Parable of Wise and Foolish Builders



Scripture Reference: Matthew 7:24-29

Suggested Theme: Everything Jesus says is true. To live wisely, we must hear and obey His words.

Memory Verse: “Everyone who hears these things I say and obeys them is like a wise man. The wise man built his house on rock.” Matthew 7:24, ICB

Story Overview:

Everyone who hears the word of God is building a house. The one who hears God’s word but does not do what it says is like a foolish builder who builds his house on sand. That house will be crushed in a storm. The one who hears the word of God and obeys it is like a wise man who builds his house on solid rock. That house will stand up to any storm. Wise people build their faith on the foundation of God’s word. This faith stands strong against the storms of life.

Background Study:

Information about teaching the Parables

A parable is a story with two levels of meaning. On the literal level, the story is simple, and the meaning is straightforward. On a figurative level, the story represents more profound and often spiritual situations. Sometimes, Jesus used parables to help people understand spiritual lessons more easily. Sometimes, He spoke in parables so that believers could understand, but enemies of the gospel could not (Luke 8:10).

Jesus told the parable of the wise and foolish builders at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount. He made sure his audience understood the meaning by explaining it. After all of the teachings in the sermon, the people needed to understand that simply listening to his words was not enough.

In Luke’s account of this parable (Luke 6:47-49), Jesus began by asking the question, “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord’ and do not do what I say?” That is the real point of this lesson. We cannot just say we are Christians or attend church or read the Bible and then not do what the Word of God says. This kind of life will not stand up against the problems that come our way in life.

In the area where Jesus lived and taught, there were low valleys and gullies that had been exposed to water from rain and storms. During heavy rainfall, these became swollen rivers that washed away everything in their paths. A foolish builder would build his house without thinking about what kind of foundation there

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was. He might have liked the way the building site looked. Perhaps he decided to ignore the warnings of people who had experienced past floods.

That is how we live our lives if we do not live according to God's word. We just do what feels right at the time. We do not listen to warnings, or we ignore God's wisdom. There are many people who build their lives on shifting sand. They may listen to sermons and Bible classes, but they do not live according to what the Bible says.

The wise builder, on the other hand, carefully plans his house. He investigates the building site to make sure that it will sustain his building. He judges the soil and elevation to make sure that there are no flood hazards. He will listen to warnings from those who know the area. He builds with confidence and knows his building will last.

We can live our lives with confidence when we live according to the word of God. It is not just about listening or talking, but it is also about doing! Other Scriptures to consider:

- 1 Corinthians 3:9-15
- 1 Timothy 6:17-19
- James 1:22-25

Way to Introduce the Story:

"Who knows the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears? The story is about a little girl entering a stranger's house when they were not home. She got very frightened when the bears came home! What is the lesson that we learn from Goldilocks and the Three Bears? The lesson is that we should never go into people's houses when they are not home. It is a simple story about bears that helps us understand another more important lesson.

Sometimes, Jesus wanted people to really understand important lessons. If the lessons were hard, then Jesus sometimes told simple stories to help people understand the things that were hard to understand. These stories were called parables. Today, we are going to learn a parable that Jesus told.

The Story:

Sometimes, Jesus told parables to people. A parable is an easy-to-understand story that helps people understand something very hard to understand.

Jesus told a parable about two men who each decided to build a house. The two men went out looking for the perfect place to build the house.

The first man was very wise. He thought carefully about the kind of house he wanted to build. He wanted a house that was strong. If a strong wind or heavy rains came, he did not want his house to break up or wash away. This wise man knew that the most important part of a house is the foundation. The foundation is the first thing that is built. It is the bottom of the house. The foundation has to be sturdy and strong to make the house sturdy and strong.

The wise man looked everywhere, and then he found the perfect place. He found a huge, flat rock. The rock could be the foundation for the house. The wise man dug around and chipped the rock until it was the perfect size for his house. Then he built his house on the rock.

After he was finished, he lived in the house. Many times, storms came to his house. The winds blew, and the rains came, but the wise man sat comfortably in his house. He did not worry about the storms because he had built his house on a rock.

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In Jesus' parable, he talked about the other man who built a house. This man was foolish. He did not think carefully about the kind of house he should build. He just found a nice flat place and started building. He built his house on sand. The foundation kept slipping and sliding in the sand, but the foolish man did not care. He just wanted to build a house.

When the foolish man finished his house, he moved in. Guess what happened when the first storm came? The winds blew, and the rains came down, and the foolish man's house fell apart. It fell apart because it did not have a strong foundation.

After Jesus told the parable, he explained to the people what the parable really meant. He said that the wise man was like someone who listened to Jesus' instructions and then followed the instructions. Jesus' instructions are always right. When a person builds his life on Jesus' words, he is building a strong foundation. He will be strong inside.

