

united FOUR SOILS kingdom

the Kingdom story from creation to revelation

FOUR SOILS

Introduction

Jesus travelled around the area teaching people about God's Kingdom and calling them back to a right relationship with God.

Mark 4:1-3

Once again Jesus began teaching by the lakeshore. A very large crowd soon gathered around Him, so He got into a boat. Then He sat in the boat while all the people remained on the shore. He taught them by telling many stories. ... *This is one of the stories He told.*

Mark 4:3-9

"Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seed. As he scattered it across his field, some of the seed fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate it. Other seed fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seed sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow, but the plant soon wilted under the hot sun, and since it didn't have deep roots, it died. Other seed fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants so they produced no grain. Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they sprouted, grew, and produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted!" Then He said, "Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand."

Mark 4:10-11

Later, when Jesus was alone with *His twelve closest followers* and with the others who were gathered around, they asked Him what the *story* meant. He replied, "You are

permitted to understand the secret of the Kingdom of God."

Mark 4:13-20

Then Jesus said to them, "If you can't understand the meaning of this *story*, how will you understand all the other *stories*?"

"The farmer *is like one who* plants seed by taking God's *message about the Kingdom* to others. The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message, only to have Satan come at once and take it away. The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's *message*. The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God's *message*, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced. And the seed that fell on good soil represents those who hear and accept God's *message* and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!"

TELLING THE STORY

Why this story?

Jesus continues to call people to consider what they think about God's Kingdom, who is part of it and how it works. This story isn't about faith by works, but seeing the outworking of God's Kingdom in people's lives. It is also one of the only stories (parables) Jesus tells where He gives an explanation to those who are following Him closely or to those who want to know more.

Jesus is calling attention to what is going on in the hearts of His listeners. He is again challenging the personal response to God's Kingdom. People aren't born into the Kingdom; rather it is a choice. Jesus is causing His listeners to consider where they stand in relation to God's Kingdom and is calling for a serious response and review.

Key concepts to include in your story

- **Once again Jesus began teaching by the side of the lake ...** Set the scene for your audience by transitioning from the Paralysed Man story to this story – highlighting Jesus' use of stories and that a large crowd had come to hear Him speak. They were gathered beside a lake.
- Jesus tells a story. A farmer went to plant seed. He scattered it across his field. The seed falls on different soil types/areas:
 - Footpath: the birds eat the seed
 - Shallow soil with underlying rock: seed sprouts quickly but wilt under the sun, then die
 - Thorny ground: tender plants are choked by thorns so they produce no grain
 - Fertile ground: seeds grew and produced a good crop ... 30, 60 or 100 times what had been planted
 - Anyone with ears should listen and understand
- Later Jesus was with His closest friends and some others, and they asked Him to explain the story
 - He tells them they are permitted to understand the secret of the Kingdom of God but challenges their understanding of the stories He tells
 - The farmer plants seed by taking God's message to others
- Seeds that fall on:
 - Footpath: like those who hear the message, but Satan comes and takes it away
 - Shallow soil with underlying rock: like those who hear the message and receive it with joy, but as they don't have deep roots, they fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's message
 - Thorny ground: like those who hear the message, but it is crowded out by the worries of this life, wealth and other things
 - Fertile soil: like those who hear and accept the message and produce a harvest

Notes about how the story was crafted

We have used the word **story(ies)** rather than **parable(s)**. There are two reasons for doing this. The first is to make the story accessible to everyone. The second reason is that this is a familiar parable to many, and to maintain the freshness of what they are about to hear, we chose to use the word 'story(ies).'

God's **word** has been replaced by God's **message about the Kingdom** in order to clarify what was being proclaimed. Scholars believe that this was a Kingdom parable, and that the **word** that the farmer was spreading was about the Kingdom.

In this story, we have omitted part of vs. 11 and all of vs. 12. Mark 4:11-12 can be very confusing for new storytellers and audiences and can detract from them hearing and understanding the story. Only those who wanted to know more came and asked for an explanation and were given it. This is a very good illustration of the abstract concept described in vs. 11-12. We have found that our audiences have understood this concept without the inclusion of vs. 12 in the story.

DISCUSSION POINTS

Retelling the story

- As your group practises retelling this story, help them see the different scenes in this story.
 - Introduction and setting the scene
 - Jesus is about to tell a story to the many people who have come to listen
 - A farmer sows seed. It falls on 4 different places / types of soil, each having a different result
 - The footpath
 - Shallow soil with underlying rock
 - Thorny soil
 - Fertile soil
 - Later Jesus was asked by his close friends and those with him to explain the story
 - Jesus explains the meaning of the story
 - The farmer plants seeds by taking God's message to others
 - Seed that falls on the footpath is like those who hear the message but it is snatched away by Satan
 - Seed that falls on shallow soil with underlying rock is like those who hear the message and receive it with joy, but as they don't have deep roots, they fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's message
 - Seed that falls on thorny ground is like those who hear the message, but it is crowded out by the worries of this life, wealth and other things
 - Seed that falls on fertile soil is like those who hear and accept the message and produce a harvest
- This story has quite a few visual reminders: pictures showing each type of soil could be placed in different areas of a room. When you tell the story, go to the place you are talking about. This will help people picture the soil type and what happened there. When people are retelling the story, they could move around the room to the different pictures.
- Your group could divide into smaller groups, each representing a different type of soil in this story (i.e. the footpath, shallow soil, thorny ground, fertile soil). When the narrator reaches that part of the story, the small group could say what happened with that type of soil.

Questions for discussion

You don't have to ask all of these questions in your discussion times. These questions are discussion starters, but you will find that often, once people feel comfortable, they talk about many of these things naturally. However, these questions are helpful to keep a conversation going where needed, and they provide a logical sequence of working through the story. Even if you don't ask all the questions in a group, try to ask people what this story means for them personally. You'll find that as you continue to interact with God's Word at a deep level, God's Spirit will reveal things for your life in a wonderful way!

- What do you like about this story?
- What bothered you about this story?
- What does this story show you about God?
- What does this story show you about people?
- What does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story?
- How will you remember this story? *(Tell it!)*
- Is there anyone you would like to tell this story to? Or anyone you would like to practice with? E.g. Your children, your best friend, your wife, your husband, a mum at the school gate, your work colleague, your neighbour. (It's true that the best way to learn a story is to tell it. So why don't you give it a go and chat to each other next week about how you found it?)
- How does this story contribute to our understanding of the Gospel? How is this story part of the Gospel?

Questions people may have

This section can never be exhaustive. Remember that during your group discussion times, you want to focus on the above questions rather than get side tracked by deeply academic issues. Part of the joy of experiencing and studying God's Word in this way is allowing God's Spirit to teach us and reveal His truth to us through the narrative of the individual stories, and ultimately through the narrative of the larger story line. However, we understand that sometimes people feel they need some deeper answers. Sometimes, the storyline has to speak for itself, and we have to trust it to do so. However, if your group needs some deeper answers in order to go on, here are some basics that you can discuss. If you have unresolved questions, please come and ask, and we'll help you find the answers.

