

**SUPPLIES:** At least two kid's Puzzles [must be between 20 and 40 pieces and cannot be identical – before class take 2 or 3 pieces from each puzzle and put those pieces with the other puzzle(s)]; Index cards (about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> more than the amount of kids you expect to have in class) – half of them marked with a “plus” sign and the other half marked with a “minus” sign. A bag of candy where the candy is individually wrapped – like Starburst or, if you want to go healthy, use grapes or raisins (individual wrapping not needed then). Timer/stop watch.

### OPENING PRAYER

#### TELL

- For the opening question, I'm going to ask you a question and then we'll go around the circle and say our names and then our answer to the question.
- I'll ask the question and then I'll answer first, ok?
- Here's the opening question: The story today is about a vineyard, which is where people grow grapes that they use to make wine. We're going to hear about how much some people really like their wine and want to keep it. But for us, for the opening question, we're going to share what our favorite fruit is.
- (go around the circle)
- During this summer, we're going to be talking about parables. Parables are stories that can help us better understand an idea. For instance, I could tell you that you have to just try harder. Or, I could tell you the story of the “little engine that could” that shows us what trying harder might look like.
- The story we're going to hear now is about people who are given quite the gift, but the don't share the gift. Listen to what happens when they don't share.

#### READ Mark 12:1-12 (The Vineyard)

1 Then Jesus told them a parable. "A man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a pit for the wine press, and built a watchtower; then he let people stay there and went to another country. 2 When the season came, the owner sent a servant to the guests to collect from them his share of the produce of the vineyard. 3 But the guests seized the servant, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. 4 So the owner sent another servant to the guests; this one the guests beat over the head and insulted. 5 Then the owner sent another servant, and that one they killed. And so it was with many others; some they beat, and others they killed. 6 The owner had still one other, a beloved son. Finally the owner sent his son to the guests, saying, "They will respect my son." 7 But those guests said to one another, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and what was to be his will instead be ours!" 8 So the guests seized the son, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

9 What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the guests and give the vineyard to others. 10 Have you not read this scripture: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; 11 this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes?" 12 When the Pharisees

realized that he had told this parable against them, they wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowd. So they left Jesus and went away.

### ASK

- Who owned the vineyard? (the owner)
- Who was allowed to stay at the vineyard (the guests)
- Did they have to pay? (yes)
- If the owner had not let the guests be there, would the guests have had anything to give to the owner in the first place? (no)
- But the guests didn't want to share what they had been given, so since they wouldn't share, what did they do with the servants? (fought with them. beat and killed them)
- Who did the owner send last? (his son)
- And what did the guests do? (Killed him)
- Do you think the owner was patient with the guests? (yes!)
- Why do you think the guests didn't want to share what they had been given? (they were greedy – wanted as much as they could possibly get!)

### TELL

- When the guests saw the servants and the son coming, all they could see were people coming to take their money.
- And because they didn't want to let go of their money, they fought with the servants and the son.
- This happens to us, too. Jesus tells this story for a number of reasons, but one of the reasons is to remind us that everything we have has been given to us by God, and since we were given it, then we need to share it just like God shares it with us.
- When we don't share, then we're not living the way God made us to live and when we don't live the way God made us to live, things don't go right. For instance, we'll fight a lot.
- Sharing is not easy, and that's why we need to practice it and why we need to invite God into our ownership.
- We're going to do an activity now that helps us practice sharing, but before we do that, let's pray:  
*Dear God, please help us to remember that even though we REALLY REALLY REALLY many of the things you have given us, that we are not to hold on real tight to these things, but share them with others, just like you first shared with us. Amen.*

**EXPLAIN SHARING ACTIVITY adapted from:** [http://www.ehow.com/list\\_6159140\\_sunday-school-games-teach-sharing.html#ixzz1SV69BO3c](http://www.ehow.com/list_6159140_sunday-school-games-teach-sharing.html#ixzz1SV69BO3c)

[NOTE: Count how many students you have. Divide that number in half. Whatever your total is, take that many "plus" index cards and that many "minus" index cards from your pile of prepped index cards. Total number of cards should equal total number of students]

- I have in my hands a pile of index cards.
- Half of the cards have a plus sign on them (like these [show a plus card]) and the other half of the cards have a minus sign on them (like these! [show a minus card]).
- I'm now going to pass out to you 4 pieces of candy.
- You MAY NOT eat the candy at this time. If you do, I'll take the other pieces of candy away from

you and I won't let you participate in this activity.

