



Week 4 (March 25-31): Lesson Guide

Introduce guests/share life. *How has this week been going? Good? Bad? Ugly? Things to celebrate?*

Open in prayer. *Include any prayer needs that came up while you were sharing life together.*

Recall the guidelines together. *Ask: "What is the purpose of the guidelines?" Answer: To be relational!*

Hook Question: Who have you already invited to our Easter Weekend service? Who could you invite between now and then? (Jesus in the Passover on March 30th at 7pm | Easter Sunday at 10:15am.)

Ask someone from your team to tell or read the following background for the story:

Today's story is a parable. Parables are short, earthly stories with heavenly meanings. What does that mean? It means that the story may be about something ordinary: farmers, coins, sheep, lamps, or a wayward son (like the Prodigal Son); but, the story isn't really about the ordinary objects at all. It is really about a lesson from heaven. Parables are spiritual truths revealed through relatable stories.

All the parables Jesus told were relatable. It is important to remember that Jesus did not live in American culture. He lived about 2000 years ago as a Jew in Israel. The stories He told would have been very relatable and gripping for His original audiences. Some were even outrageous and offensive! Our part is to do our best to put ourselves in that time and space.

Possibly the most important thing to remember about parables is that they are not perfect analogies. That means that the parable is not intended to be picked apart as if every small detail reveals a hidden spiritual truth. The details are dramatic, not necessarily symbolic. To understand the genre of parables, we must look at the big picture and the main ideas, not the small details or individual events. Don't think you are going to uncover some new or hidden spiritual truth by dissecting a parable! They weren't intended to do that. Instead, try to step back and take the parable in as a whole. Understand the big picture and the primary message and talk about that. A parable's primary message is usually found at the end of the parable or in its explanation. Parables typically only have one main message; not several hidden messages. With this background on parables, our story begins...

Tell the story from Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43: Change up the storyteller often!

Rebuild the story: Group members retell the story based on what they remember.

Read the story from Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43: Ask the group to read together.

Discuss these questions:

- Head Questions:**
Quicker tempo.
- What do you think the primary message of this parable is about? Caption this parable.
 - What does this parable teach us about people?
 - What does this parable teach us about God?
 - Why will the second coming of Jesus be exciting for some and terrifying for others?
- Heart Questions:**
Slow down & wait!
- Who do you know that, if they died right now, they would be thrown into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth?
 - How is God stirring your heart through this story and discussion?
- Action**
- Ask someone to retell this week's story one last time.
 - Update your IMPACT List and distribute it to each member of your discipleship team.
 - As a group, pray for the names on your IMPACT List. Ask God to show mercy and save them before it is too late. Ask God to put urgency in your heart to tell others about Him.

Recruit a storyteller for next week.



Week 4: Coaching Guide

Sharing with the Spiritually Dead - Sharing Invitations

1 Corinthians 3:7-9

So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.

It is Easter week. The pressure is on! The moment we've been building to for weeks. It's make or break... Wait. Is it really that stressful? Could I offer you a little peace of mind?

Jesus saves. Period. End of story. You can't save anyone. Only God can save people and He is doing so through Jesus. Jesus is attractive. He makes Himself attractive to others. When His Spirit is moving, He draws people to Himself.

You and your group have been fasting and praying for the lost. The time has come to take action. As you go, side-step the lies of the enemy. Your words won't save them. Your compassion won't save them. Your prayers won't save them. Jesus saves them. Jesus saves them and He invites you to be part of the process. You can plant seeds of truth. You can water those seeds through compassion, relationship, love, and friendship. You can be part of the process God uses to save them through Jesus! But you don't need to shoulder the responsibility. Don't let the enemy tell you it is up to you. Just walk with Jesus, do your part, and invite them to do their part. God will do His part.

Did you skip the Scripture at the top of the page? Go read it. Did you read it? Read it again. Who makes things grow? Who is the source of life? What will happen to those who do their part in God's purposes of planting and watering?

Now, I'm preaching to myself. It is not up to me. Salvation is not in my hands. It is beyond my capacity. It is out of my reach. Yet, I have a part to play. Mysteriously, my part is significant. Simultaneously, I am nothing. This is God's service. It isn't about me, it's all about Him.

What's your part? Plant. Water. Ask God to bring the growth. Cast vision. Encourage your groups with these words, and invite them to join God's service.