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| **Strands** | | | The Bible and Christian Belief, Philosophy of Religion, Christian Ethics and Ethical Theory | | | | | | |
| **Stage of Development** | | | Years 3-6 | | | **Created** May 2021 | | **Review** 2025 | |
| **Aim** | | | This unit offers students the opportunity to practise their critical thinking skills. It also explores aspects of the philosophical question “What is truth” and allows students to examine this in its practical application. The teaching of Jesus through the parables underpins these explorations. Students will seek to uncover the interpretation (truth message) of the parables. As they explore parables dramatically, they will be able to further engage with Jesus’ teaching. | | | | | | |
| **Content Descriptions** | | | **Knowledge and Understanding**   * Jesus used parables to teach moral and spiritual truths. * Parables can be found in the Gospels of the Bible. * Parables have some common elements which help to identify them as parables. | | | | **Religious Studies Skills & virtues**   * Critical thinking | | |
| **Resources** | | | [www.bible.com/videos](https://www.bible.com/videos) | | | | This webpage has most of the New Testament Bible stories in video form and would be appropriate to use with older primary students. | | | |
| RE:Quest  [www.request.org.uk/teachers?s=parables](http://www.request.org.uk/teachers?s=parables) | | | | The RE:Quest website has a section on Parables. This has information on what a parable is as well as well as videos appropriate for children of some of the parables studied in this unit. | | | |
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| **Lesson** | | **Key Questions** | | **Lesson Activity Ideas** | | | | | **Resources** | | |
| **1** | The nature of truth | What is truth?  Are there different kinds of truth?  How do we communicate truth?  Why does Jesus claim to be ‘the truth’? | | 5min  10min  15min  15min | Activity: Take a ball to class. Ask the student how you can prove the ball bounces/how you can prove the ball is your favourite ball? Discuss the difference between the evidence you would use for each question. You may wish to consider the difference between evidence and proof. Can both answers contain truth?  Read: The students a fairy tale that contains a moral. Discuss what ‘truth’ the story is trying to communicate. Ask the students to consider why humans use stories to communicate meaning.  Share some examples of common idioms eg What would you do if I said “Pull up your socks” - what would it mean if I said “I’m feeling blue” or “My new car cost me an arm and a leg” – Students consider if words and stories can sometimes have more than one meaning. Talk about some proverbs: are they literally true? (eg don’t put your eggs in one basket, don’t count your chickens before they hatch”). Students discuss any stories they might know that have more than one meaning. Challenge students to consider if both possible meanings are true and how they know they are true.  Worksheet: Ask the students to use Bible Gateway to complete a word search for ‘Truth’ in the Gospel of John. Use the worksheet to develop an individual concept map on ‘truth’ followed by a class concept map. The teacher will need to help ensure students are understanding the verses in context. | | | | Ball  Fairy tale  Worksheet: Research task  Internet | | |
| **2** | Parables and truth – The wise and foolish builder | How does Jesus use parables to communicate truth?  What truth message is contained in the parable of the wise and foolish builder? | | 5min  10min  10min  5min  15min | Activity: Share some riddles with the students e.g. What can travel around the world while staying in a corner? A stamp. Explain that a parable is a short story used to teach an important truth message. Sometimes searching for the truth message in the parable can feel a bit like solving a riddle.  Activity: choose two students to come up the front. Give one some Lego and a Lego base board and the other one Lego and a carboard base. Ask them to build the best house they can in 90 seconds. At the end check which house is more secure. Why?  Read: the story of the Wise and Foolish Builder from a Children’s Bible or the CEV (Matthew 7:24-27) and discuss what truth is contained in the parable (i.e. proper foundations are necessary. Jesus seems to be referring to obedience his teachings as being a solid foundation). An animation to complement the reading <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXWHLB1f6_U>).  Ask the students some questions to try and understand the meaning of the text. Depending on the ability of your class this could include questions that encourage students to locate meaning within the text, with the reader and with the author.  The first question is ‘what do we know about the author?’ This means asking questions about the story like:   1. Who is the author of the story? 2. What do we know about the author of the story? 3. When was the story written? 4. Who was the story first told to? /who was the story written for?   The second question is ‘what happens in the story?’ This means asking questions about the story like:   1. What characters are involved in the story? 2. What happens in the story? 3. Is there anything in the story I don’t understand?   The third question is ‘what does the story mean?’ This means asking questions about the story like:   1. What do I think someone who believed in God would think about this story? 2. What do I think my friends and family would think of this story? 3. What do I think of this story? 4. How could this story change the way someone thought about this topic?   Activity: Wise and foolish builders. Printout the images and use to re-tell the story in small groups. | | | | Lego, cardboard  Children’s Bible  [Animation of the parable](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXWHLB1f6_U)  Printouts: wise and foolish builders, paddle pop sticks | | |