- Why would a farmer waste precious seed by sowing it on a footpath, stony ground or thorny ground? In

Jesus' day the method of sowing seed was to throw handfuls of seed around as the farmer walked along, and then later plough the ground on which he had scattered the seed. He would want as much seed as possible to land and root in good soil, but there would have been wastage by landing on poor ground (the rocks underneath would not have been seen by the sower), or being blown by the wind to unsuitable ground. The yield was dependant on the soil, not on the farmer who would distribute the seed.

- Why did Jesus speak in ways he knew that people wouldn't understand?

When people did not understand what Jesus was talking about, it had more to do with the state of their hearts than Jesus' words. There is the implicit understanding that those who listened to Jesus because they were genuinely interested in learning more were able to understand His message. They were able to grasp the depth of what was said – not just hearing the story as a comment on life at the time.

- Is this a story about salvation? Especially the seed that falls on the rocky soil?

Jesus tells us (v 19-23) that this story is about 'hearing' and more importantly 'understanding' the kingdom message. The only person who hears and understands the kingdom message is likened to good soil. Hearing alone can trigger an immediate response that looks genuine. A plant growing on rocky soil looks the same as any other plant initially, and any person hearing God's word may also look the same. It is only when the realities of life come along that a person's depth of understanding, or roots, become visible. Jesus seems to imply that receiving the kingdom message involves both hearing and understanding, or receiving and living out, that will lead to fruit. This should challenge our understanding of what a follower of Jesus looks like.

From the sower's point of view, we should not be discouraged by the rejection of some; we should sow widely, knowing that the kingdom message will fall on good soil eventually. It is our duty to sow – and sow frequently and widely.

From the soil's point of view, it's always valuable for us to evaluate how we receive God's message. Even if we are good soil in that we have received it and have truly understood it and are even producing some fruit, there may be certain situations when we act like the path or the rocky ground or the thorny ground. In those situations, we will not produce fruit in keeping with God's kingdom.

- How can Satan 'snatch away' the seed that has been planted in someone's heart?

As we know from the Fall story, Satan is deceptive and twists the truth. He causes people to question God and not trust God. Therefore, it is not surprising that when there is an opportunity Sa

tan will look to take the truth from someone's heart. This could be because their hearts are hardened by constant rebellion to God's message, or because they do not give the truth time to take hold. What we do know for certain is that those who want to learn more of Jesus' message, and who have a heart that is open to Him will not fall into this category.

- What is the fruit produced?

Fruit is produced when a plant has come to maturity and it has done what it was designed to do, namely produce more seeds in order to reproduce (as well as supply us with food!). This reminds me of a part of the Creation story. When God first created the world, He set Adam and Eve in a beautiful and bountiful garden. God said, "Let the land sprout with vegetation – that will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came."

The more challenging aspect of this parable though is: are we producing fruit? Are we moving to maturity with God? The final message Jesus gave to His followers can be found in Matthew 28:19-20: "... Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Am I making disciples? Helping those around me who know and love Jesus to move on with their walk with Him? Do I know the commands Jesus has given so I can teach and encourage those around me? Do I make the most of the opportunities God gives me to talk to people about all He has done? Do I live according to God's kingdom? Do I bring a blessing to wherever I am? Essentially, am I conforming to the principles of the kingdom of God?

However, given what has just been said, each different type of tree produced the fruit it should produce. The same applies to us. There were three different amounts of seed produced from the plants in the good soil. We each have different levels of responsibility and different situations in our lives, so there will not be a uniform outcome. We don't need to compare our walk with other peoples, but we do have a responsibility to produce the fruit God created us to produce.

FOUR SOILS—for children

Introduction

Jesus travelled around the area teaching people about God's Kingdom and calling them back to a right relationship with God.

Mark 4:1-3

Once again Jesus began teaching by the lakeshore. A very large crowd soon gathered around Him, so He got into a boat. Then He sat in the boat while all the people remained on the shore. He taught them by telling many stories. ... *This is one of the stories He told.*

Mark 4:3-9

"Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seed. As he scattered it across his field, some of the seed fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate it. Other seed fell on *rocky ground where there wasn't much dirt*. The seed *grew* quickly because the *ground was not deep*, but the plant soon *dried up* under the hot sun, and since it didn't have deep roots, it died. Other seed fell among thorns that grew up and choked *the new* plants so they produced no grain. Still other seeds fell on *good* soil, and they *began to grow, got taller*, and produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted!" Then He said, "Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand."

Mark 4:10-11

Later, when Jesus was alone with *His twelve closest followers* and with the others who were gathered around, they asked Him what the *story* meant. He replied, "You *can know* the secret of the Kingdom of God."

Mark 4:13-20

Then Jesus said to them, "If you can't understand the meaning of this *story*, how will you understand all the other *stories*?"

"The farmer *is like a person* who plants seed by taking God's *message about the Kingdom* to others. The seed that fell on the footpath *is like the people* who hear the message, only to have Satan come at once and take it away. The seed on the rocky *ground is like the people* who hear the message and immediately *accept* it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They *quickly give up* as soon as they have problems or are *treated badly* for believing God's *message*. The seed that fell among the thorns *is like other people* who hear God's *message*, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the *temptation* of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced. And the seed that fell on good soil *is like the people* who hear and accept God's *message* and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!"

TELLING THE STORY – for children

Key concepts to include in your story

The story will need to be simplified at varying levels based on the age group of the children you are teaching. This means that many of the details in the story will need to be summarized. However, you should include the following concepts in your story.

- **Once again Jesus began teaching by the side of the lake ...** Set the scene for your audience by transitioning from the Paralyse Man story to this story – highlighting Jesus' use of stories and that a large crowd had come to hear Him speak. They were gathered beside a lake.
- Jesus tells a story. A farmer went to plant seed. He scattered it across his field. The seed falls on different soil types/areas:
 - Footpath: the birds eat the seed
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 - Fertile ground: seeds grew and produced a good crop ... 30, 60 or 100 times what had been planted
 - Anyone with ears should listen and understand
- Later Jesus was with His closest friends and some others, and they asked Him to explain the story
 - He tells them they are permitted to understand the secret of the Kingdom of God but challenges their understanding of the stories He tells
 - The farmer plants seed by taking God's message to others
- Seeds that fall on:
 - Footpath: like those who hear the message, but Satan comes and takes it away
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 - Fertile soil: like those who hear and accept the message and produce a harvest

Example of a simplified version of the story for children

Jesus travelled around teaching people about God's Kingdom and calling them back to a right relationship with God. One day Jesus was teaching by the lake, and a large crowd gathered around Him. So Jesus got in a boat and sat down while everyone else remained on the shore. Jesus taught the people by telling them stories, and one of the stories He told them was about a farmer. Jesus said, "Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seed and scattered it across his field. Some of the seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it. Other seed fell on the rocky ground where there wasn't much dirt. The seed grew quickly, but the plant didn't have deep roots since the ground wasn't deep. The hot sun soon dried up those plants, and they died. Other seed fell among thorns. The thorns grew up and choked the new plants so they didn't produce any grain. But other seeds fell on good soil. Those plants began to grow and grow ... until they produced a huge crop. There were thirty, sixty or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!" Then Jesus said, "Let those with ears use them, listen and understand." Later when Jesus was alone with His closest followers, they asked Him what the story meant. Jesus replied, "You are allowed to know the Kingdom of God ... but if you can't understand the meaning of this story, how will you understand all the other stories?" Then Jesus explained the story to His followers. "The farmer is like a person who plants God's message about the Kingdom in people. Sometimes the teaching falls on the path. This is like the people who hear God's message, but Satan quickly comes and takes away the teaching that was planted in them. Others are like the seed planted on rocky ground. They hear the message and quickly accept it with joy. But since they don't allow God's message to go deep into their lives, they keep it for only a short time. As soon as they have problems or are treated badly for believing God's message, they quickly give up. Other people are like the seeds planted among the thorns. Those people hear God's message, but the worries of this life, the temptation of wealth and the desire for other things keep the message from growing and producing fruit in their lives. Other people are like the seed planted in the good ground. They hear God's message and accept it. Then they grow and produce fruit – sometimes thirty times more, sometimes sixty times more and sometimes a hundred times more!"

