

LESSON 9



THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the meaning behind the parable of the sower.
2. To understand that different environments produce different results.
3. To encourage students to be "doers," not just "hearers."

MEMORY VERSE

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

(James 1:22)

PRAYER

1. We thank You, God, for gathering us here so that we can worship You and learn more about Your words.
2. Lord, thank You for guiding us through this past week.
3. Please continue to protect our hearts and minds.
4. Lord, please help us to be doers of Your word and not just hearers.
5. May You help us focus on this lesson and apply its teachings to our lives.



Overview

1. **The Parable of the Sower (Lk 8:4-8)**
2. **The Purpose of Parables (Lk 8:9-10)**
3. **The Parable of the Sower Explained (Lk 8:11-15)**
4. **Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs**—The Holy Bible contains the seeds.
5. **Life Application**
 - Be a Doer: To understand what it means to be a doer of God's words, not just a hearer.
 - Just Do It: To be reminded of God's words and that we must take action.
6. **Activity**—Seed Packets



Background Knowledge for Teachers

The parable of the sower describes many environments as being hostile to a seed's penetration and growth. Through this parable, we are warned not to develop hard hearts and attitudes that make it difficult for God and His word to penetrate. God wants to soften our hearts so that His truth can be planted to make us grow and yield crops for Him. "Wayside" type people, like many religious leaders, are those who hear but don't believe. "Rock" type people, like many in the crowds who followed Jesus, are those who believe His message but never display their belief in actions. "Thorn" type people are those who are overcome by material desires, with no room in their lives for God. "Good-ground" type people, in contrast to all the other groups, are those who obey the Lord, no matter what the cost.

The parable also describes environments in which thorns choke the plant as it attempts to grow. This also serves as a warning:

God wants us to clear out the obstacles that prevent His truth from growing and flourishing. He wants us to put Him first, so that other distractions don't stifle our works for Him. God wants us to lead healthy, productive lives and to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22-23).



Reaching Out to Your Students

Children at this age are reaching a developmental stage in which correction can sometimes be hard to accept. They are learning to become more independent in school and at home through added responsibilities that their teachers and parents delegate to them. Because of the emphasis placed on acquiring independence and responsibility, criticism from an adult can imply that a child is not succeeding or doing well—and this can be hurtful and hard for a child to accept. This lesson is important because it teaches us the importance of being self-critical and accepting instruction and criticism so that we can lead healthy physical and spiritual lives. In the religious education classroom, open the door to self-evaluation—teach the children to be involved in this continually.



Opener

5 Minutes

Have you ever planted seeds? What did you have to do to make them grow? Did you have to follow specific instructions? What is the best kind of environment for most seeds to grow in? What would happen if you just read the directions and didn't follow them?

The parable we'll be learning about today tells about environments in which seeds flourish and environments in which they die.



Vocabulary

sower: a person who plants seeds for growth by scattering or spreading them on the ground
parable: a short narrative or story that illustrates a moral or spiritual lesson



Bible Discovery & Spiritual Teaching

30-35 Minutes

FOR TEACHERS

Print out the lesson worksheets before class. Distribute Bible Discovery Worksheet #1 to the students now. The students will fill it out during the lesson. Keep one copy of the Teacher Version to reference.

Let's first open our Bibles to Luke 8, and read verses 5-8. We often call this parable, "The Parable of the Sower." But before we go into detail about this story, first we need to ask ourselves, what exactly is a "parable"? [Allow students to answer if they can.] A parable was a method of teaching that Jesus often used. It is a short story that illustrates some sort of lesson. Let's read what Jesus says about the purpose of His parables in verses 9-10. Parables, He explains here, are His way of teaching His disciples. That includes us! We need to pay close attention to all of the parables in the Bible, because all of these stories are ways for Jesus to communicate to us how we should live as His children.

The Parable of the Sower Explained

Let's move on and study the parable of the sower in detail.

First, let's look at verses 11-15, where Jesus explains the meaning of this parable.

FOR TEACHERS

You may want to write these out on the board for easier explanation. Ask your students to fill out Bible Discovery Worksheet #1 while you explain the meanings. Pause your lesson accordingly to allow students time to fill in the worksheet.

The seed is the word of God.

The different environments—the wayside, rocks, thorns, and good ground—represent different kinds of people.

