

Bible story

Open the Bible at Matthew 13.1-9,18-23: Jesus tells simple stories, called parables, to help people

A **farmer** went, his **seed** to sow, he did not know if they would grow.

Some **seed** fell on stony ground, some the hungry **birds** soon found.

Some fell among the **thorns** so tall, they stood no chance to grow at all!

But some **seed** fell on fertile ground, and soon the crops grew all around.



So many people wanted to see Jesus and hear what he had to say, that he had to sit in a boat and teach the people standing on the shore. He told them many things through parables.

‘Listen!’ Jesus said. ‘A farmer went out to sow his seeds. As he scattered them, some of the seeds fell on the path and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell onto rocky ground. At first they grew quickly, but when the sun came out they got all burnt up because they had no roots in the shallow soil. Other seeds fell among thorns, which grew up around them and choked them. Other seed fell on good soil and they grew into thirty, sixty, a hundred times more wheat. Listen!’ Jesus said again. ‘If you’ve got ears, listen!’

Jesus explained the parable of the sower to the crowd. ‘What did I mean by the seed on the path being eaten up?’ he said. ‘Well, that’s like when the good things that God has planted in our hearts get snatched away by the devil. And the seed on the rocky path? That’s like when someone hears God’s word and loves it and is full of joy, but their enthusiasm disappears as soon as trouble comes their way. And the seed among thorns? Well, that’s like when someone hears God’s word but worry and greed take over. But the seed planted in good soil – ah, the seed in the good soil is like the person who hears God’s word, loves it and lives it, so it produces thirty, sixty, a hundred times more goodness in their lives.’

Glossary

devil a personification of evil, also called Satan or ‘the evil one’.

Talk together with children

- Farmers used to sow their seeds by ‘broadcasting’ (throwing the seed as they went). Do you think the seed would land where the farmer wanted it to?
- What makes a good listener to a story?
- In the story, what helped the seeds to grow? What helps us to grow as followers of Jesus?

Activities, songs and prayers

Choose from the activities below and do any or all of them in any order you wish. Some are designed for younger children and some for young people. However we hope using a mix will work for any ages in your household.

Play

I'm going to tell you a story...

Build a story as a group

- Gather your group into a circle and explain that you're going to take it in turns to tell part of a story – one sentence each, and that you'll start. The sentences don't have to be complicated, but it helps the story if they follow on from the last sentence.
- Start the story with a sentence that should be easy to continue, for example, 'One day, Jesus went to the seaside with his friends.'
- Finish the story when everyone has had a turn, or you come to a natural conclusion.

Create

Make a story catcher

Explore another way of telling a story

You will need: [a square of plain paper \(about 20cm square\) and pens or pencils](#) for each person.

- Help everyone fold their square paper into quarters then unfold. Ask them to fold each corner in towards the middle. Turn the paper over so that the folded edges are face down, and now fold each corner in towards the middle again.
- Write numbers 1 to 8 on each of the folded triangles, then lift the flaps and write the story in eight parts underneath each triangle shape.
- Flip it over and decorate the folded squares with colours. Place index fingers and thumbs into the squares on each side to fold the story catcher in with the coloured squares on top (see below).
- Invite everyone to play with one another and use their story catchers (using the structure below).

You could use the following eight sentences to make the story in your story catcher:

1. Jesus liked telling stories.
2. Lots of people came to listen to Jesus.
3. Sometimes the crowds were huge!
4. Once Jesus told a story about a sower.
5. The sower sowed seed on different types of ground.
6. Jesus hid messages in his stories.
7. The parable of the sower is about how we respond to God.
8. Parables help us to learn more about God.

How to play

9. Choose a colour. Spell out the colour as you move the story catcher e.g. yellow = 6 moves.
10. Choose a number from one of the triangles and move the story catcher that many times.
11. Choose a number from another triangle and open up for that part of the story.

