

## WEEK 1 LESSON GUIDE



### **BIG IDEA**

God helps us know what's true.

### **BIBLE**

**The Parable of the Sower:**  
Matthew 13:1–23

## **ABOUT THIS WEEK**

Movies aren't just fun stories that entertain us, they also can teach us a little more about ourselves and how we relate to the world around us. This week, we'll hear Jesus tell a story about seeds that fall on different soils. Jesus helped his followers understand the truth about how to grow closer to God because

**God helps us know what's true.**

## **WELCOME TIME**

### **ACTIVITY | Popcorn Relay**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you'll need cotton balls, cups, and large buckets. Spread the cotton balls around your space and give each kid a paper cup. Have them scoop up a piece of "popcorn" (cotton ball) with the cup and dump it into a larger bucket. You can divide the group into two teams and have them compete to see which team collected the most in their bucket or have everyone play together and race against a timer.
  - ✂ **TODDLER HACK:** Toddlers will have fun just filling and dumping a bucket filled with balls of wadded yellow paper. Offer two or three buckets for the toddlers to play with.
- It's time to go to the movies! I love movies that make us laugh and movies that make us cry, but my favorite part of going to the movies is eating popcorn. **Which team can grab the most popcorn for their movie adventure?**

### **ACTIVITY | Good Soil Tag**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, designate objects in your space, like a chair, a hula hoop, or even a section on a wall, and label them "good soil." Let kids know that you will be a "bird," and they will be "seeds." When the music plays, the seeds can "blow" (move) around the room, and the bird can't fly. When the music stops, the seeds must find "good soil" to be safe from the bird. If the bird catches them before they touch "good soil," they are out. Play as many rounds as time allows.
- **Why does a seed need to be in good soil?** Yes, seeds need good soil to help them grow. Today's Bible story is all about seeds that land on different types of soil.

## **STORY TIME**

### **SCRIPTURE | The Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1–23)**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Teach this passage by reading from a preschool-friendly Bible translation, Bible storybook,

or using the talking points provided below. Set up the space like a movie theater, with kids seated in rows facing you. Play an old-fashioned movie countdown (similar to [this](#)) before you begin teaching. For today's story, prepare four transparent bowls with the following materials: 1) a bird plush or toy, 2) rocks, a brown pipe cleaner (to represent a withered plant stem), and a green pipe cleaner (to represent a small stem), 3) [brown crinkle cut filler](#) (to represent thorns), 4) potting soil or dark brown sand and an artificial flower. Use four large marbles to represent seeds, and drop them in each pot as you tell the story.

- It's time for the *Big Picture*! **Who likes watching movies?** Me too! Movies are a fun way to tell a story. Jesus, God's son, sometimes told stories called "parables." Parables helped people learn true and important things about God.
  - Today's *Big Picture* parable is about a farmer who went out to scatter seeds. All the seeds fell on four different kinds of soil.
  - **Can you show me four fingers?** Yes, four soils!
- Drop a marble into the first bowl.
  - The first soil was a path. There was no soil for the seed to grow in. Instead, birds flew down and ate up the seeds!
  - **How do birds eat?** With their beaks!
  - So, the seeds that fell on the path did not grow. (*Use the bird toy and remove the marble from the bowl.*)
- Drop a marble into the second bowl, and surround the brown pipe cleaner with rocks.
  - The second soil was a rocky place. The seed grew a little bit, but because of the rocks, there were no roots. So when the sun came out, there were no roots to help get water to the plant.
  - **What do you think happened?** It died!
  - So, the seeds that fell on the rocks did not grow. (*Bend the pipe cleaner to show that the plant withered.*)
- Drop a marble into the third bowl, and surround the green pipe cleaner with paper shreds.
  - The third soil had thorns. The thorns took over everything and didn't give the plant space to grow.
  - **Do you think the plant was able to grow tall?** No! The plant got choked by the thorns.
  - So, the seeds that fell on the thorns did not grow. (*Cover the green pipe cleaner with paper shreds completely.*)
- Drop a marble into the fourth bowl.
  - But the fourth soil was good soil!
  - **What do you think happened to these plants?** That's right, they grew and grew and grew! (*Cover the marble and add in the artificial flower.*)
- **Which of the soils was the best for the seeds?** The good soil! Jesus told this story to show us that we can be like good soil. When we hear a Bible story like this, we can pay close attention, put it in our hearts, and remember it. This is how we grow with God!

