

LESSON 9

THE WISE AND FOOLISH BUILDERS

BEFORE YOU TEACH

Parables

Jesus taught using many parables. A parable is a short story that uses familiar scenes, objects, and relationships to explain spiritual truths.

Parables reveal the truth to people who desire to seek and understand it, and they conceal the truth from those who are too lazy or too stubborn. The lazy and stubborn are those who refuse to seek the truth and those who do not come back and inquire.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

Your students make choices every day. Some are trivial, such as deciding to watch television, to read a book, to play with their friends, or to help around the house. These decisions are easy and don't require much effort.

However, your students may encounter more difficult choices, such as making the choice to be kind to a bully, to tell the truth even if it means getting in trouble, to befriend someone unpopular, to give the first pick to their siblings, or to help someone at the expense of their time.

Remind your students that God wants them to make wise choices. They need His help to act wisely by practicing His teachings daily.

If they do not obey and rely on God, they are like the foolish man whose house fell with a great crash. But if they listen and practice God's teachings, they are like the wise man whose house stood firm on the rock.

Let your students know that you understand how difficult it is to follow God's teachings. Encourage your students to pray to God for wisdom and strength to make the right decisions. God will listen to their prayers. Lastly, remind your students that Jesus is their rock.

BIBLE TEXT

Matthew 7:24-29

BIBLE TRUTH

A strong faith is built on a solid foundation of doing God's word.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To know that we must build our life on the right foundation—Jesus Christ.
2. To remember to set our minds on following Christ and be careful not to be deceived.
3. To recognize that a wise builder obeys God and listens to his parents.

MEMORY VERSE

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

(James 1:22)

PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Thank You, Lord, for bringing us safely again before You. We are happy to be with our friends and to learn Your words together. Lord, we know that listening to Your words is important. But today, we will learn that in addition to listening, we must practice Your words daily through our actions. You are pleased when Your children obey You. Give us the wisdom and the courage to make good choices and to do what pleases You. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for everything. Hallelujah! Amen.

VOCABULARY

parable: a story containing a teaching or lesson

wise: knowledgeable and showing good judgment

foolish: the opposite of wise; not having good judgment and making bad choices

REVIEW

Last week, we learned a story about how Jesus taught the people to be good neighbors. In the story, a Jewish man was traveling when he was attacked by robbers. The robbers left him badly wounded and near death.

As the man was lying on the ground dying, who first walked near him? That's correct, a priest, but did he stop to help the man? No. Instead, he walked to the other side of the road.

Who walked by next? That's correct, a Levite, but did he stop to help the man? No. He walked to the other side of the road as well.

Who walked by and helped this man? Correct, it was a Samaritan. He cleaned and bandaged the injured man. He then placed the man on his donkey and took him to an inn to allow him to recover.

Jesus wants us to be good neighbors, which means to help anyone who needs our help.

BIBLE STORY

[Optional Preparation: Following the instructions, make two houses: one built on sand and one built on rock.]

Materials

- 2 paper cups for houses
- 1 medium-sized rock
- Sand
- Glue
- Pitcher of water
- 2 medium to large casserole dishes

Instructions

Make a house from the small paper cup. Draw windows and a door. You may decorate the house. Place the rock in one of the dishes. Using glue, secure the house to the rock. Place the sand in the other dish and secure the house to the sand. (If sand cannot be obtained, substitute with loose items such as styrofoam peanuts.)

Ask the students, "If you were to build a house, where would you build it? Would you build it in the forest, on top of a mountain, or on a glacier?" [Show pictures of a forest, mountain, and a glacier.]

But is it wise to build a house in those places? Today's lesson will be about two men who each built a house. We will learn where they built their houses and whether they were wise or foolish.

Jesus Tells a Story

One day, Jesus was teaching a group of people the importance of obeying God. To help them understand, Jesus used a parable. [Explain to the students what a parable is.]

The Wise Man

In the parable, there were two men. Each man wanted to build a house. The wise man thought carefully about where he wanted to build his house. He wanted a place where his house would be secure and not move.

What kind of thing is very hard and will not crumble when it is shaken? Yes, a rock. [Show the students a rock.] Can you describe a rock? [Rocks are hard, solid, will hold a lot of weight, and do not wash away.]

