

Purpose

- To learn about Jesus' ministries
- To learn about Jesus' miracles
- To learn about Jesus' parables

Materials

- Bibles
- Handouts

Background Information

We learn about Jesus and his life through the four gospels. Although each gospel gives us some different information and a different perspective we can combine all four and get a pretty accurate accounting of what Jesus did in his time here on earth. Frequently what Jesus taught is divided into three categories 1) ministries, 2) miracles, and 3) parables. Today we are going to study all three areas and go over some accounts or stories that you may have heard of or maybe not.

JESUS' MINISTRIES

In handout 60-1 there is a listing of the events in which Jesus ministered to his people and where it is found in each of the four gospels. You may go over any of these that you wish but I have noted some of the more known ones. They are noted on the list in 60-1. Have the children look up the ministries and go over them to stress how it might affect their life.

Jesus and Nicodemus – Nicodemus a well-known and highly educated Jewish leader came to Jesus in the dark of night so that no one would recognize him. He asked Jesus what was needed to be saved. The famous quote Jesus gave him was that it is easier to get through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into heaven.

Jesus blesses the little children – In those days it was very common for people to push children aside and not want to be bothered by them. Several times Jesus scolds the disciples because they try to keep the children away from Jesus. Each time Jesus beckons the little children to come to him. Jesus enjoyed the children and wanted to teach them about his father.

JESUS' MIRACLES

In handout 60-2 each miracle performed by Jesus is listed and again it notes where the event can be located in each of the four gospels. I have noted a few and will give the story briefly, but feel free to cover any others that you chose. Again let the children look them up in the Bible and read if time allows.

Calming the storm

On one occasion, when Jesus was seeking some quiet time, he and his disciples got into a boat and went out on the lake. Jesus had fallen asleep for some much needed rest. Suddenly, a furious storm came up, and the waves were so high that they swamped the boat. The disciples frantically woke Jesus up, fearing that they would drown. Jesus arose, told the wave to quiet and be still. The wind instantly died down, and it was completely calm. When the disciples questioned Jesus, he answered them by asking, "Do you still have no faith?" Even after all the time the disciples spent with Jesus watching his miracles, they were still amazed each time one happened. They never seemed to get it.

Walking on water

Immediately after collecting food to feed the 5000, Jesus told the disciples to get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side of the lake. Jesus dismissed the crowd and went up into the mountains alone to pray. Jesus approached the boat by walking on the water. The disciples were terrified, because they thought Jesus was ghost. When Jesus identified himself, Peter asked if he could come out on the water. Jesus said, "Come." After a few steps, he looked up, saw the wind, and became afraid and began to sink. Immediately, Jesus reached out his hand to save Peter. Jesus said, "You of little faith, why do you doubt me?" Jesus and Peter climbed into the boat, and the wind died down. Once again, the disciples were amazed at what Jesus could do.

Feeding of the 5,000

Again, Jesus was out in a boat to avoid the masses that always followed him. This time the crowd beat him to his destination and was waiting for him when he got out of the boat. Because of his compassion, Jesus could not turn his back on anyone, so he began to teach to the multitude. The disciples became concerned because it was late in the day, and the crowd had had nothing to eat. The disciples wanted to send them away to buy food, but Jesus instructed the disciples to feed the multitude. The disciples feared what it would cost and Jesus directed them to go among the crowd and collect all the food they could find. In John, it is reported that there is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish. Jesus instructed that the people sit down. Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks and passed them out to all who were seated. When the meal was over the 5000 people had been fed, Jesus told the disciples to gather what was left. They were able to fill twelve baskets with the broken pieces that were left.

Water turned into wine

Jesus' first miracle is recorded in John 2:1-11. Jesus was attending a wedding at Canaan in Galilee. During the course of the wedding, they ran out of wine. Jesus' mother strongly hinted that Jesus solve the problem. Jesus hesitates because he doesn't feel that it is time for him to start doing the Lord's work. His mother, Mary, instructs the servant to do as Jesus commands. Rather reluctantly, Jesus did as his mother wanted. Jesus told the servants to fill six stone water jars with water and take them to their master. The master tasted it and commented on what good wine it was, even though he did not know what had happened. Everyone was pleased because it was typical to use the good wine first, but the wine Jesus made was better than what they started with.

