

Discovering the Hidden Kingdom

nine sessions on the parables of Jesus



P
r
i
m
a
r
y



Lunchtime Group
Resources

Discovering the Hidden Kingdom

nine sessions on the parables of Jesus



The Crusader Union is a Bible-based, interdenominational Christian youth organisation, whose vision is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to students in the Independent Schools of Australia, to nurture Christians and to encourage church membership.

Although all pages from *Discovering the Hidden Kingdom* may be photocopied for use in Christian groups, Crusaders request that each school or church purchase at least one original. However, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means – electronic, mechanical, recording, or any other – except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

All rights reserved.

Scriptures marked as '(CEV)' are taken from the Contemporary English Version. Copyright © 1995 by American Bible Society. Used by permission.

Scriptures marked as '(GNB)' are taken from the Good News Bible. Copyright © 1998 by The Bible Society in Australia. Used by permission.

WELCOME

This resource has been specifically written with school groups in mind but can be adapted depending on your needs. It is based on the group running for approximately 30 minutes each meeting.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

- 9 sets of leader's notes for regular meetings. The leader's notes provide an aim, fun activity, guidelines for an interactive talk, as well as prayer and song ideas.
- 2 colour advertising posters designed to grab the attention of students and help increase awareness of your group. There is space for you to fill in your group name and where you meet. We encourage Independent schools to use the 'CRU School Groups' logo when promoting their group so as to link students with the work that God is doing in other schools.

BEFORE YOU START

- Whilst this resource is aimed at easing the load for the group leader, it is vital, before each meeting, to read the Bible passages and adapt the talk to the specific needs of your group.
- A variety of video clips and other resources are used in this series. These can be accessed from the Web Extras section of the CRU website:

www.crusaders.edu.au/ministry/resourcewebextras

- It would be very easy to spend too much time on the activity each week. Remember that looking at the Bible and praying together are the most important parts of the meeting and divide time accordingly.
- Please note that all pages in this resource can be photocopied but Crusaders request each school purchase at least one original.

We pray that this resource will be a great help as you join in God's work of bringing students to Himself and growing them to be like His Son.

*"We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom,
so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.
To this end I labour, struggling with all His energy which so powerfully works in me."
Colossians 1:28–29*

Discovering the Hidden Kingdom

Week	Title	Key Passage	Main Idea
1	How do I listen to Jesus?	The Soil and the Sower <i>Mark 4:1-20</i>	People respond to God's word in different ways. The challenge is to be people who take it to heart and let it change their lives.
2	Does God search for me?	The Lost Coin <i>Luke 15:8-10</i>	God searches out and saves sinful people.
3	I said 'I love Jesus', isn't that enough?	The Two Sons <i>Matt 21:28-32</i>	Faith in God must be backed up by actions. Mere words are not enough.
4	What makes a group grow?	The Growing Seed <i>Mark 4:26-29</i>	God is always growing His Kingdom, despite how it may sometimes look.
5	You're Invited! <i>(Outreach Week)</i>	The Great Banquet <i>Luke 14:15-24</i>	God is having a salvation party and you're invited.
6	What does God want from us?	The Pharisee and the Tax Collector <i>Luke 18:9-14</i>	God is interested in humility not self-righteousness.
7	Who do I have to love?	The Good Samaritan <i>Luke 10:25-37</i>	In God's kingdom love has no boundaries.
8	Are you ready?	The Ten Virgins <i>Matt 25:1-13</i>	Jesus will return at any time, so be ready.
9	Will you share?	The Home Owner <i>Matt 13:52</i>	We need to be sharing our new and old knowledge about Jesus with other people.

AIM

To help students to see the different responses to God's word and to encourage them to be people who take it to heart and let it change their lives.

