

7

Growing Season

Grace
We allow God to transform us.

POWER TEXT

"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life" (John 6:63).

KEY REFERENCES

- Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
- *Christ's Object Lessons*, chap. 2, pp. 33-61
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 8, pp. 103-105
- Student story on page 82 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 1, The Holy Scriptures
- No. 11, Growing in Christ
- No. 4, The Son

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that God gives His Word to them abundantly.
- **Feel** gratitude that God gives His Word to everyone.
- **Respond** by letting God's Word grow in their lives.

POWERPOINT

God gives us His Word extravagantly.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

A farmer and his son planting their field discuss the parable of the farmer as told by Jesus in Galilee. The parable tells about a farmer who plants seeds in his field, which has different types of soil. The farmer scatters his seed everywhere, even on soil that is unpromising. The seed represents the Word of God, which is scattered everywhere, whether or not there is promise of its taking root.

This is a lesson about grace.

God is extravagant. He scatters His word in abundance everywhere. Like the seed that has within itself the principles of physical growth, the Word of God has within it the principles of spiritual growth.

Teacher Enrichment

"The word of God is the seed. Every seed has in itself a germinating principle. In it the life of the plant is enfolded. So there is life in God's word. . . . In every command and in every promise . . . is the power, the very life of God. . . . He who by faith receives the word is receiving the very life and character of God" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 38).

"Christ's favorite theme was the paternal tenderness and abundant grace of God. . . .

Grace can thrive only in the heart that is being constantly prepared for the precious seeds of truth (*ibid.*, pp. 40, 50).

When Jesus lived on earth, the sowing and harvesting of grain had to be done entirely by hand, as it still is in some parts of the world. Farmers began sowing seed in early October. The rains of the winter brought the crops to maturity. By April the grain was ready to be harvested. (See *The Book of Life*, vol. 18, p. 46.)

What extravagant gift have you received from God? How has it transformed your life?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson. Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the readiness activity of your choice.

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at the door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness Activities	10-15	*A. Seed Meal* *B. Seeds and Me* *C. Seeds in Extravagance* *D. It's in the Seed*	*foods prepared from seeds, seeds in containers variety of seeds *fruit with seeds, knife soaked large seeds
* Prayer and Praise	15-20	See page 77. Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, world map, pushpins, flowerpot/watering pot/basket, seed-shaped pieces of paper, pens/pencils, flowerpot/box (different from the one used for the offering)
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story Experiencing the Story Exploring the Bible	three copies of *Net Kids* script (p. 153) Bible Bibles, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk, paper, pens/pencils, *fruit (optional)
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*The Harvest Is Sure*	copies of heart pattern (p. 154), pens/pencils/markers
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Share a Seed*	copies of heart pattern (p. 154), scissors, glue, seeds, pens/pencils
* Closing		Prayer and Closing Comments Reminder to Parents Coming Up Next Week	

*Be aware of any food allergies and adjust accordingly.

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:
- ☐ *foods prepared from seeds
- ☐ seeds in containers

Seed Meal

***Note:** Before doing this activity assess whether any of the students have allergic reactions to seeds or nuts. If a student has allergies to these, avoid bringing such seeds to class.

Have adult volunteers help you prepare food dishes for a seed meal. Bring in a selection of food items that are seeds, such as peanuts, sunflower seeds, etc., or made from seeds, such as lentil soup, corn bread, etc., for the students to sample. Beside each dish of food, place a container of seeds from which the food was made. For example: baked beans with a container of white pea beans, split-pea soup with a container of dried peas, sliced bread with a container of wheat kernels, corn tortillas with a container of corn kernels, etc. Allow time for the students to sample the food.

Debriefing

Say: **Some of the foods we eat are the whole plant**. **Can you think of plants that we eat?** (celery, lettuce, etc.) **Some of the foods we eat are roots or tubers. Can you think of any?** (potatoes, carrots, beets, etc.) **What did each of our food items today have in common?** (All were seeds.) **Which seed food did you like best? Why do you think God made so many kinds of food?** (To give us a variety.) **Our lesson today is about a parable Jesus told about seeds. We will learn what Jesus used seeds to represent. Let's say our power text together, John 6:63:**

"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life" (John 6:63).

And we will find out that

God gives us His Word extravagantly.

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ *variety of seeds

Seeds and Me

***Note:** Before doing this activity assess whether any of the students have allergic reactions to seeds or nuts. If a student has allergies to these, avoid bringing such seeds to class.

Have a variety of seeds from different plants available for the students to see, feel, and smell. Have edible and nonedible seeds, large and small seeds. Allow time for the students to examine the different seeds. Instruct them to select one seed that might represent them, then sit in a circle holding the seed. Say: **We are going to go around the circle and each of you will explain why you selected the seed you did. I'll begin. I picked the _____ seed to represent me because it is _____ and I know that I am a little bit like that too.** After each student has shared, debrief.

Debriefing

Say: **In what other ways are seeds like people? Why don't all seeds come in the same size or the same shape?** (Accept responses; they need to be different for the different places that they will grow, etc.) **Today we are going to talk about a parable that Jesus told. Instead of representing people, the seeds in Jesus' parable represent the Word of God. The power text, John 6:63, reminds us of the impact of God's Word on our lives. Let's say it together,**

"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life" (John 6:63).