- I need everyone to tell me, "Yes, I understand that I'm not to eat the candy, otherwise I lose all of it."
- Now that everyone has their candy, I'm going to pass out a card to each of you.
- [Note: Be sure to individually hand the cards to the students – if you just pass the cards around, they'll all look for the plus cards]
- If you received a plus card, that means you have plenty and that its time to give away a candy – you'll give one of your pieces of candy away to someone who has a minus sign.
- Don't give or take any candy until I say go.
- READY SET GO!

### **DO Sharing activity**

- Now I'm collecting the cards.
- And I'm passing them out again.
- READY SE T GO!

### **DO Sharing Activity again (repeat 3 or 4 times)**

#### **ASK**

- How many candies did everyone start out with? (4)
- Did you find it harder to share/give away when you had less than what you started out with?
- Anyone end up with more than 4?
- Anyone end up with less than 4?
- What do you think, is that fair? Why?
- Did we have any fights or near fights? Any raised voices? Why?
- What do you think the people with more than 4 candies should do?

#### **TELL**

- Even though the candy wasn't yours to begin with, very quickly, you became very attached to your candy and had a hard time letting go of it.
- This is one of the things Jesus is pointing out with the parable we heard today: When we forget where we get our things from, then very quickly we stop sharing it, and then fight with others over the things we have or don't have.
- The other thing that happens is that we start to see other people as threats – as people who are going to take our things – instead of seeing people as God's gifts to each other.
- We're going to do an activity now that might help us to better understand what I just said about seeing people as threats.

### **EXPLAIN "PUZZLED" Activity**

- We need to get into two teams at this point (use your favorite way of splitting a class into two teams)
- To each team, I am giving you a puzzle.
- You are to put the puzzle together as a team under 7 minutes.
- You may begin!

### **DO PUZZLED Activity**

### **NOTES for Teacher:**

- If the kids ask you for help, decline. Encourage them to use what they've been given in order to finish the task. Tell them "You've been given all that you need."
- If they ask permission to work with other groups, be noncommittal. Say, "I told you to put a puzzle together under 7 minutes – how you do that is up to you."

### **ASK**

- So how did you feel when you realized your team didn't have all the right pieces?
- How did you feel when the other group came to you asking or offering other pieces of the puzzle? Did you feel annoyed? Distracted? Or just thankful?

### **TELL**

- If you felt annoyed or distracted, then you were seeing the other people in the room as a threat to you – because they were going to slow you down and cause you to not get the puzzle done fast enough.
- That's what happened in the story too, instead of seeing the servants and the son as helpful (which they could've been), the guests instead saw the servants and the son as a threat to the things/grapes/money that they liked and wanted more of.
- At the end of the story Jesus quotes this line, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." What Jesus is saying here is that when we're making our task or things more important to us than God, then what God is offering us we may not see as good or helpful – even though it is – and then we'll then reject it.
- But if we keep inviting God into our possessions and keep practicing our sharing of our gifts (with God's help), then we'll be keeping our focus on God, not on our things – which means we won't fight or hurt others like the guests did.

### **Explain Greed activity:**

Have two volunteers.

Give them each some money.

Tell them they have to bid on the item.

The only catch is that the loser will have to pay his/her bid to the winner.

Have the auction.

Greed activity from website:

Announce to two or more people that you will auction a £20 note to the highest bidder. The only rule is that the unsuccessful lowest bidder will have to pay you their bid. The bidders will start off low - maybe at just a penny or two. As they progress higher the awful trap starts to emerge - but there is nothing they can do about it: no-one wants to lose and have to pay a few pounds and watch someone else get the prize for a lot less than it's worth. And so it goes. Eventually you see (if they haven't run away) the ludicrous spectacle of people bidding higher than the face value of the note. Of course, the only winning first bid (and this is a good lesson on greed in any aspect of life) is £19.99...