

JESUS *and Your* FAITH

LESSON 2: *Be Good Soil*

What we want students to learn: That a faith in Christ that is pure and persevering goes hand-in-hand with an acceptance and love of God's Word.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To evaluate their attitudes toward knowing and living out God's Word.

Scripture Focus: Luke 8:4-15

Supporting Scripture: Psalm 119:10-11

Overview: The Bible is how we know God most fully. And so our attitude toward God's Word is intertwined with our faith. Jesus' parable of the Sower and the Seed illustrates this perfectly. Jesus describes various ways of responding to God's Word in faith, with only one of them being seen as positive. What can we learn from the way this one positive response is described? Plenty. Jesus praised the goodness and the pureness of the faith that holds tightly to God's Word. The faith that perseveres. This should be the faith our students aspire to. This lesson will challenge them to really consider how they view the Bible, and how embracing God's Word will strengthen their faith in Him.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO

The *Jesus And Your Faith* Teacher Prep Videos are short videos designed to help you grasp the main points of the lessons as you prepare to teach.

To access your "Jesus And Your Faith Lesson 2 Teacher Prep Video," click on the URL below.

- <https://youthministry360.com/jesus-and-your-faith-teacher-prep>

BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. The Details gives you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what's happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know who wrote the book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **What's The Big Deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

THE DETAILS

- **Author:** Luke was a doctor, a Gentile Christian and a companion of Paul.
- **Time frame:** The Gospel of Luke was written around 60 AD.
- **Purpose:** Luke is the only Gentile author of the Bible. His entire purpose was to write an accurate account of the life of Jesus so as to present Jesus as Savior, fully God and fully man. It is one of the synoptic Gospels, having much in common with the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

JESUS *and Your* FAITH

LESSON 2: *Be Good Soil*

THE SETTING

As we pick up the narrative in Luke 8, Luke had just finished describing several accounts of Jesus teaching and healing people. At the end of Luke 7, Jesus had the meaningful encounter where the “woman who had lived a sinful life” anointed His feet with perfume at the Pharisee’s dinner table. Luke tells us that after this encounter, Jesus traveled from town to town preaching and teaching to the crowds who had assembled to get a glimpse of Him.

THE MAIN POINT

The main point you want to make to students is that there is a right attitude to have toward believing God’s Word. When we talk to students about their faith in God, it is a discussion that can’t neglect God’s Word. As the primary means by which God makes Himself known to us, His children, the Bible is a central part of our faith. A love for God and a love for His Word can’t be separated. And so this lesson will challenge your students to be “good soil,” having hearts that are receptive and possessive of God’s Word. This is the foundation of a solid faith.

LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains three elements: An introductory activity called The Lead In; the Bible study section called The Main Event; an application-focused segment called The Last Word.

THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** To help students begin thinking about the idea of the importance of God’s Word when it comes to their faith.
- **Set-Up:** Print enough copies of the “Lesson 2 Lead In Activity Sheet” (Located in your Lesson 2 Folder) so that each group of three to four students can have one. Provide something to write with.

FIRST, introduce the idea of “dynamic duos” by saying the following:

- **When I say the word peanut butter, what’s the first thing that comes to most people’s minds? (Most of your students should say jelly.) That’s right: jelly. Peanut butter and jelly are a dynamic duo. They are inseparable. You hardly can think of one without the other. And there are other dynamic duos too, aren’t there?**

THEN, explain that you’re going to play a little group game to see who can come up with the most “dynamic duos” in the shortest amount of time. Divide students into groups and distribute the “Lesson 2 Lead In Activity Sheet.” Inform them that they will have one minute to come up with as many dynamic duos as they can think of. Instruct them to think of foods, TV or movie characters, famous friends, inanimate objects, and so on. When they have grasped the rules and are ready to go, say, “start” and let them begin.

