

God's Kingdom is Greater than Any Treasure

Featured story from the *Catholic Children's Bible*; Matthew 13:44-46

Parent Activity Guide for use with children in grades 1-5 and their families – May home lesson

Gather

Gather your family members around a central table or activity space. Make sure everyone can see *The Catholic Children's Bible* or another Bible of your choosing.

Quiet yourselves and take a moment to enter into God's presence. Choose someone to lead the opening prayer.

Begin with the Sign of the Cross and then the reader should pray aloud the following:

Heavenly Father, you sent your Son, Jesus, to live among us and form a community of believers. Let your Holy Spirit open our hearts to hear what You want to say to us through the Bible passage today. Give us a mind like Jesus to understand your message to each of us. Amen.

Share in God's Word

Ask your child to read aloud the feature story from the children's Bible, Matthew 13:44-46 (found on page 1480 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* revised edition, copyright 2017). Provide support as needed.

The leader should explain the vocabulary from the passage:

- Kingdom of heaven: wherever God rules over people's hearts

Check to see if your child has any other questions about the passage and address them as needed.

Understand it

Leader: Let's review the main ideas of this passage from John's Gospel. This passage reminds us that the Kingdom of Heaven is the most important thing we can ever have; we only receive it as a gift by putting our faith in Jesus.

Refer to your *Catholic Children's Bible* "Understand it!" section or read aloud the following:

What would you like to own most of all? To get it, would you be willing to give up everything else you have? In this Bible passage, Jesus tells two stories about men who wanted something so much that they did just this. One man traded all he owned for a treasure. Another sold everything he had for a pearl. These men gave up their houses, fields, and animals for something of greater value.

God's Kingdom is far, far more valuable than any treasure or pearl. In God's Kingdom we will live in peace and love with Jesus forever. Belonging to this kingdom is worth any price. It will cost us time and hard work. But in the end we will be even happier than the men who got the treasure or pearl.

Live it *

Finish the sentence below by naming something very valuable.

The Kingdom of Heaven is a greater treasure than _____.

Then make a poster with your sentence. You may want to decorate it with pictures. Display your poster where others will see it and think about its message.

Tell it

Using the pictures in the "Tell it!" section of the featured story spread, check your child(ren)'s comprehension by asking him/her to retell this reading in his/her own words.

Adaptation: If you do not have *The Catholic Children's Bible*, ask your child to create a comic strip with three pictures to depict three main ideas from the passage and explain them to you.

Closing Prayer

Leader: We quiet ourselves now and ask God to be present with us as we pray. After hearing this Bible passage, who or what we should pray for today?

[Give everyone time to list anyone or any situation in need of prayers.]

Leader invites everyone to join in the Sign of the Cross, and then prays aloud the following prayer or adapts it to fit your family's needs:

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of our lives and the chance to share this prayer time together. We offer all of the prayer requests spoken here into Your care, trusting in Your great love for us and that You will take care of everything.

Thank you for the gift of the Kingdom of Heaven, which is worth more than all the money or fine jewelry in the world. We know now that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. By putting our trust in him, we too can live in the Kingdom of Heaven as Jesus' disciples.

Jesus, please give us peace and joy in our hearts as your disciples.

In your most Holy Trinity we pray, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, amen.

* See optional additional activities on the next page.

Additional Activities (Optional)

These interactive family activities could be used as an extra activity in the above family lesson or used at another time in the month to reinforce the main theme of Going Deeper in the Kingdom of God for May.

The following activities have been adapted from <https://d6family.com/splink/>.

The Great Eight

Jesus taught the people a new way to live in His Sermon on the Mount. He taught the people about the kingdom of God and how to live as a follower of God. Jesus shared eight attitudes we should have, and He tells us when we have these attitudes, we are “blessed.”

Ask: Do you know what it means to be blessed? (It means we have God’s approval and the joy that comes from living in ways that please Him.)

Talk about it: The first attitude Jesus shared was, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.” Being “poor in spirit” means we know we have a great need for God, and we cannot live life without Him.

What blessing comes from this attitude? (kingdom of Heaven) When we recognize our need for Him and ask Him to be our Savior, our reward is living with Him in Heaven!

Together, make a list of the Beatitudes and the blessings each one brings. Write these on a piece of paper and post on the fridge. This list will be a great reminder that our attitudes are very important.

Bubbles, Bubbles, and More Bubbles

Items Needed: container with warm water, sugar or corn syrup, and dishwashing liquid to make bubbles (see recipe below); bubble wand or other wand ideas (listed below) for dipping in bubbles

Make bubbles and go outside to blow them. (If you add sugar, they will be a little sticky for indoors.)

Bubbles Recipe:

- 1 quart (4 cups) warm water
- 1/2 cup sugar or corn syrup
- 1/2 cup dishwashing liquid (Dawn is a great choice.)

Combine the sugar and warm water. Stir until the sugar is fully dissolved. Add the dishwashing liquid and stir again. Dip your bubble wand and blow. Some other ideas for wands include slotted spoons, funnels, Mason jar lid rings, and pipe cleaners molded into shapes.

Talk about it:

- What happened when you tried to catch the bubbles? (They popped.)
- Bubbles are fun, but they don’t last long. They are temporary, not permanent. Things are like bubbles. They don’t last either.

- Will things make us happy? Why or why not? (Things break; They are temporary; The happiness they bring won't last; etc.)

It's not wrong to have things, but they are not enough to bring us lasting joy. Remind them of the Bible passage from Matthew 13:44-46. The Kingdom of Heaven is more valuable than any earthly things, and belonging to God's kingdom is what will bring us true joy and peace.

What Matters Most

Items Needed: A plastic bag for each child, a bag with a Bible, family picture, and a special gift from your child

Before going on a picnic or out to eat, give your child five minutes to pack a bag with 3-5 of his/her most important belongings before heading out the door. As you drive, ask each person to share what items they chose and why.

Once you arrive at the destination, remove the Bible from the bag and explain that the Bible is a symbol of our top priority—our faith in God. Show your child the family picture and the special gift as well. Talk with your child about why these things are important and what our priorities, what we treasure most, should be.

Loving God and loving others should be a priority in our lives. When we put God first and love others well, we can experience true joy and experience living in the Kingdom of Heaven even now. Wherever God rules over people's hearts, there exists the Kingdom of Heaven.

How Many Toys Do You Have?

Items Needed: a Bible (mark the passage Philippians 4:11-12 so it can be opened easily)

Send your child to his or her room to count the toys and then report the number.

Ask:

- Do you have enough toys? Why or why not?
- How many toys do you need to be satisfied or content?

Read Philippians 4:11-12 aloud.

What does it mean to be content? (To be satisfied; to be happy with what we have; etc.)

What did Paul say that he had learned? (How to be content in any circumstance)

Paul said that he learned to be satisfied with what he had, whether it was a little or a lot. His contentment did not rest in what he had or what happened to him. He had a friendship with God, and he trusted that God would give what he needed.