

Lessons and Activities for Sixth Sunday after Pentecost 2020

Getting Ready for the Gospel

Option 1: Tape a sheet of butcher paper or newsprint to a wall or work surface. Invite children to make a mural of things that grow. You can show younger children how to glue simple tissue-paper flowers to the mural: ◆ Twist 1" squares of tissue around the eraser ends of pencils to make flower shapes. ◆ With tissue still wrapped around an eraser, dip the end in glue. ◆ Press the flower to the mural. Older children can use scissors and construction paper to make cut-outs of plants, animals and people that grow.

Option 2: Ask participants to list on the board or newsprint everything people need to do to grow food plants outdoors. Participants can write or draw their answers. You may need to prod memories with such examples as dig, plow, sow seed, water, fertilize, remove weeds, harvest, etc.

Discuss: ◆ What is the most important thing people need to grow food? (There is no right or wrong answer to this question; encourage participants to give diverse answers.)

Gospel Story

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears, let him hear." (Matthew 13:1-9, ESV)

OR

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. 2 And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. 3 And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. 5 Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, 6 but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. 7 Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. 8 Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 He who has ears, let him hear."

“Hear then the parable of the sower: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. ²⁰ As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, ²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. ²² As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. ²³ As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”
–Matthew 13:1-9; 18-23

Skits: Parable Re-do

Read aloud Matthew 13:1-9. Divide participants into mixed-age groups. Ask each group to invent a new version of the parable, using a modern-day setting, (for older kids, other than farming, if possible). Invite members to practice acting out the revised parable story. After 10 minutes, invite groups to share their “new” parables with one another.

Discuss the message of hope contained in Matthew 13:1-9: ♦What good news about God’s kingdom do we learn? ♦How does that message of good news show up in our new skits?

Praying Together

Option 1: Gather in front of the mural made in today’s Getting Started. Invite children to thank God for all things that grow.

Option 2: Pray together that we become the rich soil in which the word of God grows and produces abundant fruit.

Game: Seed Review

Give the children a supply of pumpkin or sunflower seeds. Explain that children can glue 10 seeds to a sheet of newsprint or poster board for each correct answer they give to a story-review question. Challenge the children to harvest 30, 60 or 100 seeds! Sample questions: ♦ Who was planting seeds in today’s story? (a man or a farmer) ♦Where did the first seeds fall? (beside a path or on top of dirt) ♦What did the birds do to these seeds? (ate them)

Planting Center: Growing Seeds!

On a covered work surface set out planting supplies. Invite each child to fill a container with soil, plant several seeds and moisten the soil with sprayed water. Children can cover their

planted containers with plastic wrap to seal in the moisture. Remove the wrap when the seeds sprout.

Art: Scripture-Verse Cartoons

Invite participants to create four-panel cartoons to illustrate today's parable. Participants can tell the Bible story or make up their own modern-day version of the story. Directions to participants: ♦Think of four drawings that will show the story you have chosen. ♦Use felt markers to make each drawing on a blank index card. ♦Glue the cards onto a sheet of black construction paper, leaving a black border around each card. ♦If you like, you can choose a verse from Matthew 13:1-9 to use in your cartoon.

Music: Listen to or Sing a Hymn

Listen to, sing and/or dance along to a video of a hymn or song reflecting today's theme. Here are some examples:

♦“Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee”: <https://youtu.be/A8udnFjf958>

♦“Be Thou My Vision”: <https://youtu.be/Optrm7IF16s>

♦“Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee”: <https://youtu.be/OaEH1e DLm0>

Reflection on Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

All gardeners must envy the inevitable, abundant harvest promised in Matthew. But when we dig, we stumble on the first rocks in our gardens. We clear the ground, we dig, we plant and we adjust our dreams as we go. But, by September we find ourselves again ruefully surveying the results. Jesus has such failures in mind when he tells this parable. Never mind, he seems to say, the harvest comes, in rich abundance.

No doubt Jesus also had in mind the frustrations and failures of Israel when he told this story. We who hear the story today can add the frustrations and failures of 2,000 years of Church history. Wars fought in the name of Christianity, the persecution of our Jewish brothers and sisters, and a division between rich and poor even more profound than in the time of Jesus—are these not enough to make us lose heart? Can the kingdom really come to redeem such failures? We think of our own frustrations and failures, too. Can the kingdom really come to us? Never mind, says Jesus. Never mind the sins. Never mind the frustrations and failures. Look—the seed is planted. God's word, God's unfailing word, is spoken. Here the kingdom comes, in rich abundance.



The Parable of the Sower

But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. Matthew 13:23a

Based on Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 (NIV)



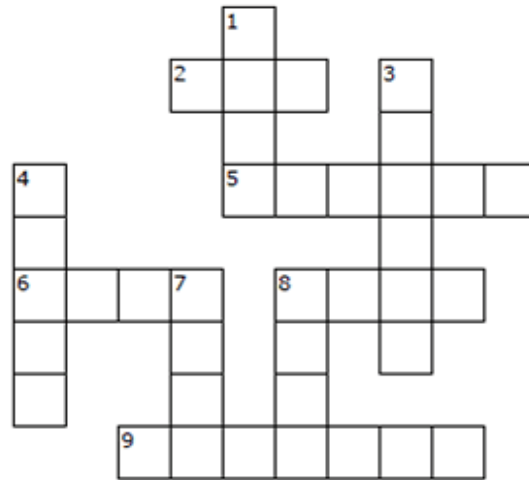
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PLANTS	SCORCH	FARMER	THORNS	CROP
WITHER	BIRDS	ROOT	CHOKE	SOIL
FELL	PARABLE	SCATTER	SEED	GREW
ROCKY	SHALLOW	GOOD	SOW	PATH

The Parable of the Sower

But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. Matthew 13:23a

Based on Matthew 13:1-8, 18-23 (NIV)



ACROSS

2. To put seeds in the ground so that plants will grow
5. Small, sharp, pointed growths on the stem of a plant
6. Plants such as grain, vegetables, or fruit grown by farmers
8. A small, usually hard part of a plant from which a new plant can grow
9. Not deep

DOWN

1. The part of a plant which grows down into the earth
3. A person who owns or takes care of a farm
4. Covered with stones
7. A way made by or for people walking on the ground
8. The upper layer of earth that may be dug or plowed and in which plants grow

PATH	CROP	SOIL	THORNS	ROOT
SHALLOW	FARMER	SEED	SOW	ROCKY