

Supplies: 3 Tri-folded (short-wise) 8-1/2" x 11" sheets of card stock; 1 pencil with eraser per student; Hard surfaces for the kids to draw on (for example: A 3 ring binder); a print-out of the drawn example ([page 3](#))

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: *Have you ever been surprised? What was the surprise? Did you like or dislike the surprise? Why?*
- (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 a farmer who has some misfortune happen to him. Let's see what the farmer does.

READ Matthew 13:24-30

24 Jesus told the crowd around him another story (what we call a "parable"): "God's Kingdom may be compared to a farmer who planted good seeds in his field; 25 but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat, and then went away. 26 So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. 27 And the servants of the farmer came and said to him, "Sir, did you not plant good seeds in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?" 28 The farmer answered, "An enemy has done this." The servants replied, "Should we pull out the weeds?" 29 The farmer answered, "No; if you pull out the weeds now, you will also hurt the roots of the wheat. 30 Let both the wheat and the weeds grow together until harvest time; then you will collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, and gather the wheat into my barn." "

ASK

- The farmer was expecting grain, but what else grew in the field? (weeds)
- Who seemed surprised by this? (the farmer's servants)
- What did the farmer say they would do with the weeds? (nothing would be done until harvest time)
- Why did the farmer say not to do anything with the weeds before harvest time? (to pull the weeds up early would hurt the roots of the grain)

TELL

- When the farmer's servants are unsure about what to do, they make a good decision. They go and ask the farmer what to do.

- In the story, we can pretend that the farmer is like God and that the servants are like us.
- And so, like the servants, when we run into surprises, the first thing we should do is check in with God to see what we should do next.
- And what we hear to do might very well surprise us.
- So for our craft activity today, we're going to be like the servants, and follow directions.
- Then, we'll see what surprise awaits us.

EXPLAIN Activity – A Drawing Surprise

- The paper you will start with will be folded into 3 sections: A top, middle and bottom.
- In each section, you can draw PART of a person, animal or creature – even a machine, as long as it has a neck or waist, respectively. are going to draw a character of some sort.
- In the top section you will draw the head and neck of this character.
- In the middle section, you will draw the torso with arms
- In the bottom section, you will draw the legs and feet.
- Here's the catch: After you draw the head and neck of your character, I'm going to tell you to fold the paper so that the head can't be seen and the middle section is showing.
- Then I'm going to tell you to move to your neighbor's seat and continue drawing on their piece of paper.
- Then we'll do it again!
- This means each section on each piece of paper will be drawn by a different person. No one will know what the character will look like until the activity is all done!
- They might look like this: [Show example provided.]
- While you are drawing the middle or last section **Do not peek** at the rest of the drawing! Peeking will be like pulling the weeds too early in the story: You will damage the harvest, which in this case is the SURPRISE of the completed drawing!

NOTES:

- For each section, give the class 3 to 5 minutes. Encourage them to draw with as much detail as possible. For the first section, make sure they get the neck to cross just over the fold into the middle section. And make sure when they are working on the middle section to get the waist or start of the legs to cross just over the fold into the last section.
- When it's time to move stations, have them fold their drawing backwards so that the next person can only see sections that have not been drawn on yet.
- Have them move a 4th time before they can unfold the pictures and look at them.
- Encourage the students to share the picture they have with the people around them.
- Do this 3 times for a total of three drawings. Encourage each person drawing to do a great and detailed job. The drawings can be given out to parents or taped up for display.

DO Drawing Surprise ACTIVITY

Then, clean up (get pencils, folders and papers back into the kitchen. Have the kids put the carpet squares back on the cart).

CLOSING PRAYER

Example for the drawing activity to show the kids:



Thoughts that the lesson is based upon

Key Verses & Theology:

27 "Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?" This is an eternal question: How do you justify/prove a good, all-powerful God who lets bad things happen?

29 But he replied, "No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them." The answer to this particular eternal question, at least in this parable, is that in order to stop the bad things, the good things would be hurt. In other words, the two are not retractable from one another; their roots are intertwined.

30 Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn." One of the revealing parts of this parable is how God responds to what we (in this case the servants) would consider a surprise. Things didn't go as the servants expected, but the response they receive is that the wheat is still good, it will still grow and it will still be collected.

Themes in the story to focus on:

Master & Servants: Sometimes it seems like we know better than others. In this story, the servants are ready to do their own thing: Take out the weeds right away. But the servants remember that they are servants, and they go to their master first instead of acting on their own. And the Master says to do the opposite of what the servants wanted to do. The servants are obedient, which allows for the wheat to grow undamaged.

Surprise: In life, things will happen to us that we think are "bad." Like weeds being planted in our fields. But like the servants, we if our response is to practice going to the master first, instead of acting on our own plans, then we don't need to worry about how to be prepared for all types of surprises. Instead, we have the same response to everything: Pray first.

Obedience: When surprised, we might be tempted to react without asking God for help and direction. So again, like the servants, we need to practice going to the Master, going to God first, and *then* we do as God directed us. Because our first response might not have been what God is telling us to do, then it might be hard to do what God is telling us to do, so then we need to practice being obedient. When we do this, then God helps us from making mistakes, like in the story, the master keeps the servants from harming the wheat.