

Large Group/Small Group

April 10, 2024

Bible Passage: Luke 6:46–49; Matthew 7:24–27
(Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders)



God Requires Obedience

Remember Verse

Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John 17:3

LESSON OVERVIEW

EXPLORE//
10 minutes



Option 1: Sand Castles
(younger kids)

SUPPLIES

- Large trays (1 for every 2–3 children)
- Sand (3 c. per child)
- Water
- Small disposable paper cups (2 per child)
- Pencils
- Tarps or plastic tablecloths
- Water pitchers or watering cans (1 per table)

Option 2: Weak and Strong Houses (older kids)

SUPPLIES

- Decks of cards (1 for every 4 children)
- Dominoes
- Blocks (wooden or plastic)
- Shoe boxes (dozens)

DISCOVER//
30 minutes



Traditions and Remember Verse

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse image*
- Remember Verse animation*
- Mementos for your church Traditions

Connect Activity:

Captain and Crew

SUPPLIES

- Connect Question image*
- Connect Activity image*

The Big God Story

SUPPLIES

- Optional: Storytelling video*
- Timeline image*
- Timeline animation*
- Bibles
- Sound effect: Storm*
- Image: Jesus on Mountain*
- Poster board (2 yellow, 3 white)
- Scissors
- Tape
- Marker
- Pen
- Props: shovel, hammer, shoe boxes (reuse the ones from EXPLORE), beach chair, sunglasses, magazine, long strip of blue cloth or paper

Worship as Response

SUPPLIES

- Bibles
- Play dough (approximately ¼ c. per child)
- Pencils

RESPOND//
15 minutes



Reflect

SUPPLIES

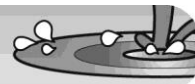
Bibles

Weather Vanes

SUPPLIES

- Photo Examples*
- Pencils with erasers (1 per child)
- Index cards (1 per child)
- Scissors
- Tape
- Straws (1 per child)
- Straight pins (1 per child)
- Disposable plates (1 per child)
- Clay (approx. 1 Tbsp. per child)
- Small desk fans (2 or 3)
- Optional: whiteboard, dry erase marker

BLESS//
5 minutes



SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse cards*
- At Home Weekly: Lesson 6*
- Bible

Further Resources

To help you plan and lead:

**Customizable copy of Lesson 5
2018–19 Scope and Sequence**

TruStory How It Works

Small Group Enhancements

At Home Weekly: Lesson 5

The weekly for the next lesson—to be sent home for preteaching by parents—is found in BLESS.

LEADER PREP

Each week you'll find a list of resources along with encouraging articles that help you prepare your heart to present the lesson.

Inspire *Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives*

When I was young, my favorite books were the *Little House on the Prairie* series. In one of the books, Laura had been in the house all day. As a treat, her mom promised her that she could help with the evening milking. But before they even reached the cow pen, Laura's mother sharply told her to get back in the house. Laura, who had been waiting all day for this adventure, immediately obeyed.

What Laura later learned was that as they approached the cow, her mother saw a large bear in the pen. If Laura had whined or questioned her mom, she may have been hurt. But she trusted her mom enough to obey her right away—no questions asked. Our journey with the Lord involves a lot of choices about obedience. Sometimes we obey immediately, and sometimes it takes us longer. But as we learn about God through His story, we get to know His character. He requires obedience from us because He loves us and knows what's best. It is worth it to follow His way, even when it's difficult. Obedience to God comes out of hearts that trust our heavenly Father and His great love for us.

Denise Snyder
Crossroads Church

Equip *Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage*

In the parable of the wise man and the foolish man, Jesus makes a distinction between two foundations: rock and sand. Jesus' parable raises a question: What is the rock? It's vital that we know what the rock represents, since Jesus tells us to build our house upon it. Take a moment to think about it: What do you understand the rock foundation to be, according to the parable?

It's easy to glance at this passage and think that the rock represents Jesus, since several places in Scripture refer to Jesus as the Rock. But in this parable, the rock isn't Jesus. Jesus says that anyone who hears these words and puts them into practice is like a wise man who builds his house on the rock. How would we characterize someone who hears something and then puts it into practice? Obedient. So in this story, the rock becomes obedience. The two foundations refer to how someone hears the truth and then either chooses to put that into practice, and obey, or chooses not to put that into practice, and disobey.

