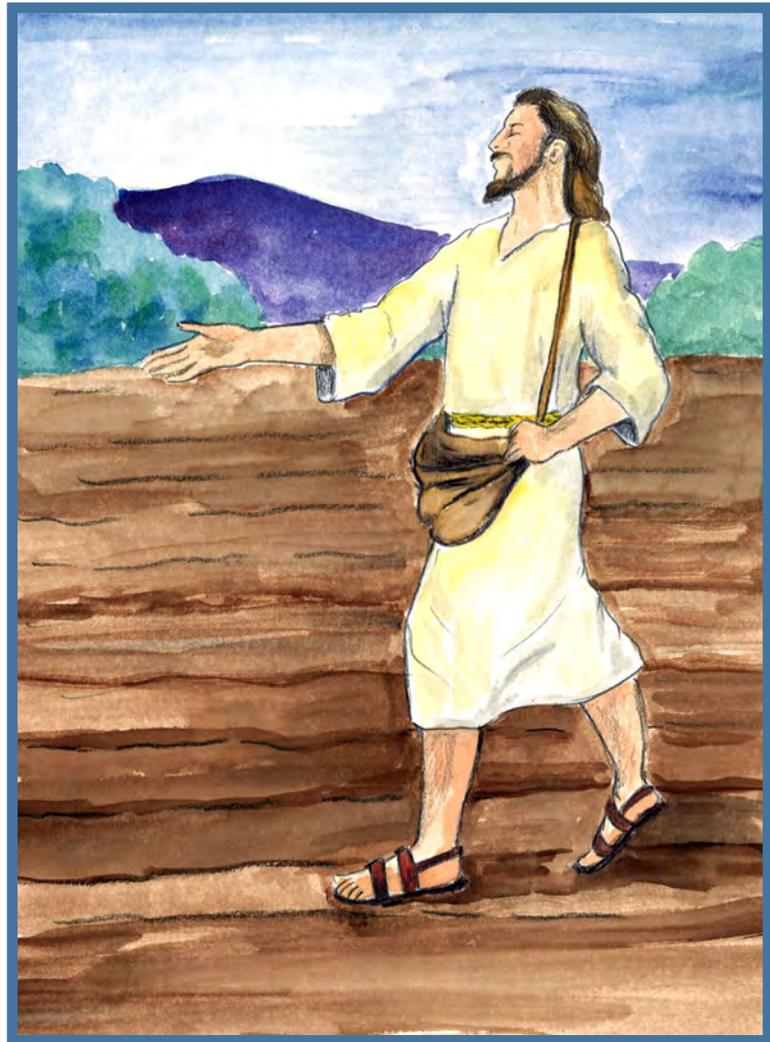
Thorns are prickly weeds that choke out other plants. It would be very hard to grow anything among thorns.

What was the last kind of ground where the seeds fell? (Good ground.)

It was in the good ground that the seeds took root and grew into a crop that could be useful to the sower.

The Garden of Our Minds

The Lord Himself explained to His disciples the heavenly meaning of the Parable of the Sower. As you read it now, listen to find out what seeds stand for.



Read Matthew 13:18-23. In this explanation what do the seeds stand for? (The Word of God.)

Yes, the Lord is like a Sower. His seeds are the true ideas He tells us in His Word. These truths teach us the way to heaven. But all of the Lord's seeds do not grow. To grow they must fall in the right places. Our minds are like the ground. The seed must fall into minds that are ready for these truths from the Lord, so they can take root and grow.

The Lord makes people's minds just right for growing His seeds, that is, for understanding His truth. Many wonderful and useful thoughts have grown up in the minds of men, women and children. You know many wonderful things now that you did not know when you were born. These things are like the seeds that the Lord plants.

