

Lesson One Use God's Gifts

Parable of the Talents

Memory Verse

James 1:17

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

Lesson Story

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

Song Suggestions:

1000 Reasons
A Beautiful Life
Count Your Blessings
Be Thou My Vision
Great Is Thy Faithfulness
Make Me a Servant

Preparatory Considerations

1. This class is divided into several 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—Cotton reproducibles; Story Time Bible Book; Dusty, Morton, and Edison puppets

Visual Aids materials—Lesson One—Lesson One Memory Verse Hay Bale; Ground; Bag of Talents reproducibles; Learning to Use Our Gifts

Decorative items—Markers, glitter pens, stickers, and other decoration items (Block Five)

Soft object—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! Welcome to Vacation Bible School! I am so excited that each of you has chosen to come to VBS because we are going to learn some wonderful lessons about God and the things God wants us to do. 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 - HOWDY! Very good!**

Ranch hands have very important jobs. One of the things ranch hands do is take good care of the cows. Sometimes, ranch hands must go out to round up the cows. Round up is when ranch hands go out to gather all the cows together in one place.

Does anyone know what a roundup is? (Response) Very good! A roundup is when ranch boys go out and gather all the cows together in one place. In this VBS, we are going to be going on a roundup, too, but we are not going to round up cows. We are going to round up some of God's greatest blessings. We are going to discover that God blesses each one of us in many different ways. We will round up all these blessings and discover how we can use them to please God.

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.)



Bible Story Time

- Explore the parable of the talents
- Discover the importance of using the gifts God gives us for His glory.

Prepare the students for the Bible story. **Okay, ranch hands, it is time for our Bible story. All our Bible stories and BS 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."**



The Parable of the Talents

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

PICTURE ONE



When Jesus came to live on this earth, He did many wonderful things. He also taught many wonderful lessons. Jesus was a great teacher. Wherever He went, people would follow 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 followed Him.

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 told about were a kind of money. They were little coins. Talents could be made of copper, silver, or even gold. In the parable of the talents, Jesus told about a man who had many servants. This man had to leave his home to travel on a journey, 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. To one servant, he gave five talents to care for. He gave two talents to the second servant. And then he gave one talent to the third servant. Then 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 his master, he dug a hole in the ground and buried the talent in the ground where no one could find it. Why do

you think he would do such a thing? The servant may have been afraid of losing his talent. He may have felt he was not able to make more talents like the first two servants. He even may have been embarrassed because he had not been given as many talents as the first two servants.

After the journey was over, the man returned home and 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 the 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 pleased with the servant. "You have done very well," he told him, "because you have taken such good care of the things I have trusted you with. I will give you 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 give you even more from now on."

PICTURE THREE

Then it was the third servant's turn to show his master what he had done with his talent. The servant told his master what he had done. "I was afraid," the servant said. "I did not use the talent you gave me at all. I took it 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 had given him. The master had wanted all his servants to use their talents wisely. "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 so 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 wise and careful 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.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How many talents did the man give to each of his servants? five, two, and one
2. What did the first two servants do with their talents? They used them to make more talents.
3. What did the third servant do with his talent? He buried it.
4. When the man returned from his journey, with which of his servants was he pleased? the first two
5. Why was the man pleased with the third servant? He felt the third servant had been lazy and had not been wise in using the talent he was given to him.
6. What can we learn from this parable? We can learn that God expects us to use the gifts He has given us.

Ranch Journal, Part 1

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

Lesson One



Blessing Roundup

- Apply the parable to their lives.
- Introduce Memory Verse.

OBJECT LESSON Use God's Gifts

Bring several (at least 3-4) tools to class with you. The tools could be a hammer, a saw, a level, a shovel, a spade, or anything else you wish. Ensure the tools are not sharp. Display the tools on a table.