This is the partnership of faith and action. It's putting into practice what we believe. It's not simply hearing God's Word—because the foolish man heard it and didn't put it into practice. It's hearing His Word and obeying it.

(Adapted from *Spiritual Parenting* by Michelle Anthony)

Support *Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word*

It's easy to want to be the wise man in the parable Jesus told at the end of the Sermon on the Mount. Wouldn't it be nice to just read Jesus' teachings and then immediately put them all into practice? And do them well? But it doesn't always work that way. Giving in secret is hard, and so is loving our enemies. Not to mention the command not to worry. That's why we have the Holy Spirit—the Counselor, the Helper.

Take a moment to read Jesus' encouraging words in John 14:23–26. Then pause to think of the commands that are the hardest for you to obey. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in submitting to these commands so you'll know that rains don't hold a chance against the firm foundation of obedience.

EXPLORE//10 minutes

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day's portion of The Big God Story.

In this EXPLORE, the kids will have a chance to experiment with building houses out of different materials and think about what makes a house strong or weak. They will also have a chance to build houses of sand and see how easily water washes them away.

Option 1: Sand Castles (for younger kids)

SUPPLIES

- Large trays (1 for every 2–3 children)
- Sand (3 c. per child)
- Water
- Small disposable paper cups (2 per child)
- Pencils
- Tarps or plastic tablecloths
- Water pitchers or watering cans (1 per table)

SET UP

Lay the tarps or tablecloths under the tables where the kids will be working. Place the trays on the tables and fill each tray about half full with sand. Place a few paper cups on each tray. Grab a few more paper cups, use a pencil to poke several holes into the bottom of each one, and put these cups on the tables next to the trays. Fill water pitchers or watering cans with water. Assign a leader to each table to be in charge of the water.

RELATE

Welcome the children and invite them to make mini sand castles in the sand trays. Have the leader at each table pour small cups of water for the kids to use to make the sand damp and sticky. Once the kids finish their sand castles, invite them to watch it “rain” over their creations: Have the kids hold a cup with holes in the bottom over the castle while a leader pours water into it. As the rain “falls,” the sand buildings should melt away. Discuss: **What happens when you build a sand castle on the beach and a wave comes along? Is sand a strong or weak foundation? What is a strong foundation?**

Option 2: Weak and Strong Houses (for older kids)

SUPPLIES

- Decks of cards (1 for every 4 children)
- Dominoes
- Blocks (wooden or plastic)
- Shoe boxes (dozens)

PREPARE AHEAD

Note: Building card houses can be tricky. Choose cards that are either already worn or not too slippery. Another option is cutting index cards in half. The card houses need a building surface with a bit of grip. A carpeted floor works best, or you can put down a blanket or a mat. If the children are struggling, another tip for building is to build your card house against a wall for additional support.

RELATE

Welcome the children and explain that they're going to build houses using different materials. Invite them to choose the supplies they want to use and create the structures however they'd like. Encourage them to explore different shapes of buildings, such as tall, narrow towers or broad, single-story homes. See who can build the most interesting-looking

house out of cards or the tallest tower of blocks—without the structures collapsing.

What would be the best foundation for a house: a hard, flat surface or a soft, shaky surface? Why? If you could build a house anywhere, where would it be? What happens to your buildings if the bottom pieces aren't stable? What happens if you take one of the blocks/dominoes/cards/boxes out of the building?

LARGE GROUP

SECTION

DISCOVER// 30 minutes



Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Traditions and Remember Verse

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse image (see Resources)
- Remember Verse animation (see Resources)
- Mementos for your church Traditions (rocks, marbles, gum balls, etc.)

RELATE

Give the children mementos (such as rocks, marbles, or blocks) for accomplishments such as memorizing the Remember Verse or bringing their Bibles. Have them put the objects into a clear container or add them to a structure and celebrate when it's complete.

This week's Remember Verse focuses on a character trait of God that's highlighted in today's portion of The Big God Story.

Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John 17:3

Connect

QUESTION

Have you ever been caught in a storm? What was it like?

