

Unit 23: The Teachings of Jesus

Unit Description: Jesus taught like no one else—as One who has authority. Everything Jesus taught about revealed what God’s kingdom is like, the kingdom that Jesus had come to establish in full.

Big Picture Question: What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.



SESSION 1: Jesus Taught about Character
Matthew 5



SESSION 2: Jesus Taught about Behavior
Matthew 6



SESSION 3: Jesus Taught about God’s Love
Luke 15



SESSION 4: Jesus Taught about God’s Kingdom
Matthew 13



SESSION 5: We Are Part of God’s Kingdom
Matthew 22; Luke 14



UNIT 23 | SESSION 4

JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT GOD'S KINGDOM

MATTHEW 13

KEY PASSAGE: Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.
1 Chronicles 29:11
1 Chronicles 29:11 NIV

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

The kingdom of God is growing in the world. This kingdom is valuable and worth giving everything for. While we wait for Jesus to return and fully set up His kingdom, we carry out the mission of telling others about King Jesus, who rescues sinners.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



PREPARE

PREPARE YOUR HEART TO TEACH; PLAN THE SESSION



WELCOME

GREET KIDS AND OPEN THE SESSION



LEARN

TEACH KIDS THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL



LOVE

LEAD KIDS TO LOVE THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL



LIVE

LEAD KIDS TO LIVE OUT THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LEADER Bible Study

Jesus often used parables to teach about the kingdom of God. These were fictional stories that illustrated larger points, and those who heard them were often perplexed by their meaning. In Matthew 13, Jesus gave clarity to two important questions that readers of the parables often ask: why does He teach this way, and what do these things mean?

Jesus had a specific purpose in everything He did. Not one moment in the life of Jesus was purely accidental or circumstantial. Jesus had clear intention in all that He did.

Jesus' disciples asked Him, "Why are you speaking to them in parables?" Jesus explained that He did this not to confuse them but to fulfill the prophecy that those who belong to the kingdom of God will hear and understand, but those who do not will hear and not understand.

In this same chapter Jesus also explained some of these parables. All of them were intended to show the unique, surprising, and powerful nature of the kingdom of God. As you consider this week's Bible story, reflect on two realities illustrated by these parables about the kingdom of God.

First, the kingdom of God will appear to be made up of those who are true believers and those who are not. There are some good fish

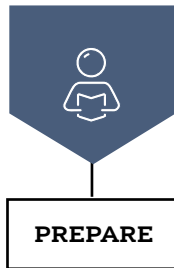
and some worthless fish; some wheat and some weeds. But in these parables, we learn that there is no confusion for God in who His children truly are. In the end God will separate the two, which means we don't have to. God will take care to guard His eternal Kingdom.

Second, the kingdom of God may look small or weak, but in the end, it will prove to be larger, more powerful, and more beautiful than we can imagine. The kingdom of God is worth giving up all you have; though starting from a small seed it will grow to be the most prominent tree, and the leaven of the kingdom will impact every bit of the flour.

God's kingdom is unlike anything else we've ever known, and the way Jesus sought to explain that was through parables that demonstrated the beauty and power of the Kingdom. These parables allowed God's people to hear and understand, yet left those of this world to hear and wonder.

TERMS TO KNOW

Kingdom of God: God's kingly or sovereign rule, encompassing both the realm over which rule is exerted and the exercise of authority to reign



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- “Kingdom Riddles” activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- play dough, 1 per kid

Session Starter (Option 2)

- mustard seeds
- yeast
- loaf of bread
- picture of a mustard tree
- cups, 2



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- “Jesus Taught about God’s Kingdom” video
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Bible props (optional)

Questions from Kids

- “Unit 23, Session 4” questions from kids video

Missions Moment

- “Michael and Traci Byrd” missions video

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- “Yours (1 Chronicles 29:11)” song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- dry erase board
- dry erase marker



LOVE

Review & Bible skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set
- world map



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- various colors of construction paper, several per kid

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- Big Picture Question Poster

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- “Every Kind of Fish” activity page



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “What kind of stories do you like to read or listen to? Who tells you good stories? What makes these stories good?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Kingdom Riddles” on the activity page.

