

# Parable of the Sower

## Lesson 7

**Scripture:** Luke 8:4-8, 11-15

**Bible Memory:** Hebrews 11:1, 6










**Focus:** ♥ Jesus wants us to stick to God's Word and grow.

### Heart to Heart Teacher Devotion

Jesus' parables are captivating, although not always easily understood. More than once Jesus had to explain a parable to His disciples. Dig deeper into this parable. Read it for several days, thinking about different aspects of the parable. Ask yourself, *How am I doing as a sower, teaching and telling others the Word of God? Am I in any way like the three soils in which the seeds didn't do well? How can I help others take root in God's Word and mature?* Then focus on verse 15 and thank God for helping you to persevere—to stick to God's Word—and grow.



## Lesson 7 at a Glance

<p><b>1 FOCUS IN</b> Use one or more of these activities to help students explore how things and people can grow.</p>	<p> <b>Quick Step</b> How They Grow!</p> <p> <b>Option</b> Guess It Fast!</p>	<p><b>Immerse Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities for lesson 7</li> <li>• Guess It Fast! reproducible page</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pencils</li> <li>• scissors, whiteboard, dry-erase markers and eraser, watch with second hand</li> </ul>
<p><b>2 EXPLORE HIS WORD</b> Use these activities to help students explain Jesus' parable.</p>	<p> <b>Bible Exploration</b> Luke 8:4-8, 11-15</p> <p> <b>Bible Memory</b> Hebrews 11:1, 6</p> <p> <b>Optional Bible Skill Builder</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources sheets 2 and 7, Resources CD</li> <li>• Resources sheet 5</li> <li>• Resources CD Optional Bible Skills 7 and Optional NT Bookmarks printable files</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bibles, CD player</li> <li>• Bibles, small self-stick notes, pencils</li> <li>• Bibles</li> </ul>
<p><b>3 MAKE IT REAL</b> Use one of these activities to help students discover why and how to stick to God's Word and grow.</p>	<p> <b>Quick Step</b> Stick to It!</p> <p> <b>Option</b> What Good Is It?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities for lesson 7</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pencils, Bibles</li> <li>• pretzel twists, ribbon, Bibles</li> </ul>
<p><b>4 LIVE IT OUT</b> Use one of these activities to help students choose to stick to God's Word and grow.</p>	<p> <b>Quick Step</b> Choose a Challenge</p> <p> <b>Option</b> Good Soil Cups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities for lesson 7</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pencils</li> <li>• newspaper, foam cups, markers, good soil, seeds, plastic spoons</li> </ul>

## Focus In (10-15 minutes)

- 1** Use one or more of these activities to help students **explore how things and people can grow.**

## Focus

♥ Jesus wants us to stick to God's Word and grow.

### Welcome

- Welcome each student warmly by name.
- Early arrivers will enjoy doing the additional activities on the unit page or *Resources* CD Extra-Time Activities.

### Quick Step How They Grow!

ASK: **How many inches taller are you now than you were a year ago?** Let kids respond.

**How many inches taller are you now than when you were 2 years old?**

**In what ways have you grown, other than getting taller?** (gained weight, know lots more, care more about others)

Distribute the leaflets and pencils. Read the instructions aloud and do the How They Grow! activity together. (Answers: 1=c; 2=a; 3=d; 4=f; 5=b; 6=e)

SAY: **It's fun to see how things and people look as babies, compared to how they look as adults.**

ASK: **What do dogs need in order to grow?** (fresh water, balanced diet, exercise)

**What do trees need in order to grow?** (soil, water, sunlight)

**What do people need in order to grow?** (clean water, balanced diet, sunlight, care, love)

SAY: **Let's keep thinking about growing as we discover what the Bible says about it.**

### Option Guess It Fast!

Before class, make a copy of the Guess It Fast! reproducible page and cut apart the cards.

Divide the class into two teams. Tell kids they're going to play a game called Guess It Fast! SAY: **One at a time, you will come to the board and choose a card. You will say to your team only the word that's at the top of the card—dog, person, or tree. Then you'll draw on the board the item that's written on the card. Your team will try to guess what you're drawing. You have a total of 30 seconds to draw the item and for your team to guess what it is.** Tell students that the items on the cards are things that a dog, a person, or a tree need in order to grow. When the game is over, lead a discussion about growing.

ASK: **How many inches taller are you now than you were a year ago?** Let kids respond.

**How many inches taller are you now than when you were 2 years old?**

**In what ways have you grown, other than getting taller?** (gained weight, know lots more, care more about others)

SAY: **Let's keep thinking about growing as we discover what the Bible says about it.**

### Materials

*Activities* for lesson 7, pencils



### Teaching Tip

Continue to display the poster for the quarter (*Resources* sheet 1).