Activity: Captain and Crew

SUPPLIES

- Connect Question image (see Resources)
- Connect Activity image (see Resources)

RELATE

The leader is going to be the captain of a ship, and the children are the crew. Introduce the commands that will be called in the game and have the children practice each one before you begin. The leader calls out the commands in any order, and the children must quickly perform the action that goes with that command. Start slow and then gradually speed up the commands. The faster the commands are called, the funnier the game becomes. Possible commands:

Attention! Make a single-file line, stand tall, and salute

Hoist the sail! Pretend to pull up rope for a sail

Scrub the deck! Drop to knees and scrub the floor

Octopus Find a group of four. Stand back to back and wave your arms

Jellyfish Lie on your back and wiggle your arms and legs

Storm's a coming! Run from one side of the room to the other as if the boat is wildly rocking

Seasick Run to the side of the room and make puking noise off the "boat"

Swim to shore Make a swimming action and swim to the front of the room

Grab a mate! Find a partner and ask each other the Connect question

The Big God Story

Bible Passage: Luke 6:46–49; Matthew 7:24–27

Storytelling Technique: Props

God Requires Obedience

SUPPLIES

- Optional: Storytelling video (see Resources)
- Timeline image (see Resources)
- Timeline animation (see Resources)
- Bibles
- Sound effect: Storm (see Resources)
- Image: Jesus on Mountain (see Resources)
- Poster board (2 yellow, 3 white)
- Scissors
- Tape
- Marker
- Pen
- Shovel
- Hammer
- Shoe boxes (reuse the ones from EXPLORE)
- Beach chair
- Sunglasses
- Magazine
- Long strip of blue cloth or paper (6'–8' in length)

PREPARE AHEAD

Outline a cloud on each of the two sheets of white poster board and cut them out. On the yellow poster board, draw two lightning bolts and cut them out.

SET UP

Tape the third sheet of white poster board to a wall in the storytelling area, set a marker nearby, and hide the other supplies. Place the props (shovel, hammer, shoe boxes, beach chair, sunglasses, magazine, clouds, lightning, and long strip of blue cloth) to the side of the stage. Ask for volunteer leaders to act out the parable.

RELATE

Before we hear today's portion of The Big God Story, I want you to help me do the impossible: I want you to help me make it rain indoors! Quiet the kids. Point to the left side of the room and have the kids quietly rub their hands together. Move your hand across the room until all the kids are rubbing their hands. Have them continue the action while you point back to the left and get the kids snapping their fingers. Work your way to the right, then return to the left and have them begin patting their hands on their legs, then patting harder, and finally stomping their feet on the floor. Then begin to do this process in reverse—from stomping to patting legs, to snapping, to rubbing hands, and finally back to silence.

Great job! Jesus once told a story involving a rainstorm. But before we hear it, let's take a moment to pause and ask the Holy Spirit to help teach us today. Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

Today we're going to explore some one of Jesus' teachings. When Jesus taught, He loved to tell stories. The stories Jesus used in His teachings are called parables. A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Jesus used parables to teach us about who God is, His passionate love for us, and how God requires obedience. What is obedience? Pause for answers. **Obedience is showing your trust in God by listening to what God says and doing what He asks you to do.**

God loves us so much. He delights in our obedience to Him because He wants us to live our lives in the best way possible. When we have questions about how to live, how to treat others, and how to make good choices in difficult times, we can look at what the Bible says and ask the Holy Spirit to help us obey God's commands in each situation. Jesus answered these questions at the end of a famous sermon He gave on a mountain. It's called the Sermon on the Mount. *Tech: Cue Jesus on the Mountain image.* In this sermon, Jesus showed us how to worship God with our obedience. He told us (write these on the poster board) to love mercy, to trust God instead of worrying, to pray, to love our enemies—and lots of other amazing things

At the end of this long sermon, to show the people how important obedience was to Him, Jesus finished with a parable about a wise builder and a foolish builder. Turn with me to Luke 6:46 as we read this story together. Volunteer reads Luke 6:46–47 as group follows. Ask the volunteer leaders to come up to act out the parable.

Once there were two builders. Have two leaders go to opposite sides of the stage. **One builder decided that he needed a strong foundation for his house.** Direct volunteer to read Luke 6:48, stopping at the word “rock” as group follows along. As the verse is read, have one volunteer take the shovel and pretend to dig. Volunteer pretends to wipe sweat off his brow and get tired. After he finds “rock,” have him start to build the house with the hammer. **On that rock he built his house. Now what about our other builder? Turn in your Bibles to Matthew 7:26.** Volunteer reads as group follows. While the wise builder continues to work hard, have the foolish builder quickly make his house out of shoe boxes and then sit on the beach towel, wearing sunglasses and reading a magazine.