PREPARE

- ❑ Read and familiarise yourself with the context and content of Mark 4:1-7, 13-20.
- ❑ Ensure you have the facilities to show the advertising videos found on Web Extras.
- ❑ Make sure you have a white board and white board markers available.
- ❑ Get a long flower pot with some soil in it, and some seeds for easy to grow flowers.¹

INTRO

Explain to the students that over the next 9 weeks you will be looking at parables. Parables are stories and pictures that Jesus used to teach people about the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is what life is like when God is in charge, just like when people live in an earthly kingdom they live under the rule of their King or Queen.²

¹ See <http://www.yates.com.au/products/seeds/flowers/easy-to-grow/> for easy to grow flowers

² It may be useful to note that many kingdoms these days, such as the United Kingdom, are not accurate representations of what God's rule is like in the Kingdom of God, due to their democratic form of government.

FUN ACTIVITY

This activity is designed to get people thinking about how they respond to the messages they get.

Watch three of the ads featured in the Web Extras.

Get students to stand on the far right of the room if they think the ad is terrible.

Stand in the middle of the room if the ad makes them a little interested in the product.

Stand on the far left if they think the ad is brilliant!

Ask a few students why they stood where they did each time.

Tell the students:

We are given lots of different messages "Buy this product", "Wear these clothes", "Eat this food" and we all respond to them in different ways. Advertising is often trying to give you a message you don't need to hear, but God's message is different. In today's parable we're looking at how people respond when they hear God's message about how He saves people, which is a message that everyone needs to hear, but not everyone responds to as they should.

PASSAGE

Read Mark 4:1-7 – You could get students to act out the parable. It's always fun having people pretending to be growing seed, choking weeds and greedy birds.



TALK

A. Face One

- On the white board draw four circles.
- Explain that in Jesus' parable the four different types of seed represent four different responses to Jesus' message.
- Jesus says the first type of soil, where the birds take the seed away, are people who hear Jesus' message, but Satan takes it away as soon as they hear it so it makes no difference in their life.
- In the first circle draw two eyes, two ears, a nose and a blank mouth.
- These are the people, who hear about Jesus and it goes in one ear and out the other. They don't care.
- Draw an arrow going in one ear and out the other.

B. Face Two

- Draw a happy face on the second circle.
- Explain that the second soil is where the seed grows in rocky ground, but then dies because it has no root. This is like people who hear about Jesus and love it, but when trouble comes, or people don't like them because they are friends of Jesus, they stop believing in Jesus.
- Draw angry faces around the second face, and maybe a lightning bolt (whatever represents trouble).
- Rub out the second face's mouth and make it a sad mouth.

C. Face Three

- Draw a happy face on the third circle.
- Explain that the third soil, which grows well and then gets choked by weeds, is like people who hear about Jesus, love what He says and does, and act like friends of Jesus. Sadly, after a while, they get distracted by things like trying to be popular, having the best stuff, having an easy life, and they stop wanting to follow Jesus.
- Around the third face draw toys, sunglasses (to signify being cool), and straight faces.
- Make the third face unhappy like the second.

D. Face Four

- Draw a happy face on the fourth circle
- Explain that the fourth soil, which grows well and produces a huge crop of grain, is like the people who hear Jesus' message and believe it, they obey Jesus and their lives are changed by Him.
- Draw a Christian cross over the head of the fourth face and lots of little happy faces around it.

E. The Challenge

- Tell the students that over the next few weeks you're going to be learning a lot about Jesus' message.
- Encourage them not to be like the first person who ignores or hates what Jesus has to say.
- Not to be like the second person who only believes Jesus for a little while until it gets too hard.
- Not to be like the third person who gets distracted by all the other things that happen in their life.
- But to be like the fourth person who believes in Jesus, listens to what Jesus teaches, obeys Jesus and tells lots of people about Him.

SING

The Ballad of Farmer Phil – *Meet the King* - EMU
Good Soil – *Meet the King* - EMU

FINISH

Give everyone some seeds and get them to put the seed into the soil in the flower pot. As they do this encourage them to pray that God would be making their hearts soft; helping them to respond to His message like the fourth person.

You may like to keep the pot and care for the growing plants. If the plants grow well bring the plants back at the end of the term as a reminder of what you learnt.