In this parable the Lord is telling us that we must keep our minds clean and prepared to receive new seeds or truths. Then good things will grow there. However, if we let bad thoughts come and take away the true ideas we hear in His Word, it is like the birds eating the seeds so

that they do not grow in our lives. If we are not very interested in the Lord's Word, it is like the seed that fell in the stony places where they did not have enough earth to grow. If we are more interested in selfish ideas or being greedy, then these things will choke out any truths just like the thorns. But if we listen carefully to the Lord's Word, if we try to follow His teachings, then the Lord's truths can grow up in our minds and bear fruit in our lives. Our minds will be good fields filled with useful fruits and flowers. They will be beautiful gardens planted by the Lord. People whose minds are like that actually live in such gardens when they go to heaven!



Discussion Questions

- Have you ever planted seeds? How did you prepare the soil?
- What kinds of thoughts do you think the Lord would like to have grow in our minds? (Good and true thoughts from His Word.)
- What kinds of thoughts and feelings make it hard or impossible for the Lord's truths to grow in our minds and lives? (False and selfish feelings and thoughts, thoughts about doing or saying unkind things, any hurtful thoughts.)
- Why do you think the Lord taught this parable? (To teach us to be aware of the kinds of thoughts we have in our minds and to prepare ourselves to receive new truths as we grow older.)
- It's important to prepare our minds to receive good and true thoughts from the Lord. How can we do this? (Answers may include recognizing the importance of the Word and paying attention to it, doing what the Lord tells us to do, praying for help, being kind to people around us.)

Activity Overview | The Sower

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

Seek the Lord while He may be found;
Call upon Him while He is near.
Let the wicked forsake his way,
And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
Let him return to the Lord,
And he will have mercy on him;
And to our God,
For He will abundantly pardon. Isaiah 55:6,7

Songs

The Sower

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-the-sower/>

Activities

Choose one or two.

- Activity 1 | Sower Wheel Project
- Activity 2 | Sower Pictures to Cut Out and Sequence
- Picture to color

Additional Activity Ideas

- Watch a video of *The Sower* song at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-the-sower-song/>
- Plant seeds indoors or outdoors. Water them and watch them grow!

Activity 1 | Sower Wheel Project

Re-tell the parable of the Sower by creating a Sower Wheel.

Materials

- 2 white paper plates (or circles cut from stiff paper using the *Sower Wheel* templates provided)
- 1 paper fastener (brad)
- crayons, colored pencils or markers

Instructions

1. Cut a quarter section out of one of the two white plates, as shown in *Figure 1*. (*Optional: using the Sower Wheel 1 template, cut a circle out of stiff white paper.*) This will be the top layer of the project.
2. Draw a picture of the sower spreading seeds on this top circle. Position the sower so that His seeds appear to fall into the quarter section that is cut away.
3. Divide the second plate into quarters with a pencil, as shown in *Figure 2*. (*Optional: using the Sower Wheel 2 template, cut a circle out of stiff white paper. Mark as shown.*)
4. Illustrate the story by making a picture of what grew on each kind of ground mentioned in the parable. Go in order around the circle.
 - 1st seeds on a rock and seedlings withering in the sun
 - 2nd plants being choked by thistles, thorns and weeds
 - 3rd seeds by the wayside with birds nearby
 - 4th good ground and healthy plants with fruit
5. Place the top plate or circle over the bottom. Fasten in the center with the brad.
6. Re-tell the parable of the sower. As you tell the story, turn the bottom plate so that the picture of each kind of ground shows as you talk about it.