### Materials

Guess It Fast! reproducible page, scissors, whiteboard, dry-erase markers and eraser, watch with second hand



### Note

See the teacher contents page for the location of reproducible pages. Reproducible pages are also provided on the *Resources* CD.



Some kids may not know how much they have grown in the age groups listed; this might be a hard concept for them. Provide pictures of babies and toddlers to help make this activity more concrete.

## Focus

♥ Jesus wants us to stick to God's Word and grow.

# Explore His Word (25 minutes)

2 Use these activities to help students explain Jesus' parable.

## Bible Background for the Teacher

Jesus told this parable as a large crowd was gathering (Luke 8:4). Jesus knew, however, that popularity could be fickle. The parable He was about to give would illustrate that very point! Jesus' disciples needed to understand that not everyone would be open to the gospel message. The seed represents God's Word. The seed lands on four different types of soil: hard, shallow, weedy, and good. There is nothing wrong with the farmer or with his seed. Everything is dependent on the soil. Some seed "fell along the path" (v. 5). Hard-packed dirt walking paths divided fields. This represents hard hearts that hear but refuse to believe.

"Some fell on rocky ground" (v. 6). Sheets of solid rock covered by thin layers of dirt caused seeds to sprout quickly, only to wither and die from the roots' inability to reach water. Those represented by this kind of soil "believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away" (v. 13). Perhaps they believed all their problems would disappear after their baptism.

"Other seed fell among thorns" (v. 7). Peer pressure, being with the wrong crowd, and not maturing spiritually can all become weeds that choke the life out of faith. Those surrounded by thorns need to be transplanted to better surroundings whenever possible. Despite the discouragement of many seeds falling on unproductive soil, some seed fell on good soil, producing a crop "a hundred times more than was sown" (v. 8). These are people who hear Jesus' message, take it to heart, and live by it.

### Materials

Resources sheets 2 and 7, Bibles, Resources CD track 2, CD player



### Note

The Scripture text is provided on the Resources CD in both the *New International Version* and the *King James Version*, if you want kids to read from the same Bible version.

### Media Option

Go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and type in "parable of the sower" to find a video clip you'd like to use.

## Bible Exploration Luke 8:4-8, 11-15

Refer to the Bible time lines. SAY: **All these events are part of history—His story, God's story.**

ASK: **What have we been learning about history?** (It's His story. It's God's story.)

**What New Testament books tell us about Jesus?** (the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John)

**What did Jesus do after He called disciples to follow Him?** (Jesus taught about God. He healed people.)

SAY: **This is where we pick up God's story.** Ask kids to turn in their Bibles to Luke 8:4. Have a volunteer read the verse aloud. **Jesus is ready to tell another parable.**

ASK: **What is a parable?** (a story that has deeper meaning, a story that helps people think about things in a new or different way)

Kids may want to follow along in their Bibles as you play track 2 from the CD. Be sure to pause the CD after verse 8. Refer to the sheet 7 Bible Exploration Poster as you SAY: **Back in Jesus' time, farmers would toss or scatter seeds to plant them. Of course, that meant that the seeds could go just about anywhere. In Jesus' parable, some seeds fell along a hard path. Those seeds were eaten by birds. Other seed fell on rocky ground. Those seeds grew into plants, but the plants soon withered because they didn't have enough water. Other seeds fell where there were thorns. Those seeds grew into plants, but the thorns choked them.**

SAY: **The last group of seeds fell on good soil. You know what happened; the plants grew and grew! That happened because of the good soil. And that was the end of the parable. Remember, a parable is a story that has a deeper meaning.**

ASK: **Do you think the people understood the deeper meaning of Jesus' parable?** (no)

**Do you think the disciples understood the deeper meaning?** (no)

SAY: **The disciples asked Jesus to tell them what His parable meant. Here's what He said.** Resume playing the CD. When the CD is done, draw students' attention again to the poster. Have volunteers read the text that's with each photo. SAY: **Just because someone hears the Word of God, it doesn't mean he is going to stick with it, does it?**

Divide the class into four groups. Assign each group one of the four kinds of soil. Each group is to plan how to act as people who are like their kind of soil. If you have a small class, let individuals or pairs of kids represent the soils. When groups are ready, let them do their acting.

