


the
Jesus 
Storybook
Bible
Curriculum

Treasure hunt!

The story of the hidden treasure, from Matthew 13

☉ Please see the curriculum Introduction .pdf for more guidance on praying with your group and on Scripture memory.

☉ The total allotted time per lesson is 45 minutes. This is the minimum amount of time it would take to complete the whole lesson. The time can easily be extended to increase the lesson to as much as 1.5 hours. If you have more than the allocated 45 minutes, please use the extra time to extend the time for activities, to learn the memory verse, and to pray.

☉ The “Notes for Teachers on the Text” section is intended as explanation of the Bible text and advance preparation for you only; it is not expressed in terms or language the children could understand.

The Jesus Storybook Bible Curriculum
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Recap of the Previous Story

3 min. 

☉ Welcome the children and ask them to sit in a circle.

☉ Briefly recap the main points of the previous stories: “We’ve learned that Jesus has power over sickness, over death, over nature, and he can feed more than 5,000 people with a few loaves and fish. Jesus is God and so he can do things that other people cannot do. We memorized a verse about that.”

☉ Ask them to recite together the verse they learned at home about the story. “Matthew 19:26 — ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’”

☉ To lead into the theme of today’s story, ask: “Who has been on a treasure hunt? Raise your hand. Thank you, hands down.”

Activity Introducing the Story

10 min. 

Aim: To expend energy and introduce the idea of finding “treasure.”

Materials: An identical small object or “treasure” for each child; preferably this will be something they can take home with them, e.g., stickers, a small toy, etc.

1. Hide the objects around the room so that they are in full view, but hard to spot. In other words, the children should be able to see them without having to move or lift any other object, but at the same time they should not be too easy to find.

2. Say: “I have hidden treasures all around the room. They look like this. There is one for each of you. Walk around the room and — without touching or moving any other object — find where I have hidden a treasure. Once you have found your treasure, stop looking, take it back to your place in the circle, and sit down. Ready? Start the treasure hunt now!”

3. Once the majority of children have returned to the circle, you can ask those seated to help the children who are struggling.

4. Once everyone is seated with their “treasure,” ask them to keep hold of it for the next activity.

5. Say: “In today’s story there’s a man who finds some hidden treasure. Let’s find out what happens.”

Join the children in the circle and announce the title of the story. Read aloud pages 250–255 from *The Jesus Storybook Bible* or listen to CD3 track 3.

Notes for Teachers on the Text

Jesus says in Matthew 13:44: “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.” In order to get this treasure, the man had to sell “all he had.” He knows it is worth everything he has and so he sells everything; he gives up everything he has, with joy, to get the treasure. He is willing to give up everything because he knows that what he is getting is worth so much more than what he is giving up.

The Bible tells us that Jesus brought “the kingdom of heaven” or “the kingdom of God.” That means that Jesus, the true King, has returned and has begun to put the world right with his power. Now, that healing is only partial, but some day all deformity, decay, sin, disease, imperfection will be wiped away. The kingdom is “already” but “not yet” here. With Jesus’ coming, the ideal has penetrated the real and is transforming it into his likeness.

The world was created as a place of complete flourishing and harmony under God’s rule. Our sin, our resistance to God’s authority, led to the unraveling of this perfect creation. Relationships with God, others, and physical nature itself disintegrate when God is not acknowledged as King. But God reveals that redemption will ultimately entail the complete healing of creation and the end of physical decay and death. The kingdom of God, then, is the renewal of all creation by the reentry of God’s ruling power through Jesus’ death and resurrection.

The healing, all-renewing presence of the kingdom of God has come into the world because Jesus is the true King. However, this King comes in a way that reverses the values of the world—in weakness and service, not strength and force—to die as a ransom for us. Therefore we enter this kingdom through the same upside-down pattern of the King who went to the cross. We are accepted not because of our ability or merit, but through repentance and sheer grace. Then, we live out this kingdom by following the upside-down pattern of the King who went to the cross. We live lives of sacrifice and service. The kingdom is entered then by repentance and faith (Mark 1:15), forgiveness (Colossians 1:13–14), and the new birth (John 3:3). In other words, by giving up everything and allowing Jesus to be King over everything.

Understanding the Story

15 min. 

Aim: To understand what the kingdom of God is like.

Materials: The “treasures” from the first activity; crayons; copies of the handout (the last page of this document).

1. At the end of the story, say: “Jesus tells the people a story to help them understand what God’s kingdom is like. Let’s act out the story and see if we understand what God’s kingdom is like.”

2. Ask everyone to stand up, leaving the treasure on the ground in front of them. Say: “I am going to call out scenes from the story. Get ready to act them out.”