Can anyone tell me what these are? (Response) **Very good! These are all tools. Let's look at each one of them.** (One at a time, pick up each tool and ask the students what it is. Ask them what it is used for. Discuss the use of each tool and how they are all different.) **Who might use some of these tools?** (Response) **That's right. A carpenter** (or other occupation) **might use them. Why is it important for a carpenter to have different types of tools?** (Response) **Very good! It is important to have different types of tools because each tool is used for something different. If I were building a house, I would not use a shovel to hammer nails, would I?** (Response) **I would not use a hammer to dig a hole, would I?** (Response) **No, that would be silly. It is good to have different types of tools because we use each of them to do different things. Whoever makes the tools, makes them just right so they will be useful for the person who is building the house.**

Did you know each one of you is like these tool? (Response) **You are. Each one of you is made in a special way. Do you know Who made you?** (Response) **That's right. God made you. That makes each one of you special. What makes you even more special is that God made each one of you a little different. He made each one of us look a little different from each other. He made each one of our voices sound a little different from each other. He also blessed each one of you with some things that you do well. I can probably do some things well that you cannot do so well, and you can probably do some things well that I cannot do so well. That is great because that is how God made us.** **Since God made each one of you a little different, He must have special plans for you.**

We learned in our Bible story for this lesson that we should use the blessings God gives us wisely. Each of you should try hard to discover what things you are especially good at and use those things to please God.

Memory Verse

You will be making a Memory Verse Hay Bale bulletin board using the visuals from the Visual Aid Pack. 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 and markers, so they can color their cows as you talk.



Today, ranch hands learned 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." What 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 for 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.) **Yee-haw! 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.



Activity Stamped.

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

The following activities are all designed with the same purpose in mind—to reinforce the lesson. They are not listed in a 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 want 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.

Who Buried the Talents?

Materials needed: Visual Aid marked Lesson One—Ground, Bag of Talents, Reproducible (several copies) crayons, markers, glitter pens, stickers, and other decoration items

Before class begins, make several copies of the Bag of Talents reproducible, one bag for each student. Cut out the bags and bring them to class. Give each student one Bag of Talents, and have them write their name on the bag. Then have them color or decorate their bags in any way they wish. As they color, give a review of the parable of the Talents, focusing on the servant who buried his talent. **SAY: The talents that Jesus told about were a kind of money. They were little coins. Talents could be made of copper, silver, or even gold. They would have been in a little bag like this.**

Once students have finished decorating their bags, all the bags should be spread across the table where they can be seen along with the Ground Visual Aid. Choose one student to be "it." This student should close her eyes. While "it" has her eyes closed, tap another student on the shoulder. This student should quietly "bury" his bag by placing it under the Ground Visual Aid. Instruct "it" to open her eyes and look at the bags that are remaining on the table. "It" should try to guess which student has buried his talent (or money bag). "It" should continue to guess which student has buried his talent until she guesses correctly. Choose another student to be "it" and play again. Continue playing until all students have had a chance to be "it." Upon conclusion, **SAY: The talents represent all the work God gives us. God does not want us to bury our talents by failing to use them. Even if no one else knows we are not using our blessings, God knows when we have "buried our talents."**



Copy Cat

Have students stand in a large open area of the room facing you. SAY: **We are going to play a game. Copy what I do and try to copy me.** You might perform the action of climbing a tree, flying like a bird, hopping like a bunny, or any other action you wish. After the students have mimicked you a few times, allow another student to take your place. He will perform the action, and the rest of the students will mimic him. Play as long as you wish. Upon conclusion, SAY: **God has made each of you different. You should not want to be like everyone else because God has made you in a special way for a reason. You may never be able to do some of the things that other people do, but each of you has special things you can do. Discover the things you do well and don't worry about the things others can do better than you.**

Learning to Use Our Gifts

Materials needed: Visual Aid marked Lesson 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 student to toss 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 say 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 must say the memory verse together.

Suggestions for talents that the beanbag might land on:

- EYES: watch out for others who need our help, look around and see all the wonderful things God has created
- HANDS: help a picture for someone who is sick, obey our parents by cleaning our room, give someone a hug
- EARS: listen to the 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

- Introduce 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. Place the glove on your hand and 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 were 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 like that. 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 look like your friends. There are lots of animals that would love to have horns like that. And you, Edison, no one would "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: Well, 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.

Morton: That's right! I did!

Dusty: And you, Morton. You're so big and strong. You win all the tug-of-war 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 in the Bible. The Bible is filled with many wonderful stories that teach us important lessons. The Bible is another blessing that God has given us.**

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



Does anyone remember our Bible verse? 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 at 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.