

Lesson One Use God's Gifts

Parable of the Talents

Memory Verse

James 1:5

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above."

Story

Parable of the Talents
(Matthew 25:14-30)

Song Suggestions:

100 Reasons
A Beautiful Life
Count Your Blessings
Be Thou My Vision
Great Is Thy Faithfulness
Make Me a Servant

Reproducible Pages
Available on the
Multi-media CD!

Preparatory Considerations

1. This class is divided into seven blocks of instruction. To ensure that all the material is covered, you will want to consider carefully each block of instruction in preparation for class.
2. Read all the Scripture referenced in the lesson.
3. Make sure that all materials are prepared for the students' use. The following materials will be required for this class:
 - Student Book
 - Visual Aids—C.W. Reproducible; Story Time Bible Book; Dusty, Morton, and Edison puppets
 - Visual Aids made for Lesson One—Lesson One Memory Verse Hay Bale; Learning to Use Our Gifts
 - Bible
 - Fun candies like M&Ms® or jelly beans (Block Five)
 - Glass jar (Block Five)
 - One paper cup for each student (Block Five)
 - Beanbag or other soft object to throw (Block Five)



Saddle Up

- Welcome students.
- Record attendance.
- Introduce the theme.

GREETING

Begin by welcoming the students to class. **Howdy, pardners! I am so excited to see each of you here at VBS. Do you know what ranch hands say when they are excited? They say, Yee-haw! Can you say that too! (Response) Are you excited to be here? Say, Yee-haw if you are excited to be here at VBS! (Response) Yee-haw! You should be excited. We are going to have so much fun together.**

Introduce yourself and any co-teachers as a Trail Boss. Then continue by explaining the theme of the VBS series. **In this VBS, each one of you is going to be a ranch hand. Isn't that exciting! If you are going to be a ranch hand, the first thing you must learn is how to say hello like a real ranch hand. When a ranch hand wants to say, "Hello," he says, "Howdy!" Can all of you say, "Howdy?" Let's try it together. 1-2-3-HOWDY! Very good!**

Ranch hands have very important jobs. One of the things ranch hands do is take good care of the horses and cows. Sometimes, ranch hands must go on a roundup. A roundup

is when ranch hands go out and gather all the cows together in one place.

In this VBS, we are going to learn about some of the wonderful things God gives us. Boys and girls, when God gives us wonderful gifts, He wants us to take good care of them. We sometimes call the gifts God gives us blessings. Just like a ranch hand takes good care of the animals, God wants us to take good care of the blessings He gives us. So we are going to have a great big blessing roundup!

Are you ready to "saddle up" and get started on our blessing roundup? (Response) Yee-haw! Before we begin, let's sing a song that will help us to remember everyone's name.



Hello Song

Audio Tracks available on the Multi-media CD!

Rotate through song until every student has been mentioned.

(See page 48.)



Blessing Roundup

- Perform Action Rhyme.
- Introduce Memory Verse.

Blessing Roundup

Action Rhyme

Arrange the students in a large open area facing you. Perform the Blessing Roundup Action Rhyme with them. **Okay, ranch hands. We are now going to say and do the "Blessing Roundup Action Rhyme" together. We will do this action rhyme each time we are together so we will always remember to be thankful for a person's blessings.** Perform the following action rhyme with the students. Instruct them to watch you, and perform the actions as you say the words. Repeat the action rhyme slowly so students will have time to complete the actions. Perform each action as you say each line. This activity will be performed during each VBS session. The students will become more familiar with the actions as VBS progresses.