SAY “Great job finding the answers to the riddles! While Jesus didn’t teach using riddles, He often taught in parables that people did not understand. Today, we will learn more parables that Jesus taught and how they revealed what His kingdom is like.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: SCULPTURES OF VALUE



Invite kids to think about the most valuable thing in their life. Remind kids that we all have things we value and love dearly. Provide each kid with play dough and invite them to create a sculpture of something valuable they love. Once the sculptures are complete, invite kids one at a time to display them to the class. Direct kids to guess what each kid sculpted.

SAY “There are many valuable things we own or love. Yet, even the greatest treasure on this earth is worth nothing compared to the kingdom of God. His kingdom is eternal and worth giving everything for. In today’s story, Jesus used parables about a man finding a treasure in a field and a fisherman finding a pearl to illustrate the great worth of God’s kingdom.”

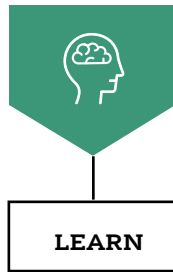
OPTION 2: SMALL BUT GREAT

Before the session, print off a picture of a mustard tree. Gather mustard seeds, yeast, and a loaf of bread. Place the mustard seeds and some yeast in individual cups. Pass the cups around for the kids to see. Emphasize how small both the yeast and the seeds are. Ask kids if they know what either of these items are. Discuss how the yeast helps dough rise and the mustard seed grows into a tall tree.

Display the picture of the mustard tree and the loaf of bread. Discuss how such a small seed can grow into a tall tree and how the tiny yeast can spread throughout the dough to make it rise.

SAY “Both the mustard seed and the yeast symbolize how something small can grow into something great. In today’s story, Jesus taught parables using a mustard seed and yeast, or leaven, to explain how God’s kingdom is growing in the world.”





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Hello! My name is [your name]. I am so glad to see you! If you have your Bible, please take it out. [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Let’s open our Bibles to Matthew 13. As we read our Bible story today, we can remember that everything Jesus taught is true and good. His words teach us about God’s kingdom and how through faith in Him, we can live in God’s kingdom forever.

Have you ever heard a teaching and didn’t understand what it meant? Today, we will learn how Jesus told stories called parables to help people understand what His kingdom is like. Many times people didn’t understand the parables. Even when we may have trouble understanding the Bible, we can ask God to give us ears to hear and hearts that believe His words. ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

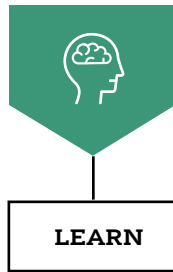
SAY “ In the New Testament, many people referred to Jesus as Teacher. Why do you think that is? [Allow responses.] Jesus taught with authority and everything He said is true. But Jesus is more than just a great Teacher. He is God and when He speaks we should listen.

Do any of you remember our big picture question from last time? Our big picture question is, **What did Jesus teach when He was on earth?** What is the answer we have learned? [Allow responses.] **Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.** ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ People came from all over to hear Jesus and see His miracles. The teachings of Jesus were different than that of the religious leaders because Jesus taught with authority and spoke to reach the heart of people. His teachings were not a way for people to just do what was right, but rather for people to believe what is true so that they could be transformed from the inside out. Today, we will learn more of Jesus’ teachings as He told parables about God’s kingdom. ”



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 13. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jesus Taught about God’s Kingdom.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT GOD’S KINGDOM

“ One day, Jesus went out and sat by the sea. Large crowds of people gathered around Him, so He got into a boat and sat down. All the people stood on the shore. Then Jesus told the people parables, or stories, to teach them about the kingdom of God.

Jesus’ disciples asked Him, “Why do you teach in parables?”

Jesus answered, “Not everyone will understand the hidden truths about the kingdom of heaven.” Jesus reminded them about some of the words spoken by the prophet Isaiah. Some people look, but they do not see. They hear, but they do not listen or understand. Jesus made these prophecies come true. **Jesus said, “You are blessed because you do understand.”**

Jesus told a parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a man planted in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but it grows taller than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, and the birds come and build nests in its branches.”