Repeat

Snapshot

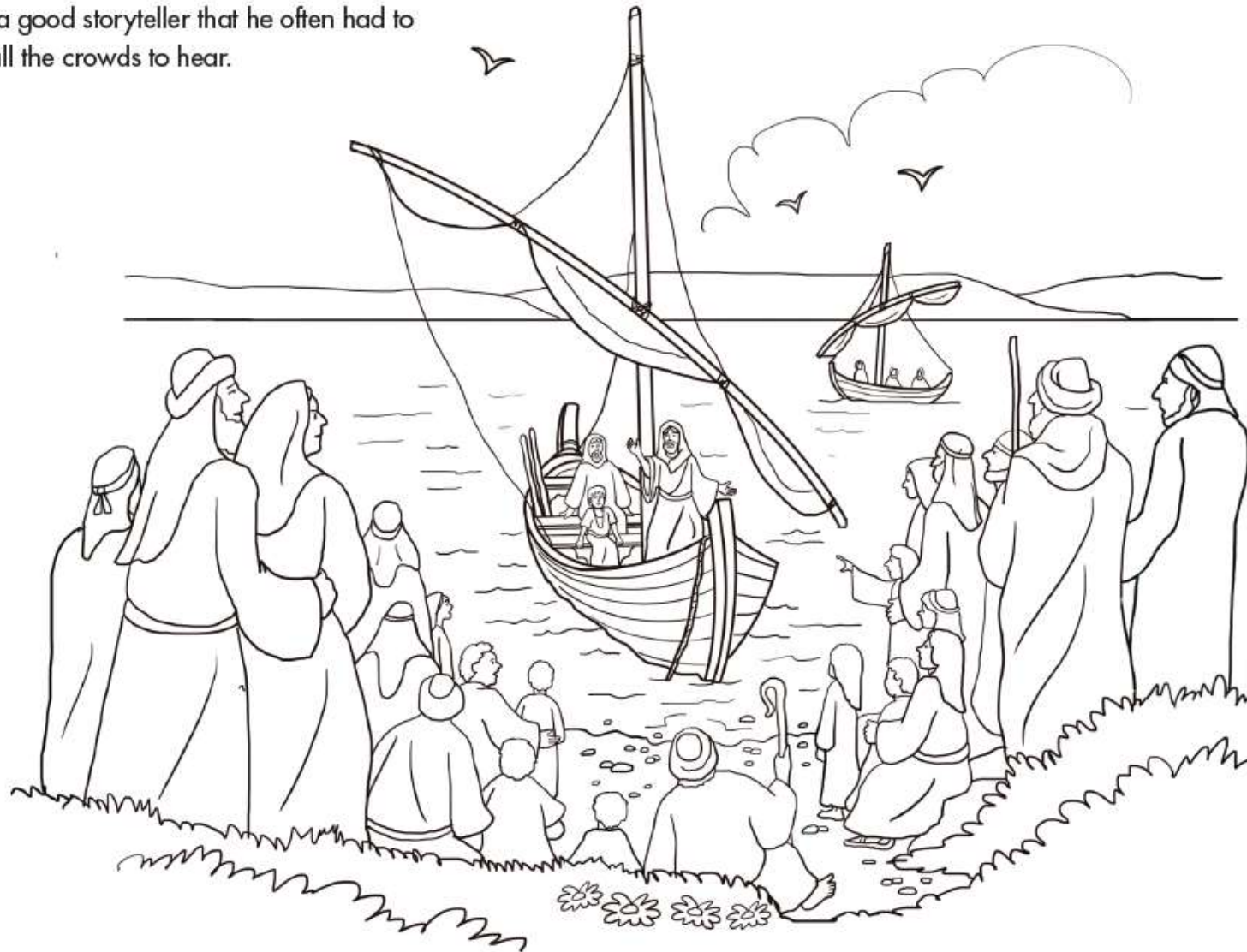
Come up with a snapchat or a tweet (max. 280 characters) – a picture with a caption – that would get across the message of the parable of the sower. Discuss how today we only have quick snippets of things to share information with people:

- Do people think we spend less time reading/watching stories now?
- How easy is it to share information quickly?
- Do we get across everything that we need to?

