



# Faith Adventures Youth Resource



Free to use – please acknowledge when using beyond local church children's and youth work so others can find and use the resource themselves.

*Embedded in Faith Adventures: Children Together, this youth resource is intergenerational in nature and designed to foster God-connection in church, home and beyond.*

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link: [www.bit.ly/How-To-FAYR](http://www.bit.ly/How-To-FAYR)

## Title: Matthew 13: 3 – 9, 18 - 23

Theme: Hearing, responding and sharing God's wise words

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### Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning?

The Parable of the Sower is a familiar story to many and is one of 7 stories Jesus told on the theme of the kingdom of God, it's also one of the few stories that Jesus gave the interpretation for. Jesus explained that it was a story about people who hear God's words and how they respond differently. This session explores what it means to hear God, respond and to share God's words with others.

It is an opportunity to also explore how we share stories with and without words in a diverse and creative world.

It can provide an opportunity to think about how the voice of young people are heard, as disciples in the church.

The session might be a trigger for those who are not listened to or even silenced, or those who may have communication differences.

# Together – prayer and games

Let's start our time with God and each other well

Use this opening prayer or encourage young people to open the session with a prayer of their own.

*All mighty God,*

*Be with us as we learn more about you through stories and people in the Bible.*

*Help us to walk in your way and follow your path.*

*Be with us as we make decisions that affect our lives, and the lives of those around us.*

*Amen*

Alternatively, you may join with the widgit prayer found in Faith Adventures: Children together or else the Lord's Prayer found at the end of this session.

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## Active game - Hungry hippos

The balls are the seeds, and the catchers are like the birds, thorns, rocks and good soil gathering or scattering the seeds.

*You will need:*

- small balls (Ball pit balls work well)
- skateboards (optional if you have them)- you want cycle helmets as well to prevent injury
- baskets

*What you do:*

Split the group into teams. The teams race to collect as many balls as possible. This can be on foot, on skateboards, or even by doing wheelbarrow walking, (if you are using skateboards, have some cycle helmets to hand so the children can be protected against bumping heads).

In the centre of the room place 50-100 balls, you could mark out a circle to place them. Ideally create 4 teams of 3-5 people but work with the numbers you have in your group. They should be an equal distance away from the centre. Give each team a bucket or a hula hoop as a collection bin.

On the signal, they each in line race to the centre, grab a ball, and bring it back.

Next player in line goes once their teammate has returned, etc, etc, until all the balls have been taken from middle. Count the balls to see who wins!

Play again. Each time you play add in new rules as you go along e.g. only take a specific-coloured balls, have someone scattering balls, teams are allowed to share balls to another team.

Here's a clip of the game being played by wheelbarrow walking

[https://youtu.be/URDQDPeVK\\_Y?si=3Ca8BmTc-h6taryS](https://youtu.be/URDQDPeVK_Y?si=3Ca8BmTc-h6taryS)

Here is the game played using skateboards

[https://youtu.be/W-xPyqPC\\_NY?si=irnciTddMGm8KZCu](https://youtu.be/W-xPyqPC_NY?si=irnciTddMGm8KZCu)

### Quieter game - Danger Word

*You will need:*

paper and pens

Write nine random words on separate pieces of paper.

One player leaves the room. The group secretly picks one word to be the danger word. The player returns and picks up the words one by one. Their aim is to collect as many safe words as possible *without* picking the danger word.

If they pick the danger word - the round ends.

If they collect all the safe words - they win.

Repeat with a new player and a new danger word.

Use this game as an introduction to lead into thinking about the power and impact of words.

## Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

This link takes you to Matthew 13: 3 – 9, 18 – 23 Easy-to-read version

<https://bit.ly/MattheW13>

You may wish to research different versions of this reading on [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)  
Recommended versions to try are NRSV, Easy-to-read, The Message, NIRV

Then Jesus used stories to teach them many things. He told them this story:

“A farmer went out to sow seed. <sup>4</sup> While he was scattering the seed, some of it fell by the road. The birds came and ate all that seed. <sup>5</sup> Other seed fell on rocky ground, where there was not enough dirt. It grew very fast there, because the soil was not deep. <sup>6</sup> But when the sun rose, it burned the plants. The plants died because they did not have deep roots. <sup>7</sup> Some other seed fell among thorny weeds. The weeds grew and stopped the good plants from growing. <sup>8</sup> But some of the seed fell on good ground. There it grew and made grain. Some plants made 100 times more grain, some 60 times more, and some 30 times more. <sup>9</sup> You people who hear me, listen!”

Jesus Explains the Story About Seed

<sup>18</sup> “So listen to the meaning of that story about the farmer:

<sup>19</sup> “What about the seed that fell by the path? That is like the people who hear the teaching about God’s kingdom but do not understand it. The Evil One comes and takes away what was planted in their hearts.