The wise man decided to build his house on the hard rock. He thought to himself, "If I build my house on hard ground, then I will be safe. When the heavy rain comes, it will not wash my house away. I know that would be the best place to build it."

The man labored day and night. He made sure everything was done correctly, and finally, his house was finished. Even though it had been hard work, he was very happy because it was a strong and secure house.

The Foolish Man

The other man was a foolish man. He made poor choices because he failed to think about the consequences of his actions. When he decided to build his house, he did not build his house on firm and secure ground; rather, he built his house on the soft and shifting sand.

Sand is wonderful material to play with. It is soft, so you can bury your feet or your body in it. When mixed with water, you can mold it into different shapes, like when you go to the beach and build sand castles or sand sculptures. [Have sand in a container and allow the students to feel it.] Can you describe the sand? [Grainy, washes away, not strong, changes shape, etc.]

The foolish man built his house on the sand and when he finished his house, it looked as beautiful as the wise man's house that had been built on the rocks.

A Storm Arrives

Though the wise man's and the foolish man's houses both looked beautiful, appearances are not what make a good house. A good house is a house that can remain standing after an earthquake or a flood. Which house do you think remained standing? Let's find out.

One day, dark, gray clouds drifted into the town. Suddenly, lightning flashed across the sky. The thunder roared, the wind blew hard, and rain flooded the town. The rain became heavier and heavier, until there was a great flood.

As the rain poured down, how do you suppose the man in the house upon the rock felt? Show me with your body and face how he must have felt.

Let's read Matthew 7:25: "And the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock." [Gently pour the pitcher of water into the dish containing the house attached to the rock.]

How did the foolish man whose house was built upon the sand feel when he saw the storm? Show me with your body and face how the man must have felt when he saw the water rising. Yes, he was terribly worried and anxious.

Have you ever tried building sand castles at the beach? If you build your castle close to the water's edge, what happens to your sand castle when the waves come in? Yes, it is swept away. And that is exactly what happened to the foolish man's house. Sand is too soft and not strong enough to build houses on.

Let's read Matthew 7:27: "And the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall." [Gently pour the pitcher of water into the dish with sand.]

The Meaning of the Parable

When Jesus finished telling the parable to His listeners, He explained to them what this story meant.

Let's turn to Matthew 7:24: "Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock."

The Lord Jesus tells us that when we hear what God says in the Bible and do it, then we are like the wise man who built his house on the rock. When we obey God's words, even if trouble comes like a storm, our Lord Jesus, who is the rock, will keep us safe. The Lord Jesus will support and protect us so that nothing can harm us.

Let's read Matthew 7:26: "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand."

The Lord goes on to say that if we hear God's words and do not follow or obey them, then we are like the foolish man who built his house on sand. A foolish man does things his own way and refuses to obey God. So what happens when bad things happen to a foolish man? Just like how the house collapsed, a foolish man will meet with a lot of troubles and suffer great harm.

Jesus told this parable because He hopes that we can all be like the wise man and not the foolish man. He wants us to hear His words and then do them. If we do this, God will bless us and He will keep us safe.

Which type of man do you want to be?

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Fill In the Blank/True or False

1. The man who built his house on the rock was _____ (wise).
2. The man who built his house on the sand was _____ (foolish).
3. When the great storm came, both houses fell down. False; only the house built on sand fell.
4. A wise person is someone who listens to God's words and then does them. True.
5. God wants everyone to be like the wise man. True.
6. God wants us to make our own decisions and do what seems right to us. False; He wants us to listen to and do His words.
7. Building our house upon the rock means that we put God's words into action. True.
8. If we do what the Lord Jesus says, He will bless us and keep us safe, even though we may face problems or troubles. True.

MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." (James 1:22)

SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

We have learned that the wise man that built his house on the rock refers to someone who hears God's words and then does them. The foolish man who built his house on the sand refers to someone who hears God's words and does not put them into practice. From this parable, we also see two kinds of results. What happened to their houses? [Let students answer.] The wise man's house did not fall, while the foolish man's house fell. Similarly, when we listen to and do God's words, God's teachings will protect us, such that when problems come, we will overcome them and not fall. However, if we don't listen to or obey His words, we will be overwhelmed by our problems. We will not be able to stand, and we will fall with a great crash.

So, how does this parable apply to us today? How can we become a wise builder? The best way to find out is to look into the Bible. Are you ready?