## BIG IDEA | God helps us know what's true.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Write one word of the Big Idea on separate sheets of yellow paper. Crumple up each of those papers and blank sheets, and place them in a large popcorn bucket (like [this](#)). Invite kids to come to the front, one at a time, and pull out a "popcorn" from the bucket. For added fun, throw the "popcorn" in the air and have kids scramble to grab one. Give them a chance to smooth out the paper. If their paper contains a word, read it out loud for them. Once all the words are found, put them in order and have kids repeat after you while learning the motions below.
- Our poppin' new Big Idea for today is ...
  - **God** (*Point upwards.*)
  - **helps us** (*Point to yourself.*)
  - **know** (*Tap your forehead.*)
  - **what's true.** (*Two thumbs up.*)

**VIDEO | Big Picture, Episode 1**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's episode of [Cali's World](#).

**ACTIVITY | Big Picture Acting**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, review the Bible story with preschoolers by acting like the seeds that fell on different soils from Jesus' parable. Start by doing the motions with the kids then you can start calling out the different soils to see if kids remember the action.
- Okay, places, everyone! It's time for some acting. Acting is what you do when you pretend to be something else. In movies, actors pretend to be astronauts, chefs, and doctors all the time.
- Let's see if you can be an actor, too. We are going to be the seeds from Jesus' story.
  - **Put your hand over your head to make a circle.**
  - Great job, seeds!
- First, you are the seed that fell on the path. There is no dirt to protect you. You have nowhere to go!
  - **Lie on the ground and rock side to side.**
  - The wind is blowing, and the birds are closing in!
- Next, you are the seed that fell on the rocks. You have no roots, so you are very weak.
  - **Stand up and hunch over.**
  - The sun is out, and it's so hot — you can't stand it anymore!
- Now, you are the seed that fell on the thorns. The seeds aren't giving you enough space to grow. You feel squished!
  - **Squeeze yourself real tight.**
  - There's no way you can grow like this!
- Finally, you are the seed that fell on the good soil. You found a good home where you can grow roots deep into the ground. Now, you'll grow tall and strong.
  - **Start from the ground and slowly get up and jump!**
  - You're a great, big plant!
- Great acting! Now, we are not really seeds. Jesus' story wasn't really about seeds either. This parable teaches us how to grow with God, just like the seed in the good soil.
- Remember, **God helps us know what's true!**

**PRAYER**

- Jesus, thank you for teaching us about who God is and how much God loves us. We know that God helps us know what's true each and every day. Amen.

**SHARING TIME****SNACK | Movie Popcorn**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For snacks this month, serve popcorn in popcorn bags or small brown paper bags with different mix-ins or flavors—M&M's, goldfish crackers, raisins, marshmallows, cereal, cheese flavoring, cheese puffs, and more. You can provide a variety each week for kids to choose from or focus on one each week. As kids enjoy their movie snack, you may choose to show a fun clip like [this one](#) from "The Good Dinosaur" (stop at 1:29), [this retelling](#) of today's Bible story, or something similar.
  - ✂ **TODDLER HACK:** Offer toddlers some oat cereal as an alternative. You can serve them in boxes like [these](#) for fun. Remember that foods like grapes, blueberries, and popcorn can pose a choking hazard to a toddler. They are not yet developmentally mature enough to chew their food completely, so offer them foods that are easily mashed or chewed.

- **What does a farmer do to make sure the seeds grow into a crop?** They plant the seeds in good soil, make sure the seeds have room to grow, and have plenty of sun and water.
- Jesus taught everyone how to grow with God. When we learn about God and do the things we learned, we grow more and more like Jesus.
- Listen to God. **God helps us know what's true!**

### ACTIVITY | Circle Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Pass around a small seedling in soil or a flower. Ask the following questions one at a time. Pass the plant or flower around to whoever wants to answer the question.
  - **Did the seeds in today's story grow in the path, rocks, or thorns?** No.
  - **Where did the seeds grow?** The good soil.
  - **What do we call the stories Jesus told to teach us about God?** Parables.
  - **What things can help us grow closer to God?** Read the Bible, come to church, pray, worship, and love each other.
  - **Who helps us know what's true?** **God helps us know what's true.**

### ACTIVITY | Seed Flipbook

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, print the [printable](#) on cardstock paper. Have kids color in all the images then cut along the lines. Compile the cards in order and staple them together on the left hand side. Show kids how to secure the pages and release them [flipbook style](#) to watch the seed grow.
- As you flip the pages on your flipbook, it shows the seed growing into a big plant. It's your own movie of a tree growing!
- **How can we grow, too?** By learning from the things Jesus taught us about God! **God helps us know what's true.**

### MEMORY VERSE | Jeremiah 33:3 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Help kids learn this month's memory verse by setting the words (including the Scripture reference) to the tune of "Jesus Loves The Little Children." You can also have kids repeat the verse after you in small chunks, say it using silly voices, or create simple hand motions for keywords.
- **"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."**

## PLAY TIME

### ACTIVITY | Coloring Page

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Print and distribute [the coloring page](#) along with crayons or markers. You can review today's Bible story, Big Idea, and memory verse as the kids color.

### ACTIVITY | Seed Art

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this free play activity, have kids decorate using liquid glue and popcorn kernels on brown construction paper. Provide flower stickers to add to their art, too.
  - ✂ **TODDLER HACK:** Offer toddlers some silk flowers with the wires removed. They will enjoy the different colors and textures as you talk with them about how God makes the flowers grow from tiny seeds.

### ACTIVITY | Digging In Soil

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Prepare small tubs with soil in this free-play activity. Kids can put different small plastic toys in the soil and find them using sand or play garden toys.