Jesus continued, **“The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, or yeast, that a woman mixed into fifty pounds of flour. The leaven makes the dough rise.”**

Jesus told another parable: **“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure, buried in a field, that a man found. He reburied it, and then he joyfully sold everything he had and bought that field.”**

Then Jesus said, **“The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls. When he found one priceless pearl, he went and sold everything he had and bought it.”**

Finally, Jesus said, **“The kingdom of heaven is like a large net thrown into the sea. It collected every kind of fish, and when it was full, the fishermen dragged it ashore, sat down, and gathered the good fish into containers. But they threw out the worthless ones.”** Jesus said at the end of time, **God will separate people who trust in Him from those who don’t.**

When Jesus finished teaching the crowds, He left that place and went to Nazareth.

Christ Connection: The kingdom of God is growing in the world. This kingdom is valuable and worth giving everything for. While we wait for Jesus to return and fully set up His kingdom, we carry out the mission of telling others about King Jesus, who rescues sinners. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Define it: Explain that a parable is a short story told by Jesus to reveal a specific truth about the kingdom of God. Tell kids that parables seemed confusing to people whose hearts failed to believe in Jesus.

Set the scene: Pretend you are in a boat as you tell the story.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Jesus’ disciples asked Him why He taught in parables. Jesus answered by explaining that not all people have ears to hear or eyes to see. What do you think Jesus meant? **[Allow responses.]** Those who seek truth and earnestly seek God will be granted ears to hear and eyes to see. But those whose hearts are not interested in knowing God will fail to understand.

Let’s unpack the meaning behind each parable Jesus taught about the kingdom of God. What objects did Jesus use in the first two parables? **[Allow responses.]** Jesus used a mustard seed and yeast to illustrate that the kingdom of God may appear small but it will one day be fully expanded throughout all the earth. The kingdom of God is growing in the world and when we share Jesus with others, we are taking part in His kingdom’s expansion.

Then Jesus used a pearl and a hidden treasure to teach truths about His kingdom. What do you think is the meaning behind these parables? **[Allow responses.]** The kingdom of God is of great value, like a priceless pearl or a grand treasure. It is valuable because it is eternal and is the dwelling place of God. Living in the kingdom of God is worth giving everything for.

Lastly, Jesus taught that the kingdom of God is like a net full of all kinds of fish. How does this parable teach about the kingdom of God? **[Allow responses.]** Right now, the kingdom of God may appear to have many kinds of people who have heard the gospel, but one day God will judge who is truly a follower of Jesus and who is not. Those who have not believed in Jesus will not enter the kingdom of God.

Unlike those who hear the gospel and fail to believe, we can ask God to give us hearts that will live by faith and seek the truth only found in Him. By faith, God can use the gifts He has given us to help further His kingdom in the world as we share the gospel. ”

3 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ The kingdom of God is growing in the world. This kingdom is valuable and worth giving everything for. While we wait for Jesus to return and fully set up His kingdom, we carry out the mission of telling others about King Jesus, who rescues sinners. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 23, Session 4” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. If God’s kingdom is growing in the world, why do bad things still happen?
2. How are you inviting people to trust in King Jesus and become a part of His kingdom?



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

SAY “ When people visit St. Louis, Missouri, it is hard to miss the Gateway Arch, the world’s tallest arch. It is 630 feet tall and 630 feet wide and made up of almost 900 tons of stainless steel. St. Louis is also an area with 2.7 million residents who speak at least 110 different languages. While the city has been known as America’s gateway to the West for quite a while, it is now often thought of as a gateway to reach the world with the good news about Jesus. ”

Play the missions video. Close in prayer, asking God to give the Byrds wisdom as they build relationships with people in the neighborhood. Ask God to help open the minds and hearts of the people in the area to want to learn more about Jesus.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 1 Chronicles 29:11 together.

SAY “ Our key passage reminds us that the kingdom belongs to God. When Jesus returns and makes all things new, His kingdom will be perfect and will last forever. ”

Write the first letter of each word of the key passage on a dry erase board. Leave space between the letters and invite kids one at a time to use the letters to help them write the words of the key passage. (Tip: Consider creating two dry erase boards with the letters of the key passage and forming two teams for a little friendly competition.)

