Jesus used the method of parables to get the attention of the people by using the familiar to teach his spiritual meanings. The parable we study today was told to a crowd of people that had gone to the shore of the Sea of Tiberius to hear him. People were so tightly pressed about him that he got into a boat and went a little way into the water to talk to them. These probably were people from all walks of life, not unlike the different types of people we meet daily. Thus, he used an illustration to which they could relate, the common act of sowing seed.

In Palestine, every bit of land is used, including land close to the path, since there is not much territory. This practice differs from our country’s farming methods, in which we do not plant close to the road. At the time of this parable, sowing seed was far different from our modern methods and utilization of equipment to plant seed. The farmer would carry a bag of seed and scatter the seed by hand, much like we sow grass seed. He would scatter seed onto the every bit of available ground, in attempts to enlarge his harvest. In attempts to plant as much seed as possible, some of the seed fell among the path, which was packed soil from the tread of people’s feet. Though farmers spent time gathering rocks from their soil, the terrain of Palestine is rocky. Thus, some of the seed fell into the rocks. Other seeds fell among thorns, where they were choked out, while others fell into the cultivated land. Despite the circumstances into which the seed was sown, the harvest still yielded a nice crop for the farmer, much more than what he had sown. There are many different kinds of people, just like there were different kinds of soil. The seed that is sown is good. It is God’s Word, and wherever it falls, if given a chance, it will grow and bring forth a harvest. He was also telling us that all kinds of people have a chance; that Gods had his seed, or Word, given to every kind of heart. This means that the harvest does not depend on the seed or the one sowing it; but rather upon the ones who receive it. You cannot tell the condition of another’s heart. Be an abundant sower, so you have a chance to be an abundant reaper for the Lord.
What I want my students to:
God wants to bless us. We need to grow into the person God wants us to be.

Know: God’s word is a gift straight from Him to you.

Feel: Feel led to learn what the Bible says.

Do: Grow into great Christians.

As teachers we must continually reassess our soil. James 3:1 tells us “we who teach will be judged more strictly.” Not only do we need fertile soil for God’s word, we need to feed our seed. God wants to bless us with knowledge and blessings. He wants us to be great teachers of His word. We are expected to sow God’s seed in all the children that enter our classroom. Some children will have nearly perfect, untainted soil. Others may not be so fortunate, even at this young age.

The Sower and the Seed parable reminds me of King Solomon. He seemed to start out with incredible soil. He loved God, had a Godly upbringing, and his wisdom (thanks to God) was beyond belief. God planted great knowledge and understanding in him. As he grew older, he allowed weeds and thorns to enter his physical and spiritual life. His 700 wives and 300 concubines led him astray. His heart turned to other gods. We can learn a lot from Solomon’s great wisdom. We can also learn from his not so wise decisions. He needed to continually reassess his soil and feed his seed!
**Materials:** One apple, one knife.

**Procedure:** Cut apple in half and cut seeds out of center. Let apple sit out, both halves exposed, for at least 10 minutes. Before class, put apple back together. The apple should look as if it were never cut.

Show the class your delicious-looking apple. Hold the apple, so that no one can tell it has been cut. *Do apples have seeds?* Wait for response. *We’ll be talking more about seeds in our Bible story today. The seeds in our story will be like the word of God. It is important for us to learn the word of God. We need to read and study the Bible. Now, who wants to guess how many seeds are in this apple? This is a beautiful apple. If this were a person I’d say they had a lot of “good stuff” inside to make them look so good. Do you think this apple has many seeds? Let’s see how it looks on the inside. Open the apple for the class. *This apple does not look as tasty now, does it? What is missing?* The seeds.
Materials: one watermelon, black marker, knife, paper plates and forks, napkins.