STORY	ACTION
There was a man working in a field digging.	Get them to pretend to dig a hole in place.
His shovel bumps into something hard.	Get them to make an appropriate sound.
He picks it up.	Get them to pick up their treasure.
What he sees takes his breath away.	Get them to gasp while looking at their treasure.
He wants that treasure, even if he has to sell everything he has. He quickly buries the treasure again.	Get them to put their treasure back on the floor and pretend to bury it.
He runs home.	Get them to run in place.
He sells everything he has and buys that field.	Get them to pretend to sell and then buy.
He runs back.	Get them to run in place.
He digs up the treasure again.	Get them to pretend to dig and then pick up their treasure.
The treasure is his!	Ask: “How does the man feel now that the treasure is his?” Get appropriate answers and get them to celebrate.

3. Repeat the story in the table above several times so that the actions and story become familiar. Every time you repeat it, the pace at which you read and the children’s actions should get faster and faster.

4. Toward the end of the allocated time, ask the children to sit down and give each child a copy of the handout and a crayon. Say: “Jesus told this story to show that the kingdom of God is like a hidden treasure. Look at the first question on your paper. What is the kingdom of God? Let me read you the answers. Circle the correct answer, and remember that there may be more than one correct answer.”

5. Read aloud the three answers, and then say: “Raise your hand if you circled all three answers. You are right, hands down. All three answers are correct; the kingdom of God is wherever God is King; it is wherever God is in charge. It is also where God fills his people’s hearts up with his Forever Happiness. And the kingdom of God is like a hidden treasure.”

6. Say: "Go to the second question. How is the kingdom of God like a hidden treasure? Again let me read you the answers. Circle the correct answer or answers."

7. Read aloud the three answers and then say: "Raise your hand if you circled all three answers. Okay, hands down. Raise your hand if you circled answer 'a' and answer 'c.' You are right, hands down. You should *not* have circled answer 'b.'"

8. Say: "Being in God's kingdom is as wonderful as finding a treasure, but that does not mean you will make a lot of money; you may have to give things up. In the story the man gave up everything he had to get the treasure. We might have to give up things too — and because God is our real treasure, we will *want* to give those things up. What sort of things might we have to give up?"

9. Get answers (e.g., anything we love more than Jesus, popularity, being first, friends, etc.) and comment appropriately.

For larger groups: You may want to divide the group into smaller circles, each with a teacher. Each teacher can facilitate the activity with their circle, and then the circles can all perform for one another.

Drawing the Story to a Close

1 min. 

Say: "Being in the kingdom of God is as wonderful as finding hidden treasure."

Say: "It is worth anything you have to give up, because Jesus is the real treasure."

Jesus in the Story

2 min. 

Ask: "What did we discover about Jesus from today's story?"

Get a few children to share their answers aloud, commenting appropriately; then ask everyone to write an answer in the space on their handout.

Praying about the Story

5 min. 

Pray aloud, thanking God that Jesus is our treasure.

Ask the children to praise God in prayer. Use a psalm or specific words to guide them.

A Verse from the Story to Learn at Home

2 min. 

☉ Introduce the verse: "God is our real treasure. All things are possible with God."

☉ Read the verse out loud together as a group.

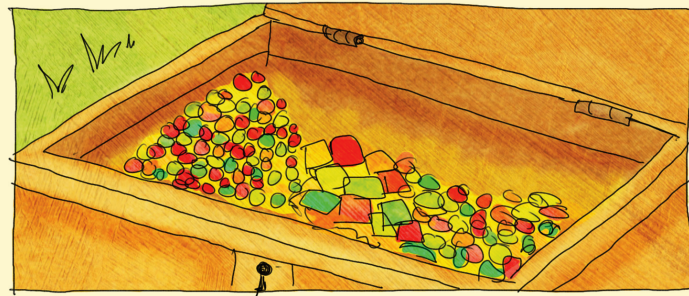
☉ Announce the verse: "So, your verse to practice at home is Matthew 19:26 — 'With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'"

☉ Remind the children to take their treasure home with them, to give the handout to their parents, and to memorize the verse for next time.



The kingdom of God is ...

- a) ... wherever God is King.
- b) ... where God fills his people's hearts up with his Forever Happiness.
- c) ... like a hidden treasure.



How is the kingdom of God like a hidden treasure?

- a) It is as wonderful as finding a treasure.
- b) It makes you rich and brings you lots of money.
- c) It is worth anything you have to give up.

☉ Jesus in the Story



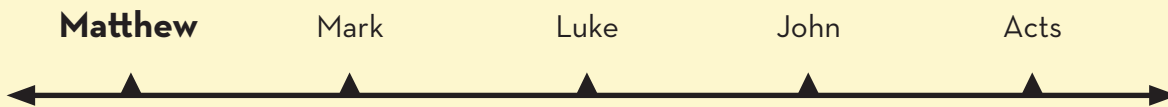
What did you discover about Jesus from this story?



Jesus

☉ A Verse from the Story to Learn at Home

With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.
(Matthew 19:26)



Notes for parents: From the story we learned that the kingdom of God is like finding a hidden treasure. It is worth anything we might have to give up, because Jesus is our real treasure.
Please help your child to memorize the verse and the Scripture reference for next time. Please review with them the place of the book of Matthew, using the diagram above.