| **3** | Parables and truth- Treasure in a Field | How does Jesus use parables to communicate truth?  What truth message is contained in the parable of the treasure and great pearl? | | 5min  15min  10min  15min | Activity: Take a small prize or lolly to class. Tell the students you will give the lolly or prize to the student that offers you the best trade e.g. if you give them the lolly, they may offer to complete their homework all week or clean up the bag area.  Read: The parables of the Treasure in the Field and The Great Pearl in a Children’s Bible or the CEV (Matthew 13:44-46). Discuss the ‘truth’ communicated in these parables about the kingdom of heaven. Nothing is more valuable than the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is a treasure! Link back to the first activity and the value students attached to the prize/lolly vs their time etc.  Ask the students some questions to try and understand the meaning of the text. Depending on the ability of your class this could include questions that encourage students to locate meaning within the text, with the reader and with the author.  The first question is ‘what do we know about the author?’ This means asking questions about the story like:   1. Who is the author of the story? 2. What do we know about the author of the story? 3. When was the story written? 4. Who was the story first told to? /who was the story written for?   The second question is ‘what happens in the story?’ This means asking questions about the story like:   1. What characters are involved in the story? 2. What happens in the story? 3. Is there anything in the story I don’t understand?   The third question is ‘what does the story mean?’ This means asking questions about the story like:   1. What do I think someone who believed in God would think about this story? 2. What do I think my friends and family would think of this story? 3. What do I think of this story? 4. How could this story change the way someone thought about this topic?   Ask the students to re-write the parable in small groups using items of value to them. | | | | Small prize/lolly  Children’s Bible | | |
| **4** | Parables and truth- The Lost Sheep | How does Jesus use parables to communicate truth?  What truth message is contained in the parable of the lost sheep? | | 10min  10min  10min  15min | Activity: Hide one of your keys in the classroom and tell the students you have lost it and need to find it. Ask them to help you. Explain to the children that even though you have many other keys, the lost key is special and important to you because it opens your house/car/classroom.  Read: The Lost Sheep from a Children’s Bible or the CEV (Luke 15:3-7). Discuss what truth is contained in this parable. Every single person is important to God. God does not want anyone to be lost.  Ask the students some questions to try and understand the meaning of the text. Depending on the ability of your class this could include questions that encourage students to locate meaning within the text, with the reader and with the author.  The first question is ‘what do we know about the author?’ This means asking questions about the story like:   1. Who is the author of the story? 2. What do we know about the author of the story? 3. When was the story written? 4. Who was the story first told to? /who was the story written for?   The second question is ‘what happens in the story?’ This means asking questions about the story like:   1. What characters are involved in the story? 2. What happens in the story? 3. Is there anything in the story I don’t understand?   The third question is ‘what does the story mean?’ This means asking questions about the story like:   1. What do I think someone who believed in God would think about this story? 2. What do I think my friends and family would think of this story? 3. What do I think of this story? 4. How could this story change the way someone thought about this topic?   Activity: children play a lost sheep version of “Marco Polo”. Mark off an area that all children must stay inside of. One child stands in the middle of the area and is designated the shepherd. That child is blindfolded. The object of the game is for the blindfolded child to “find” one of his sheep by touching them. Then that sheep becomes the shepherd. The shepherd can call out “Where are my sheep?” Each time the shepherd says this all the sheep must say “baa”. | | | | Keys  Children’s Bible  Extra Resource: Lost sheep storyboard from Early Childhood Kindness Unit.  Large space, blindfold | | |
| **5** | Parables and truth- The Pharisee and the Tax Collector | How does Jesus use parables to communicate truth?  What truth message is contained in the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector? | | 10min  10min  10min  15min | Activity: Ask the students to list the most important people they know. Pick one of the people from the list and discuss things this person could ‘brag’ about with the students. Explain that in the story today there is a Pharisee (an important person) and he was bragging to God about how good he was.  Read: The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector from a Children’s Bible or the CEV (Luke 18:9-14). Discuss the truth this parable communicates. “If you put yourself above others, you will be put down. But if you humble yourself, you will be honoured”.  Ask the students some questions to try and understand the meaning of the text. Depending on the ability of your class this could include questions that encourage students to locate meaning within the text, with the reader and with the author.  The first question is ‘what do we know about the author?’ This means asking questions about the story like:   1. Who is the author of the story? 2. What do we know about the author of the story? 3. When was the story written? 4. Who was the story first told to? /who was the story written for?   The second question is ‘what happens in the story?’ This means asking questions about the story like:   1. What characters are involved in the story? 2. What happens in the story? 3. Is there anything in the story I don’t understand?   The third question is ‘what does the story mean?’ This means asking questions about the story like:   1. What do I think someone who believed in God would think about this story? 2. What do I think my friends and family would think of this story? 3. What do I think of this story? 4. How could this story change the way someone thought about this topic?   Reflection: Give the students time to reflect on how they can be humble before God. You could print out a copy of the parable for them to read and reflect on. If you have time, ask the students to write a modern parable that communicates the same truth as the parable of the pharisee and the tax collector. | | | | Children’s Bible  Print out of the story  Worksheet: The Pharisee and the Tax Collector | | |
| **6-8** | Parables and Truth – group performances | Assessment | | GROUP TASK (over 4 weeks) In small groups students develop short dramas from parables. Teacher could allocate a parable per group or let students select from the ones studied in previous lessons. Students present their parables in a present-day setting.  Final lesson- presentation: students present their parable dramas to the class. (maybe invite the Chaplain or a member of the School leadership team to come and watch). Quick recap of meaning after each performance– what is the truth message? | | | | | Spaces for small groups to work and perform. | | |