

Morning Devotion Parables

Parable Presentations

The following parables are designed for use in the Morning Devotions as a way to present the theme for the day in a visual way. Use the suggestions to create a worship that will be meaningful to your group.

Make posters with the theme printed in large letters.

Choose songs the campers are familiar with that support the theme.

Plan for prayer time.

Use the printed version of the parable for the scripture reading.

These have been selected specifically for easy understanding

Use the suggestions for presenting the expanded version of the parable in a creative way. Practice to make flow. A drama class would be a great place to prepare/hr these each day.

Parables can be acted out, using simple props and costumes. Directions are given at the beginning of each parable for materials needed.

Readers' theater offers an option if preparation time is limited. Each player stands or is seated on a chair or stool facing the audience. The presider introduces each person and identifies the character they represent. The script is then read, using expression and imagination, but without action or movement.

Some scripts may lend themselves to use in alternative settings such as campfire or evening devotions, if done with the large

group. If this is the choice, use only the scripture version in the morning worship. Make use of the gifts within the campers to create visual elements for the worship. —

Day One: Finding the Road

The tax collectors and sinners all came to listen to Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to complain: "Look, this man welcomes sinners and even eats with them." Then Jesus told them this story. "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep but loses one of them. Then he will leave the other ninety-nine sheep in the open field and go out and look for the lost sheep until he finds it. And when he finds it, he happily puts it on his shoulders and goes home. He calls to his friends and neighbors and says, 'be happy with me because I found my lost sheep.'" Luke 15:1-6, *YouthBible*

Suggestions for presenting the parable: Choose campers to act out the parts as the story is read. No major preparation is needed. The acting can be spontaneous reactions to the words as they are heard. The reading can be done by one person using different voices or three people representing the narrator, Sheba, and Sebastian. The narrator reads words in italics that are not direct conversation for the other two in between their speeches. Practice will make this flow smoothly as continuous sentences.

"This is boring," *complained Sheba.* "All this wonderful green grass waiting to be eaten and we have to sit here huddled together to wait for the Shepherd. Who's the one that wandered off anyway?"

“Sheba” *scolded Sebastian*. “The Shepherd loves each one of us as if we were the only one in the flock. You know that. It doesn’t matter which of us is missing. The Shepherd will not stop looking until the lost one is found.”

“Well, I think it’s a pain to have to wait on some irresponsible wooly who doesn’t know enough to stay with the group. I don’t care who it is.”

“What if it turns out to be Granny? She’s the oldest sheep in the flock.”

“Old sheep ought to know better. Besides, she’s not my granny,”

“What if it turns out to be Shambles? He was badly injured by the wolf last spring and has never been quite the same.”

“Sure I feel sorry for Shambles, but you’d think he especially would stay close to the flock after his scary experience.”

“What if it turns out to be one of the twins, either Shem or Shep? Surviving twins can be rare in a flock like ours.”

“Even if it turns out to be one of the twins, it’s their mother’s responsibility to look out for them. I would never let anything like that happen to my own little Sheila. She’s always . . . she never . . . now where did that little lamb go? Sheila! Sheila! Where are you?”

“You don’t think *Sebastian asked carefully, helping Sheba scan the flock.*

Suddenly a faint sheepish cry could be heard drifting across the air. “Sheila!” Sheba cried, racing down the hill toward the sound.

“Mama!” called her frightened daughter from her perch atop the shepherd’s shoulders. The shepherd gently swung the little sheep around and down to touch the ground. She went springing off across the grass to nuzzle against her mother.

“I was so scared,” *she whimpered.* “But the Shepherd came. I was lifted and hugged and talked to and carried back to you. The Shepherd loves me, mama.”

“So do I, little one,” *Sheba said. She looked up with loving eyes as the Shepherd rubbed her wooly head. “Thank you,” her eyes said.*

“You’re welcome,” the shepherd said.

Day Two: Along the Road

A lawyer asked Jesus questions about what he should do to inherit eternal life. Jesus talked to him about the Jewish law, reminding him to love God, himself,

and his neighbor. In response to the question, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus told this story.

A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and

went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend."

Jesus then asked, "Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."
Luke 10:25-37 adapted

Preparation for presenting the parable: You will need eight actors, a reader, a leader, and a few props mentioned in the individual scenes. Only two actors will be used at a time.

Scene I

Two actors enter from opposite sides, one holding an arm as if injured, the other smiling.

Smiley: How's it goin'?

Injured: (*'Shakes head*) Not so good. It's my arm.

Smiley: What happened?

Injured: I was rollerblading.

Smiley: Rollerblading's great! (*Checks damaged arm*) Looks like it's a little dangerous, too.

Injured: Only when you hit a rock in the road you didn't realize was there. (*Rubs arm.*)

Smiley: Looks like you need a nurse. Let's

go. (*Both exit.*)

Reader: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Scene II

Two actors enter from the same side, one front and one back. They meet in the middle, heading the same direction. One is carrying a basketball and a backpack and the other shows signs of being hungry.

