

Cornerstones Curriculum - A Summer of Parables Planning Guide

How does it work?

- An administrator maps out the scope and sequence for the summer, searching for and inviting people with just the right talents to teach for just one Sunday. This person communicates with the teachers by emailing the lessons, making sure that supplies are gathered and greeting him/her upon arrival. (See the “Administrator Checklist” below for details.)
- A gathering time leader prepares and leads the gathering time within the context of a worship experience and the parable theme. This person knows each child by name. (Sometimes the administrator and the gathering time leader are the same person. See the “Gathering Time Leader Checklist” below for details.)
- The teachers are invited to teach just one Sunday and are matched to a workshop lesson that highlights their own talents, hobbies and interests.
- The children have the familiarity of the same person leading the gathering worship time but are then introduced to a different teacher each week who makes the lesson come alive.
- There is a possible computer lab component. (See “Computer Lab Checklist” for details.)
- Consider connecting the summer program to a bigger event:
 - A Bible Carnival Open House at the end of August to show off all of the activities during the summer: puppet shows, dramas and videos, art projects. Make it a BBQ, inviting people to bring sliced tomatoes from their gardens.
 - A mission outreach program, perhaps creating hygiene kits for a homeless shelter.

The focus: Jesus used parables to teach about our relationship to God. At the time, the listeners knew how Jewish law taught them to act in certain circumstances, thus exhibiting a right relationship with God. Jesus often started a story, giving the impression that the end was a foregone conclusion. In fact, the endings had an unexpected twist that revealed a new way of behaving that unveiled a relationship with God that was more concerned about the heart, forgiveness and invitation.

In the Cornerstones’ *Covenant* year, three units focus on the parables:

- The Good Samaritan
- The Prodigal Son
- The Kingdom Parables

That is 33 workshop lessons from which to choose to create a 10-12 week Summer Sunday School program. See the "Chart of Workshops, Teachers and Dates" to decide which ones fit your congregation.

Administrator Checklist

This is the logistics person, making sure that the program runs efficiently with all of the teachers in place.

- Figure out the calendar of when the program will start and end and determine if there are any days when there is no Sunday School or if there is a Family Worship Sunday, like Sunday, July 3.
- The **chart** below includes overviews of each lesson with some recommendations of the kinds of talent that will make each lesson extraordinary. Brainstorm who are potential people to invite to teach. Once someone says “yes”, choose a date that they will teach that workshop. It’s easy to say “yes” to teaching just one Sunday in the summer, especially when approached based on a natural talent.
- Fill in the **calendar** (included below).
- Email the workshop lesson and biblical background to the teachers, encouraging them to add their own talents. They print the lessons the way they want to teach them.
- Keep up communications with all teachers. Refer to resources available at church: a class set of Bibles, Bible references, the craft closet. It can’t be stressed enough to be aware of the supplies that are needed, especially if they are not in the craft closet.
- On each Sunday, greet the teacher and go over the logistics of the day.
- Send out invitations to the congregation about Summer Sunday School. Remember, summer is filled with visits of friends and family; grandparents might be thrilled to bring their grandchildren to church.

A Chart of Workshops, Teachers and Dates

Workshop Lesson Overviews	Potential Teachers	Yes!	Date
<p>Good Samaritan: Bedouin Encampment Imagine if the Levite gathered his family around the dinner table to share what he saw as he walked home to Jericho. He asks the class to help him sort out his conflict of passing by the victim so that he obeyed the law. A lawyer might enjoy presenting the argument. A host of many family dinners has seen the family work out issues over a communal meal, thus making the class about hospitality and the covenant.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Good Samaritan: Bible Improv Someone plugged into children and popular culture can help the class bring this parable into the 21st Century. Make the story contemporary and act it out. Video record the performance and share it with the congregation.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Good Samaritan: Created by the Spirit “Who are you when no one is looking?” A crafter will have fun with the mask project as the class ponders their own identity. Think about saving the masks and displaying them a few weeks before Lent 2012, perhaps hosting a pancake breakfast with a Mardi Gras theme on the Sunday before Fat Tuesday.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Good Samaritan: Eat Your Way/Bible Focus on the healing of the victim. Study herbs, herbal teas and balms and make a related edible project. So many people would enjoy teaching this: an herbal gardener, an herbalist, a homeopath, a nurse, a doctor.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Good Samaritan: Faith Today A seamstress can help the class make teddy bears to send to children in crisis. This year the bears could be sent to the victims of the Japanese earthquake and tsunami.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Good Samaritan: Mary & Martha’s B&B A storyteller teaches the class about Jewish law. The parable asks us to let our behaviors reveal our relationship with God. A crafter or beader can lead the class in making friendship bracelets/keychains with “WWJD” (“What would Jesus Do?”).</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Good Samaritan: Moved by the Spirit Focus on healing. A person who knows about first aid, a physical therapist, a wilderness scout or an EMT can make a great connection between the parable and life today.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	