Retelling the story

The following activities can be used to vary your storying sessions with the children and keep the action fresh and exciting. They also help the children learn the stories in different ways. You'll find as children journey through this story set with you, they become more and more capable of learning even complicated stories quickly and well. Varying activities and keeping it fun helps the children write the stories on their heart so that they can pull them out of their toolbox whenever a situation comes up where they can use them!

- **Charades** – Have participants choose one line from the story and use actions to convey that line to the rest of the group. The child that guesses correctly goes next.
- **Skit** – Assign parts to groups and have them act out the story as you or a participant narrates. This can be done as a group or in smaller teams. If done in teams, you may choose to have each team act out the whole story, or assign sections and have them perform the skits in chronological order one after the other.
- **Song** – This activity seems to work best in small groups of older and more advanced students. If you believe your group would enjoy this activity, have them write and perform a song based on a story or a portion of a story. To make this task easier, have each group choose a song melody as their foundation and change the lyrics as needed, as opposed to starting from scratch.
- **Sign Language** – This is a great way to incorporate kinaesthetic learning into storying. Work with the participants to develop "sign language" for keywords in the story. This will help them to remember the order and progression of the story. This activity may also be done as a group or in smaller teams. If done in teams, have a participant from each team narrate as the group demonstrates their motions. The more creative, the more likely they are to remember it! Sign language is a good activity if younger and more inexperienced storytellers are part of the group.
- **Perspective Shift** – This creative and critical thinking activity works best later in the story set. Assign groups of children different characters in the story. They then adjust the story they have learned to the perspective of that character. For example, they could tell the Fall story from Adam and Eve's perspectives or the Abraham story from Abraham's perspective.
- **Memory** – The storyteller starts this activity by saying the first line of the story. The story then moves around the circle as each participant tells a line. An alternate method is to go back and forth between partners as they tell the story to each other.
- **Popcorn** – The storyteller also starts this activity. As children remember, they raise their hand. When ready, the storyteller yells "pop" and the name of someone with their hand raised. That person will then jump in until more hands are raised and they shout "pop" to pass the story to another child. You will likely need to demonstrate how this works.
- **Interview** – Children are assigned different characters. A child designated as "interviewer" asks the characters questions about what happened in the story and the character answers according to his or her role. For example, the interviewer could ask Adam about what he witnessed or the actions he took in the garden when he ate the fruit, and Adam would give his answer.
- **Action words** – Before telling the story, the storyteller gives instructions associated with particular words. Children listen for those words in the story, and must do appropriate action when heard. For example, the storyteller would tell the participants to wiggle their arm like a snake anytime they hear the word "snake." There should be multiple words associated with actions in the story. This activity also works well with a younger audience.

Children's Teaching Materials

Sunday mornings will begin in the warehouse with a joint children's worship time led by a youth worship band followed by a storytelling session with the roving storyteller. Then groups will disperse to their usual meeting locations for the age appropriate teaching of the story and activities that reinforce that story's message.

Sparks

10:30	Retell the story. Use a Storybook Bible.	Resources Needed:
	Snack – rice cakes	• Storybook Bible • Rice cakes
10:45	Craft: Four Soils ~ Have two pictures of flowers stuck on a card. Allow the children to scribble on one of them to show weeds. ~ 4 pots to represent the different soils; use cress seeds and plant them; leave them to grow Play: Happyland figures, tractor, farmer, farm mat	• Card, pictures of flowers, flower stickers • Pots • Cress seeds • Cotton wood / soil • Gravel • Rocks
11:15	Music: choose an appropriate song to accompany the lesson; build a playlist on Google play	• Music CD
11:20	Play	

Little Flames

10:30	Begin with prayer. (Don't repeat a specific prayer, but follow the general idea of the prayer below.) ~ Say "Hi" to God, tell Him we're glad He's there with us and ask Him to help us see Him, hear Him and know Him. Invite Him into everything we'll be doing today. Keep today's focus in mind: "I should tell people about Jesus."	Resources Needed:
10:35	Retell the story. ~ Use 4 posts with a picture of each soil attached to the post. On the backside of the pictures should be a picture of the "plant." (For example, show a picture of the seed falling on the path on one side of the page. The backside can show a picture of birds flying down and eating the seed. Use a different picture to represent each soil.) All the children can sit in a boat to start the story. They have to choose which post to stand next to for each section of the story.	• 4 Rounders posts (from warehouse) • Props: farmer's cap, clothing, etc • Pictures of each soil and end result of the plant

- 10:45 "Knowledge Harvest" conversation: (use similar questions as below) ~
 What was Jesus teaching people while He was travelling?
 ~ When a large crowd gathered, what did Jesus do so that everyone could see and hear Him?
 ~ What did the farmer do in Jesus' story?
 ~ What happened to the seed that landed on the path?
 ~ What happened to the seed that fell on rocky ground?
 ~ What happened to the seed that fell among thorns?
 ~ What happened to the seed that fell on good soil?
 ~ Why did Jesus explain the story to His closest followers?
 ~ What kind of person did the seed that landed on the path represent? ~
 What kind of person did the seed that fell on rocky ground represent? ~
 What kind of person did the seed that fell among thorns represent? ~
 ~ What kind of person did the seed that fell on good soil represent?
- 10:50 Game: "Seed Relay"
 - Spoons
 - Bean seeds
 - Jars/pots
 - Measuring cup
 ~ Divide into two or more teams. Place an empty container in the front of each team. Large seeds should be placed at the opposite side of the room on a table (or in a bowl). Each team gets on plastic spoon. Take turns running to the opposite side of the room, filling the spoon with seeds and returning to drop them in the empty container assigned to his/her team. When the time limit is reached (or all players have had a turn), count the seeds in each container to see which team gathered the most seeds. (Option: fill a jar or measuring cup with the seeds to determine the winner instead of counting them.)
- 11:00 Biscuit break – Use this relatively calm opportunity for a little chat and prayer time.
 - Biscuits
 Discussion: "Why does Jesus want us to tell people about Him?"
- 11:05 Popcorn Prayer
 ~ Have simple prayers, popcorn style: "Thank you, Jesus, for _____!"
- 11:10 Song: "Sow the Word" – sing to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat"
 - Music
Verse 1:
 Sow, sow, sow the Word, precious seeds of faith
 Some that fall along the path, are quickly snatched away
Verse 2:
 Sow, sow, sow the Word, precious seeds of truth
 Some that fall on rocky soil, won't last the whole day through
Verse 3:
 Sow, sow, sow the Word, precious seeds of hope
 Some that fall among the thorns, grow weak from fear and woe
Verse 4:
 Sow, sow, sow the Word, precious seeds of life
 Some that fall into good soil, will live a life for Christ!
- 11:15 Learn the words of the week: "I should tell people about Jesus"
 - Visuals to help learn the phrase