<sup>20</sup> “And what about the seed that fell on rocky ground? That is like the people who hear the teaching and quickly and gladly accept it. <sup>21</sup> But they do not let the teaching go deep into their lives. They keep it only a short time. As soon as trouble or persecution comes because of the teaching they accepted, they give up.

<sup>22</sup> “And what about the seed that fell among the thorny weeds? That is like the people who hear the teaching but let worries about this life and love for money stop it from growing. So it does not produce a crop in their lives.

<sup>23</sup> “But what about the seed that fell on the good ground? That is like the people who hear the teaching and understand it. They grow and produce a good crop, sometimes 100 times more, sometimes 60 times more, and sometimes 30 times more.”

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**Watch:** Why Jesus Told Parables By Bible Project

[https://youtu.be/XX-aAg4\\_U2Q?si=ycPvap9u5OCTvcsn](https://youtu.be/XX-aAg4_U2Q?si=ycPvap9u5OCTvcsn)

### Questions for discussion

- Did you recognise the parables that the narrators talked about in the video? Was the parable of The Sower mentioned?

### Listen:

Ancient Words by Michael W. Smith Saddleback Worship feat. Michael W. Smith

<https://youtu.be/RWLJOIBOeKY?si=LCXB1GK86Fc4cCFZ>

### Questions for discussion

- Do you think the people who first heard Jesus’ parables, thought they were hearing holy stories?

## Explore

Ideas and activities to explore this week’s Bible passage together

### A new way to explore the theme

This is a new way to explore the Bible passage and the theme for this week.

Alternatively, you may wish to use the Explore section from this week’s Faith Adventures: Children Together to guide your exploration of the theme this week.

Have some creative fun by retelling the story of the Sower but without using spoken words. Consider your group and how you might you do it with them, choose the method best for you. You could start by reading the story from a bible or sharing one of the video options (the Max7 story link doesn’t use words), this will help familiarise the story with the group.

Then explain that we are going to hear the story again but without using words. Here are a few examples:

**Under 5's** – if you have a lot of this age group you might find it easier to use the what's in the box section.

**Visual storytelling** using pictures. We have provided a selection of images to use in sequence. Sometimes this is more effective if you play some gentle music in the background as you slowly place each picture down in the narrative order.

**Sign language.** If you have someone in the church who can sign or use Makaton utilise them if possible. Or you could have a go at sharing the story using sign or sign supported English. Here is an example which could also be used, a mime version could also be effective <https://youtu.be/rceVtg2wvVs?si=LZCI1T87Sf-y7Wz7>

**Soundscapes**, This method uses the sounds only without the narration. The group would close their eyes and listen to the story in sound, consider the sounds of the story in order for example, feet walking, seeds in a bag, seeds landing on different surfaces, birds flying and pecking, growing sounds, choking sounds, thirsty sounds, and a growing and flourishing sound.

**Draw and tell**, If you have someone who is good at drawing, invite them in to draw the story in different quick scenes.

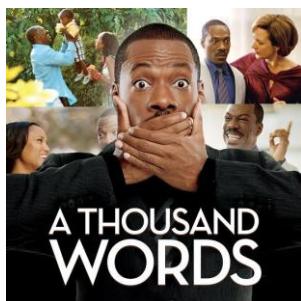
There may be other ways you can share the story without using spoken word.

Once the story has been shared, discuss how different it felt to 'hear' a story without spoken words. Does it help you to notice different parts of the story? Do you prefer it? Use the wondering questions in the session to explore further.

The young people might also want to recreate the story without using words in their own way as an activity.

### Modern parables

This section includes references to TV programmes, films, books, TED talks, TikTok etc aimed at this age group that will have been widely seen, or where a clip is available to use as a stimulus for discussion. You may also enjoy the picture book recommended for Faith Adventures: Children Together and explore the relevance of the story to the theme of the session in more depth – young people and adults are often well tuned in to the deeper meanings in materials aimed at younger people and the authors are often very aware of the adults reading the books to or with younger ones.



A Thousand Words 2012: Paramount Pictures  
Clip by Rotten Tomatoes Trailers

[https://youtu.be/N6AxRCP3e4s?si=lWJw0j\\_wVAwiv5Y\\_](https://youtu.be/N6AxRCP3e4s?si=lWJw0j_wVAwiv5Y_)

This film is about the basic message that people should think before they speak and not spout so many meaningless lies.

- Jesus chose his words carefully when he told stories – are there situations where you are more careful about the words you use?
- Are there times (like in the film trailer) where you use more words than you need to?

- If you could only use 5 words to describe yourself, what would you choose? What about 1 word?

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### Group discussion

- This is a familiar story. I wonder if you hear the same wise words each time it is read, or can we hear different wise words each time?
- How do/can we change the meaning of a story or sentence by putting the emphasis on different words?
- When might it be useful to enable others to hear the story?

### Personal reflection

- What words do you feel your community/the world needs to hear from God at the moment?