The Wayside

Let's read verse 12. Have you ever seen a plant grow when it hasn't even been planted? If you drop a seed on the carpet or the sidewalk, what do you think will happen? It will probably be swept away by people walking by, or if it's outside, hungry birds may pick it up. Well, according to this parable, this kind of "environment," or person, hears the message, but then the word is taken away from their

hearts by the devil, and they are prevented from being saved. God's word is never even given a chance to grow in them.

Rocks

Next, let's read verse 13. Have you ever taken a plant out of the ground? Have you noticed that all plants have roots, which are essential to their growth and stability? Seeds that have been sown on rocky environments do not take root. So, the rocky environments represent those who hear the message and receive it with joy. But the message doesn't take root, or form a strong foundation, so although they are able to receive the message at first, they allow God's word to fall away from their hearts when faced with temptations or tribulations.

Thorns

Next, read verse 14. Have you ever been asked to weed a garden? Do you know why people remove weeds? Some weeds are actually very pretty, but there is a reason that they must be removed from gardens. Weeds steal away the precious nutrients and water in the soil, preventing flowers from growing. They often also crowd around flowers, taking up the space they need to grow and making them wither and die. Can you imagine trying to grow plants in this kind of smothering environment, or in an area with many thorns? In the parable, the thorny environment represents those who initially accept God's word, but are unable to let it grow in their hearts because they are choked by the worries, pleasures, and desires of the world around them.

Good Ground

Finally, let's read Jesus' description of this kind of person in verse 15. The last kind of environment in the parable is the good ground. This environment represents those who not only hear God's word, but who also wholeheartedly follow His teachings. Because it lands in good soil, God's word is able to root itself deeply and grow. In the verse we just read, Jesus describes these people as having a "noble and good heart," and patience. These environments are the ones that allow the seed to grow fully and bear fruit for God.

What is the major difference between the seeds that fell on the good ground and the seeds that fell in the other environments? These seeds had the opportunity to spread their roots deep down into the earth. They were **deeply rooted**.

What does it mean to be deeply rooted? Why is this so important? Roots are like straws through which plants are fed. Plants extend their roots in search of nutrients from the soil and oxygen from water. Without deep roots, plants die very easily.

There is another reason why being deeply rooted is important. Roots act just like ship anchors for plants. Just as a big anchor keeps a ship from floating away, long, strong roots keep plants from being blown away by the elements. Jesus told us the parable of the sower to demonstrate why God's word must be deeply rooted in our hearts. If God's word is deeply rooted in our hearts, then God will provide us with the nutrients we need for our spiritual lives. This will allow our faith to grow, so that when trouble comes along, we will not be blown away.

FOR TEACHERS

Distribute Bible Discovery Worksheet #2 to the students now. Ask the students to list out the fruit of the Spirit, and then identify the different environments in the scenarios. Keep a copy to reference.

So now that we know why we must become good soil, how do we do it?

Let's turn to James 1:22 and read it together. "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

As the verse says, we need to follow God's word actively, not simply listen to it. Becoming a "doer" of the word means bringing it into our everyday lives. What are some ways we can do this? [Give students some time to discuss and give answers. If the question is too vague for them, give them some examples, such as obeying their parents, reading the Bible at home, avoiding bad things at school (e.g., bullying or drugs), or bringing their friends to church.]

We mentioned that the thorny environment represented when a person became caught up with worries, desires, and pleasures of the world, which obstruct the growth of God's word in their hearts. What are some things that drag you away from God? [Allow students to discuss and offer their own answers. Some examples may be TV, video games, Internet, or even books.]

As a conclusion, go over the four types of environments once more. Ask the students which type of environment we should all strive to be, and then ask them what actions they will take to be that environment.



Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs

2-5 Minutes

Holy Bible

The Bible is inspired (written) by God and contains the truth, which is the seed we learned about today. These words are true and living. The Bible was written a long time ago, way before any one of us was born, but because it contains the words and teachings of God, it is timeless. We must constantly study the Scripture so that we can plant the seed in our hearts and let it grow by following its instructions.