Procedure: As students enter class, have them write their names on the watermelon. Close: Have any of you ever seen a watermelon seed? Do you think this watermelon has one seed, or lots of seeds? Watermelons have lots of seeds. One seed has the power to grow 200,000 times its weight in 90 days. Isn’t that’s amazing? Jesus talks about God’s word being like seeds. Do you think after God’s word is planted in our heart, we can grow to be 200,000 times better than we are now? We can sure try! God made us a lot like watermelons. He gave us the ability to be “tough” like the rind of the watermelon. We can stand up against bad people and not give in to doing what is wrong. We also have a “sweet” side. We know how to be good to people and how to show love. Most importantly though, we are full of seeds (God’s word). Watermelon Wannabes-Want to be like a watermelon. We want to be full of God’s seed and ready to better ourselves 200,000 times over! Slice and enjoy.
Put the cookie jar in front of the class. **Who can tell me what this is?** If it isn’t obvious you can give hints until they guess right. **Do any of you have a cookie jar at your home? What do people keep in cookie jars?** Cookies. They keep the cookies fresh and yummy. **What are your favorite cookies?** Wait for response. **Who wants to guess what I’ve got in my cookie jar?** Well, let’s see here… take the lid off and begin pulling “trash” out. Put the wadded up papers in front of the children. **Wait a minute; someone put their trash in my cookie jar! Is it still a cookie jar even though it’s full of trash?** It sure is. This cookie jar is a lot like each of us. If we put good things in us like reading our Bible, going to church, talking to God, watching good TV shows; it is like filling our jar with delicious cookies. If we fill ourselves with bad stuff, like watching bad movies, saying bad words, looking at bad pictures; we’re just filling our cookie jar with trash. What we put in is what we will get out.

Jesus talks in his story today about people who fill themselves with the “good stuff” and do great things for God. He also talks about the people whose lives are full of “trash”; they don’t go far as Christians. Jesus had been traveling with his twelve disciples, teaching along the way. He was sitting by the lake teaching, as more and more people gathered around to listen. He climbed in a boat and sat to teach while a large crowd gathered on the shore. He taught this group of people a parable, or story, known as “The Parable of the Sower”. Jesus told them that a farmer went out to plant his seed. While he was planting, some seed fell by the road. The birds came and ate all that seed. Some seed fell on rocky ground, where there wasn’t much dirt. That seed grew fast. When the sun came out, those plants dried up because they didn’t have deep roots. Some seed fell in areas of thorny weeds. The weeds choked these plants out. Some other seed fell on good ground where it grew and became grain.
Jesus’ disciples asked Jesus to explain this parable. Jesus said the seed that fell by the road is like the person who hears the teaching about the kingdom, but doesn’t understand it. The Evil One comes and takes away the things that were planted in that person’s heart. The seed that fell on rocky ground is like the person who hears the teaching and gets excited, but he doesn’t let the teaching go deep into his life. He keeps it only a short time. When difficulties come, he quickly gives up. The seed that fell among the thorny weeds is like the person who hears the teaching but lets worries and love of money get in the way. The teaching does not produce good fruit from him. The seed that falls on the good ground is like the person who hears and understands the teaching with a sincere heart. They obey God’s word and produce good fruit.

In other words: Jesus is the farmer. He’s throwing the seed out all over the earth. The seed is the word of God. He wants everyone to take this seed and grow into the best Christians possible. The problem is we are all different types of soil, or dirt. What kind of dirt are you? The road with hard dirt are people who are closed-minded and don’t really want to take in God’s word. The rocky dirt is like people who are shallow and don’t let God’s word take root. They fall apart when problems come against them. The thorny, weedy dirt people are those whose lives are busy with things of the world. They like to worry. The good dirt people are who we want to be. They listen to God’s word and store it in their hearts. They grow and become strong Christians.

Now if we are “good dirt” people, and “good cookie jar” people, what do you suppose we will have in our cookie jars? Good stuff or old trash? Well, no matter how this class started, I’m going to fill myself – and my cookie jar – with good stuff. Pull out your hidden cookies. Place them in your empty cookie jar. As you are filling your jar with cookies, have the class name good things to fill their lives with. (Church, prayer, kindness, good attitudes, Bible study, etc.) Once you have all the cookies in your jar say, Oh, I feel so much better now! I’ve filled up with some real goodies. If I share my goodies with you, will you go out and share some of your goodies with others? You can share your kindness, your helpfulness, even your belief in Jesus with others. Hand each child a cookie and a napkin. GO!
Who’s Rubbing Off On You?