SAY: **I hope that you choose to be like the good soil, hearing and taking Jesus' message to heart and living by it. Jesus doesn't want us to just come to church services or just listen to God's Word. ♥ Jesus wants us to stick to God's Word and grow. Let's discover how we can do that.**

### **Bible Memory** Hebrews 11:1, 6

<sup>4</sup>"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. <sup>6</sup>And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

Continue to display the Hebrews 11:1, 6 poster on a wall or bulletin board. Remove the notes kids put on it last week. Have kids turn in their Bibles to Hebrews 11:1, 6, and have volunteers read the verses aloud.

ASK: **How do we learn about faith in Jesus?** (from the Bible, from other Christians)

SAY: **The Bible tells about people who had a lot of faith, such as Joseph and Mary, Jesus' parents; Jesus' disciples, who left everything to follow Him; and the centurion, whom we studied about last week. The centurion had such great faith that he believed Jesus didn't have to be there with his servant in order to heal him. ♥ Jesus wants us to stick to God's Word and grow too. And a big way that Jesus wants us to grow is in our faith. He wants us to have an amazing faith, a faith that shares God's Word with others.**

Give each student a self-stick note. SAY: **Write on your notes someone you know who sticks to God's Word and is growing in his or her faith. This might be a parent, other relative, friend, teacher, or someone else you know.** Ask kids to put their notes on the right side of the poster (they don't need to include their own names). When kids have done this, read what they've written. **When you know people who stick to God's Word and are growing, those are great people to listen to and learn from to help your faith grow.** Have all the kids read or say the Bible Memory verses together.



#### **Materials**

Bibles, *Resources* sheet 5, small self-stick notes, pencils



#### **Note**

The Bible Memory in the *King James Version* is included on the *Resources* CD.

#### **Optional Bible Skill Builder**

Print and use the *Resources* CD Optional Bible Skills 7 printable file.



## Focus

♥ Jesus wants us to stick to God's Word and grow.

# Make It Real (10–15 minutes)

**3** Use one of these activities to help students **discover why and how to stick to God's Word and grow.**

## Materials

Activities for lesson 7,  
pencils, Bibles



## Materials

pretzel twists, ribbon,  
Bibles



## Teaching Tips

Be sure to tell the kids that this is a game to help them understand the lesson. This may allay frustration and help them to connect to the meaning.

Remember to check for food allergies. Try to purchase gluten-free pretzels.

## Quick Step Stick to It!

**SAY:** ♥ Jesus wants us to stick to God's Word and grow. Since that's so important, let's think about how we can do that. Have kids turn in their leaflets to the Stick to It! activity. Divide the class into two groups. One group will look up the Scriptures and answer the questions about *why* we need to stick to God's Word. The other group will look up the Scriptures and answer the questions about *how* we can stick to God's Word. As they work, encourage all group members to participate.

When groups are ready, have the Why group go first. Have different kids in that group read their questions and answers. Encourage everyone to mark the right answers. Then have the How group read their questions and answers. Encourage everyone to mark the right answers.

**ASK:** What reason to stick to God's Word means the most to you?  
What way of sticking to God's Word and growing is something you want to start doing or do more of?

**SAY:** ♥ Jesus wants us to stick to God's Word and grow. I challenge you to be like the good soil in Jesus' parable—hearing, reading, studying, thinking about, and memorizing Scripture.

## Option What Good Is It?



Tie a piece of ribbon around a pretzel. Ask a volunteer to sit by you in a chair. Tell the volunteer that he can have the pretzel if he can get it. But he is not allowed to get up from the chair or use his hands. Dangle the pretzel in front of him, but at a distance that he cannot reach.

**ASK:** What good is food if you can't eat it? (none)  
What good is God's Word if all you ever do is hear it? (none)

Give kids some pretzels to snack on. Have a volunteer read Matthew 4:4 aloud. Then have another volunteer read 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 aloud.

**ASK:** Why should we stick to God's Word? (We need it in order to live. It's useful for teaching, training us to live for God, and helping us do good things.)

Have a volunteer read Psalm 119:11 aloud. Then have another volunteer read 1 Timothy 4:13.

**ASK:** How can we stick to God's Word and grow? (memorize Scriptures, listen to Scriptures, listen to teachers of God's Word, study it, think about it)

**SAY:** ♥ Jesus wants us to stick to God's Word and grow. I challenge you to be like the good soil in Jesus' parable. Always be ready to hear, read, study, think about, and memorize Scripture.

## Live It Out (10 minutes)

- 4** Use one of these activities to help students **choose to stick to God's Word and grow**.