Check for Understanding

5 Minutes

- 1. What are the four different kinds of environments Jesus talked about?** The wayside, rocks, thorns, and good ground.
- 2. Explain the spiritual meaning of seeds sown along the wayside.** These types of people hear God's message but don't believe it.
- 3. Explain the spiritual meaning of seeds sown among the rocks.** These people, like many in the crowds who followed Jesus, believe in the message but never do anything about it. They take no action. Eventually, they drift away from God because they have no foundation in His word.
- 4. Explain the spiritual meaning of seeds sown in the thorns.** These people are overcome by the world and don't have room in their lives for God.
- 5. Which environment does God want you to be like? Why?** The good ground; only on good ground will we be able to bear fruit.



Life Application

10 Minutes

[Please hand out Life Application Worksheet #1 at this time. Ask the students to read the passage and draw a picture illustrating the story. After students have finished drawing, you may ask them to share their pictures with the class if they'd like. Then, continue by asking them to read the passages and scenarios, and then filling in the third column. Suggested answers have been provided.]

1. Just Do It!

Objective: To remind ourselves that simply listening isn't enough—we must also take action upon God's word.

Read Matthew 7:24-27 and draw a picture illustrating the story.

2. Be a Doer

Read the following passages and scenarios, and then fill in the third column by answering the question, "How would you be a doer?"

Matthew 5:44 (Love your enemies)

Pray for him. Ask God to help me understand why he doesn't like me. Perhaps if this person is ever in need, I can help him.

Matthew 22:39 (Love your neighbor as yourself)

Let them pick first, or choose to share a bed and allow someone else to sleep in the single bed.

Ephesians 4:32 (Forgive one another, as God has forgiven you)

You tell him it's okay; the movie inside is not broken and you can still watch it.

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 (Love is not jealous)

Stop thinking about such things and stop comparing yourself to others. Pray that you can overcome this and be able to show love to others even when you are jealous.

Ecclesiastes 7:9 (Don't be quick to anger)

Try to understand why she is late, instead of yelling at her the moment she arrives.

Luke 12:15 (Do not be greedy)

Take only what you are told and exert self-control. If you have trouble, always ask God for help to overcome greed.



Activity

Seed Packets

10-15 Minutes

Objective: To take home a reminder of this lesson.

Materials

- Square piece of paper
- Seeds (optional) or anything you can find as a substitute for seeds, such as small beans
- Markers, colored pencils, or crayons

Instructions

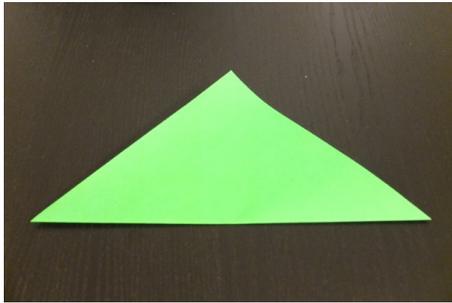
1. Give the students a piece of square paper and tell them that they will be making a packet to hold seeds. This packet will remind students about the parable of the sower.
2. Refer to the provided instructions and guide the students to make the packets. Prepare a completed packet before class as an example, and make one in class with the students.
3. As a class, make the seed packet together, making sure that all the students have completed each step before moving on to the next one.
4. When the students have finished making the packets, put seeds or anything that will rattle inside the envelope.
5. Students can decorate the envelope. Be sure to have them write: "Be doers of the word."

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

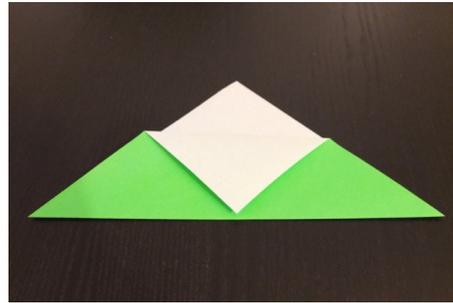
1. A
2. D
3. B
4. C
5. The good ground; only on good ground will God's word take root, allowing us to bear fruit.
6. Love, joy, peace, longsuffering [patience], kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Seed Packets

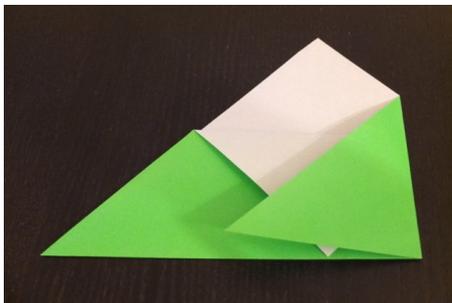
Instructions: Follow the steps below to make a seed packet. Make sure you wait for the teacher to tell you to go on before moving on to the next step.