## Express – prayer and creative activities

Praying together: enabling your group to respond spiritually

### Praying together

**Prayers** Respond to the theme by writing or saying a short prayer. Alternatively use the creative prayer from Faith Adventures: Children Together for this session or use the prayer activity below. Alternatively light a candle and play some music while you listen and talk to God together.

### Seed prayers

*You will need*

- paper and pens

*What you do:*

Give everyone a piece of paper and invite them to draw a large seed in the centre of the page.

Write or draw your prayers for yourself in the seed.

Now draw some roots coming down from the seed, write or draw your prayers for others, especially those who help us, around the roots.

Finally draw a plant with a green leaf sprouting up out of the seed, write or draw your thank you prayers or things you want to celebrate.

### Planting seed prayer

A simple prayer activity that encourages us to pray at each step of planting a seed.

**You will need:**

Plant pots, soil, seeds (google which seeds are suitable for planting at this time of year)

**What you do:**



**Take a pot**

Put yourself into God's hands, pray that you will be open to hearing God.



**Half fill the pot with soil**

Pray for the situations or people that are on your mind



**Place 3 or 4 seeds in your pot**

Pray for the things you are asking God for



**Top up the pot with soil**

As you finish the pot, we also finish our prayer by thanking God for hearing us and saying  
Amen

Take your pot home with you, take care of it, watch it grow, enjoy the flowers that will come.

**Spoken Prayers**

Dear God, help us to **hear** your word and really listen to what you are saying to us.  
*Think of one part of God's Word that has spoken to you recently.*  
 (Pause to reflect)

Help us to **respond** to your word in our lives.  
*Think of one thing you could do this week to live out what you've heard.*  
 (Pause to reflect)

Help us to **share** your word with the people around us.  
*Think of one person you could encourage or show God's love to.*  
 (Pause to reflect)

Lord, help us to hear, respond, and share your word every day. Amen

## Responding together

This is an opportunity for a social justice challenge, some research, craftivism, or a craft or STEM activity. You may have a specific activity chosen but free choice is also an option. Here are some suggestions for this week's theme. Choose whatever will work best for your group.

### Wise Grass heads

*You will need:*

- old tights
- grass seeds
- compost or soil
- a yogurt pot, or cup, or any small container to hold the grass head
- googly eyes, fabric scraps, markers, or any other materials to create a face.
- a piece of card in the shape of a speech bubble



*What you do:*

Cut a section of the nylon stocking, about 18 cm long, and place it over a cup to make filling easier. Pour a tablespoon of grass seeds into the toe of the stocking.

Pour compost or soil into the nylon stocking until the stocking is shaped like a ball. Tie off the open end securely, making sure nothing falls out. Attach your decorations to make a face.

Think about the wise words your grass head is going to share with the world. Attach the speech bubble to the head and display sharing your wise words to everyone.

Place the grass head in a sunny spot and water it regularly. As the grass grows you can trim it like hair, and you could change the wise words regularly too.

Here is a video of how it is made.

<https://youtu.be/HQhLGX0MmpQ?si=CmU6xHAXMvaGYinZ>

### Communication Methods

**Task:** Work in groups to retell the Parable of the Sower without using any spoken or written words.

**Reflect:** How did it feel to communicate without words?

**Research:** Explore ways to communicate without using spoken/written words. How many can you find? Share your findings with the group and discuss.

Examples:

The Talking Drum (BBC Radio 4) <https://youtu.be/JT3tIJzAkcc?si=Z38Omoht8RkEhyjt>

British Sign Language Bible

<https://bslbible.org.uk/>

What is Braille (BBC Newsround)

[https://youtu.be/jkYil-mcq\\_Y?si=7Fnke\\_SzdONb7wLs](https://youtu.be/jkYil-mcq_Y?si=7Fnke_SzdONb7wLs)

## Challenge

Discipleship doesn't stop when you walk out of the church door – it is a part of everyday life. Take a challenge with you and try to make it part of your week.

You may think of your own suggestion of what you as an individual or a group might do in the coming week in response to what you have explored today. If not here are some suggestions:

- Use one of the “conversation starter” questions or the question below to talk with someone of a different generation or from a different setting and share your questions, thoughts, insights together. **What environment creates the best time to hear wise words from another?**
- Research something suggested by JPIT Resources ([jpit.uk](http://jpit.uk)) *Commitment for Life cforl.co.uk*
- Could you spend some time this week actively listening to all around you? This could include going to somewhere peaceful in nature and sitting and listening to the world. How could you respond to what you have heard?

Thank you for exploring the **Matthew** passage with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing [sharon.lloyd@urc.org.uk](mailto:sharon.lloyd@urc.org.uk) or by sharing it on [www.bit.ly/FACT\\_FB](http://www.bit.ly/FACT_FB)



The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

and forgive us our sins As we forgive those who sin against us

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory

forever and ever. Amen

**Explore Flash Cards**