### Quick Step Choose a Challenge

**SAY:** The parable Jesus told was a good story, but it wasn't *just* a good story. Jesus' parables always had deeper meanings. From this parable about the sower, we learn that ♥ Jesus wants us to stick to God's Word and grow. Will you choose to do that? Have kids turn in their leaflets to the Choose a Challenge activity. **Decide how you will put Jesus' teachings into practice, how you will stick to God's Word and grow. Choose at least one of these things to put into practice. Write on the lines what you will do.** If any volunteers want to tell what they're choosing to do, let them share that with everyone.

Have kids gather for prayer. Ask kids if they've ever kneeled when they have prayed. Kneel, and ask the kids to also kneel. **SAY: Being close to the ground reminds me of today's parable. Let's pray and ask God to help us always be good soil, sticking to God's Word and growing.** After a short time of silence, close in prayer.

### Option Good Soil Cups



**SAY:** The parable Jesus told was a good story, but it wasn't *just* a good story. Jesus' parables always had deeper meanings. From this parable we learn that ♥ Jesus wants us to stick to God's Word and grow. Will you choose to do that?

Cover tables with newspapers. Give each student a foam cup. **SAY: On your cups, write at least one way that you will choose to stick to God's Word and grow. You might also want to draw some pictures or write out some Scriptures.** When kids are done with their cups, let them put some good soil in their cups and then plant a few seeds. **Your cups are full of good soil, so those seeds will grow if you give them enough water and sunlight. I challenge you to be like the good soil in Jesus' parable. Always be ready to hear, read, study, think about, and memorize Scripture.**

Close with a time of prayer. Encourage volunteers to pray aloud, asking for God's help to stick to His Word and grow.

## Focus

♥ Jesus wants us to stick to God's Word and grow.

### Materials

Activities for lesson 7,  
pencils



### Materials

newspaper to cover  
tables, foam cups,  
markers, good soil, seeds (your  
choice), plastic spoons



Provide assistance to kids who may struggle with fine-motor activities, or prep some of the materials ahead of time.

### Kidz Chat

Give each student a *Kidz Chat* to take home.

Be sure parents know about the *Faith & Family* pages available online to print and use with their children at home. Go to [www.21stcc.com](http://www.21stcc.com).



# Choose a challenge

How will you stick to God's Word and grow?

Hear God's Word

Memorize Scriptures

Listen to Scriptures being read

Think about God's Word

Study God's Word

Listen to teachers of God's Word

Here's what I will do:

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try THIS!



Find in your Bible another parable Jesus taught. Ask a parent or family member what the parable means.

MEMORIZE Hebrews 11:1, 6.

Jokes! :-)

What type of music are balloons scared of?

Pop music!  
What did zero say to the number eight?  
Nice belt!



# How They Grow!

MIDDLE ELEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

Lesson 7

Match the photos of the babies with their adult photos. See how they've grown!

# STICK IT!

## WHY

stick to God's Word?

## HOW

can you stick to God's Word and grow?

Put a ✓ by the correct answers. There might be more than one.

1 Psalm 119:104, 105

### God's Word

- \_\_\_ a. gives us understanding.
- \_\_\_ b. is only for adults.
- \_\_\_ c. keeps us on the right path.

3 Romans 15:4

### God's Word can

- \_\_\_ a. have lies in it.
- \_\_\_ b. encourage us.
- \_\_\_ c. give us hope.

5 2 Timothy 3:16, 17

### Scripture is useful for

- \_\_\_ a. teaching.
- \_\_\_ b. training us to live for God.
- \_\_\_ c. helping us be ready to do good things.

2 Matthew 4:4

### Besides needing food to live, Jesus said that we need

- \_\_\_ a. cartoons.
- \_\_\_ b. the Word of God.
- \_\_\_ c. candy.

4 1 Peter 1:25

### The Word of God

- \_\_\_ a. lasts forever.
- \_\_\_ b. lasts for a while.
- \_\_\_ c. was only for people who lived a long time ago.

1 Psalm 119:11

### I can

- \_\_\_ a. memorize Scriptures.
- \_\_\_ b. ignore Scriptures.
- \_\_\_ c. forget Scriptures.

3 Luke 11:28

### I can

- \_\_\_ a. listen to my favorite songs.
- \_\_\_ b. hear God's Word.
- \_\_\_ c. obey God's Word.

2 Psalm 119:97

### I can think about

- \_\_\_ a. my friends.
- \_\_\_ b. favorite video games.
- \_\_\_ c. God's Word.

4 Acts 17:11

### I can study

- \_\_\_ a. the history of candy.
- \_\_\_ b. the Bible.
- \_\_\_ c. math.

5 1 Timothy 4:13

### I can listen to

- \_\_\_ a. Scriptures being read.
- \_\_\_ b. gossip.
- \_\_\_ c. teachers of God's Word.