11:20	Craft: ~ Using pre-drawn pictures of the different soils, allow the children to colour them and attach stickers (or pictures) of different types of soil, birds, seeds, etc, to the drawings.	• Pre-drawn pictures • Colours/crayons • Stickers
11:30	If there is any remaining time (or the previous activities finish early), allow the children to freely choose to do whatever they want to do. Play story-relevant music in the background. Leaders should engage with the children during this time: celebrate them, pray for them, love them. ~ Play with story-oriented toys ~ Role play ~ Play-dough creations ~ Colouring station	• Play dough • Colouring sheets • Blank paper • Crayons

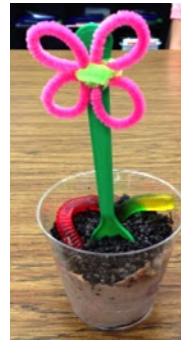
Blaze

10:35	Welcome and straight-forward telling of the story ~ Remind kids of rules ~ Ask if anyone remembers the previous story ~ Retell the story using visual aids	Resources Needed: • Jars of dirt, stone, thorns and packed soil
10:40	Retell the story using the parable game board (included at the end of these materials) ~ Children move their player (a cardboard seed) through the birds, rocks and thorns to eventually reach the good soil where they can put down their roots. There are pitfalls along the way representing the various problems that Jesus talks about in His parable. ~ Ask teams questions about the story. As a team guesses correctly, allow them to roll a die (or flick a spinner) to determine how many spaces they can move. The first team to get to the good soil wins.	• Printed game board • Tack to post the game board on the wall & the seeds to the board • Large cardboard seeds in different colours (one colour per team)
10:55	Discuss the questions: ~ What do you like about this story? ~ What bothered you about this story? ~ What does this story show you about God? ~ What does this story show you about people? ~ What does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story? ~ How will you remember this story? <i>Tell it!</i> ~ Who will you tell this story to?	
11:05	Game: "Seed Relay" ~ Divide into two or more teams. Place an empty container in the front of each team. Large seeds should be placed at the opposite side of the room on a table (or in a bowl). Each team gets on plastic spoon. Take turns running to the opposite side of the room, filling the spoon with seeds and returning to drop them in the empty container assigned to his/her team. When the time limit is reached (or all players have had a turn), count the seeds in each container to see which team gathered the	• Spoons • Bean seeds • Jars/pots • Measuring cup

most seeds. (Option: fill a jar or measuring cup with the seeds to determine the winner instead of counting them.)

11:15 Craft: Flower Pot Dessert

~ Make a "flower pot dessert" using chocolate pudding, whipped topping, Oreos, gummy worms, plastic spoons, pipe cleaners and small cups
~ Be sure to include gluten and dairy-free alternatives



- Small cups
- Plastic spoons
- Gummy worms
- Oreos
- Chocolate pudding
- Pipe cleaners
- Whipped topping
- Gluten & dairy-free alternatives

11:25 Circle Time: praying, reflection, responses and offering

- Container for the offering

TNT

10:35 Welcome and straight-forward telling of the story ~

Remind kids of rules

~ Ask if anyone remembers the previous story ~

Retell the story using visual aids

Resources Needed:

- Jars of dirt, stone, thorns and packed soil

10:40 Retell the story using the parable game board (included at the end of these materials)

~ Children move their player (a cardboard seed) through the birds, rocks and thorns to eventually reach the good soil where they can put down their roots. There are pitfalls along the way representing the various problems that Jesus talks about in His parable.
~ Ask teams questions about the story. As a team guesses correctly, allow them to roll a die (or flick a spinner) to determine how many spaces they can move. The first team to get to the good soil wins.

- Printed game board
- Tack to post the game board on the wall & the seeds to the board
- Large cardboard seeds in different colours (one colour per team)

Discuss the questions:

10:55 ~ What do you like about this story?

~ What bothered you about this story?

~ What does this story show you about God?

~ What does this story show you about people?

~ What does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story?

~ How will you remember this story? *Tell it!*

~ Who will you tell this story to?

11:05 Game: "Seed Relay"

~ Divide into two or more teams. Place an empty container in the front of each team. Large seeds should be placed at the opposite side of the room on a table (or in a bowl). Each team gets on plastic spoon. Take turns running to the opposite side of the room, filling the spoon with seeds and returning to drop them in the empty container assigned to his/her team. When the time limit is reached (or all players

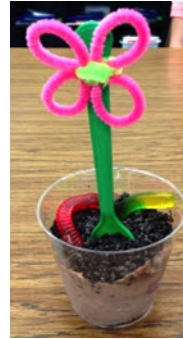
- Spoons
- Bean seeds
- Jars/pots
- Measuring cup

have had a turn), count the seeds in each container to see which team gathered the most seeds. (Option: fill a jar or measuring cup with the seeds to determine the winner instead of counting them.)

11:15 Craft: Flower Pot Dessert

~ Make a "flower pot dessert" using chocolate pudding, whipped topping, Oreos, gummy worms, plastic spoons, pipe cleaners and small cups

~ Be sure to include gluten and dairy-free alternatives



- Small cups
- Plastic spoons
- Gummy worms
- Oreos
- Chocolate pudding
- Pipe cleaners
- Whipped topping
- Gluten & dairy-free alternatives