From the outside, both houses looked the same. Invite four volunteers to the front. Place two volunteers at each end of the stage, kneeling, holding the ends of the long strip of blue fabric. Choose three to four kids to hold the clouds and lightning bolts. Position them behind the blue fabric. **Let’s read what happens.** *Tech: Cue Storm sound effect.* Storyteller reads Matthew 7:27 slowly, stopping at “house” as group follows and volunteers act out. Direct the kids acting as clouds and lightning bolts to wave their props. Leaders both “take cover” in their houses. Have the four volunteers shake the strip up and down over the edge of the stage, slowly at first and then harder and higher, to make “floodwaters.”

The wise builder’s house stood strong, unshaken on the rock. Look at the end of Matthew 7:27. What happened to the foolish builder’s house? Invite children to answer. **Yes! It got washed away because of its weak foundation.** Have the foolish builder’s house fall down and the foolish builder look sad.

Why do you think Jesus ended His sermon with this story? Invite answers. **Good thoughts! In Matthew 7:24 and 26, Jesus gives us the answer.** Pause as children read the verse from the Bible and volunteer answers. **What’s another word for hearing instructions and putting them into practice?** Interact with responses. **That’s right—obey. Jesus’ parable is all about obeying. God requires obedience. Jesus wanted the people to listen to His teaching and do what He said, not just hear His words and do nothing with what they had heard.**

When we choose to be in a relationship with God, we’re choosing to trust and obey Him. We’re trusting that He is God and that He always knows what’s best for us. And we’re choosing to obey Him because He asks us to. Not obeying Him is just like building a house without a foundation. If our lives aren’t built on a foundation of trusting and obeying God, everything could fall apart—just like the house built on sand. But if we build our lives on the strong foundation of trusting and obeying God, then we can be sure that no matter what comes our way, we will stand strong.

How can we build a life of obedience? Encourage the kids to voice their ideas. Add their ideas to the poster board next to the Sermon on the Mount list. **What are some things that make it difficult to obey Jesus’ words?** Interact with ideas, and add them to the poster board. **How can we live a life of obedience when it gets hard?** Pause for answers and add them to the poster board. **Great ideas!** Share a time you demonstrated obedience to Jesus even when it was difficult.

God requires obedience, so He sent us His Holy Spirit to guide us and to help us obey all that He asks us to do. The Holy Spirit reveals God’s truth for our toughest questions and gives us what we need to obey God with our whole heart. Every day we have a chance to dig deep into the rock by trusting and obeying our God. So let’s do it! Let’s ask the Holy Spirit to help us dig deep and build our lives on obedience.

Worship as Response

This time allows kids to respond to God through worship. Make plans for your worship time, but prepare yourself and your team to hold them loosely if the Holy Spirit leads the group in a different direction.

SUPPLIES

- Bibles
- Play dough (approximately ¼ c. per child)
- Pencils

SET UP

Place a table near the front of the room with an open Bible on it. Have the play dough and pencils ready to pass out.

RELATE

When we commit to following Jesus, God requires obedience. We don’t just choose to hear His words; we

choose to live out His words. We promise to practice what Jesus preached. What has God been teaching you recently that He desires for you to live out? What situation in your life is God asking for your obedience in today? Right now we are going to listen to a prayer from the book of Psalms that asks God to keep us in the path of His commands and to teach us how to obey.

Pass out a small lump of play dough to each child. Explain that as you read the prayer, they will create a play dough prayer by forming the play dough into a shape that represents what they want to pray about. The shape could symbolize something specific that God is asking them for obedience with, or it may be a general prayer such as an ear for listening, or a Bible for seeking His Word. Children may also choose to trace a word into the play dough using a pencil.

Read Psalm 119:1–12 aloud. Encourage the children to listen for any words or phrases that stand out to them. You may want to read Psalm 119:1–12 another time or two so the children can listen carefully to the words as they form their play dough prayer. When they are ready, the children may bring their prayer to the table.

SMALL GROUP

SECTION

RESPOND//15 minutes



Children respond to what the Holy Spirit is teaching them as they reflect on the day's portion of The Big God Story, engage in relationship, and create meaningful pieces of art individually or together.

Reflect: God Requires Obedience

SUPPLIES

- Bibles

RELATE

Jesus told the parable about the wise and foolish builders at the end of the His Sermon on the Mount. Through this parable, Jesus tells us that He requires obedience from those who follow Him. As people who love and trust Jesus, we must put His words into practice, not just hear them.