Lead kids to sing “Yours (1 Chronicles 29:11).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

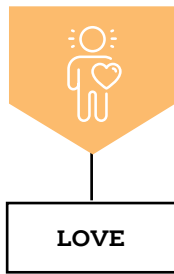
7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Father, we praise You for being powerful and great. Everything is Yours and Your kingdom will have no end. Thank You that through Jesus, we can enter Your kingdom. Amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the New Testament Israel Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Matthew 13. Explain that the kingdom of God is taught throughout the Bible. Tell kids that God's kingdom will be a physical place we experience one day, but that it is also a kingdom we enter when we trust in Jesus. Explain that Jesus becomes the Ruler of our hearts when we submit to His authority and live for Him.

Consider comparing the New Testament Israel Map to a modern-day map to help kids understand where these stories took place. (Tip: Locate the areas in and around modern-day Sea of Galilee [D6].) Choose a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 13:16.

SAY “While some people heard Jesus’ parables and failed to understand them, Jesus called the disciples blessed because they were able to understand. Their hearts had a desire to know the things of God and they wanted to know truth. God rewarded their genuine desire to hear and see by allowing them to understand Jesus’ parables.”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “Why is God’s kingdom so valuable?”

Tell kids that the kingdom of God is valuable because it is where God rules and reigns for all eternity. Explain that it is also valuable because all those who trust in Jesus will be saved from sin and death and be able to live with God forever. Explain that God’s kingdom is full of joy because Jesus is there.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rev. 21:3.)

SAY “What might we have to give up for God’s kingdom?”

Answers will vary. Tell kids that living for the kingdom of God means being willing to give up worldly ways and sometimes even good desires because we treasure Jesus more. Explain that sometimes we may need to give up friendships, comfort, sports, wealth, and so on to demonstrate that we treasure God’s kingdom most of all.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Phil. 3:7-8)

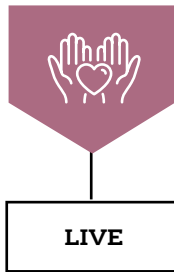
SAY “How can we participate in the growth of God’s kingdom?”

Answers will vary. Discuss how we have many opportunities to participate in the growth of God’s kingdom such as sharing the gospel, helping the poor, giving our money, praying for others, enduring suffering with joy, serving as a missionary, inviting people to church, etc. Encourage kids to seek ways to contribute to kingdom growth this week.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Matt. 9:37-38)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: KINGDOM GROWTH



Tell kids that about two hours outside of St. Louis a famous oak tree called the McBaine Burr Oak can be found. Explain that this tree is the oldest tree in Missouri and is estimated to be between 350 to 400 years old. Tell kids that this tree is a rare natural landmark and has survived many disasters such as floods, fires, and droughts.

Provide each kid with a several pieces of varied colors of construction paper. Distribute scissors, markers, and glue to kids. Lead kids to use the construction paper to create a tree. Invite kids to get creative and cut out branches, leaves, the trunk, etc. Then lead kids to glue the tree parts together on a separate piece of construction paper. On the trees, encourage kids to write ways they can pray for the Byrd family and the people of St. Louis.

SAY “ The Byrd family is helping God’s kingdom expand in St. Louis. God’s kingdom is growing like a tree. Nothing can stop His kingdom from growing. It will last forever. ”

OPTION 2: KINGDOM IN SCRIPTURE



Form kids into four groups. Read Matthew 13:17 to the kids. Remind kids that **Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.** Tell kids that the prophets Jesus is referring to are people from the Old Testament who believed that God would send a Savior into the world and that He would establish His kingdom.

Provide each group with a Bible and assign each group one of the following Bible verses: John 8:56; Daniel 2:19,44; Psalm 89:3-4; Isaiah 9:6-7. Direct each group to read their verses and determine the Old Testament person who looked forward to Jesus’ kingdom. Invite groups to share their answers with everyone.

