

“Readers’ Theater” versions of some of the parables found in Luke

NOTE: Not all parables make good readers’ theatre. Some don’t have enough speaking parts or are too short (such as the parable of the woman’s lost coin). The following parables are just long enough and have just enough characters to be do-able as readers theater skits.

SUGGESTION: After you complete each skit, have a brief discussion about its true meaning. Kids under the age of 12 will probably need help figuring out who or what each character represents. (The ability to think abstractly begins, on average, at age 12.)

EXTRA IDEA: If you want an activity for the parable of the lost coin (not presented here) buy some gold-covered chocolate coins and hide them in your meeting area ahead of time so the kids can find them. Or, divide the kids into two groups and have the groups take turns hiding and finding the coins. I’ve found that kids enjoy hiding the coins as much as finding them.

On to the skits...

The Parable of the Banquet (Luke 14:15-24)

Cast:

Narrator

Host

Guest 1

Guest 2

Guest 3

Servant

NARRATOR: A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. When the banquet was finally ready, he sent his servants to tell all those who had been invited that it was time to come. When the servants told the guests that everything was ready, they began to give excuses.

GUEST 1: I have just bought a field and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.

GUEST 2: I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I am on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.

GUEST 3: I just gotten married, so I can’t come.

NARRATOR: The servants came back and reported this to their master. The master became angry and said to his servants:

HOST: go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.

NARRATOR: His servants did so, but still the banquet hall was not filled.

SERVANT: Sir, what you ordered has been done, but there’s still room.

HOST: Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full! I tell you, not one of those people who were invited will get a taste of my banquet!

The Parable of the Lost Son (Luke 15:11-31)

Cast:

Narrator

Father

Older Son

Younger Son

Servant

NARRATOR: Once there was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father:

YOUNGER SON: Father, give me my share of the family estate. I want it now.

NARRATOR: So the father divided the estate between the two sons and paid the younger son his share. Not long after that, the younger son took his inheritance and set off for a distant country. And there he squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who gave him a job feeding pigs. The younger son longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. After a while, he came to his senses, and said:

YOUNGER SON: My father's servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I should go back to my father and say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Please just let me be one of your hired men."

NARRATOR: So he got up and went back to his father's house. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. The father was filled with joy and ran to meet his son. He threw his arms around him and kissed him.

YOUNGER SON: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.

NARRATOR: But the father said to his servants:

FATHER: Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate! For this son of mine was dead and is alive again-- he was lost and has been found!

NARRATOR: So they began to celebrate. Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on.

SERVANT: Your brother has come home, and your father has killed the fattened calf to celebrate because your brother has come back.

NARRATOR: The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out asked him to come in and join in the celebration. But he answered his father:

OLDER SON: All these years I've served you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son who has squandered your money comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!

FATHER: My son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again. He was lost and now is found!

The Parable of the Shrewd Manager (Luke 16:1-11)

Cast:

Narrator
Rich Man
Manager
Debtor 1
Debtor 2

NARRATOR: There once was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting money. The rich man called in the manager and asked him:

RICH MAN: What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer. You are fired.

NARRATOR: The manager said to himself:

MANAGER: Oh no, what shall I do now? My master is taking away my job! I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. Wait--I have an idea. I know what I can do so that people welcome me into their homes and provide for me.

NARRATOR: The manager called in each one of his masters debtors.

MANAGER: How much to you owe my master?

DEBTOR 1: 800 gallons of olive oil.

MANAGER: Give me your bill. I will cross out 800 and write in 400 instead.

DEBTOR 1: Hey, thanks!

MANAGER: And you-- how much do you owe my master?

DEBTOR 2: 1000 bushels of wheat.

MANAGER: Give me your bill. I will scratch out 1000 and make it only 800.

DEBTOR 2: Thanks!

NARRATOR: Believe it or not, the rich man did not become angry at the manager for doing this. He was amazed at how shrewdly the manager had acted, making the debtors into his friends by reducing their debt. Jesus said, "Use your worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when your wealth is gone you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. If you show yourself trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, you will be trusted with heavenly wealth. He who proves himself trustworthy with little things will then be trusted with great things.