11:25 Circle Time: praying, reflection, responses and offering

- Container for the offering

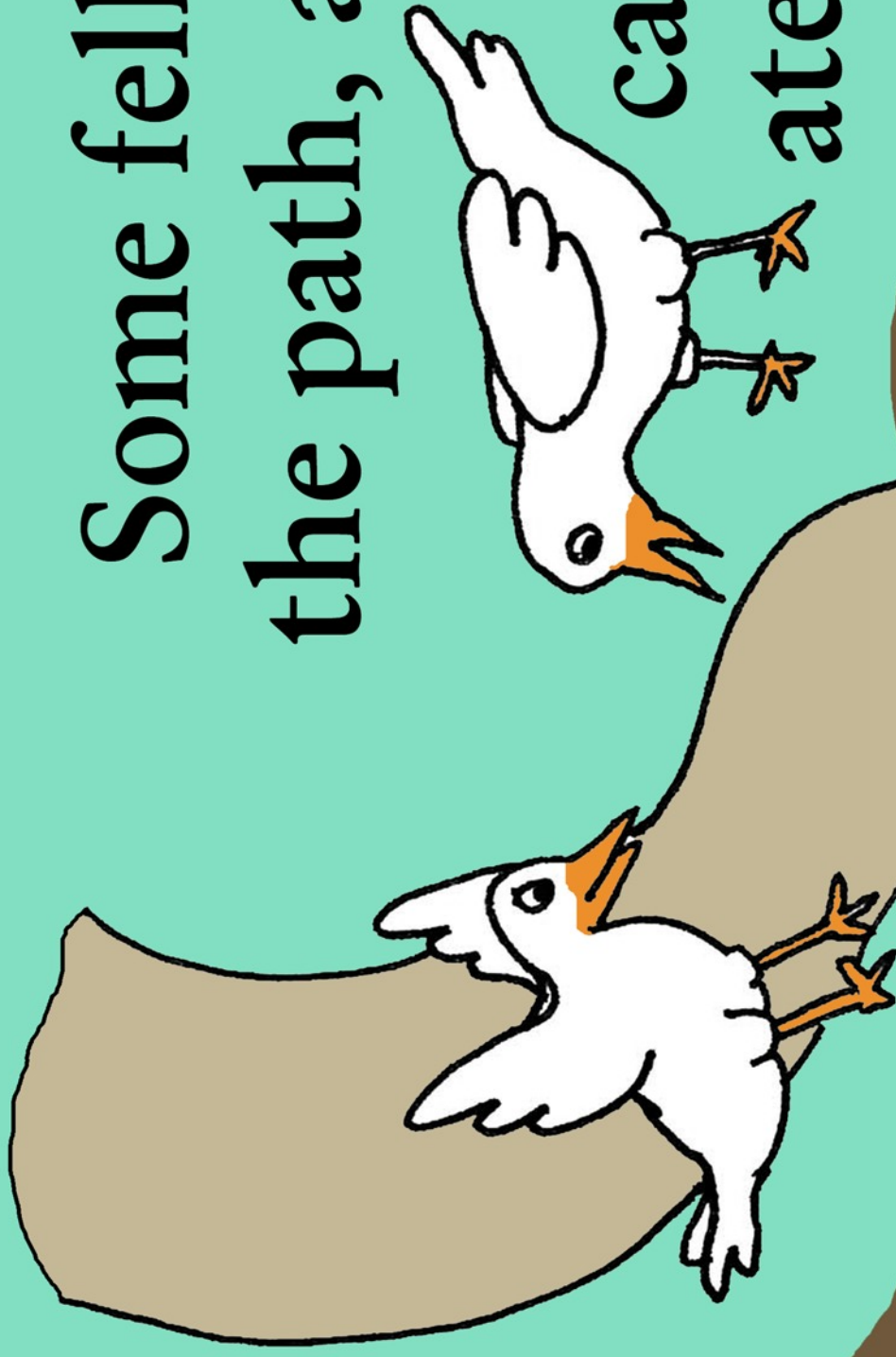
11:30 (As they leave) Activity pages

- Activity pages

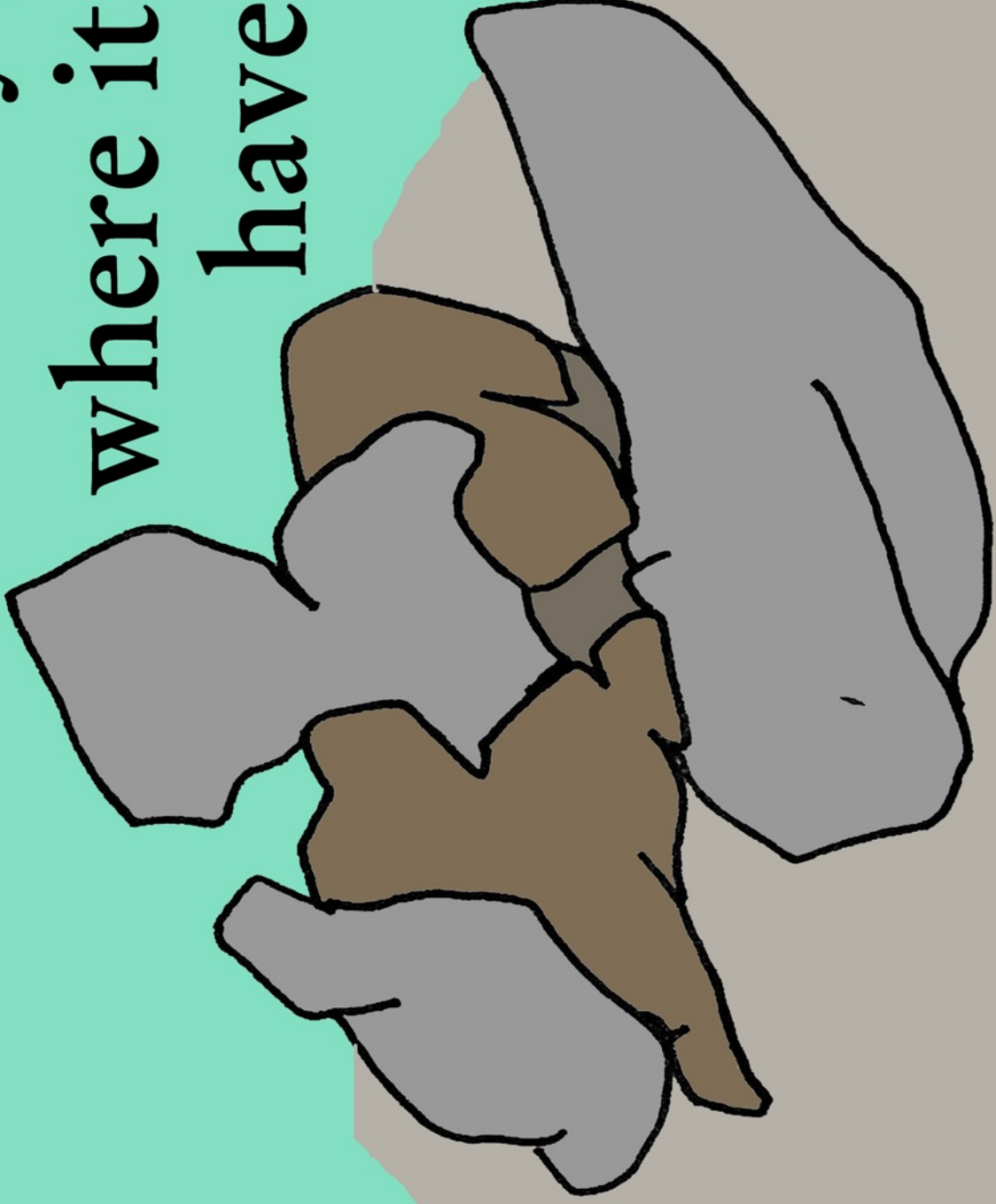
A farmer went out to sow
his seed. As he
was scattering
the seed....



Some fell along
the path, and the
birds
came and
ate it up...