SAY “ God’s promise to send Jesus into the world also meant the promise of His coming kingdom. Abraham, Daniel, David, and Isaiah are a few of the people who hoped in God’s kingdom to come. We can hope in the complete fulfillment of God’s kingdom and celebrate that Jesus reigns forever. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

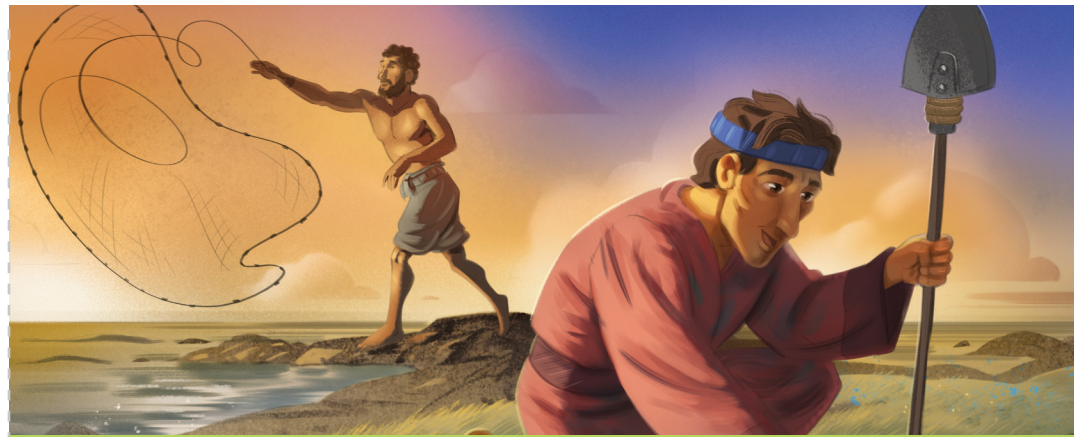
- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, praising God for His kingdom and helping us to contribute to its growth. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Every Kind of Fish” on the activity page.



JOURNAL PAGE

1. What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
2. What does this story teach me about myself?
3. Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
4. Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
5. How does this story help me to live on mission better?



Unit 23 • Session 4

JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT GOD'S KINGDOM

Matthew 13

**WHAT DID JESUS TEACH WHEN HE WAS ON EARTH?
JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT GOD AND HIS KINGDOM. HE TAUGHT THAT ALL
SCRIPTURE IS ABOUT HIM.**

Jesus' disciples asked Him, "Why do you teach in parables?"

Jesus answered, "Not everyone will understand the hidden truths about the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus said, "You are blessed because you do understand."

Jesus told a parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a man planted in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes a tree, and the birds come and build nests in its branches."

"The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman mixed into fifty pounds of flour. The leaven makes the dough rise."

Jesus told another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure, buried in a field, that a man found. He reburied it, and then he joyfully sold everything he had and bought that field."

"The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls. When he found one priceless pearl, he sold everything he had and bought it."

"The kingdom of heaven is like a large net thrown into the sea. It collected every kind of fish. The fishermen gathered the good fish into containers. But they threw out the worthless ones." Jesus said at the end of time, God will separate people who trust in Him from those who don't.

Christ Connection: The kingdom of God is growing in the world. This kingdom is valuable and worth giving everything for. While we wait for Jesus to return and fully set up His kingdom, we carry out the mission of telling others about King Jesus, who rescues sinners.