JESUS PARABLES

A parable is a story that teaches spiritual truth. Parables are short, easy to remember-and-potentially life changing. It was easy to just listen to the stories and enjoy them and not get the hidden meaning. Several times Jesus had to interpret the parable so that it would be understood. Each gospel relates different parables and puts them in a different order. Luke gives us twenty-eight, Matthew twenty-three, Mark nine, and John none. Again I have marked some, but feel free to cover any you want.

Prodigal Son

Probably the most famous parable of all is the parable of the prodigal son. There was a man who had two sons. The younger son asked his father for his share of the estate, and his father gave it to him. After that the younger son left home and wasted all his money on wild living. After he had spent all his money, there was a famine where he was living, and he had nothing. He went to work for a man who sent him to the fields to feed the pigs. He was so hungry that he wanted to eat what the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. He started to think about his father's servants who had plenty of everything. He decided to go back home, ask for his father's forgiveness and ask to become one of his servants. His father saw him coming and began a huge celebration, because his son who was lost had been found. The other son was very angry, because he had been obedient, and his father had never given him anything. The father told the older son, "You have always been with me, and everything I have is yours." He told the son that they had to celebrate because his brother was dead and now was alive again.

Wise and Foolish Builders

Jesus told the people that anyone who heard his words and put them into practice was like a wise man who built his house on a rock. Even when the rains and winds came and beat against the house, it stood firm, because it had a strong foundation. He said that anyone who heard his words and did not put them into practice was like the foolish man who builds his house on the sand. When the rains and winds came and beat against that house, it came crashing down.

Weeds

Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven to a man who sowed good seeds in his field. While everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and slipped away. The wheat and the weeds spouted and formed heads together. The manservant asked him since he only planted good seeds, where did the weeds come from? The man replied that his enemy had done it. The servants were instructed not to remove the weeds, because this would also uproot the wheat. At harvest time, they would first collect the weeds, tie them in a bundle and burn them. Next, they would gather the wheat and take it into the barn. Several verses later, Jesus explained what the parable meant. The one who sowed the good seed is the son of Man. The field is the world and the good seed stand for the Son of the Kingdom. The devil sowed the weeds. The weeds are the son of the evil one. The harvest is the end of the age, and the angels are the harvesters. The son on Man sent out the angels to weed out everything that causes sin. They are thrown into the fiery furnace. The righteous (the good wheat) will shine like the sun and live forever.

Mustard Seed

A mustard seed is the tiniest of all seeds, yet when it grows; it becomes the largest of all plants and becomes a tree. It becomes so strong that the birds can perch in its branches. Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven to this tiny mustard seed and what can happen when we are in God's care.

Talents

(A talent is worth about \$1000) Before he left on a journey, a man called his servants together and gave them his property to take care of. One servant got five talents, another received two talents and the last got one talent. The owner decided how much to give each servant based on what he thought was his or her ability to take care of it. After the owner left, the man with five talents went out and used his money to make more money giving him four talents. However, the man with one talent dug a hole in the ground and hid it. After a long time, the master came back. The man with five talents showed him what he had done with the money. Because he proved that he was able to hand the money, the master put him in charge of many things. The master was pleased, and also put him in charge of many things. The servant with one talent dug it up and brought it to the master, explaining that he was afraid he would lose the talent, so he put it in the ground. The master was upset and called him lazy. The master took back the talent and gave it to the man who now had ten.

Good Samaritan

Jesus frequently tells us to love our neighbors as ourselves. Jesus told this parable to illustrate exactly what that means. A man traveling to Jerusalem was attacked by robbers. They beat him, took his clothes and left him for dead. A priest, traveling on the same road, saw the man, crossed to the other side of the road and kept going. Next along came a Levite. He saw the man, crossed to the other side of the road and kept going. A Samaritan, traveling along the same road, took pity on the man and stopped to help. He bandaged the man's wounds, put him on his donkey and took him to the inn (motel) to take care of him. The next day, he gave the innkeeper some money to take care of the man. He also promised that he would come back to pay for any extra costs. Jesus told that this is what we are to do. Jesus used three different individual to tell this story. The priest should have been God's representative. The Levite, who was the priest's assistant, should also have shown God's mercy in taking care of the man by the side of the road. Everyone would have expected those two to help. But it was the Samaritan who showed God's love. Here is the irony. The Samaritans were despised because of their religious beliefs and were not treated well by others in Bible times. Yet, he was the one who stopped to help and truly showed God's love.

Procedure

- Read over the first paragraph of background information.
- Look over handout 60-1 and look over it to select a few to talk about.
Background information will give details of a few on the list.
- Read handout 60-2 and do the same for miracles.
- Read handout 60-3 and review parables.