NEXT, when the minute is up, allow each group to take turns reading off their duos. Have fun with this, calling out any duos that seem to be a stretch. Award a winner based on who has the most legitimate duos.

FINALLY, transition to the Main Event by saying something like the following:

- **This is our second lesson on what Jesus has to say about our faith. Now, you might be wondering why in the world we just talked about dynamic duos? Good question. In this lesson, we’re going to be looking at the right attitude we’re to have about the Bible. And what we’re going to find is that**

JESUS *and Your* FAITH

LESSON 2: *Be Good Soil*

God's Word and our faith go hand-in-hand. They form their own dynamic duo. To have a full faith, we have to have a positive attitude toward the Bible. Let's see how Jesus described this.

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help your students understand that a faith in Christ that is pure and persevering is the key to a life of meaning and purpose.
- **Set Up:** While it's not crucial, it's probably beneficial to have a dry-erase board as you're going to track with the different places the seed fell and what the results were. If you have a board, make the following chart:

	Where It Landed	Result	Meaning
Seed 1			
Seed 2			
Seed 3			
Seed 4			

FIRST, do a brief review to see if anyone can recall what you studied last lesson. Use the following bullet points to remind them:

- **Students learned that our faith in Jesus is the means by which we find forgiveness and eternal relationship with Christ.**
- **Students were challenged to really consider the significance of life through faith in Christ and death in separation from Him.**

THEN, explain that you're going to start by looking at what Jesus had to say in the Gospel of Luke. Instruct students to turn to Luke 8. While students are looking, make sure you take a few moments to provide the context for the passage using the Bible Background. Pay close attention to the Setting. Summarize it for your students so that they grasp exactly when this passage of Scripture occurs in Jesus' ministry.

NEXT, read or have a student read Luke 8:4-10. When you've finished, lead students in a discussion. Ask:

- **Just so we're on the same page, what is a parable?**
 - o Answer: A parable is basically a story with a message, or a way of teaching a particular truth through a story.
- **Knowing Jesus' original audience, why do you think He chose to teach them a truth about faith by telling the story of a farmer planting a crop?**
 - o Answer: Jesus was awesome about using images and concepts that were super-familiar to His audience. First century Palestine was an agrarian economy. Even if everyone in Jesus' audience weren't a farmer, they would still all be intimately familiar with the process of planting fields. (As an aside, it's sometimes interesting to get students thinking about what analogies Jesus might have used today if He were teaching and preaching in modern day times.)

JESUS *and Your* FAITH

LESSON 2: *Be Good Soil*

THEN, explain to students that you're going to unpack the parable using a chart you've made on the board. Work with students to fill in where each seed landed and what the result was. The answers are as follows:

- **Seed 1: Path; trampled on, birds ate**
- **Seed 2: Rock; withered, no moisture**
- **Seed 3: Among the thorns; choked as it grew**
- **Seed 4: In Good soil; yielded huge crop**

NEXT, when you've finished the first two parts of the chart, read or have a student read Luke 8:11-15. Explain that Jesus did not often provide the answers to the parables He told. But in this case, He did. Looking at these verses, go back in and fill in the chart with the meaning of what each seed and soil represents, making sure students are first clear on what the seed represents (the Word of God). The answers are as follows:

- **Seed 1: Those who hear God's Word but reject it, and don't place their faith in Christ.**
- **Seed 2: Those who have a positive reaction to the Word, but not true, lasting belief.**
- **Seed 3: Those who hear but don't really pay any attention to God one way or the other.**
- **Seed 4: Those who believe in Christ through His Word.**

THEN, explain that you want to focus for just a moment on this last verse, specifically how Jesus described the person that represents the "good soil" in the parable. Ask:

- **As we're interested in how Jesus describes our faith, let's pay attention to this last phrase in the verse. Jesus says the person with the good heart, the person who accepts Him through hearing God's Word, does so by hearing the word, retaining it, and through perseverance, lives a fruitful life of purpose and meaning (produces a crop). What does hearing God's Word have to do with your faith in God?**
 - o Answer: We came to faith in Christ through His Word. We learned about Jesus through the Bible, and compelled by the Holy Spirit, came to Christ in faith. Without God's Word, it's highly unlikely we come to faith in Christ.
- **What does it mean to retain God's Word?**
 - o Answer: It means when we hear God's Word or when we study the Bible, we hold on to it, making it a part of our life.
- **Do you usually hold on to things you don't care about? What does this say about our attitude toward the Bible?**
 - o Answer: No. We should value it. We should want to meet God in the pages of Scripture, drawing closer to Him, and growing more like Him.
- **Jesus said through perseverance our lives would be fruitful. What does perseverance have to do with the quality of our faith?**
 - o Answer: Perseverance means sticking with God through the tough times of life. If our faith is strong, if our belief in God has truly impacted our lives, we will not turn away from God even when things get tough.

FINALLY, transition into the Final Word by saying something similar to the following:

- **At the beginning of this lesson, we looked at the dynamic duos, and talked about how inseparable God's Word and our faith are. This parable helps us understand why. It's through the Bible that we know God. And by accepting and valuing the Bible, we strengthen and grow our faith. The opposite is true, as well. It's very difficult to grow our faith without a strong love for God's Word. That's why as we close the lesson, we're going to focus on our attitudes toward the Bible.**

JESUS *and Your* FAITH

LESSON 2: *Be Good Soil*

Make sure there aren't any questions, then transition into the Last Word.

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To help students evaluate their attitudes toward knowing and living out God's Word.
- **Set-Up:** Provide note cards and something to write with for each of your students.

FIRST, explain to students that one of the most important keys to a faith that is meaningful is to develop a true love for meeting God in the Bible. Remind students of David's words in Psalm 119:10: "I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands." Say something like:

- **We tend to have two faults when it comes to engaging with our Bibles. One, we tend to view it like a chore or a habit instead of seeing it as a time to meet God in the pages of His Word. Two, we tend to focus on HOW we study the Bible, not our attitudes behind it. We focus on the next app or Bible plan or devotional journal and we wonder why we can't stick with it. Most of the times, it's because of our attitude toward God's Word.**

THEN, explain to students that you're going to do something very simple to end this lesson, but something that will serve as a reminder to them this week of the call to develop a good attitude toward the Bible. Distribute the note cards and pens/pencils. Once every students has one, ask them the following question:

- **On the front of the note card, I want you to answer this question: When you think of spending time reading the Bible, what's the first word or thought that comes to mind. Don't censor yourself! Be honest with yourself and with God. If you're going to allow God to work on your heart, you first have to recognize that work needs to be done. Write your word or thought on the front of your card. If your word or thought is positive, good. If it's neutral or negative, that's OK too. No one will judge you.**

Allow time for students to write their word or thought on the front of the card. Then, ask them the following question:

- **Now, on the back of the card, I want you to write a statement to God that will be your one-sentence prayer this week. In your own words, think about the attitude you want to have when it comes to the Bible and ask God to help work within you to create this attitude in your life. Make it personal. It can be something as simple as, "God help me to enjoy reading the Bible again." Or it could be something like, "God show me new things about you through your Word." Whatever you want to see God do when it comes to your attitude, write it on the back of the card.**

FINALLY, when students have finished, encourage them to keep these cards with them this week in a prominent place. Challenge them to make the time to read their Bibles this week; after all, they won't know if their prayer is working unless they put it to the test.

Encourage them that this is such a huge part of their faith. Remind them that God will honor their desires and will help change their attitude toward studying the Bible. Then, close in prayer.

- Don't forget to distribute the "Lesson 2" devotions to your students this week. If you're printing them, have them available for students as you wrap up class. If you're texting a link, posting them on Facebook, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
- Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Twitter, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

JESUS *and Your* FAITH

LESSON 2: *Be Good Soil*

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.