<p>Good Samaritan: Puppetry <i>Bunraku</i> is a Japanese form of puppetry that is larger than life with reticulated joints and is worked by several people. Use this form of puppetry to tell this parable. The puppets can be made throughout the summer and used at the final gathering. A set designer or prop maker would be valuable in this workshop.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Good Samaritan: Video Live Who likes detective shows? Create a 1950s detective's office – think black and white film noir. Aid the class in creating interviews with those involved in the incident on the road to Jericho. An acting director and/or videographer will know how to make this video great. Show it to the congregation.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Good Samaritan: Where in the World A map enthusiast or Middle East historian will enjoy teaching this class on Middle East relationships going back to the enmity between Jews and Samaritans. There is also a discussion about who is “invisible” in society and how we, as Christians, are called to see those in need.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Prodigal Son: Bedouin Encampment A good storyteller will help the children understand the struggle and liberation of reconciliation, something the children are constantly asked to do when they are told to say “I’m sorry”. Learn the song “Amazing Grace” to discover the awesome potential of God to invite us back into the fold of God’s Kingdom.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Prodigal Son: Bible Improv Act out contemporary scenarios of reconciliation, whether they are a time when forgiveness was asked for or was offered. This role playing could be the very bridge that children need to figure out how to deal with their own situations of forgiveness. The relationship between the Prodigal Son and his brother is unfinished in scripture; lead the class in acting out some versions of how that story ends.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Prodigal Son: Created by the Spirit A crafter who works with wires and beads will enjoy leading this class that makes wire sculptures to interpret the emotions and interactions between the father, the Prodigal Son and the elder son. These sculptures have the potential to be a “keeper”, something that the children take home and treasure.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	

<p>Prodigal Son: Eat Your Way/Bible Think of this as “Upstairs, Downstairs” in the Bible. The class becomes the servants who are making the elaborate dinner that the father has ordered upon seeing his long lost son. The servants are all assigned to one of the people in the story and advocate for their master’s perspective. The class makes food, eats food, and learns how the family table can be a place of reconciliation.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Prodigal Son: Faith Today A lawyer will appreciate helping the class understand “inheritance”, perhaps adding a few good stories to illustrate how a family passes an estate from one generation to another. To make sense of this parable, the biblical laws reveal how the one son was able to collect his inheritance even while his father was still alive.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Prodigal Son: Mary & Martha’s B&B A good storyteller becomes the father who wrestles with his youngest son about inheritance, independence, being recklessly wasteful and welcoming a prodigal son with open arms upon his return. Someone who journals can guide the class in how to write or draw pictures about the things that trouble them, opening the door to reconciliation.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Prodigal Son: Moved by the Spirit A dance teacher can help the class move through the story by creating spatial metaphors ~ who is close to whom and how do the various scenes of the story change those relationships. This is quite fun: it gets the children moving while also thinking. Then the class builds both a wall and a bridge to symbolize our relationship with God. Who might be a good teacher here? How about a mason or a bridge-builder?</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Prodigal Son: Puppetry The parable of the Prodigal Son is beautifully illustrated in Margaret Wise Brown’s <u>The Runaway Bunny</u>, a family favorite that will be familiar to many. A puppeteer will enjoy helping the class create a puppet show to this tale. If all works well, perform it for the parents.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Prodigal Son: Video Live Think of all the people, places and things that the Prodigal Son saw on his adventure turned disaster. These objects become the storytellers of a home-made video. A videographer can stage and film the production.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	