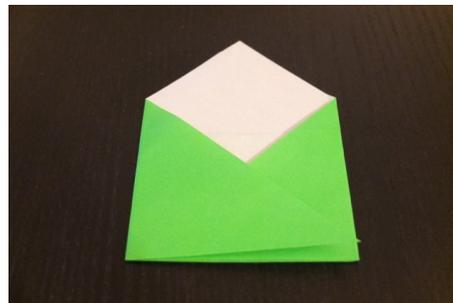
1. Fold the paper in half to form a triangle and make sure your edges are even (lined up).



2. Take the top corner of the first layer and fold it down to the bottom edge.



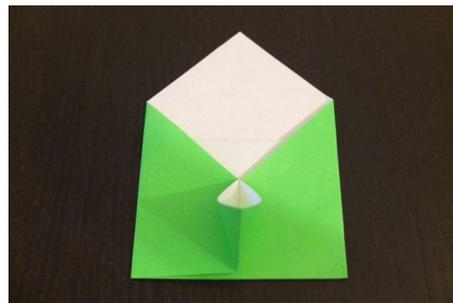
3. Fold the right corner about 1/3 of the way to the left.



4. Take the left corner and fold it to the other end. Your envelope should be rather square-shaped now.



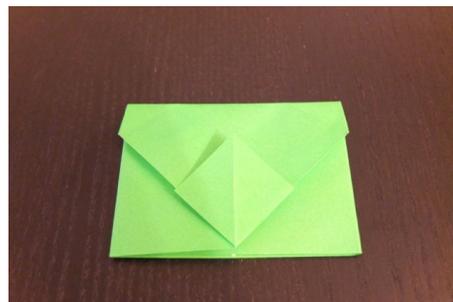
5. Fold the point of the flap back to the left edge of the square.



6. Lift the flap so that it's vertical and press the bottom crease to open it.



7. Press down on the bottom crease to fold the point of the flap up to the top corner of the flap. Make sure you flatten it well, as this will help secure the envelope.



8. Fold the very top point down to the bottom edge and tuck it into the "pocket" that was formed in Step 7.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

Instructions: Write the meaning of each in the blank column on the right.

What does the seed represent?

The word of God.

What do the different environments represent?

Different types of people.

Environment	Who It Represents
Wayside	<i>Those who hear the message, but then are unable to be saved because the devil takes the word away from them.</i>
Rocks	<i>Those who hear the message and receive it with joy, but then fall away when faced with temptations or tribulations.</i>
Thorns	<i>Those who hear the message, but then are distracted by the worries, desires, and pleasures of the world around them.</i>
Good Ground	<i>Those who are noble and good-hearted, who hear God's word, cling to it, and patiently bear fruit for Him.</i>

We need to be deeply rooted because...

...Roots act as a straw to gather food and water, and as an anchor to keep the plant firmly in place.

Turn to Jeremiah 17:8 and fill in the blanks below.

"For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters,

Which spreads out its roots by the river,

And will not fear when heat comes;

But its leaf will be green,

And will not be anxious in the year of drought,

Nor will cease from yielding fruit."

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

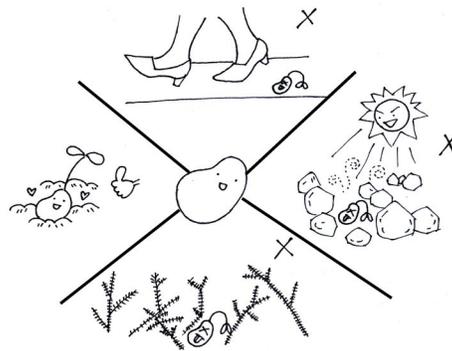
Instructions: Write the meaning of each in the blank column on the right.

What does the seed represent?

The _____ of God.

What do the different environments represent?

Different types of _____.



Environment	Who It Represents
Wayside	
Rocks	
Thorns	
Good Ground	

We need to be deeply rooted because...

...Roots act as a _____ to gather food and water, and as an _____ to keep the plant firmly in place.

Turn to Jeremiah 17:8 and fill in the blanks below.