Materials: Copy enough of the “FRIEND” worksheets for each student. Have one Number 2 pencil sharpened and ready for each student.

Procedure: Hand out pencils and the “FRIEND” papers. Tell your students to color in each letter with their pencil. As they are coloring, ask them the name of each letter. To keep from having “silent time” ask them words that begin with each letter. Have them continue coloring until they are done. Once they have all finished, have them hold their artwork up for everyone to see. Praise students for coloring in the lines. Finally, have students lay their papers in front of them on a hard surface. Have them take one hand and rub it across their paper.

What happened to your hands? They should have lead on the surface. The word we colored in was “friend”. It was easy for the pencil lead to rub off on you, wasn’t it? It’s also very easy for your friend’s to rub off on you. If you are spending time with good friends, God will be pleased. You will be doing what is right while you are around them, using nice language, and attending church. If you are spending time with friends who don’t include God in their lives, they can rub off on you also. Maybe they invite you over and tell you how mean your parents are to make you get up early for church. Maybe they tell you cleaning your room is only important if you want to clean it. Maybe they tell you that it’s okay to say bad words if no adults are around. We do not need these kinds of people rubbing off on us. In our story today, we will find that some seeds (also known as God’s word) fell on soil that became choked out by weeds. Don’t let bad people, we consider our friends, choke out God’s important words to us. Don’t let anything we do choke out God’s message to us. Let’s try to rub off on others. Let them see Jesus living in us.
CRAFT/SCIENCE
Materials: bread, cookie cutter, smooth peanut butter, plastic knives, yarn or string, bird seed, paper plate, baggies, and wet wipes

Preparation: A day before you will be doing your project, use cookie cutter to cut shapes out of bread. Push yarn through bread before it hardens. The yarn will be for hanging, after project is complete. You may tie yarn before class, or let students tie to complete the hanger. Have a paper plate full of birdseed for class.

Procedure: Give each student a hardened piece of bread and a plastic knife. Class can share a jar of peanut butter. Students will spread peanut butter on one side of the bread. Once one side is covered, they will push peanut butter side into plate of birdseed. Students may repeat process on the other side, if they wish. Place bird feeder into baggie. Students may need wet wipes for clean up.

Hang your bird feeders outside on a tree for the birds to eat. In our story today, we find that birds are eating all the good seeds that we need. These seeds are the word of God and we want to hold onto those. We don’t want to let the birds peck away at the Bible. Just think, our bird feeders will keep the birds where they belong. We don’t want anything, or anyone, to take away what God has given us. The Bible is a gift to each of us. He speaks directly to us through his word. We need to protect and guard it.
Quest Connection

Procedure: Have children sit or stand still in one spot. They could be sitting in their chairs; they can be in a straight line or circle. Tell them, I want you to think of something that has a seed. This could be corn, an orange, a watermelon, etc. I will come around the room and blow bubbles toward you. When I say your name I want you to pop one bubble and name one thing that has a seed. So if I blow bubbles to my right, no one pops them except the person who’s name I call out. If you feel REALLY smart, you can pop two bubbles and give two answers. Don’t go in a specific order, but make sure to give everyone a chance. Now that you are all warmed up, we’re really going to make this interesting! This time when I blow bubbles toward you and call your name, I want you to say one thing the Bible has taught us. Here are some examples. God is in heaven, Jesus is God’s son, Jesus died on a cross, Adam and Eve were real people, Noah built an ark, we shouldn’t lie. Now play again. Give everyone a chance to pop a bubble and tell a truth from the Bible.