Backpacker: Hey, you wanna play some basketball'?

Hungry: Nah, I got too much to do.

Backpacker: Come on, you can shoot a few.

Hungry: (*Rubs stomach*) I don't feel like it. Leave me alone.

Backpacker: (*Reaches into pack and pulls out something to eat*) How 'bout a snack before we start? If you don't mind sharing, that is.

Hungry: (*Reaching for the offered food*) Thanks. That looks good, *both exit eating.*)

Reader: I was hungry and you fed me.

Scene III

Two actors enter from opposite sides, One is wearing a sweatshirt and a jacket. The other has on only a thin shirt, shaking as if cold.

Sweatshirt: Hey, (*name*)! Going to the game?

Thin Shirt: I was, but I didn't realize how cold it was.

Sweatshirt: Yeah, you'll freeze dressed like that.

Thin Shirt: Guess I'll go home. (*Turns and starts walking away, shoulders hunched.*)

Sweatshirt: (*Calls to friend.*) Hey, you comin' back?

Thin Shirt: Yeah, maybe. If I can find my jacket. (*Keeps walking.*)

Sweatshirt: Hold up. (*Walks toward friend while removing jacket.*) You can borrow my jacket. The sweatshirt should be enough for me. (*Thin Shirt hesitates, takes the jacket,*

smiles, puts it on, and the two exit together.)

Reader: Love your neighbor as you love yourself. Yeah, you'll freeze dressed

Scene IV

Two actors enter from opposite sides. One is smiling, the other walks with sad body language.

Friend: Hey, how's it goin'?

Hurt: Not so good. I'm upset.

Friend: Why are you upset?

Hurt: My best friend moved away. I feel so sad I think I might die.

Friend: That's tough. Can I help?

Hurt: You can't bring my friend back.

Friend: No, but I can be here if you want to talk. *(Reaches out and the two turn and start walking off together, talking to each other.)*

Leader: All will know you are my disciples, if you show love for one another.

Day Three: Fork in the Road

A sower went out to sow, and as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, mid they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; mid since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for awhile, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was

sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, mid it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty. Matthew 13:3-8,18-23 NRSV

Preparation for presenting the parable: Give the two actors time to work on their parts so the action goes smoothly.

(Two actor, one with a pad of sticky notes and a pencil in a pocket)

Bored: I'm so bored. There's *nothing* for me to do. *Everybody* else in the whole world has *something* to do—but *not me*)

Cheerful: Cheer up, friend. There are a lot of things you could do right now.

Bored: Oh yeah? *Like what?*

Cheerful: You could clean up your cabin without being reminded.

Bored: *Hey*, it gives my counselor something to talk to me about.

Cheerful: You could help with a project to beautify the campgrounds. You could pick up trash you see lying around,

Bored: Yeah, but *what's the point?* As soon as you pick up the trash, somebody throws down some more.

Cheerful: Maybe your place to serve is doing a drama for a worship.

Bored: Nah, that's *not* my idea of fun,

Cheerful: You could volunteer for K.P.

Bored: *Are you nuts?* Why would I want to do that job when I didn't have to?

Cheerful: How about collecting information for the Camp Log?

Bored: Well, I suppose I could turn in stuff if people wrote it and gave it to me, but I wouldn't want to do interviews or ask questions or anything.

Cheerful: How about writing a letter home

so your family will know how much fun you're having at camp?

Bored: (*Pauses and looks skeptical*) You've got to be kidding!

Cheerful: Sorry, lost my head. Well, suppose you could do anything you choose here at camp. What would it be? Think of all the things you enjoy doing, make a list, and put stars by your favorites. Then circle the one you will most look forward to doing.

Bored: We don't get choices here at camp. Somebody tells us everything to do.

Cheerful: Sure you get choices. There is a schedule, but you make choices within that plan.

Bored: You mean like which foods I decide to eat'?

Cheerful: And whether to swim or not swim, lay out or play in the water, stay the whole time or quit early. You have lots of choices.

Bored: Yeah, but making choices takes energy. It's easier just to sit and complain.

Cheerful: (*puts arm around Bored's shoulder*) And even that's a choice.

Bored: (*Thinks about what was said.*) Hey, you wouldn't happen to have something I could use to make a list, would you? I think I'm ready to start choosing.

Cheerful hands Bored the sticky notes and a pencil. Bored begins to write things like spending more time with my friends or looking for the good things in my classes, reading them aloud as they are written.

Both exit as Bored continues to make choices.

Day Four: Rocks in the Road

There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me." So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered

his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating . . . but when he came to himself he said, "How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'"

So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him . . . the father said to his slaves, "Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to celebrate. Luke 15:11-24 NRSV

Preparation for presenting the parable: Choose a narrator to read any lines in italics. The individual actors can read their lines from cards, adding expression or action when appropriate. This is one that lends itself to readers' theater.

The youngest child made an announcement. "I am going out into the world to seek my fortune."

And the father said: "You have a fortune here. I worked all my life so you would have everything you needed."

