The Parable of the Sower
Lesson Plans

Materials:
- Lesson tray of three types of “soil”
- Seed basket
- Grass or flax seed
- Small bird

Once there was a teacher named Jesus. He was wise and kind and he liked to teach people about life by telling them stories. These teaching stories are called ‘parables’. One day, his friends asked him, “Jesus, why doesn’t everyone follow wise and kind teachings? Tell us about how people learn – or don’t learn – to be wise and kind.”

So Jesus told a teaching story.

This story happens in a field. There was a farmer who was sowing – that means planting – seeds in a field. The field had many different kinds of soil. But the farmer spread the seed everywhere in the field no matter what the soil was like.

*Place the story tray in front of you where the children can see it.*

Some of the seed landed on rocky soil. There were more rocks than soft dirt.

*Spread some seeds across the rocky soil.*

The soil was so hard and dry that no seeds could put down their roots and grow. The seeds lay on the rocks where birds could see them. The birds came and ate many of the seeds! The other seeds dried up on the hot, rocky soil.

*Bring the bird to the rocky soil where it can “eat” some of the seeds.*

Some of the seed landed on soil that was filled with weeds and thorns. There were more thorns than soft dirt.

*Spread some seeds across the thorny soil.*

The soil was so choked with thorns and weeds that no seeds could put down their roots and grow. The seeds lay in the shadows of the thorns where no sun could reach them. They never grew.

Some of the seed landed on good, soft soil. This soil was ready for seeds. The seeds landed on the soft, rich dirt.
Spread some of the seeds across the soft, rich soil.

The rain helped them to grow deep roots. The sun helped them to grow strong stems and leaves.

Place some plants in the holes in the soft, rich soil.

Where the seeds took root, beautiful plants grew. Some had lovely blooms and some had ripe fruits.

Jesus friends asked him, “How can this help us understand wisdom? What does this story mean?”

Jesus said, “This story is like learning to be wise and kind.”

Hold a handful of seeds in the palm of your hand, pointing to them.

The seeds are like ideas about being wise and kind. People share wisdom with everyone around them, just like the farmer sowed seeds on all the soil.

Point to the rocky soil.

Some people make their hearts hard against ideas about being kind and fair. They are hard and stubborn like rocks. They close their eyes and cover their ears so that they can’t see or hear the truth. The seeds of wisdom can’t grow in their hearts and minds. Sometimes the idea-seeds disappear just as if a bird had eaten them.

Point to the thorny soil.

Some people’s hearts and minds are so tangled with thorny ideas that there’s no room for the seeds of wisdom and kindness. There are weeds in their minds – weeds like selfishness and anger and unfairness. All they think about is themselves and their own ideas and they don’t think about other people’s ideas and how they might be true and good. It’s hard for the seeds of kindness and love to grow in their hearts and minds. The idea-seeds disappear in the thorny shadows inside the people.

Point to the soft, rich soil.

But sometimes, the seed ideas fall on soft rich soil. These people have done the work of removing the rocks from their hearts. They’ve pulled out the thorny ideas of anger and selfishness. Their eyes are open and their ears are listening. They are ready for the truth. They are like a ready field, waiting for good seeds. Now their hearts are soft and ready for the ideas of wisdom and kindness.
In these people, the teachings become thoughts that are beautiful like flowers and actions that are useful like fruits.

“This is how it is with teachings about wisdom and kindness,” said Jesus.

**Wondering Together**

- I wonder what part of the story you liked best?
- I wonder what the most important part of the story is?
- I wonder if you’ve ever learned something important from a story?
- I wonder if you feel like your heart is hard like a rock or soft like good earth?
- I wonder if you have ever felt stubborn when someone was trying to tell you something?
- I wonder what other stories Jesus might have told to teach people?
- I wonder what it means to be wise?
- I wonder what it means to be kind?
- I wonder what happened to the birds?
- I wonder what kind of soil you want to be?
- I wonder what wise ideas you’ve heard lately?