Close

Bubbles are fun. We should let people know that Christians love to have fun! We need to constantly be bubbling over with God’s word. The more you know about the Bible, the better equipped you’ll be for planting good seeds in people.
God’s word is living and active, like these bits of nature we have been working with. These nature items all started out as little bitty seeds. We are all given seed from God. The seed we are given is the Bible. We need to decide if we want to shrivel up and die inside, or grow into something wonderful. God expects great beauty to come from us. He knows your heart. He doesn’t have to rub hard on you to know how beautiful you are. We all have our own beauty, our God – Given Beauty! Think of each nature item on your paper as a different Christian. God looks at us and thinks, “What a beautiful bouquet,” and He ties a yellow Kingdom ribbon around us for safekeeping.
Dirt Pudding

**Materials:** Instant chocolate pudding, chocolate wafer cookies, sunflower seeds, paper cups, plastic spoons, Ziploc Baggies, and wooden spoons (optional). **Preparation:** Prepare pudding according to directions. Fill Baggies with wafer cookies. Fill paper cups ½ full of pudding for each student.

**Quest Connection**

**Procedure:** Give each child a baggie with wafer cookies and have them gently begin crushing them with their hands. If you have wooden spoons, they may use the back of these. Encourage them to keep their Baggies intact. Once students have their cookies crushed into small bits, have them dump them into their pudding and stir. After they have stirred their cookies in, tell them they have officially made Dirt Pudding!

**Close**

In Jesus story of the farmer planting his seed, we are the dirt. Did you make good dirt today? Were you gentle with your bags when you crushed your cookies? Sometimes life doesn’t seem so gentle on us. Sometime it seems like a hammer is shaping us, doesn’t it? If you’ve been yelled at by someone you love, or been disciplined by Mom or Dad, you may feel like our crushed cookies. It’s important to know that God is with us, no matter what we are going through. We need to take good care of ourselves and when God is ready he will provide us with all we need. Right now, I want to give you something God has already given us. Hand each student a sunflower seed. This is a seed. The Bible calls God’s word a seed. I want you to plant this seed deep in your dirt. When you eat your dirt pudding remember there is a special gift planted in the dirt just for you. The seed is the word of God, and it’s a gift to you.
Go!

I’m Full Of Seeds

ART
Materials: apples, a knife, black and green permanent markers, red fabric paint, paper plates, wax paper, t-shirt or pillowcase to be painted, soap and water for clean up. Other ideas to stamp apples on could be: bandanas (handkerchiefs), socks, visors, hats, plain paper, and bulletin boards.

Quest Connection

Preparation: Pre-wash any fabric you will be painting on. Cut apples in half before class. Pour red paint onto paper plates. Put wax paper inside t-shirt or pillowcase and lay it flat in front of child’s work area.

Procedure: Have students roll up their sleeves if necessary. Hand each child half an apple. Have children dip their apple into the red paint. They should stamp it onto an empty paper plate before starting on their project. Let them carefully stamp all over the front of their shirt or pillowcase. Once they are done stamping, let them wash their hands and leave their project to dry. This would be a good time for the Bible Story or another activity. At the end of class you can either have an adult help you put the seeds and stems on the apples, or let the children. I would recommend an adult sneak into class and do it while the children are preoccupied. It is not important to put seeds on every apple. You can tell the children that some apples are whole and we cannot see the seeds.

Close

The apples we worked with today didn’t just have one seed each, but many seeds. Each apple is capable of growing several more apple trees. God fills us with his seeds, which are His words in the Bible. He wants us to be full of His seeds and spread them to others. He gives us enough to not only grow ourselves into great Christians… but to help plant seeds in others, so they’ll grow into great Christians!
Color (or glue different seeds onto) your flowers.

Draw green stems from your flowers to the bow.
Who has God's seed in them?
Draw a line to the apple that matches best.
Start with the seed in the bottom of the flowerpot. Work through the maze until you find the heart of the flower. Draw a smile in the heart.
For the word of God is living and active.

Hebrews 4:12a

Connect the dots. Color in your “living” pictures. The word of God is just as “alive” as any fruit or plant you see growing.
Draw a picture of yourself standing on the Bible. The Bible is the seed that helps us grow. It is a strong foundation and can hold anything. Draw seeds in one of your hands. These seeds are God’s word that you can now spread to others.