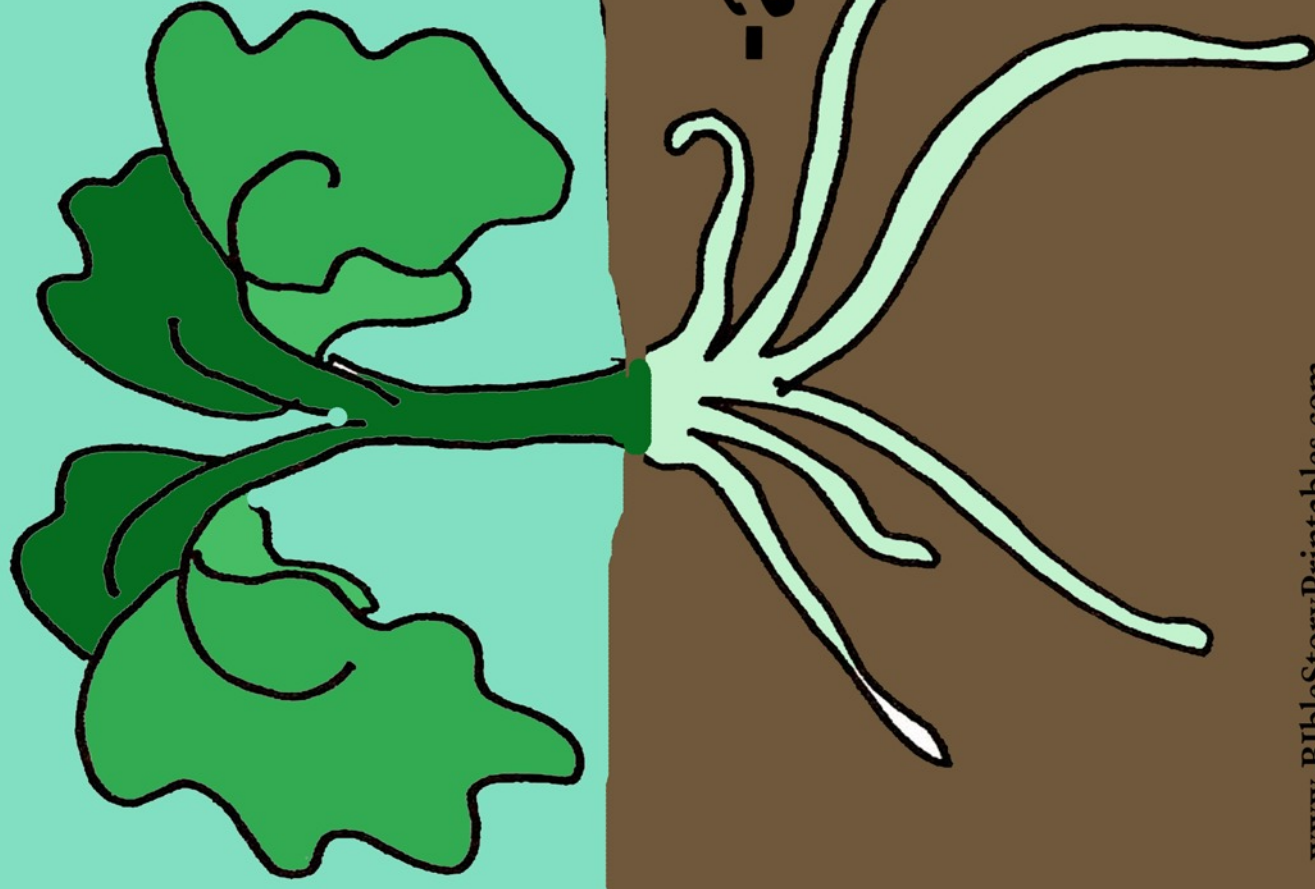
Some fell on
rocky places,
where it did not
have much
soil...



Other seed
fell among
thorns
which
grew up
and
choked
the plants...

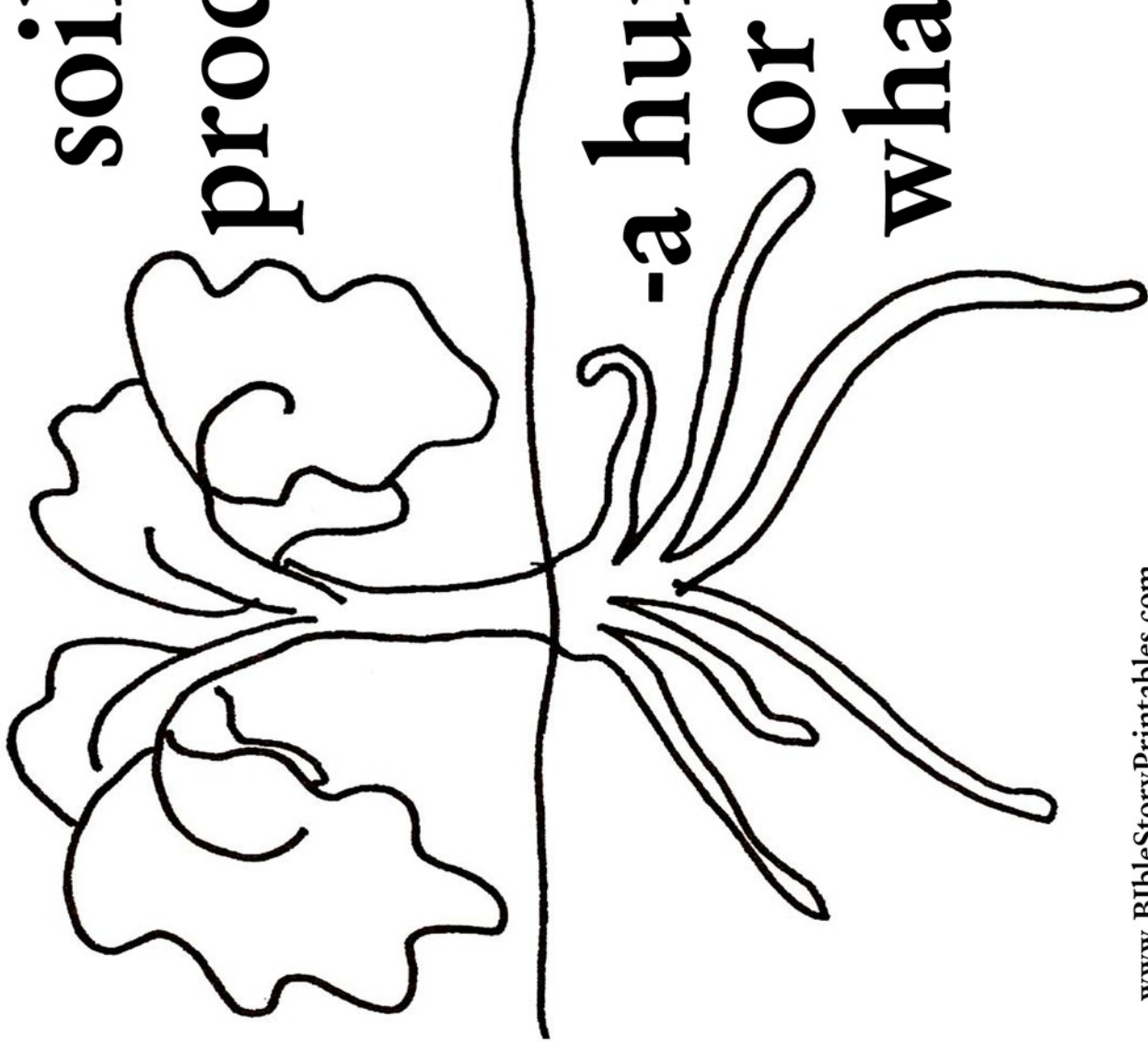


Still other seed fell on good
soil, where it
produced a crop

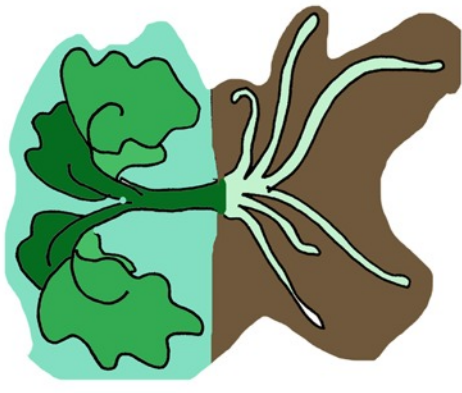


-a hundred, sixty
or thirty times
what was sown.