Like good ranch hands on our horses who ride
 And we swing our trusty lasso as we bound from side
 God gives us many blessings, all good things come from Him
 So we're rounding up our blessings and we're thanking God for them.
 God created everything my little eyes can see
 And I should always thank God for the blessings He gives me
 I am thankful for the Bible that leads me right from wrong
 I am thankful for each chance I get to praise God in a song
 I am thankful for my family which I love so very much
 I am thankful for the flowers, the grass and trees and such
 I am thankful for the sunshine, I am thankful for the rain
 I am thankful for the horses that gallop free out on the plain
 I am thankful for the bunnies that hop around all day
 I am thankful for the fishes that move to swim and play
 I am thankful for the dragon that flies and every tiny bug
 And I'm thankful for my friends whom I can give a great big hug

act as if riding a horse
 swing lasso in the air
 point upward as if to God
 swing lasso and throw it
 place hand over brow and look
 fold hands as if praying
 open hands as if holding a book
 hold head high as if singing
 fold arms and hug yourself
 spread arms like a growing tree
 wiggle fingers as if raining
 gallop like a horse
 hop like a bunny
 swim like a fish
 flap arms as if flying
 come together for a group hug



Memory Verse

You will be making Redemption Ranch memory verse bulletin board using the visuals from the Visual Aid Packet. You might want to prepare your bulletin board with a blue and green background to look like a field. Cut out each of the Memory Verse Hay Bales, but do not add them to the bulletin board yet. Have the Memory Verse Hay Bale for Lesson One with you at this time. You will also want to make copies of the Cow reproducible page, one for each student. Write each child's name on their cow. Gather the students at a table, and give them crayons or markers, so they can color their cows as you talk.



Okay, ranch hands. It is time for us to learn a very important Bible verse. Show the Memory Verse Hay Bale for Lesson One. **Our Bible verse can be found in James 1:17. It says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above." Our Bible verse is saying is that God, Who lives in heaven, sends us many different and wonderful gifts. He wants us to use the gifts He gives us to do good things for Him.** (Attach the Memory Verse Hay Bale to the bulletin board.) **Let's say our Bible verse together. Repeat after me...**(Say the memory verse slowly, allowing students to repeat.) **Yes, everyone said the memory verse so that means everyone gets to place a cow on the bulletin board.** Help each child to attach their cow to the bulletin board near the Lesson One Memory Verse Hay Bale.



Bible Story Time

- Explore the Parable of the Talents
- Discover the importance of using the gifts God gives for His glory.

Prepare the students for the Bible story. **Okay, ranch hands, it is time for our Bible story. All our Bible stories in this VBS will be stories that Jesus told. We call them parables. Jesus told these parables to help teach important lessons. The first parable we will hear is called the Parable of the Talents. Before we begin, let's sing our "Story Time Song."**

Story Time Song

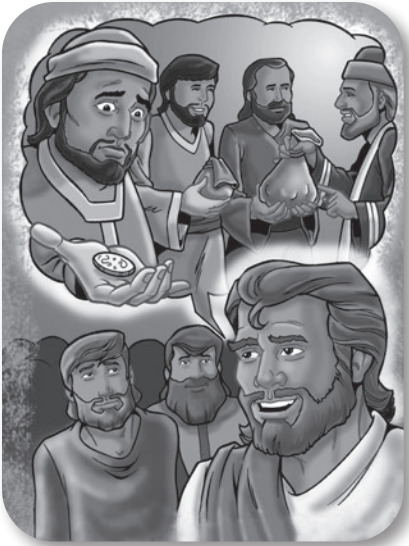
Audio Tracks available on the Multi-media CD!

(See page 48.)

The Parable of the Talents

Remove the Story Time Bible Book from the Visual Aid Packet. Turn to the first group of pictures, and show the corresponding pictures as you read the following story. Scriptural reference: Matthew 25:14-30

PICTURE ONE



Jesus was a wonderful teacher. Wherever He went, people would come to Him so they could hear Him teach. Jesus liked to teach the people by telling stories. We call these stories *parables*. Have you ever heard the word *parable*? (Response) A *parable* is a story that teaches a lesson. Jesus told many parables to the people who came to hear Him teach.