*"For he shall be like a tree _____ by the waters,
 Which spreads out its _____ by the _____,
 And will not _____ when heat comes;
 But its leaf will be green,
 And will not be _____ in the year of drought,
 Nor will cease from yielding _____."*

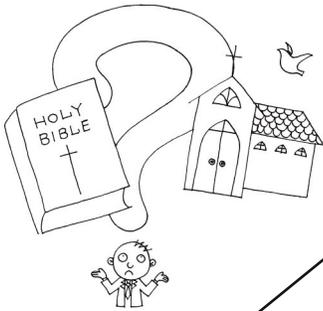
WHICH ENVIRONMENT?

Read Galatians 5:22-23 and list the fruit of the Spirit below.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is _____

 _____."

Read the following scenarios and identify the environment for each one.



Jason is a truthseeker who has been visiting church for a month and listening to the word of God.

Jason's friends from work had been playing golf and tennis on Sabbath mornings. They always asked Jason to come along, so he finally decided to go one Saturday. It was very fun, and soon enough, he began going with them more and more, while attending church services less and less. Having fun with his friends seemed more important than studying the truth. Eventually, he stopped coming to church altogether.

Jason loves coming to church and learning about the Bible. He enjoys having fellowship with brothers and sisters, too. After several months, he decided to get baptized and was very eager to start helping with holy work.

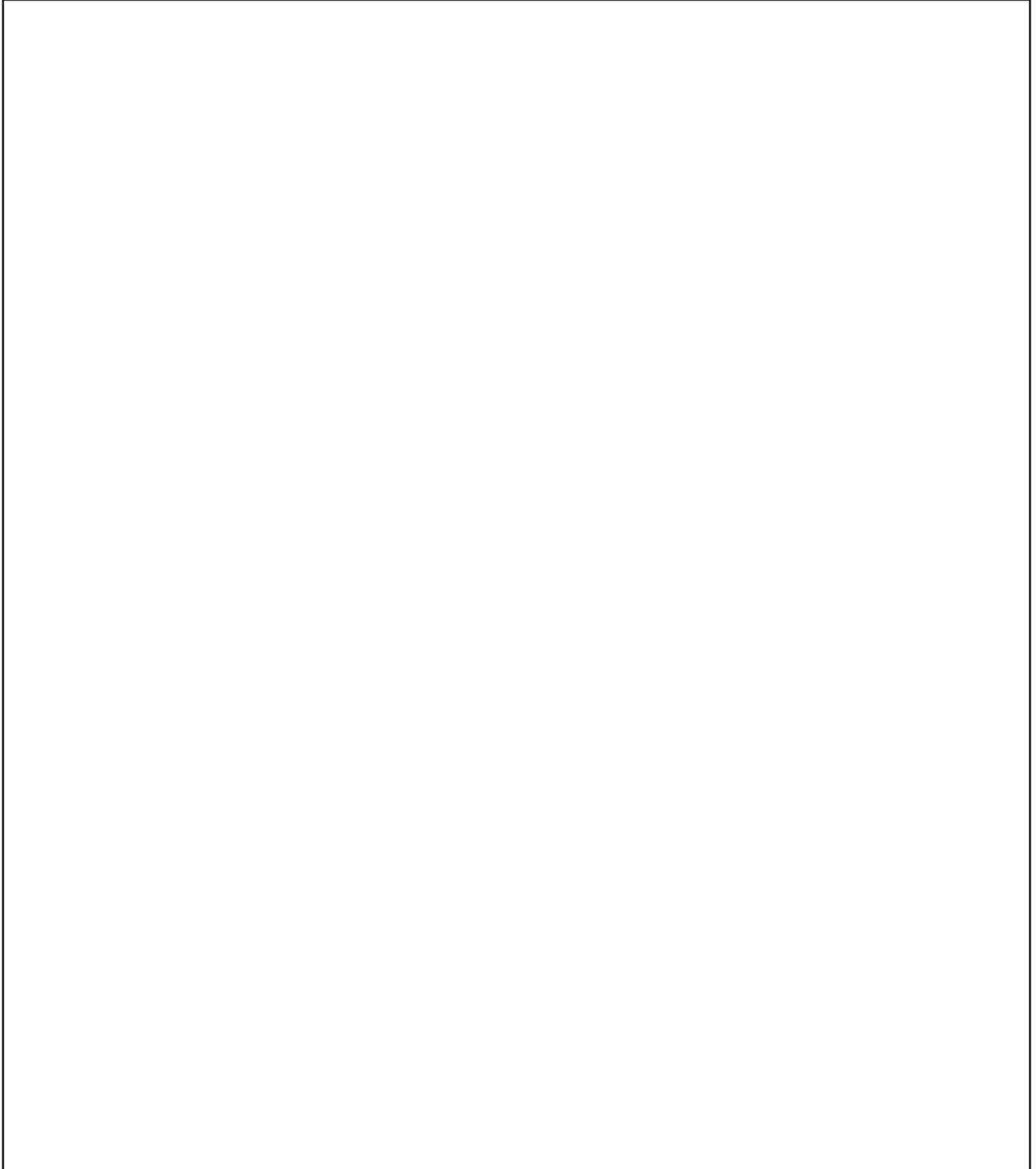
The rest of Jason's family is Buddhist. Although he came to church on one occasion to listen to the truth, he was doubtful about it. The rest of his family pressured him into trying Buddhism instead. In the end, he didn't return, but rather went on to study other religions.