**Still other seed fell on good
soil, where it
produced a crop**



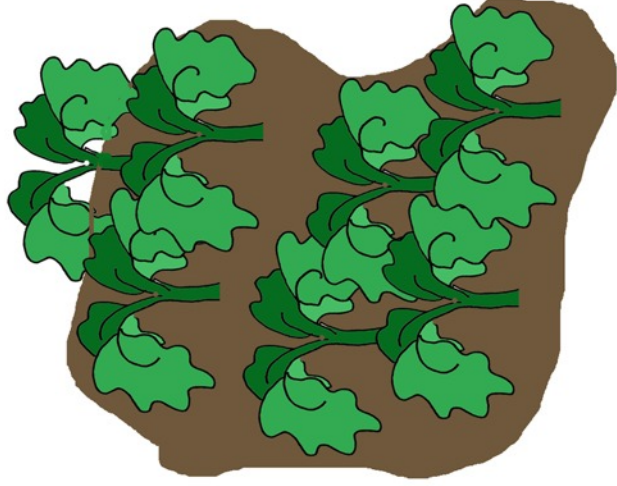
**-a hundred, sixty
or thirty times
what was sown.**



Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a good crop

-- a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

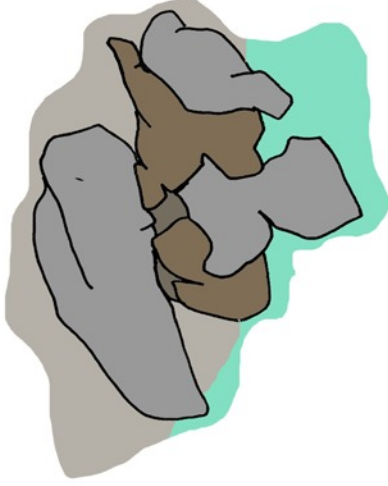
The Parable of the Sower



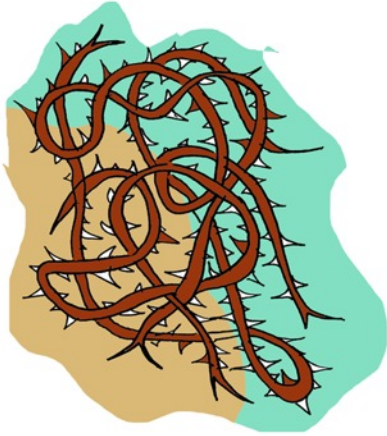
"A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed..."



Some fell along the path and the birds came and ate it up...

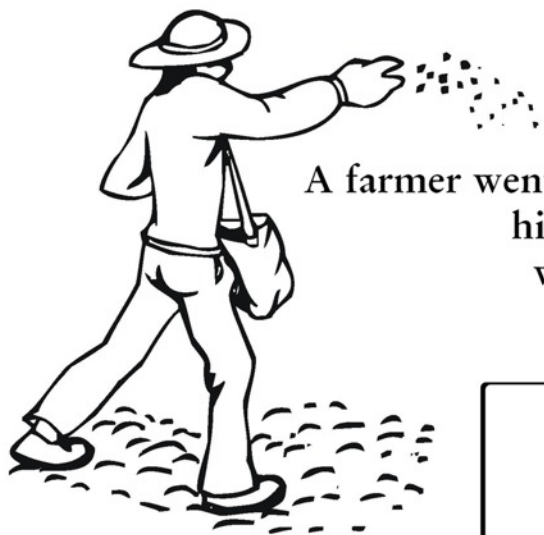


Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil...

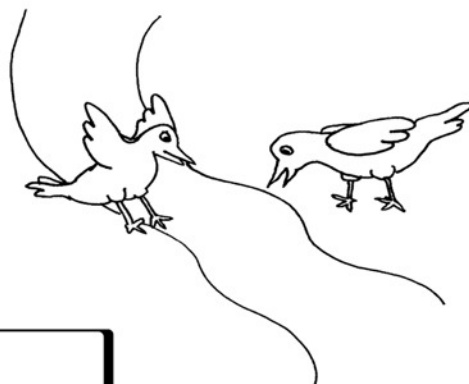


Other seeds fell among thorns which grew up and choked the plants...

The Parable of the Sower



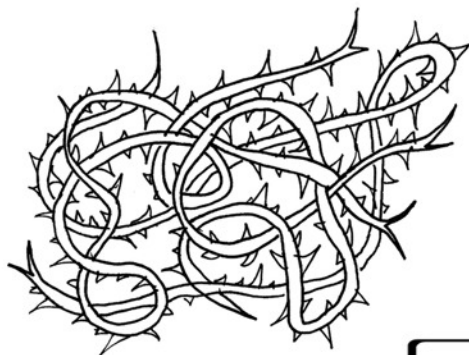
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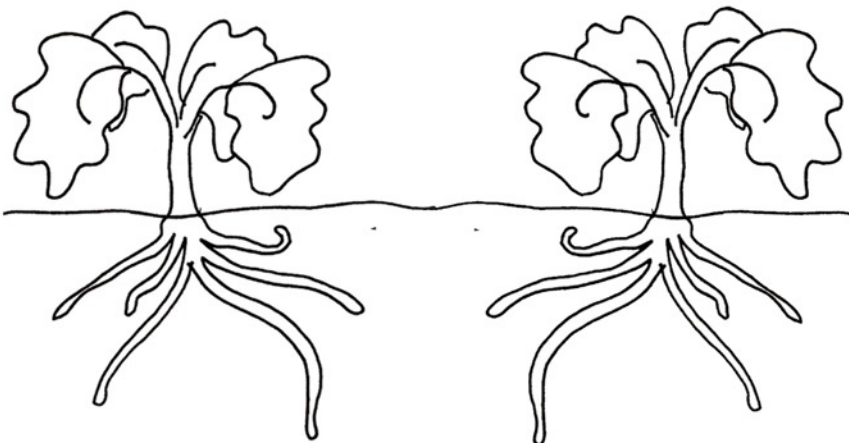
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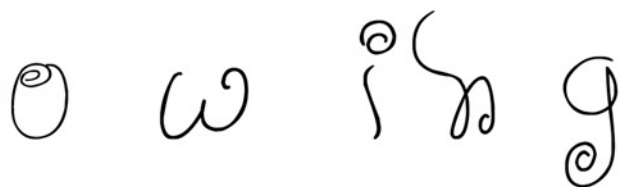
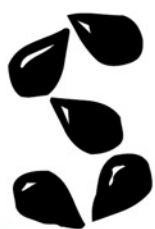
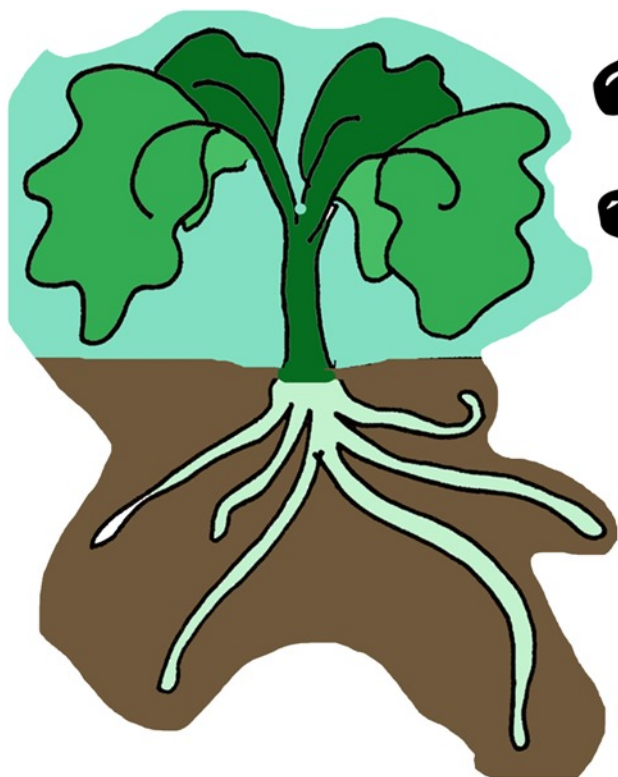


Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a good crop - a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

Free Sunday School Tools at:

Bible Story
Printables.com

Images (c) Jupiter Co.



The Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13:3-9

www.BibleStoryPrintables.com

Images (c) Jupiter co.

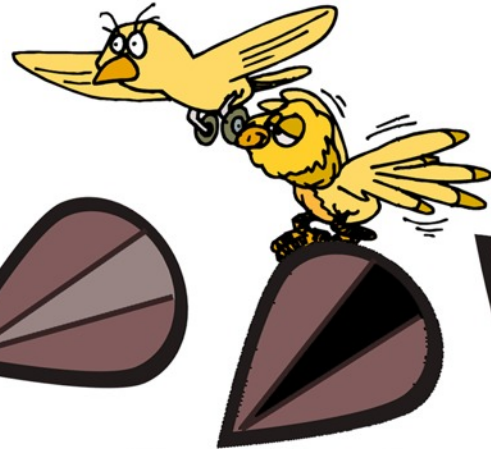
Instructions: Mount gameboard to file folder. Use sunflower seeds or other large seeds for playing pieces. Play: Roll a die, move your guy and try to make it to the good soil without getting snared! First one to get roots in the ground wins!

Sowing Seeds

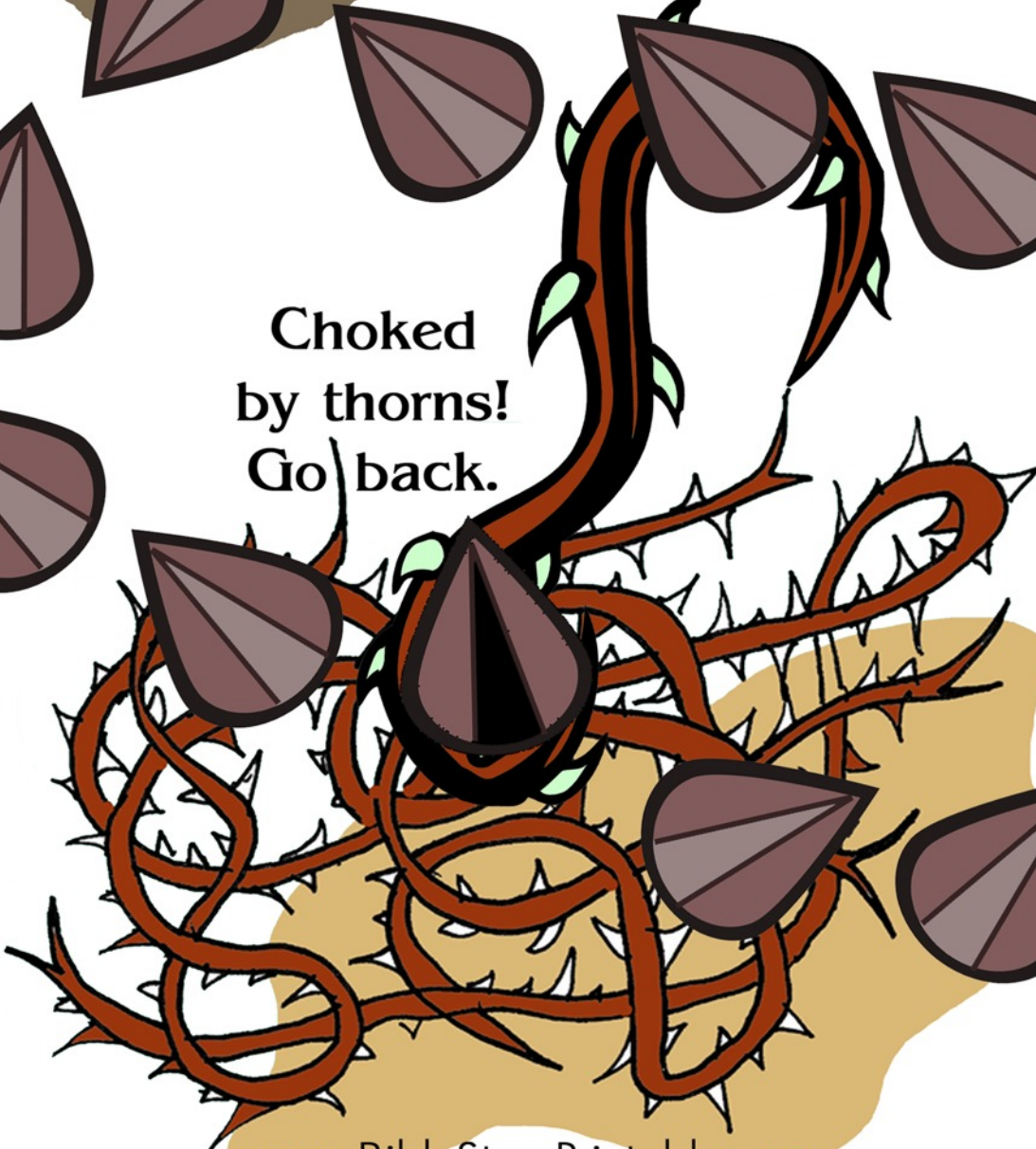




**Start
Sowing!**



**Snatched up
by birds.
Loose a Turn!**

A large, tangled, brown thorny vine is shown choking a seed. The vine has many sharp white thorns and is wrapped around the seed and other seeds. There are several other seeds floating around the vine.

**Choked
by thorns!
Go back.**



Not enough
soil to grow.
Go Back!