The foolish man in the parable was like someone who listened to Jesus' instructions but then did not follow them. A person who does not build his life on Jesus' words will not have a strong foundation. He will be weak inside.

The people were amazed at the parable that Jesus taught. They were happy that he made things very easy to understand. His parable helped them want to listen to more things that Jesus had to say. The parable also made them want to follow Jesus' instructions.

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible, but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.

View this slideshow and download it from the original source:
http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/gnpi-039-parable-builders/

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Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child's spiritual development and help them connect to God. Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.

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Review:

- What is a parable? (A story that is easy to understand that's told to explain something harder to understand)
- What happens to a house built on sand when a big storm comes? (The house falls down and is destroyed)

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- What must a person do to be like the wise man who built his house on a rock? (Hear Jesus' words and do them)
- A person who hears Jesus' words but does not do them is like someone who builds his house on what? (Sand)
- What did the disciples learn from this parable?
- What does this parable show you about Jesus?

Reflection:

- How are Jesus' teachings or stories like a rock?
- What part of this story did you enjoy the most?
- Which person in the parable do you think you're most like?
- Why do you think Jesus told this parable?
- What do you think this parable means? What was Jesus trying to teach us?
- What happens when we don't obey God?
- Why does God want us to obey Him?
- What does it mean to be wise?
- Jesus said it is wise to listen to what He says and do what He says. What might Jesus be asking you to do today (or this week)?

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a lifelong friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. A variety of prayer methods are found here.

Song Suggestions:

- Wise Man Built His House Upon the Rock Song
- Goodbye World Song
- Refer to the Song Page on this website for more song options.

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Activities and Crafts:

- How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.
- Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.

Activities:

- Ask a builder to talk to the children about the importance of building a house on a good foundation.
- Go on a walk around the building and find sandy or firm soil. Also, look at the building's foundation.

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- Use Bible encyclopaedias or commentaries to find out about houses in New Testament times.
- Provide actual sand and rocks so the children can examine each with a magnifying glass. Let children blow on them. The sand will move around, but the rock will not. Apply pressure to each by placing various objects on them. Notice how the sand shifts, but the rock stands firm.
- Object Lesson: Place a food item or candy bar in front of the children. Lay your Bible beside it. Talk about how simply looking at the candy bar is not enough. It is not until we take it and eat it that we can enjoy it. The Bible is the same. Just carrying it around or looking at it is not enough. We cannot receive the benefits until we read it. Read a few Scriptures you have chosen beforehand. After discussing this with the children, let them enjoy the candy bar.
- Here's a good idea, Tom, one of our readers, sent in: First, make two simple, small boxes/houses with cards 3-5 inches high. Then, put a brick or a large rock and a house on top of a big tray. Pour a little water gently onto the house (rain) and then a lot onto the rock (floods). Next, remove the rock, water and house from the tray. Make a sand castle from either a small bucket or another container on the tray and repeat the process. As you pour water onto the sand, it will subside eventually. This can be done outdoors or indoors, but if you are indoors, a waterproof sheet or tablecloth below the tray helps minimise mess.
- And Eileen sent an idea that uses game pieces from the board game "Monopoly." Glue a house token from a Monopoly game on a flat rock and put another Monopoly house on top of a small sand pile in a pie pan. Pour water (rain) on the house on the rock, and it will stay firmly in place. Then pour "rain" on the house on the sand. It, of course, will be knocked off the pile of sand. *Hint: test the glue you use to ensure it will withstand the water's pressure.*

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable "God's Story" printable reflection page. Free printables for this story.

Crafts:

- House on the Rock Collage: Give each child a sheet of paper with a simple house outline. Glue small stones or gravel beneath the house to represent the rock. Add blue paper, yarn, or drawn lines for rain and water. Write, "Build your life on Jesus' words" along the bottom edge of the paper.
- Craft-Stick House: Build a simple house from craft sticks and glue it onto a piece of sturdy cardboard. Glue small stones underneath to represent the firm foundation. Children can write "Hear and obey" on the base.
- Painting Stones: Collect stones that have at least one flat side (like river stones). Have the children paint the rocks with the words "God's Word" or "Jesus" on them. Alternatively, use waterproof markers to draw on the rocks. *(Thanks to Sharon for sending in this idea)*
- Poster: If teaching a number of parables over time, make a "Parables" poster. Each week, add a timeline picture depicting one of the parables.

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. Free printables for this story.

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Other Online Resources:

- Colouring page and worksheet about the house built on a rock (Calvary Curriculum)
- Colouring page and worksheets about parables in general (Calvary Curriculum)
- Printable, Wordsearch (sermons4kids.com)
- Video: Youtube clip 2 minutes and 10 seconds. Good animation with no speaking. Really nice.
- Video: Youtube clip 2 minutes and 54 seconds. The story is told using legos. Sound effects and good scripture references.
- Activities (sermons4kids.com)
- Flip charts, puzzles and more (ebibleteacher.com)

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