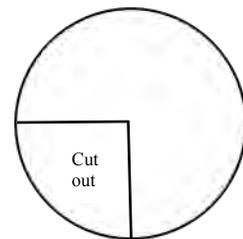


Figure 1

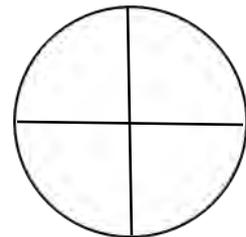
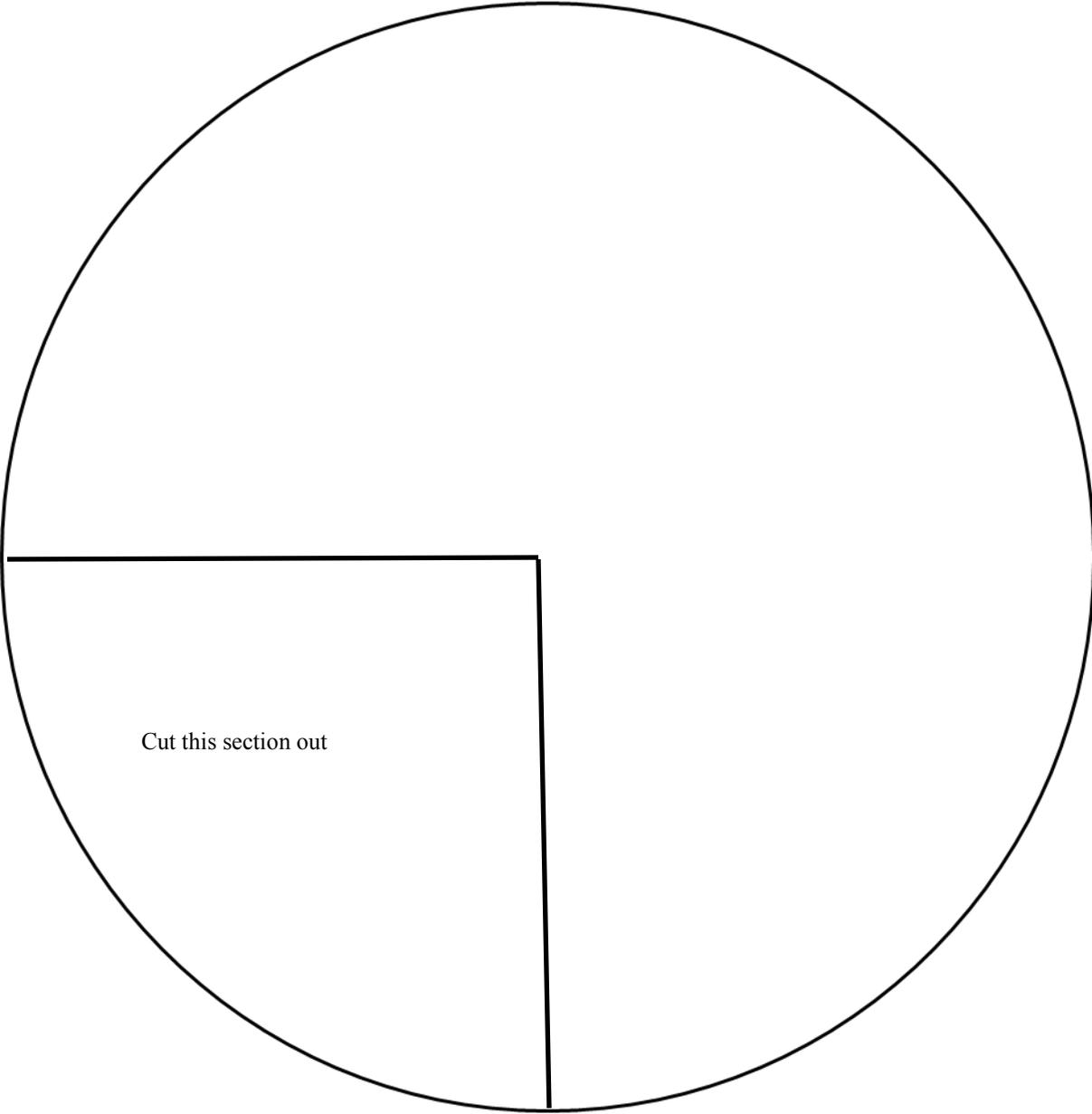