The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke:16:19-31)

Cast:

Narrator
Rich Man
Abraham

NARRATOR: Once there was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate lay a beggar named Lazarus, who was covered with sores. The dogs would come and lick his sores. Lazarus had no food and longed to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Then the time came when both the rich man and Lazarus died. The angels came

and carried poor Lazarus to the place where Abraham was. But the rich man went to hell. From hell, the rich man looked up and saw Lazarus with Abraham. Lazarus was happy where he was but the rich man was in torment.

RICH MAN: Abraham! Father Abraham! Have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip his finger in water and drip it on my tongue to cool it, because I am in agony in all this fire.

ABRAHAM: Son, remember that in your lifetime you lived in comfort and received many good things while Lazarus had a miserable life. Now it is reversed-- Lazarus is in comfort and you are in agony. And besides, there is a huge gap between us. No one can cross over.

RICH MAN: I beg you, Father Abraham, send Lazarus to my father's house so he can warn my five brothers about this place. I don't want them to come here to this place of torment.

ABRAHAM: They have Moses and the Prophets. Let your brothers listen to them.

RICH MAN: No, Father Abraham-- if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent!

ABRAHAM: If your brothers will not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.

The Parable of the Ten Minas (Luke 19:11-27)

Cast:

Narrator

Prince/king

People (everyone says these lines together)

Servant 1

Servant 2

Servant 3

Servant 4

NARRATOR: A prince of a certain land went on a long journey to a distant land. While in that distant land, he would be promoted from prince to king. Before he left, he gave ten of his servants a coin called a mina, and told them to put it to good use while he was gone.

PRINCE: Here is a mina for each of you. When I come back I will ask you what you did with the money while I was away.

NARRATOR: Right before the prince left, the people of his land said to him:

PEOPLE: We hate you! We don't want you to be our king. We hope you never return!

NARRATOR: The prince went on his long journey and eventually he did indeed return home. When he came back he was no longer just a prince-- he had been promoted to being king. As he had promised, he called in those ten servants to find out what they had done with their minas.

PRINCE/KING: And what did you do with the mina I gave you?

SERVANT 1: Sir, your mina has earned ten more. I can give you eleven minas.

PRINCE/KING: Well done, my good servant! Because you have been trustworthy in this small matter, I will make you the ruler over ten cities! And you-- what did you do with the mina?

SERVANT 2: Sir, your mina has earned five more. Here are six minas in return.

PRINCE/KING: Well done! I will give you five cities. And you-- what did you do with the mina?

SERVANT 3: Sir, here is your mina. I have kept it hidden away in a piece of cloth because I was afraid. I know you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and you reap what

you did not sow.

PRINCE/KING: What?! I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! What do you mean that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in and reaping what I did not sow? You could have at least put that mina in the bank and made a little bit of interest on it! I will take that mina from you and give it to my faithful servant who made ten minas!

SERVANT 4 (or 2): But sir, that man already has ten minas.

PRINCE/KING: I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given. But for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away. And as for those enemies of mine who did not want me to become king-- bring them to me and kill them in front of me!

The Parable of the Tenants of the Vineyard (Luke: 20:9-17)

Cast:

Narrator

Owner

Tenant

NARRATOR: A certain man planted a vineyard, rented it out to some farmers and then went away on a long journey. At harvest time, he sent a servant to the tenants so they would give him some of the fruit that the vineyard had produced. But the tenants beat the servant and sent him away with nothing. The man sent another servant, but they did the same thing to him. When he sent a third servant, the tenants beat him up and threw him out of the vineyard. Then the owner of the vineyard said:

OWNER: What shall I do? I know-- I will send my son. They will respect him.

NARRATOR: But when the tenants saw the son coming, they said to themselves:

TENANT: This is the heir of the vineyard. Let's kill him and then the inheritance will be ours!

NARRATOR: So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Now what will the owner do? Will he not get rid of the tenants and give the vineyard to someone else? As it says in the scriptures, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the capstone."