1. We must build our life on the right foundation—Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 28:15-19 tells us that God has already prepared a foundation for us upon which to build our lives—Jesus Christ, the cornerstone. What does it mean to build our lives upon Jesus? It means to trust in God and obey His word every day. God is just and righteous; only by His standards should we build our "house" so that it won't be carried away when flood and wind come. In other words, when our life is built upon Jesus Christ, and upon following His every word, we need not to worry about any trials or tribulations that may come our way. God has promised to guide us through every step of our way as long as we obey Him. Nothing can affect our faith and take away God's promises from us.

Because the foundation is what holds everything up, it is also what holds everything together. No matter the quality of our materials; no matter how carefully we join the frame together; no matter how skilled our craftsmen may be, if the foundation isn't solid and stable, our "house" will lack integrity. Over time, cracks will develop in the walls. The windows will stick. The roof will leak. And, sooner or later, the storms of life will bring it crashing down, and everything we've worked so hard to build will be destroyed. That is to say, the most important thing for us in life as Christians is to build our faith upon our Lord Jesus Christ. Only if we do so can we live a solid Christian life. Let me share a scenario with you.

Carlos goes to church every Saturday. He loves everything about going to church—RE classes, fellowships, SSC's. etc. However, the problem is that he only likes to go to church because he loves his friends there, and he wants to spend time playing with them. Every time Carlos' family travels to another town and has to attend Sabbath at a different church, Carlos always asks to stay at the hotel by himself. His always reasons that he doesn't know anyone at that church, so there is no fun in going to a different church. However, even when Carlos is at church, he never listens to his RE teachers during class. His mind is always thinking about what he wants to play with his friends after class. When there is a fellowship, Carlos is always the first to sign up but the least involved in preparation. When it comes time for SSC, Carlos only registers after making sure that all his friends have already signed up. Because of this, Carlos has little understanding of God and His word.

Reflection Questions

1. **Is Carlos' faith built upon our Lord Jesus?** No, he has little understanding of the truth.
2. **If it is not, what do you think his faith is built upon?** His faith is built upon his friends at church. Even though he goes to church every Sabbath, it doesn't mean that he has a solid faith in God. Rather, he only goes to church because of his friends.
3. **What do you think will happen to Carlos' faith if his family moves and he has to attend Sabbath at another church?** Since he will no longer go to the same church as his friends, Carlos will most likely lose interest in going to church and eventually lose his faith in God.

In this scenario, we learned that Carlos built his faith on his friends—the wrong foundation. While it is very important for us to have spiritual friends, our faith is a two-way relationship; it is between you and God, not you, your friends, and God. We are responsible for our own faith and we cannot let other factors, like how many friends we have in church, affect us because only a solid foundation in Jesus Christ can guarantee us safety through every life storm that will come our way.

2. We should set our minds on following Christ and be careful not to be deceived.

In this parable, how did the wise man differ from the foolish man? [Let students answer.] The only difference was in the foundation they chose to build on. But that made all the difference in the world. Even the most terrible, frightful storm could not destroy the house that the wise man had built. On the contrary, the house that the foolish man had built did not sustain through the flood. How does this result correspond to some people today? Let's look at a passage in the Bible.

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. [...] And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

(Matthew 7:21-23)

Why is it that not everyone who calls unto the Lord will be recognized by Him? The reason lies in the foundation of our faith. Many people call themselves Christians but do not obey the words of God. Their faith is not built upon our Lord Jesus Christ. In this case, they are the foolish builders. Jesus doesn't recognize them as His children and wants them to depart from Him. This is certainly not what we want. We want to be those of Christ who will pass through the "storms" in this life. When we build our lives upon Christ, obey His commands, and fellowship with Him through the Spirit, there is literally nothing that can separate us from Him. We need to be careful not to be deceived. We cannot claim to follow Christ while following our own inclinations in our hearts. We want to be wise builders and set our lives only on the truth that endures forever (1 Pet 1:25; Isa 40:8; Ps 119:89). Let me share a testimony with you.