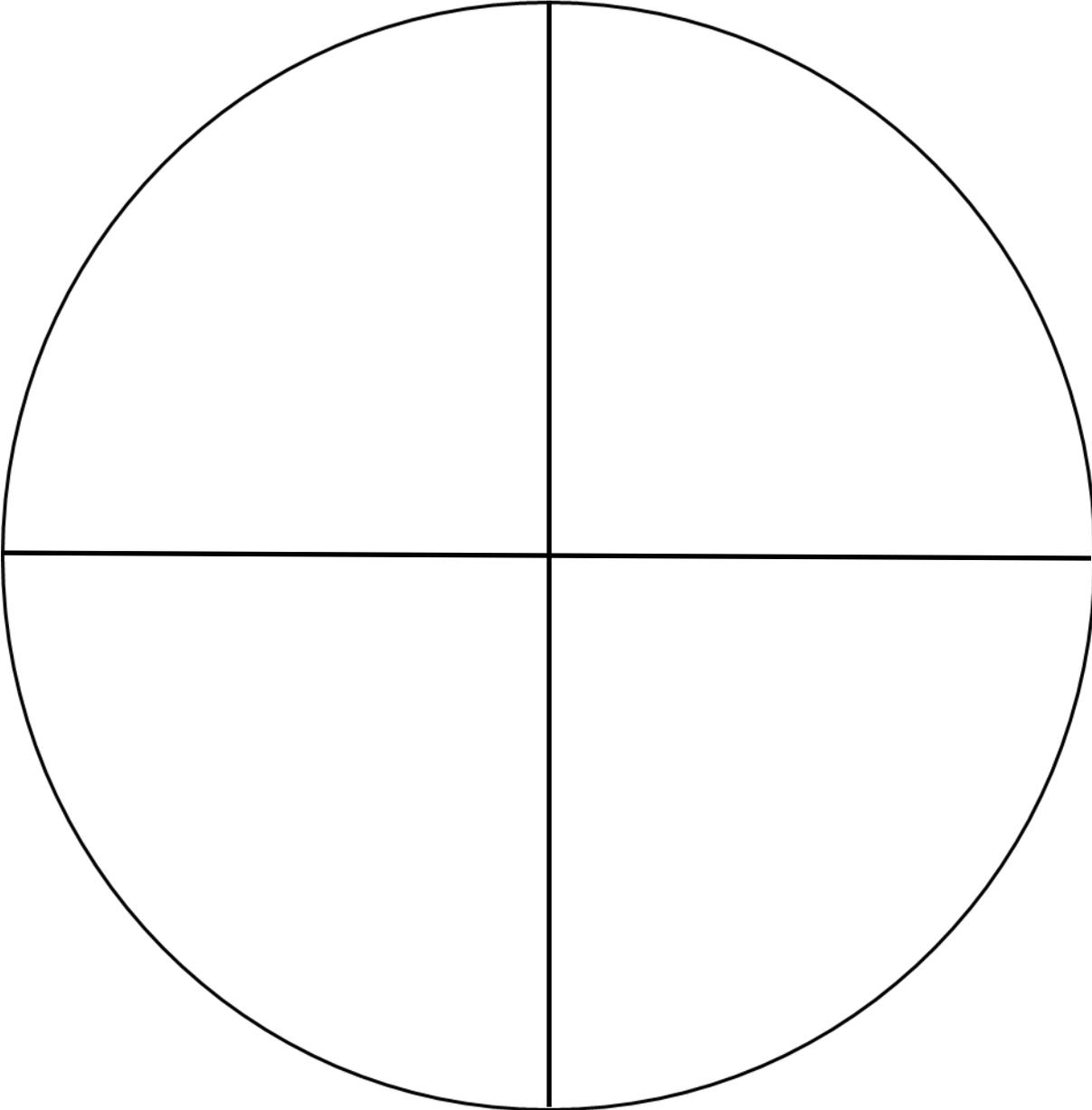


Figure 2

Sower Wheel Template 1



Sower Wheel Template 2



Activity 2 | Sower Pictures to Cut Out and Sequence