Because this parable links directly with the teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, take some time to review the sermon and answer the following questions. Explain to the kids that because the Sermon on the Mount is so long (it's three chapters!), they will only be exploring a few sections.

For younger kids, read Matthew 5:1–11 and Matthew 6:5–14 out loud together. After each portion of Scripture, pause and have the kids paraphrase or summarize that section. Then move on to answering the questions. Have older kids work in teams of two or three. Give each team one of the portions of Scripture listed below. Note: You do not need to use all portions of Scripture.

Matthew 5:1–11
Matthew 5:33–37
Matthew 5:38–42
Matthew 5:43–46
Matthew 6:1–4
Matthew 6:5–14
Matthew 6:19–24
Matthew 6:25–34
Matthew 7:7–12

Have each group read and summarize their verses. Then have all the groups present their summaries to one another. When all the groups have presented, answer the questions together.

- **What are the main ideas of the Sermon of the Mount portion you read?** Refer to portions of Scripture.
- **Who is wise?** Matthew 7:24
- **Who is foolish?** Matthew 7:26
- **What is the rock?** Matthew 7:24

- What is the sand?
- Why did Jesus tell the parable of the wise and foolish builders? Luke 6:46–47
- What can help us know how to build our house on the rock? John 16:13a
- How can we put Jesus' teachings into practice and do what He said?

Weather Vanes

In this activity, kids will explore how wind works.

SUPPLIES

- Photo Examples (see Resources)
- Pencils with erasers (1 per child)
- Index cards (1 per child)
- Scissors
- Tape
- Straws (1 per child)
- Straight pins (1 per child)
- Disposable plates (1 per child)
- Clay (approximately 1 Tbsp. per child)
- Small desk fans (2 or 3)
- Optional: whiteboard and dry erase marker

PREPARE AHEAD

Print the Photo Examples.

SET UP

Set out the pencils, index cards, scissors, tape, straws, straight pins, disposable plates, and clay. Place the small desk fans to the side. Place the example photos on each table.

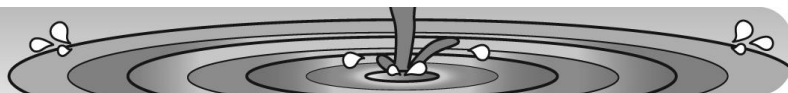
RELATE

In Jesus' parable, a storm struck two homes. One home stood firm because it was built on a good foundation—a rock. The rock represents obedience, which is not just hearing Jesus' words but also doing what He says. Jesus requires obedience. When we follow His way, we will not be moved or swayed. We will know the right way, and He will bring us back if we go the wrong way.

A weather vane indicates the presence of wind and the possibility of a storm. A foolish man—one who hears Jesus' words but does not obey—needs to be concerned about storms. They will take down his home, and he will have to build again and again. But a wise man's home can endure the storm.

Invite the kids to make weather vanes and explore how wind works. Have the kids create a list of descriptions of how wind feels and what it does. If you choose, record the list on a whiteboard or poster board. Then have the kids cut a triangle from one side of an index card. The children should have one triangle and an indented rectangle left over from the index card. (Refer to the examples in Resources.) Then cut a slit at both ends of the straw and insert the triangle and indented rectangle, making an arrow. Insert the straight pin through the middle of the straw and into the eraser end of the pencil. (Have leaders help younger children insert the pin. Caution older children to be especially careful with the pin or to ask a leader for help.) Finally, place a lump of clay in the middle of the disposable plate and stick the pencil in the clay to make a weather vane. Have the kids play with their vanes using the desk fans.

BLESS// 5 minutes



Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)
- At Home Weekly: Lesson 6 (see Resources)
- Bible

RELATE

Encourage the kids to hold their hands in front of them, palms up. Then open a Bible and read Psalm 25:4–5:

Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.

Then invite the children to echo Psalm 24:4–5 back to you. Read the following lines, one at a time, and allow the group to repeat them aloud:

Show me your ways, LORD.

Teach me your paths.

Guide me in your truth and teach me.

For you are God my Savior.

And my hope is in you all day long.

May you remember that Jesus has given you His words to guide you, and He will bring you back when you go the wrong way.

Send home Remember Verse cards and the At Home Weekly with your kids.