LEADER GUIDE

Children’s Classroom Edition
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Archbishop Coakley wrote all of us a letter. He is giving us something we have to do, he is calling us into mission! This is a very exciting time and we don’t want to miss out on this chance to become closer to God and help our Church!

Lent is a good time to pause and reflect on how we can grow in our faith. This study guide is intended to introduce children to the lesson Jesus shares in his parable of the seed and the sower. Some older children may already be familiar with the parable and the parent/catechist is free to select portions of the lesson which will be most relevant to the child.

In his Pastoral Letter the Archbishop says, “We are called to be disciples; called to pursue holiness and mission; called to become saints. We are still called to evangelize, to be witnesses, and to live authentic lives as missionary disciples.”

Just like God is always asking us to get to know Him better and tell others about Him, the Archbishop is asking us to really take our faith and mission to share the Good News seriously.
What is the Parable of the Sower and the Seed?
The parable of the sower and the seed is about the Word of God being sown in our hearts with gladness and producing fruit. It's plain and simple, but not easy. Why? Because YOU determine if the seed will be planted in your heart or not. Yes, it’s you… not Jesus. God gives us the gift of free will, to say “yes” to His invitation.

- **What is the Seed?** The Word of God.
- **Who is the Sower?** God
- **Where does the Seed Grow?** In your heart.
- **Who Makes the Seed Grow?** The Holy Spirit.
- **Why is the Seed Important?** It’s a matter of our eternal life and death.
- **What is being Produced Out of Us from the Seed?** Fruit.
- **What is the Fruit?** The fruit is what the presence of the Spirit accomplishes and produces in you, with your cooperation: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

What does the Parable of the Sower and the Seed mean?
God is the Sower. How you receive the Word determines whether it will take root in your heart or be snatched away by the evil one, Satan. This is a difficult truth because it is easier to be passive than active. We are responsible for preparing and tilling the “soil” so that we can best receive the Word. Yet, the increase of that Word in our hearts is ultimately accomplished not by us, but by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Why is the Word of God Important to Us?
The Word of God is powerful.
Kids face a lot in life. They are navigating their friendships and relationships with others. They are working at identifying who they are in Christ. As they get older, they are trying to figure out why they are here on this earth. It is not easy.
In fact, we as adults are still facing the same questions and obstacles! But, through all of these hardships and difficulties, there is nothing more powerful than teaching children that the Bible contains the guidance they need for life and holiness. With the Holy Spirit, He will bring scriptures to our remembrance. He will comfort, lead and guide us, and He will never leave us nor forsake us. But, how can they learn this without being taught? That is where you come in!

How do We Help Our Kids Sow The Seed?
We first help our kids nurture the seed (the Word of God in their hearts) by modeling it.
If you don’t read and study the Word of God, how will your kids recognize that it is important for them?
But kids won’t just do it on their own. They need incentive and encouragement to keep at it.
How many of us as adults are still trying to be more self-disciplined when it comes to prayer, reading the Word, worship, etc. If we struggle with consistency, we can expect our children to struggle as well.
Sit with your kids, digging into the Word of God together. There is an intimacy that will take place between you, your kids and the Holy Spirit as you study and read the Bible.
LESSON

Opening Prayer

PRAY:

“Dear Jesus, help me to grow strong in my love for you. Help me to be like the seed that is planted in good soil so I can produce good fruit and share your love with others. I know that you love me and your Blessed Mother, Mary loves me too. Dear Mary, help me to be more like Jesus.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.”

READ:


DISCUSS:

Jesus Tells Stories (Relating the Parable of the Sower and the Seed to our daily lives.)

- While Jesus was with his disciples and went around teaching to all the crowds who came to hear Him, He often spoke in parables. A parable is a simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson.

- Jesus used parables so the people would remember the stories and the lessons the parables taught.

- The difference between children's stories and parables is that most children's stories are completely make believe, while the stories Jesus told weren't true stories, they were about real-life problems.
• Even though you are young, you can learn these stories too. They show us how to treat others, how to please God, how to stay close to God, and how to get to heaven.

• After Jesus told a parable he would often explain what it meant. In this scripture, Jesus had gone and sat by the lake by himself. Soon such large crowds gathered around Him that He got into a boat near the shore and people stood on the land to hear him. Then he began telling them parables.

• After Jesus told the parable of the sower and the seed, the disciples asked what it meant, just like you might do when you are listening to your parents, teachers, and Father at Mass.

• If you hear them talking about Jesus but don't understand, you need to ask questions. If you don't ask, it will be like the seeds that fell on the path and were eaten by the birds – the seed will never even be planted.

• If you don't learn more about God and make Him part of your life every day, the seed may be planted, but it won't grow. It will be like the seed that fell on the rocks. It grew only for a short time and then it died.

• The next seed is the one that was choked out by the thorns. This can happen when you hear a lesson about God and then you start thinking about other things … other things like toys, video games, cell phones, or something your friends did. By spending more time thinking about these things and less time thinking about God’s Word, you will choke the seed and keep it from growing. Make God first in your life.

• The last is the best – the seed fell on the good soil. If you learn from what you hear in Sunday School and church, the seed in your heart will grow. You will be able to tell others about how great God is and what a good friend He is to you. You will be helping others know God and love Him too.
The Parable of the Sower

Mark 4:1-20

- Some seeds fell on the path and were eaten by birds.
- Some seeds fell on rocks but dried up because they had no root.
- Some seeds fell among the thorns and were choked out.
- Still others fell on good soil and they produced 100 x more.
Ask the children if they know how a seed grows into a plant. What do you need to make it grow? Just like a plant, how can we make the Word of God grow in our hearts?

THINK!

What kind of soil are you?
What kind of soil do you want to be?
What would you need to do to become good soil?

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CLOSING PRAYER

PRAY:

“Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.”