Jason had been coming to church regularly for a year. He believed in the truth and was eventually baptized, but during this time he started a business. It began to get very stressful and hectic, so he decided to attend only afternoon services, in order to continue working in the mornings. Then, he decided to stay home all day and listen to online sermons, but eventually, he stopped doing even that.

JUST DO IT!

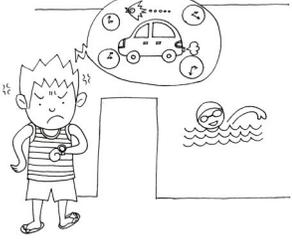
Objective: To remind ourselves that simply listening isn't enough—we must also take action upon God's word.

Instructions: Read Matthew 7:24-27 and draw a picture illustrating the story below.



BE A DOER

Instructions: Read the following scenarios and fill in the last column by answering the question, "How would you be a doer?"

Word of God	Scenario	How would you be a "doer"?
<p>Matthew 5:44 (Love your enemies)</p>	<p>Every single day in the hallway at school, one of your classmates throws a piece of crumpled paper at you. He just doesn't like you. You don't even know why.</p>	
<p>Matthew 22:39 (Love your neighbor as yourself)</p>	<p>You and two other church brothers are sharing a cabin room during a church retreat. But there are only two beds in the room—one single bed (for one person) and one double bed (for two). You arrive first and have the first pick.</p>	
<p>Ephesians 4:32 (Forgive one another, as God has forgiven you)</p>	<p>You let your friend borrow your favorite DVD. When he returns it, though, the DVD cover has been broken. He accidentally dropped some heavy books on top of it.</p>	
<p>1 Corinthians 13:4-5 (Love is not jealous)</p>	<p>One of your friends from school seems to get everything he wants—clothes, shoes, toys, games, electronics, pets, etc. You've become jealous of his life. It bothers you sometimes.</p>	
<p>Ecclesiastes 7:9 (Don't be quick to anger)</p>	<p>Your mom was thirty minutes late picking you up from your swimming lesson because she needed to drop your sister off at a party. You feel very angry because she made you wait for so long at the pool entrance, and you want to yell at her when she finally arrives.</p>	
<p>Luke 12:15 (Do not be greedy)</p>	<p>During class at church, your teacher brings snacks for everyone. A bag of chocolate is passed around and everyone can only have one piece. You really love this kind of chocolate, though, and there is enough for you to take more than one.</p>	

E2 Year 2 Book 1 Lesson 9—The Parable of the Sower

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Weekly Bible Reading: _____

Bible Reading: Check each box when you complete that day's reading.

Prayer: Check each box after you pray to God that day.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Read							
Pray							

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____

2. _____

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse. **(James 1:22)**

Matching

Match the environment to the correct type of person.

- A. Wayside B. Rocks C. Thorns D. Good Ground

1. _____ Those who hear the message, but are unable to be saved because the devil takes the word away from them.
2. _____ Those who are noble and good-hearted, who hear God's word, cling to it, and patiently bear fruit for Him.
3. _____ Those who hear the message and receive it with joy, but then fall away when faced with temptations or tribulations.
4. _____ Those who hear the message, but then are distracted by the worries, desires, and pleasures of the world around them.

Short Answer

5. Which environment does God want you to be like? Why?

6. List the fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22-23.