

Youth Worship Lesson – November 15, 2020

NURTURING THE GIFT

Focus Scripture: Matthew 25:14-30

Purpose: To recognize our responsibility to nurture our gifts from God.

Youth issue:
My talents

Preparation

Worship Table – green cloth

Pencils/Paper

Envelope or bag

Pictures for Bible story and activity materials at the end of the lesson.

Lighting of the Christ Candle: We light this candle to remember that God is always with us.

Opening Prayer

O God, we thank you for this time to be together
to share our lives with each other, and with you.

Help us recognize our call to work alongside you to create a better world.

Guide us in developing our talents that they may be used to bring about your shalom.

Amen.

Song: YOU SAY – Lauren Daigle on YouTube

Introducing the Theme – “Talents”



Hand out a pencil and small slip of paper to each person and yourself.

Take a minute to think about three things you do well. Then, write those three things on your slip of paper. **(You should do this too. If your children are struggling to think of things that they do well, it might help to work in pairs. Sometimes a sibling can**

help us see things that we forget or miss in ourselves.)

I am going to collect the slips in this envelope/bag, then pull the slips out one at a time and read them out loud. **(Pull out a slip.)** In this room someone’s talents are... **(Read from the slip. After you have read each slip, tape it to the wall. Repeat with the remaining slips.)**

This is an impressive list of talents. Sometimes when we think about talents, we compare ourselves to others. Have you ever thought that your friends or people who are famous have more talents than you do? How do you feel about the talents you have? Is it OK to be proud of your abilities? **(Give them time to explore their feelings.)**

We have all been given a unique set of qualities, talents, and abilities. This is one of the special things about God’s creation. No two flowers, snowflakes, or people are exactly alike.

Not even identical twins. It was God's plan that each of us be one-of-a-kind. That way, when we share our talents with others there is a full, rich, wonderful variety.

Another special aspect of it is that our talents are not set in stone. We all have abilities that we haven't tapped into yet, talents that we haven't yet discovered. With God's help, our talents grow and develop throughout our lives.

Exploring the Theme – The Parable of the Talents

Today's Bible story is another parable. Do you remember what a parable is? **(A story based on a familiar situation from life that teaches a spiritual truth; an earthly story with a heavenly meaning)** This parable is about talents, and it's a bit of a play on words. In Jesus' time, the word "talent" meant something different. To them, a talent was a coin – an extremely valuable coin that was worth a lot of money. In the story, there are three people who each have different talents – both in the sense that they have different abilities, and they have different amounts of money. Let us see what happens.

Hand out the Bibles. Turn to Matthew 25:14–30. Read the passage together.

For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. In addition, to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. Likewise, he who had received two gained two more. However, he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

Therefore, he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, "Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them." His lord said to him, "Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord." He also who had received two talents came and said, "Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them." His Lord said to him, 'Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord.'" Then he who had received the one talent came and said, "Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, picking where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. In addition, I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours."

However, his Lord answered and said to him, “You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I pick where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. Therefore, you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming, I would have received back my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. In addition, cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and grinding of teeth.

- How did the three people come into their money? **(Their master gave it to them to look after, verse 15)**
- How do you think they felt about their master entrusting them with his money? **(The first two servants felt confident, but the third one was worried and afraid)**
- When their master was gone, what did they do? **(One grew wheat, one raised goats, and one hid the talent in a box and buried it, verses 16-18)**
- Has anyone ever given you a job to do and then gone away and left you to do it? How did that feel? How did you do? What happens when a teacher leaves a class to work on their own? **(Listen to their responses)**
- How did the master respond to servant #1 and servant #2? **(He was very pleased, verses 21, 23)**
- How did the master respond to servant #3? **(He was angry and called him wicked and lazy)** Why did servant #3 act this way? **(He was afraid of losing the money, verse 24.)**
- Do you think the master’s response to servant #3 was fair? How do you think the master would have felt if the servant had invested the money, but the market changed and he had ended up losing it all? **(He might have been disappointed, but probably he would have felt that the servant cared about the gift and tried to develop it, which is still better than putting it out of sight and doing nothing with it.)**
- What would you say is the lesson to be learned in this parable? What is the spiritual truth or heavenly meaning? **(It is not how many talents you have, but how you use them that is important; use it or lose it, etc.)**

Why are we to develop our talents? So that people will like us? So that we become famous? **(So we can share our talents and use them to make a difference/build a better world/build God’s shalom)**

This parable appears in both Matthew’s and Luke’s gospels. Some of the details of the stories are a bit different in the two versions – Luke tells of ten servants, not three – but the meaning is the same. Both Matthew and Luke placed the story near the end of Jesus’ life. Let us read Luke’s introduction to the story.

Read Luke 19:11.

While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once.

Why would it be important for the disciples to hear this story just before Jesus went to Jerusalem, where he would be crucified? **(He was telling them to use their talents when he was gone; he wanted them to know he was entrusting them with his mission to bring about God's shalom, a mission which has been entrusted to us as well.)**

Do you remember the Great Commandment? It tells us to love God, love ourselves and love others. How does the parable of the talents relate to the Great Commandment? **(When we acknowledge and develop our talents, we are showing love for ourselves and for God, who gave us the talents; when we use our talents to help others, we are showing love for others and for God, whose shalom we are helping to build)**

Let's take a moment to look again at the slips of paper that list some of our talents. Read your slip. Think about all of the gifts that God has given to us. Let's celebrate this wonderful gathering of talent!

Memory Verse: *For whoever has will be given more, and they will have plenty. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.* Matthew 25:29

Integrating the Theme – "Choose your Talent"

Materials: Phone or Video device

Choose a talent that you are good at and film yourself doing this. Once you are finished, show your family this awesome talent. If you wish, you may also forward this to Nikki to show the congregation your special "talent", posting it on our Facebook page.

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Closing Prayer

Thank you God for the talents and abilities that you have given to each of us.

Help us to treasure and develop them and use them in service to others, so that shalom will grow in our world.

Amen.