One day, Jesus told His followers a parable about talents. Have you ever heard of a *talent*? (Response) The word *talent* meant something different during the time that Jesus lived than it does today.

The talents that Jesus talked about were a kind of money. They were made of coins or even gold. In the parable of the talents, Jesus told of a man who had many servants. This man had to leave his home for a while, so he called his servants together and told them to take care of his things while he was gone. He even wanted his servants to take care of his talents, his money. He gave five talents to one servant, two talents to the second servant, and one talent to the third servant. The man left and went on a journey.

PICTURE TWO

While the man was away on his journey, the first servant who was given five talents took good care of the talents he was given. He did not just keep the talents safe. He went out and traded with the talents and used them to make more talents. After much work, he made five more talents, giving him ten talents in all.

The second servant, who was given two talents, also took good care of the talents that were given to him. Like the first servant, he also used his talents to make more talents. When he had finished his work, he had earned two more talents, giving him four talents in all. These two servants did just what they were supposed to do. They worked hard, took good care of their master's talents, and earned more talents for him.

But the third servant did not act as the first two servants did. Instead of using his one talent to earn more talents for

himself, he dug a hole in the ground and buried the talent in the ground where no one could find it.

Finally, the man returned home from his journey, and he called his servants together. He wanted to see if they had taken good care of the things he had given them. The first servant showed his master his talents and told him that he had taken the five talents he had been given and earned five more. The master was very happy with the servant. "You have done very well!" he told him. "Because you have taken such good care of these things, I will trust you with even more from now on." The second servant also showed his master what he had done with his talents. "I took the two talents you gave me and made two more talents!" he said. "You have also done very well!" the master told the second servant. "I will trust you with even more from now on."

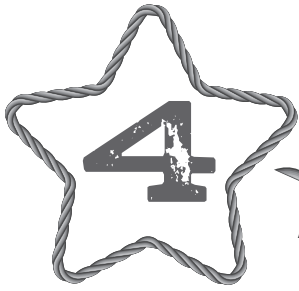
PICTURE THREE

Then the master called to the third servant to whom he had given one talent. Do you think the master was going to be pleased with him? (Response) No, he was not. The servant told the master what he had done. "I was afraid," the servant said. "I did not use the talent you gave me at all. I was afraid and buried it in the ground. Here! You can have it back."

The master was very angry with the servant because he had not taken good care of the talent he was given. The master had wanted all his servants to use their talents for him. "You wicked and lazy servant!" the master said. "You could have done something with the talent I gave

you. At least you could have put it in the bank if you were not going to use it!" The master took the one talent from the servant and gave it to the first servant who had been so faithful with the talents he was given. Then he punished the lazy servant.

The master wanted his servants to take good care of the things they had been given. The reason Jesus told this parable is because He wants us to learn that it is very important for us to take good care of the things we have been given. God is our master, and He gives us many blessings, but if we want to please God, we will use the blessings He has given us to do good things for Him.



Ranch Journal, Part 1

Allow the students to complete the Bible Story Activity from Lesson One in the *Books*.

Activity Stamped!



- Reinforce the lesson.
- Create a hands-on learning experience that will solidify the lesson in the student's hands.
- Have fun!

The following activities are all designed with the same purpose in mind—to reinforce the lesson. They are not listed in any certain order; there are a number of ways you can choose to coordinate them. Depending on the number of students, the number of teachers available, the size of your classroom, and the time allotment, you may decide to perform these activities one at a time with the entire class or separate your class into small groups and rotate through stations. Obviously, you may even opt to pick which activities work best for you and only perform those activities. However, it is important for this age group that each group of students has adult supervision.