Name

Colouring time

Jesus was such a good storyteller that he often had to find a way for all the crowds to hear.





Fit the nine letters from 'sunflower' into the gaps below. Cross them off as you use them.

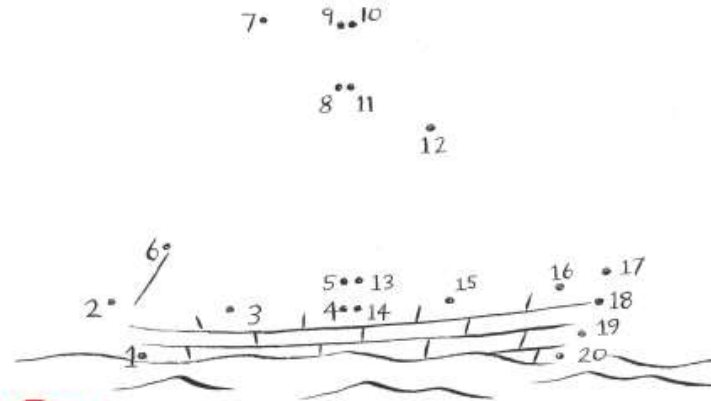


Jes _ s told th _ m a st _ ry
 about a farme _ who sowed
 _ots of seeds. Some of them
 _ell on bad ground, and died.
 But all the seed o _ good
 ground gre _ tall and _ trong

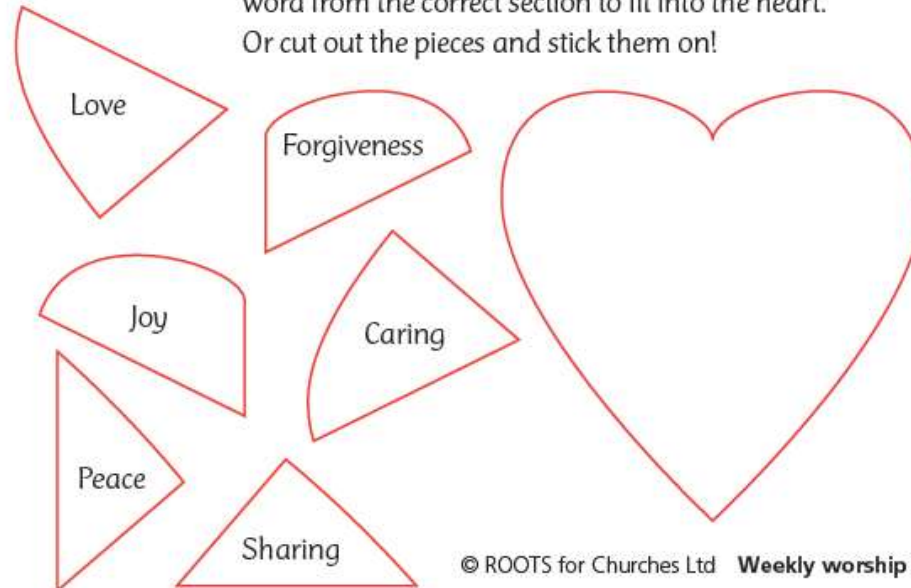
Activity time



Crowds gathered to listen to Jesus telling stories. Where did he sit so that everyone could hear him? Join the dots to find out.



Jesus sows the seeds of God's love in our hearts. Can you 'plant' the words in this heart? Write the word from the correct section to fit into the heart. Or cut out the pieces and stick them on!



Name

Matthew 13.1-9,18-23

Jesus tells simple stories called parables to help people understand an important message.



Family time

Talk In the story, what helped the seeds grow and what stopped them from growing? What helps us to grow as followers of Jesus? What might stop us from growing?

Do Take it in turns to tell a story. Someone starts the story with a sentence, e.g. 'One day, John went to help clean the church when...'. Continue until the story reaches a natural conclusion.

Pray Make time to read some favourite Bible stories together (some of the parables ideally) and pray about the meaning together.