A few years ago, Ivan went off to college in another state and started going to the church near his school. After a few weeks, Ivan found out through the church schedule that he had been assigned a few duties in the following month, including leading Bible studies, leading hymns, playing piano, and cleaning. At that time, Ivan was still in the process of moving into the school dormitory, getting used to living in a new place, starting college, and making new friends. He felt a lot of pressure because of the holy work assigned to him on top of his busy schedule. He thought to himself, "I always hear people say that they miss their time in college and wish that they had studied hard and played harder. They say that this is the time people start planning for their future and meet their best friends in life. I really want to give my best to academics during my time in college and spend more time with friends. If I go to church every Saturday and do all the duties they give me, I will lose a lot of time for school and friends. Maybe I shouldn't go to church here. It's only for four years and when I go back home, I will start going to church again. I can read the Bible by myself every day to make up for my absence."

That night, Ivan was reading the Bible, and he came across the parable of the wise and the foolish builders. He was reminded to build his faith upon our Lord Jesus Christ. He knew that by not keeping the Sabbath, he would become a foolish builder who built his faith upon worldly desires. So, he prayed to God to give him strength to continue keeping the Sabbath and serving Him in this church.

Looking back, Ivan was very thankful that he made the right decision to be a wise builder. During his time in college, Ivan encountered many difficult challenges, but he found peace and hope through the word of God, which he studied on every Sabbath and in the Bible studies he attended. He knew that if he had stopped going to church in the first place, he would have eventually lost his faith. Thank God, Ivan did not follow the path of the foolish man and build his faith on the wrong foundation. Even though he didn't have all the time he wanted for school and friends, Ivan felt a great gain in his faith during his time in college, and he did not regret having made such a decision.

Students, the storms of life may rage and we may become frightened and fearful. We may even come close to despair and hopelessness. But no matter what happens, our faith cannot be destroyed. We cannot lose Christ or be lost by Him because our foundation is Jesus Christ Himself. Today, upon which foundation have we built our faith? Is this foundation strong enough to sustain us through every life storm?

3. A wise builder obeys God and listens to his parents.

Not only does God want us to listen to His word, He wants us to listen to our parents, too. God gave us parents to take care of us, love us, and protect us from harm. The Bible also tells us, "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord" (Col 3:20). If we hear our parents but do not obey what they say, we are like the foolish man. If we hear our parents and do what they say, we are like the wise man. Let me share a scenario with you.

Jason and Joe are brothers. One day, their mother said to them, "We are going to be hosting Bible study this Friday. Many church members will come to our house. Please tidy up and clean your rooms, and keep the house clean. Also, when church members come over, be polite and see if they need help with anything. We will be studying the parable of the wise and the foolish builders. Make sure you read the passage before this Friday!"

That week, Jason tidied up his room and offered to clean the house. However, Joe was too lazy to clean. Instead of helping his mother to clean, Joe asked her to help him clean his room at the last minute. On Friday, many members arrived at their house early. Jason greeted all of them and helped his mother serve snacks and drinks on the table. He also offered to hang their jackets and coats. On the other hand, Joe was in his room playing video games. Even though he remembered what his mother had told him, he just wasn't interested in greeting people. After dinner, Joe went back to his room and closed his door, hoping that his mother would forget to ask him to come out for Bible study. However, just before Bible study began, his mother asked him to come out of his room. She asked Joe, "Did you read the Bible passage we're studying tonight?" Joe seemed annoyed and answered, "No, I didn't bother." Disappointed, she grabbed Joe's arm and said, "When you go out there, don't forget to greet people." Joe rolled his eyes and walked out.