Good Gifts Roundup

Materials needed: none

Direct your students to a large open area of the classroom. SAY: **We are going to round up some of God's good gifts. You are going to pretend to be cows as you walk around in a circle. When we lasso you with our arms, you must tell us one thing God has made that is good.**

You and an assistant teacher stand back-to-back and place your hands together so that, as the students walk in a circle, they will pass beneath your extended arms. Say the following chant as they walk:

**God made all good things you see
 One of the things God made was me
 If the things God made are good, it's true
 I must be good, and made me too!**

When you say the word to drop your arms to catch one student inside. This student which has been "rounded up," should then tell you one thing God has made that is good. Then all of the students should pretend to be the named item. For example, if the student names a tree, the other students must extend their arms like trees. If the student names a monkey, the other students must walk like a monkey. If the student names a cloud, the other students must float around like clouds. After pretending for a moment, resume play. Continue until all students have had an opportunity to be "rounded up." SAY: **Everything God made is good. Trees, monkeys, and clouds are all good. But we do not have to be trees, monkeys, or clouds to be good. God has made each of us special and given each of us special gifts. He has a plan for each of us, and we should be happy that He has made us just the way we are. We should always use the gifts and abilities He has given us to please Him.**

Different but Delicious!*

**Materials needed: a large bag of colorful candies (ex. M&M's® or jelly beans)
a glass jar
one paper cup for each student**

Before class, fill your jar to capacity with the colorful candy. Then pour the candy out onto a clean surface and separate each color of candy into different containers. Just before class, pour one color of candy into a paper cup, one for each student. It is okay if more than one student has the same color candy. Place the jar on the table, and SAY: **This is just like the world God has made. It is filled with different types of people.** One at a time, allow the students to pour their candies into the jar. As they do, SAY: **Just like these colorful candies, each one of us is different. We are all filled with different gifts and abilities. Each of us has some things we do well and some things we do not do so well at.** After all of the students have poured their candies into the jar, the jar should be full. SAY: **Each of you is important because you took care of you to fill the jar. In much the same way, each of us is important in God's world because without each one of us, the world would not be complete like God intended for it to be. See how beautiful the full jar of candies is. Would it be as beautiful if all the candies were the same color? God's world is a beautiful place because each of us is different and has different gifts.** Upon conclusion, enjoy snacking on the candies.

* Check with guardians for any food allergies.

Learning to Use Our Gifts

**Materials needed: Visual Aid material from One—Learning to Use our Gifts
beanbag or other soft object to throw**

Remove the Visual Aid titled **Learning to Use our Gifts** from the Visual Aid Packet, and place it on the floor. Read Psalm 139:14. SAY: **One of the gifts God gives us is a body that is able to do many wonderful things. We should use the bodies God gives us to do good deeds for Him.**

Instruct the students to stand in a circle around the Visual Aid, ensuring that each student is standing a few feet away from the edge. One at a time, allow the students to throw the beanbag onto the Visual Aid. If a student misses the Visual Aid, allow him to try again. If a student hits the Visual Aid with the beanbag, it will land on either a part of the body or a memory verse circle. If the beanbag lands on a part of the body, the student should state a way he can use that part of the body to do good deeds for God. If the student cannot think of an answer by himself, help him by providing one of the suggestions given below. If the beanbag lands on a memory verse circle, everyone should say the memory verse together.

Suggestions for gifts or abilities might include:

- EYES:** look out for others who need our help, look around and see all the wonderful things God has created
- HANDS:** draw a picture for someone who is sick, obey our parents by cleaning our room, give someone a hug
- EARS:** listen to Bible stories, pay attention to our teachers or parents, listen to a friend who needs to talk to us
- MOUTH:** tell others about Jesus, sing praises to God, say nice things to others
- FEET:** walk to church, walk to visit a sick person

Continue until each student has had at least one turn. If possible, personalize your suggestions by saying something unique about each student. For example, if the beanbag lands on HANDS, say, "Molly, I know that you can color very well, so you can use your hands to make a Get Well card for a sick person."



Ranch Tails

- Review the lesson topic, *Use God's Gifts*.
- Explain that God gives us all different gifts.
- Explore how God wants us to use those gifts for His glory.