<p>Prodigal Son: Where in the World This lesson is particularly appropriate in the summer of 2011 while Japan is still in the news, having suffered through earthquake, tsunami and nuclear contamination. The Japanese have a tradition involving 1000 paper cranes, as exemplified in the book <u>Sadako and the 1000 Cranes</u>. This story is about a young girl who was in Hiroshima during the nuclear bombing during WWII. Someone who makes origami will appreciate teaching this lesson which will send paper cranes to an agency in Japan that passes on the prayers of the class.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Kingdom Parables: Bedouin Encampment Who has gone to a big event with an inspirational speaker? That's the person to be the storyteller who was in the crowd and heard Jesus talk about the Great Feast. A scrapbooker will enjoy leading the class in making invitations to a church event or worship. The cards might even be sent to visitors to your church as a sign of welcome. Invite a person from church who is in charge of new membership who greets people as they enter the church for worship and offers other aspects of hospitality. This is a wonderful opportunity for the children to discover how a church is welcoming.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Kingdom Parables: Bible Improv This workshop is all about excuses that keep us from living the way God wants us to live. Create contemporary versions of why people would turn down God's invitation to the Great Feast.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Kingdom Parables: Created by the Spirit An art or drawing teacher can lead the class in making pictures about how Jesus described God's Kingdom. Hang these in the hallway or scan them into a Power Point program and show them to the congregation during coffee hour.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Kingdom Parables: Eat Your Way/Bible Jesus used this parable to help people understand that God is the great host, the one who invites and puts out a lavish banquet in celebration. This class will make food to give to homebound parishioners, a local soup kitchen or Meals on Wheels. Invite members of your congregation to tell the class about how your church extends hospitality to others through food.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	

<p>Kingdom Parables: Faith Today This parable talks about God’s Kingdom being inclusive. The children will be able to relate to the activities that deal with inclusion and exclusion. They can respond through a choice of art, journal writing or poetry.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Kingdom Parables: Mary & Martha’s B&B The storyteller is the host of the Great Feast who shares the disappointments when guests don’t show up and the joy when others do. A scrapbooker or rubber stamp crafter will have fun helping the children create invitations to the feast. An acting director can direct the children in pantomiming the parable of the Landowner and the Vineyard.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Kingdom Parables: Moved by the Spirit A PE teacher or camp counselor can easily lead this games-oriented class as the children learn about the Great Feast.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Kingdom Parables: Puppetry What is heaven like? <u>The Next Place</u> is a book that explores that question. A puppeteer or set designer will enjoy making this book 3D with props and scenery.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Kingdom Parables: Video Live An advertiser has the creativity to lead the class in creating an ad campaign for a new line of snack products by the <i>Parable Products Company</i>. These can include visual, audio and video. If you make a video, ask a videographer.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	
<p>Kingdom Parables: Where in the World Surely, one vision of God’s Kingdom is that everyone has adequate shelter. This workshop focuses on how Habitat for Humanity creates housing. Is there someone in your congregation who has participated in a Habitat project? The activity is to make <i>Peace Houses</i> out of wood, dowel rods and dove cutouts. This is a very cool project; a carpenter will be able to make this a keeper.</p>		Name: Phone: Email:	

The Calendar for the *Summer of Parables*

Date	Workshop	Teacher	Notes
June		Name: Phone: Email:	
June		Name: Phone: Email:	
June		Name: Phone: Email:	
June		Name: Phone: Email:	
July		Name: Phone: Email:	
July		Name: Phone: Email:	
July		Name: Phone: Email:	
July		Name: Phone: Email:	
July		Name: Phone: Email:	
July		Name: Phone: Email:	
August		Name: Phone: Email:	
August		Name: Phone: Email:	
August		Name: Phone: Email:	
August		Name: Phone: Email:	

Gathering Time Leader Checklist

- Determine how long this gathering time lasts, usually 15 minutes.
 - What are the elements of worship that will be practiced?
(Perhaps opening praise, a hymn, a prayer, offering, a benediction.)
 - What stories can be used to highlight the lesson of that day and the theme for the summer? This is a time to help the children see the bigger picture about our personal relationship with God and Jesus Christ. Look in the biblical backgrounds for each unit to understand the context of the story. Each background also includes a parent's page that also might offer insight.
- Lead this gathering time worship experience each Sunday.
- Learn the names of each child and greet everyone who comes through the door.
- Either the administrator or the gathering time leader introduces the teacher of the day.

Computer Lab Checklist

Within this *Summer of Parables* are three computer lab lessons.

- The Good Samaritan: Use a variety of Bible references to learn about the story. Discovery's *Life of Christ* program is very kid-friendly with flash animations of the story and lots of places to discover details. Use graphics software to design a rebus of pictures to illustrate the parable.
- The Prodigal Son: Discovery's *Life of Christ* program also has a unit on this parable. Create a tabloid newspaper to illustrate the story.
- The Kingdom Parables: A scripture scramble starts off the lesson. Create window decals to illustrate the parable.

Options for opening the computer lab:

- Invite families to arrive early specifically to work together on the computers.
- Older children might appreciate working through the 40 lessons in the *Life of Christ* program, gathering clues and finally entering the castle at the end of the summer.