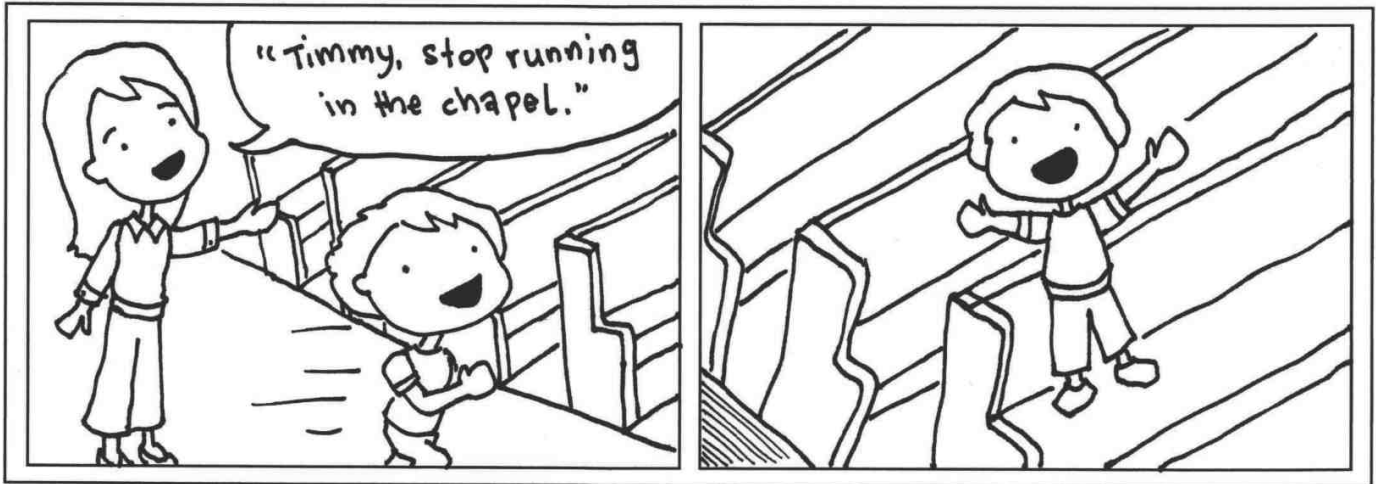
During the Bible study, Jason was very involved and tried to answer a few questions. Joe, however, appeared very bored and uninterested. Some church members even asked Joe's mom if he was not feeling well. This embarrassed Joe's mother.

Reflection Questions

- 1. Between Jason and Joe, who is the wise builder?** Jason is the wise builder. He listened to his mother and did everything that she had asked him to do.
- 2. Who is the foolish builder? Why?** Joe is the foolish builder because he didn't do anything that his mother had asked him to do. Not only did he purposely ignore everything his mother said, he also had a bad attitude and embarrassed his mom.
- 3. What can you learn from this story?** It pleases God to obey our parents.

In the following comic strips, we will find examples of people who behaved foolishly and wisely. If you think that the person was foolish, draw little dots that look like sand in the answer box. If you think that the person was wise, draw rocks in the answer space.

[Have students share their answers; from the examples, have students think of the consequences that result from obeying or disobeying their parents and God.]



Answer:



Answer:



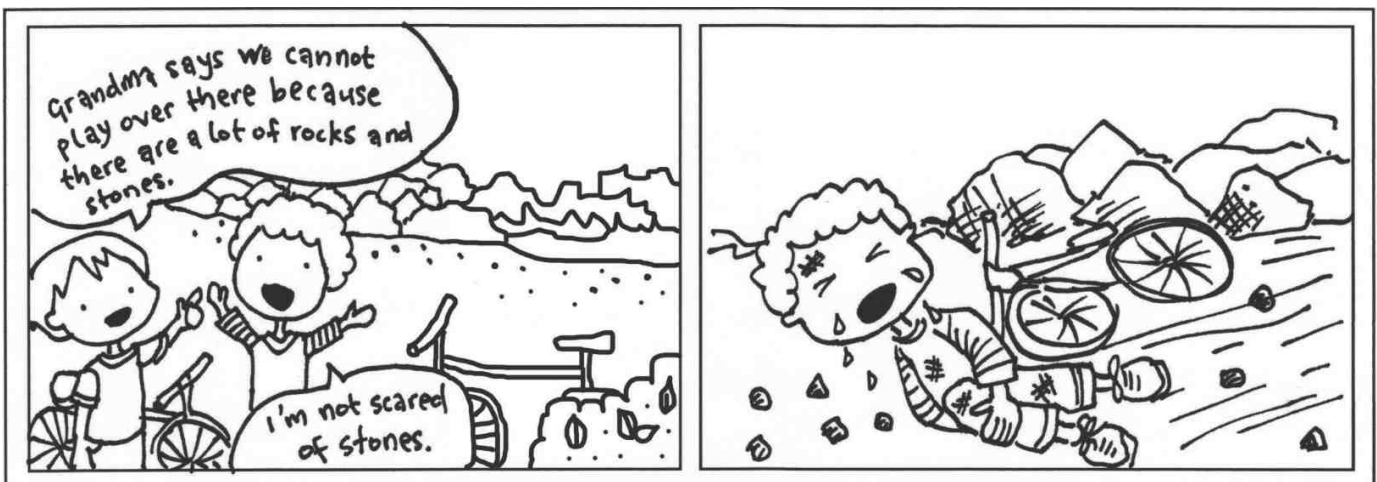
Answer:



Answer:



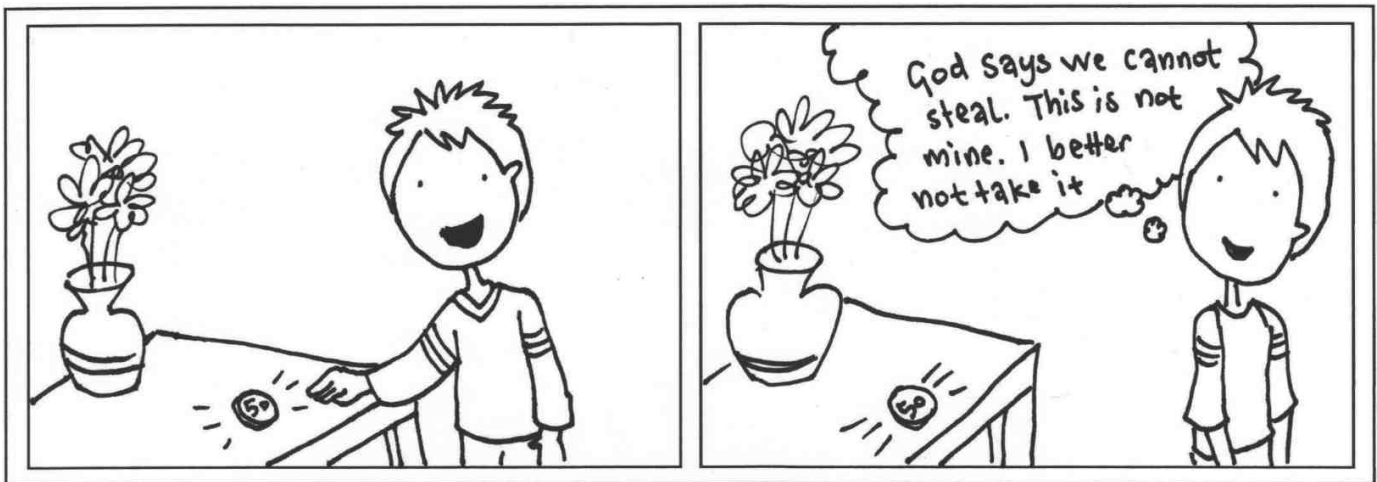
Answer:



Answer:



Answer:



Answer:

HOMWORK ANSWER KEY

1. B; False
2. E; False
3. A; True
4. D; True
5. O; True
6. E; False
7. R; True
8. Answers may vary.
9. Answers may vary.

ACTIVITIES

1**Be a Doer of the Word****Objective:** To remind students to be doers of the word.**Materials**