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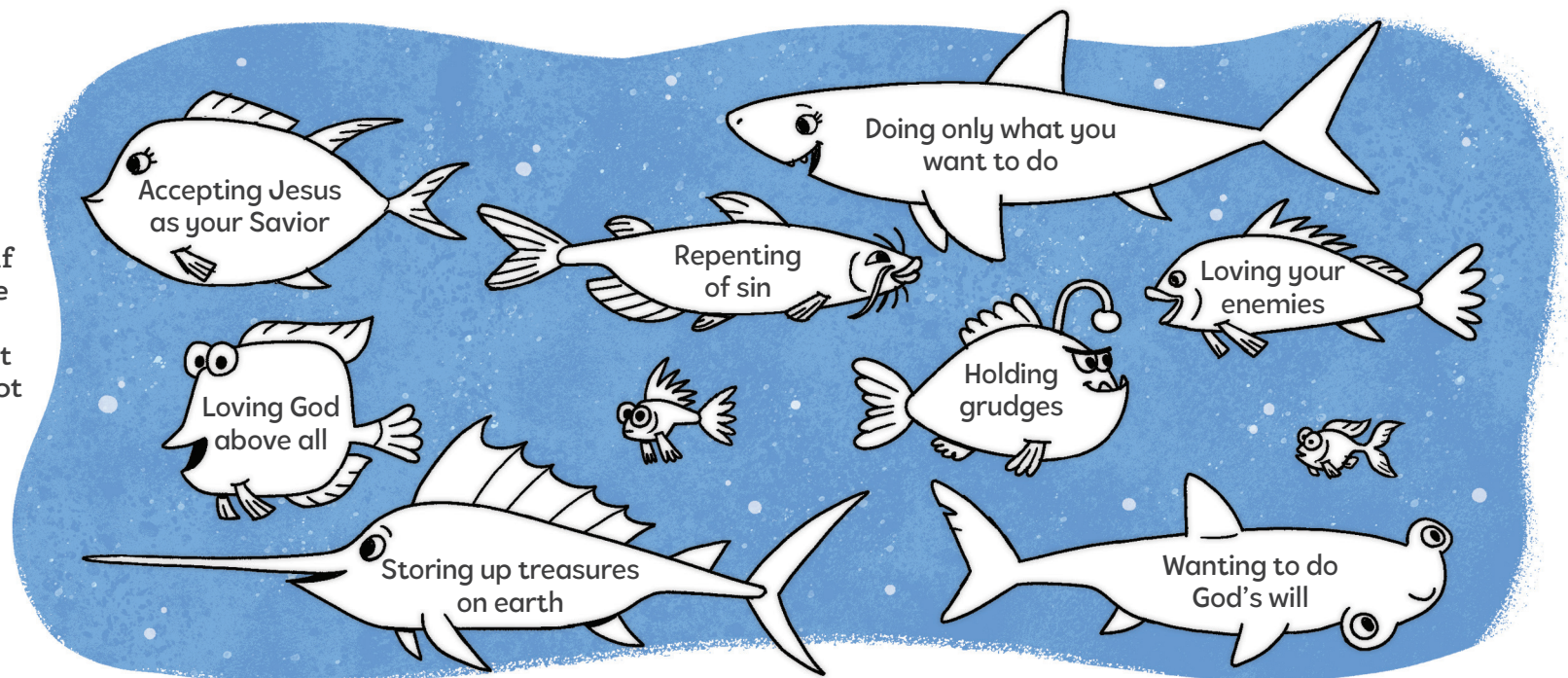
Kingdom Riddles | Read each riddle and then draw a line to the right picture. Use the Bible references if you need help.

1. I'm smooth and round and made in the sea. A pretty necklace I can be. (Matthew 13:45-46)
2. I make dough rise and like the heat. I am in the bread you eat. (Matthew 13:33)
3. I am smaller than a pea, but I grow into a tall tree. (Matthew 13:31-32)
4. I have holes but can hold a lot. Inside me is the fish you caught. (Matthew 13:47-50)
5. I am worth as much as gold. A man bought me with all he sold. (Matthew 13:44)



Every Kind of Fish

Color the fish green if it describes someone trusting in Jesus. Color the fish red if it describes someone not trusting in Jesus.





NAME:



Jesus Taught about God's Kingdom

BIBLE STORY SUMMARY:

- Jesus taught that God's kingdom may seem small like a mustard seed or yeast in bread, but it is growing.
- Jesus taught how His kingdom is valuable like a hidden treasure or a priceless pearl.
- Jesus said God will separate people who trust in Him from those who don't.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

The kingdom of God is growing in the world. This kingdom is valuable and worth giving everything for. While we wait for Jesus to return and fully set up His kingdom, we carry out the mission of telling others about King Jesus, who rescues sinners.

KEY PASSAGE:

1 Chronicles 29:11

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.