Before class, remove the Dusty, Morton, and Edison puppets from the Visual Aid Packet, and glue a craft stick to the back of each puppet. Use the puppets to tell the following story. (Or you could use the Dusty, Morton, and Edison finger puppets.) Hold Dusty, Morton, and Edison in your hands as you speak to the students.

Teacher: Howdy, ranch hands! I want you to meet some of my friends. (Show the puppets to the students.) This is Dusty the horse and her friends, Morton and Edison. Can you say howdy to my friends? (Response)

Dusty: Howdy, there pardners!

Teacher: Dusty, Morton, and Edison all live on a ranch together. They love living together and playing together.

Morton: We sure doooo!

Teacher: But Morton, just the other day, I heard you get pretty jealous of Dusty, didn't you? Why was that?

Morton: (sadly) Sometimes I wish I were more like Dusty.

Edison: Me toooooo! She can do all sorts of neat things. She can run really fast. I like to watch her run. She runs so fast that her mane blows in the wind. I cannot run fast at all.

Morton: And she can jump so high! She is such a great jumper, I believe she could jump the way to the moonooooon! I cannot jump very high at all.

Edison: And she carries the ranch hands all over the farm. She helps them round up the calves when they get lost. But we can't do anything. We are good for anything.

Dusty: Waaaaait a minute, you two. You are good for all sorts of things. There are lots of neat things I like about you, too.

Morton: What?

Dusty: For one thing, look at your horns. They are big and strong and sharp on the ends. There are lots of animals that would love to have horns like that. And you, Edison, no one can "Moo" like you can. Go ahead, let me hear you!

Edison: Really? Well, okay. Moooooooooooo!

Morton: That was good one, Ed.

Edison: (sheepishly) Thank you.

Dusty: Those mean old coyotes were sneaking around the herd the other night, I heard you mooed so loud the other night that all the ranch hands came running right away and chased them off.

Edison: That's right! I did!

Dusty: And you, Morton. You're so big and strong. You win all the pig-paw contests. And didn't I see you helping to haul off that huge tree that the storm knocked down?

Morton: (proudly) Well, yeah. I guess I did.

Dusty: Everyone has something they are good at. God made each of us different for a reason. It is our job to find out what we are good at and do it as best we can.

Morton: Thanks, Dusty. You are a really good friend.

Teacher: Yee-haw! I think Morton and Edison have learned a valuable lesson. God makes each one of us special, and He blesses each one of us with things we can do really well. What are some of the things you do well? (Allow the students to share some of the things they do well.) Those are wonderful blessings that God has given you. It's time for Dusty, Morton, and Edison to leave now. Everyone tell them, "Bye, Y'all!"





Roping Up the Message

- Review this lesson.
- Offer some final thoughts.

Materials: Visual Aids—Morton and Edison
Visual Aid—Story Time Bible Book
Bible

Gather the students at a table or other seated area, and remove Morton and Edison from the Visual Aid Package. Have Morton and Edison review the lesson with the students.

Yee-haw! I can tell you were all listening very closely. Jesus told a parable about three servants who were given talents. Two of them used their talents wisely; one of them didn't use his talent at all. God gives us many wonderful blessings. He wants us to use those gifts to do good things for him.

Pick up a Bible. **Jesus told many parables when He was teaching. They are all found right here in the Bible. The Bible is filled with many wonderful stories that teach us important lessons. It is a real blessing that God has given us.**

Let's sing some songs that will help us to remember how much God loves us. Sing with me, partners!



Does anyone remember our Bible verse for this lesson? Let's say it again together. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above," James 1:17. Each of us should be thankful that God has given us special gifts. It is important that we discover those things we do really well and use them to please God. Let's say a prayer right now thanking God for His special blessings and asking Him to help us use them. Before we pray, let's sing our "Prayer Song."



Ranch Journal, Part 2

Allow the students to complete the Application Activity from Lesson One in their Student Books.