- Rocks, one per student
- Paint
- Paintbrushes
- Permanent markers

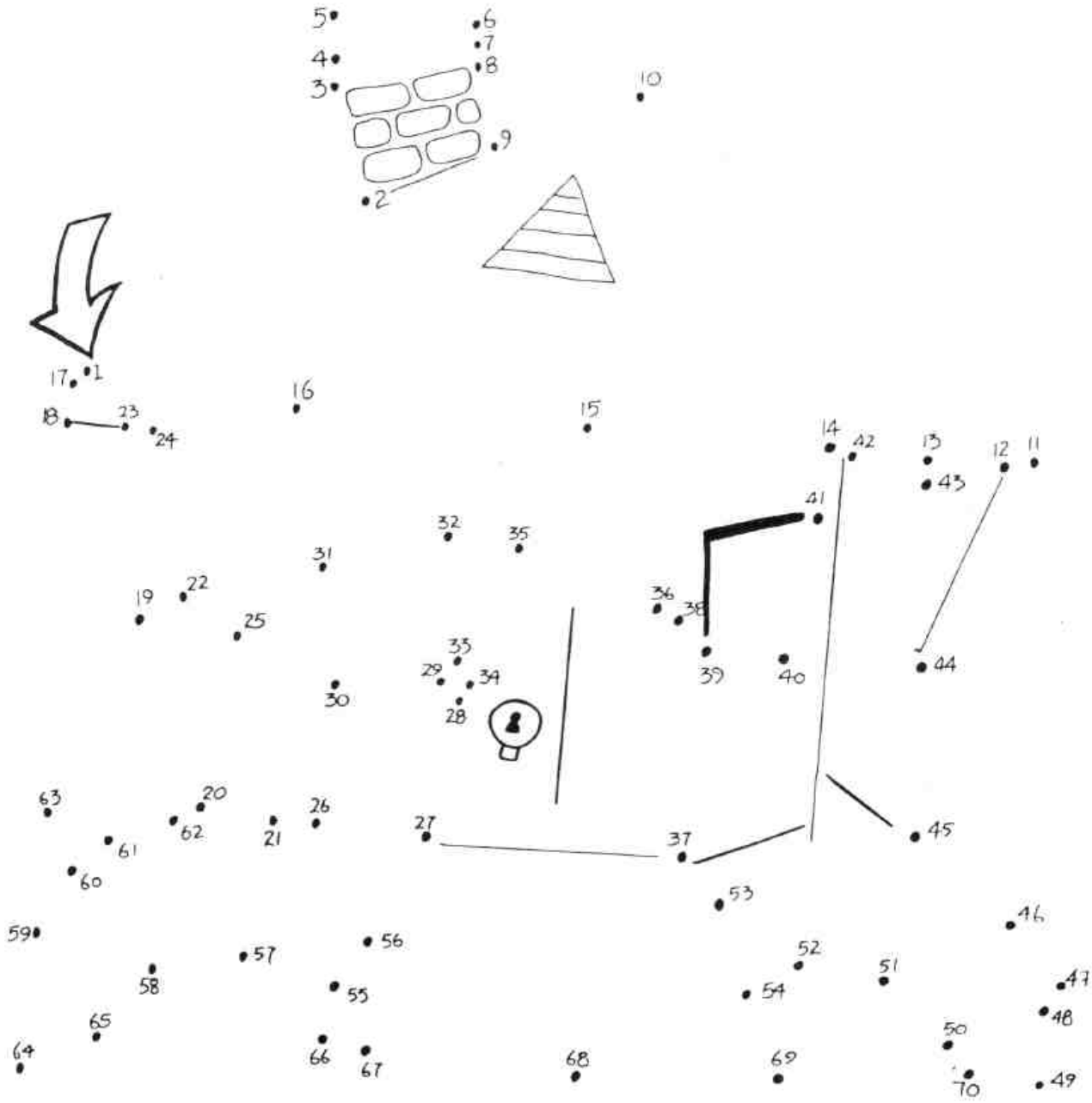
Instructions

1. Have each student take a rock.
2. Write the theme of the lesson “Be a Doer of the Word” on the board. Have each student write this theme on their rock.
3. Each student may decorate the rock. While the students are decorating their rock, repeat the memory verse with them.
4. After the rocks have been decorated and allowed to dry, repeat the memory verse with the students together.

2 Connect the Dots: the Wise and Foolish Builders / *Optional*

Instructions

Jesus told a story about a wise man and a foolish man. Connect the dots in each picture and find out whether the builder was wise or foolish. Write it down below each picture.



Was this man foolish or wise? _____



Was this man foolish or wise? _____

E1 Year 2 Book 4 Lesson 9—The Wise and Foolish Builders

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Bible Truth: A strong faith is built on a solid foundation of doing God's word.

Lesson Objective: To emphasize the importance of putting God's word into action.

Bible Reading: Please put a check mark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

Prayer: Please put a check mark in the space provided on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(James 1:22)

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Homework Assignment

Understanding What You Have Learned

Circle the letter of the correct answer. Then write the circled letter on the lines below.

	True	False
1. The man who built his house the sand was wise.	C	B
2. When the great storm came, both houses fell down.	F	E
3. The great storm represents the problems and troubles that we face in life.	A	S
4. The foolish man is one who hears God's words but does not do them.	D	A
5. Jesus is the true Rock, if He is the foundation of our faith, we will be secure and safe.	O	P
6. God won't mind if we don't do what He says.	T	E
7. If we don't do God's words, we can easily fall when problems come.	R	G

_____!

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. Name or draw one thing that you find difficult obeying.

9. Write a short prayer to ask God to help you.
