

Good soil, growing faith

Mark 4:1-20

Jesus invites us to hear God's Word, welcome it, and let it shape our lives.

Your goal

Retell the four soils and name a habit that helps us respond to God's Word.

Read & gather

Read aloud: Mark 4:1-20. Memory passage: Mark 4:20.

Basic kit: Bible, paper, pencils or crayons, child-safe scissors, glue or tape. Paper, pencils, crayons, and tape.

Read the full passage in context before class. Practice unfamiliar names and select age adaptations.

Words to explain

Parable: a story Jesus uses to teach. Sower: someone scattering seed. Receive: welcome and take in.

Your 60-minute flow

0-5 minutes | Welcome & wonder

Use the opening question or visual below. Welcome beginners and offer a quiet way to join.

5-10 minutes | Worship & prayer

Offer thanks to God. Sing a familiar, church-approved song or speak a line of praise. Listening quietly is welcome.

10-15 minutes | Bible & memory

Find the reading together. Read the memory passage from your Bible. Repeat short phrases with simple gestures.

15-27 minutes | Discover the story

Read the selected Bible verses and tell the three-part story. Pause for prediction, pointing, and retelling.

27-35 minutes | Talk it through

Use the three discussion questions. Give thinking time, then pair discussion before sharing with the whole group.

35-50 minutes | Create & practice

Demonstrate the activity, work together, and use the student page. Finish drawing at home if time is short.

50-55 minutes | Respond & pray

Connect the big idea with a choice this week. Offer voluntary prayer or quiet reflection.

55-60 minutes | Remember & take home

Use the exit prompt, revisit the big idea, tidy supplies, and give caregivers the family page.

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Welcome & wonder

Show a seed beside a drawing of a path and a garden bed. Ask where it could grow and why.

Tell the story

Read the passage first. The following is an original teaching retelling, not a quotation from the NIV.

1. A crowd gathered beside the lake, and Jesus taught from a boat. He told a story about a farmer scattering seed. Some fell on a path and birds ate it. Some landed in shallow, rocky soil, where it sprouted quickly but withered. Some grew among thorns that crowded it out. Other seed fell on good soil and produced a crop.

2. Later Jesus explained the story to his followers. The seed pictured God's Word. The different soils pictured different responses: the message could be taken away, abandoned when trouble came, or crowded out by worries and desire for other things. Good soil pictured people who heard, accepted, and bore fruit.

3. Jesus invites us to listen deeply rather than simply hear sounds. We can ask questions, remember what we learn, and take one faithful step. Growth is not a contest between children. God patiently helps us grow as we welcome his Word, bring him our worries, and follow Jesus in everyday life.

The Jesus connection

Jesus gives us the good news of God's kingdom. His Spirit helps that message take root in our lives.

Talk it through

What does the seed picture?

God's Word.

What happened in good soil?

The seed grew and produced a crop.

What is one way to welcome God's Word?

Listen, ask questions, and practice what we learn with God's help.

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Four-soil story fold

1. Fold paper into four panels. Draw a path, rocks, thorns, and good soil.
2. Add drawn seeds and retell what happened in each place, following the order in Mark.
3. On the reverse, draw an open Bible and write one helpful habit such as asking about an unfamiliar word.
4. Partners practice hearing a short verse, explaining it, and choosing one response. Pray for help to keep growing.

Grades 1-2

Use simple symbols and act out a growing plant while seated or standing.

Grades 3-5

Explain why learning a verse and practicing it belong together.

Offer movement breaks, a quiet space, picture choices, or an adult scribe. Adapt to the child, not only the grade.

Teach with care

Never sort actual children into soil categories or imply that learning difficulties mean a closed heart. Use seeds only as optional visuals.

Prayer invitation

Jesus, help us welcome your Word and let it grow into loving actions.

Exit prompt

Name one response of a good listener.

Student page answer guide

1. God's Word. 2. The seed grew and produced a crop. 3. Listen, ask questions, and practice what we learn with God's help.

Drawings and personal responses vary. Look for understanding rather than polished artwork.

After class

What did children understand? Whose voice did you hear less? What question will you revisit?

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Name: _____ Date: _____

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Explore the story

1. What does the seed picture?

2. What happened in good soil?

3. What is one way to welcome God's Word?

Draw & discover

Draw a growing plant beside one habit that helps you learn Scripture.

A little deeper

What might crowd out time to listen to God?

You can write, draw, point, or tell someone your answer.

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A LITTLE FAITH, EVERY DAY

Jesus invites us to hear God's Word, welcome it, and let it shape our lives.

Open the Bible together

Read Mark 4:1-20. Let your child retell one part. Write down a question to ask a trusted church leader; you do not need to have all the answers.

Start a conversation

What does good soil represent in Jesus' story?

Try this during the week

Read one short Bible paragraph on two different days. Ask what you notice the second time and choose one response.

A prayer to share

Jesus, help us welcome your Word and let it grow into loving actions.

Remember together

Look up Mark 4:20 in your family Bible. Read a short phrase, repeat it together, and ask what it means.

Keep it simple and welcoming

A few unhurried minutes are enough. Children may respond with words, drawings, or gestures. Prayer is an invitation; quiet participation belongs too.

This curriculum is written for mixed groups in grades 1-5 in an evangelical setting. Retellings and prayers are original. Bible references are intended for use with your own NIV Bible; no extended Bible translation text is reproduced.