And the mother said: "You are too young. You are my baby. I have always looked after you and taken care of you."

And the brother said: "How come you get to go and I have to stay here? Who do you think will have to do your share of

the work?"

And the sister said: "You always get to do everything you want."

And the dog looked on with sad eyes and a droopy tail.

And the youngest child made a statement. "I have decided. It's my choice. Give me what's mine and let me go."

And the father said: "Here is your portion of all that I have. You are my child and I love you."

And the mother said: "Here is food and clean clothing. Don't wear torn underwear in case you are in an accident."

And the brother said: "Not fair! You get your portion now and I have to wait for mine."

And the sister said: "Have a nice trip."

And the dog walked the youngest child to the gate.

Time passed. Choices were made. Rocks appeared in the road. The youngest child felt fed up, used up, washed up, and passed up. Meanwhile, back at the house life moved on.

And the father said: "I wonder where he is and what he is doing?"

And the mother said: "I wonder if we will ever see him again?"

And the brother said: "He was my only brother."

And the sister said: "He was my youngest brother."

And the dog sat out by the gate and looked longingly down the road.

"Time's up," *decided the youngest child.* "I need to go home if they'll have me." *And he started down the road, barefoot and clothes torn, toward those who once loved him. And the dog saw him first and wagged his tail furiously as he barked to alert the others.*

(As these lines are read, the actors respond with appropriate action.)

And the sister ran to meet him.

And the brother raced her.

And the mother wiped her tears and smiled.

And the father ordered pizza. And the family rejoiced and celebrated together.

Day Five: On the Road Again

Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, "Come; for everything is ready now." But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, "I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets." Another said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out please accept my regrets." Another said, "I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come." So the slave returned and reported to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, "Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame." And the slave said, "Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room." Then the master said to the slave, "Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled." Luke 14:16-23 NRSV

Preparation for presenting the parable: Prepare for this activity ahead of time so the actors are comfortable with their

roles and dressed for the parts. Choose someone to play the angel communicator the children especially like. Set the scene by placing a phone on a small table in the front of the group. The angel can be off to one side, seated at another table, standing, or out of sight so only the voice is heard. The sound of the phone ringing can be on tape, played at the appropriate moment.

(A child comes in from the side wearing a swimsuit and carrying a beach towel. The phone rings and the child goes to the table to answer it.)

Swimmer: Hello, _____ . This is _____ . May I help you?
(name of camp) (swimmer's name)

Angel: Hello, this is _____ and I'm an angel and secretary for
(name of person playing angel)
the Lord Jesus Christ. He will be on the campgrounds this afternoon to visit with people and would like someone to be his guide. Would you be able to help?

Swimmer: Terrific! I sure would! Think of it—Jesus right here in person. I'll be there just as soon as swimming is over.

Angel: Well, Jesus has a lot of people to see and wanted to start early in the afternoon. Could you recommend someone else?

Swimmer: I'll see. *(Turns toward the back and calls to another child)* Hey, phone call for you. It's an angel.

(A child with a ball and bat comes forward and picks up the phone.)

Player: An angel, huh? Is this a joke?

Angel: No, this is "serious." Jesus will be on the campgrounds this afternoon and would like someone to be his guide.

Player: Great! He can watch me pitch. I've really got control of that ball now!

Angel: I'm sure Jesus would love the ball game, but there is so little time and so much to do. Maybe you could help me find someone who isn't so busy.

Player: Yeah, that would be _____, the reader. Only action you ever see there is
(name of reader)
turning the pages of a book. Hey, _____ telephone.
(name of reader)

(Child enters reading a book, pauses, marks the place with a finger, and picks up the phone.)

Reader: Hello, this is _____ .
(home of reader.)

Angel: Hello, _____ this is _____ and I'm an angel.
(name of angel) (name of reader)

Reader: An angel! A real live angel? I've read about you in the Christmas story.

Angel: Good, then you'll also remember the baby Jesus. He's all grown up now and will be on the campgrounds this afternoon. Would you be able to show him around?

Reader: Well, I really don't know much about where things are. I mostly just go to meals and class and then hang out on my bunk reading. Say, I could tell Jesus about my current book . . . but maybe he wouldn't be interested. You'd better find someone else who knows their way around. Wait a minute and I'll grab _____ for you.

(name of snacker)

(Child enters with money visible in one hand and an empty candy wrapper in the other.)

Snacker: You call me _____?

(name of reader)

Reader: Yes, there's an angel on the phone.

Snacker: Yeah? *(Grabs phone.)* Who is this?

Angel: I'm an angel and my name is...

Snacker: *(Interrupting)* I don't believe in angels.

Angel: Well, you're talking to one right now. I need a few minutes of your time

Snacker: *(Interrupting again)* Wish I had time to talk, but I ran out of candy and I'm off to buy some candy from _____. He's got quite a stash. Catch ya later.

(name of camper)

(Drops phone and runs.)

Angel: Hello . . . Hellooo! Is anyone there'? Isn't there someone who has time for Jesus? Someone? Anyone? Hello?