Our power point is:

God gives us His Word extravagantly.

Prayer and Praise

C

YOU NEED:
- ☐ *fruit with seeds
- ☐ knife

Seeds in Extravagance

Bring a piece of fruit that has a lot of seeds in it, such as a melon or a pomegranate. Cut the fruit open in front of the class. Show the students the seeds inside the fruit. Ask: **If we planted one of these seeds, how many [melons/pomegranates] would we get from the plant it produced?** (Accept responses.) **Why do you think there are so many seeds in one piece of fruit when all it takes is one to grow a new plant?** (A lot of the seeds will not take root, etc.) **In our lesson today we will learn that seeds are compared to God's Word. Let's say the power text, John 6:63:**

"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life" (John 6:63).

Our power point for today is:

God gives us His Word extravagantly.

D

YOU NEED:
- ☐ *soaked large seeds

It's in the Seed

On Friday soak large seeds, such as butter beans, in water overnight. In the morning, drain the water from the seeds, then wrap them in a moist towel until classtime. Soak enough for each student to have one seed.

Distribute the seeds to the students. Say: **Carefully split the seed open. Look for the tiny plant that tells you the seed has started to sprout.** Assist any students who need help.

Debriefing

Hold up a seed and ask: **What do I have to do to get this seed to grow? Say: If you water it, a seed will grow. Growing is built into the seed. It's natural. Today our lesson is about God's Word being like a seed. Let's say our power text together, John 6:63,**

"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life" (John 6:63).

Our power point is:

God gives us His Word extravagantly.

*Be aware of any food allergies and adjust accordingly.

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"Amazing Grace" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, no. 108)
"Thy Word" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 88)
"Oh, Magnify the Lord" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 12)
"How Majestic Is Your Name" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 4)
"It's About Grace" (see music on page 152)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Use *Adventist Mission* for youth and adults (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. Using a world map, have the students identify and mark with pushpins the location where the mission story is taking place.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ flowerpot/watering pot/basket

Use a flowerpot, basket, or other gardening container to collect the offering. Say: **Our church is working around the world to tell people about Jesus. When we give an offering it's like the water that is used to help a seed grow. It provides a way for other people to learn about Jesus.**

Prayer

YOU NEED:
- ☐ seed-shaped pieces of paper
- ☐ pens/pencils
- ☐ flowerpot/box

Have students write prayer requests on small pieces of paper shaped like a seed common in your area. At prayer time, invite them to go to the place where a nicely colored flowerpot or box decorated like a flower box or other plant-oriented container is located and place them in it. Pray over the requests or ask for a volunteer to pray. Close with a prayer for the students' joys and sorrows, for the birthday and other special event celebrants, as well as for the visitors.

2

BIBLE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ three scripts (p. 153)

Introducing the Bible Story

***The* Net Kids**

(Note: The *Net Kids* are an imaginative way to introduce the Bible story. If you prefer not to use this imaginary element, read over the script yourself and introduce the lesson concept in your own words.)

(Refer to Lesson 2 for background and setup information.)

Make three copies of the *Net Kids* script on page 153 of this guide. Distribute to the students you have selected as early as possible. Allow practice time before using this activity.

Present the skit.

Debriefing:

Say: **The lesson this week is from a parable Jesus told about a farmer who was planting seeds in a style that was common in his culture. See if you can figure out the lesson Jesus wanted His followers to understand.**

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bible

Experiencing the Story

If possible, take your class outside. If not, do this activity in the room. Tell the class that you are going to re-create a parable Jesus told. Ask for volunteers to be the following: farmer, seeds, birds, rocks, sun, and thorns. Instruct the students to act out what the passage says while a student volunteer reads from the Bible. Begin by saying: **It is a beautiful day. Jesus is walking beside the Sea of Galilee. Of course, His 12 disciples are with Him. Crowds of people shove each other trying to get a good look at this amazing rabbi. Sick people elbow their way to the front, hoping that Jesus will heal them. The crush of people is so great that Jesus finally has to stop. He speaks to Peter and Andrew, then climbs into their fishing boat. You can hear the people moan, thinking that He is leaving them now. But instead of rowing across the lake, the disciples move a little way from shore and drop anchor in shallow water. Jesus looks out across the plain of Gennesaret and notices a farmer working in his field. He points to the farmer and all the people standing on the beach turn their heads and look. Jesus says: _____**

(Instruct the student volunteer to read Matthew 13:3-9.)

Debriefing

Ask: **How do you think the people listening to Jesus felt?** (curious, happy, etc.) **Why did the sower scatter seed everywhere, including places it wouldn't grow well?** (It was accidental; to give it a chance.) Read Luke 8:11: **"The seed is the word of God." What do you think Jesus wanted them to understand about God from this story?** (He is generous; He scatters His seed everywhere no matter what the soil is like.) **Repeat the power point with me:**

God gives us His Word extravagantly.

3

APPLYING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pens/pencils
- ☐ fruit (optional)

Exploring the Bible*

Provide materials for the following activities. Write the options on a marker board. Tell the students that they can work individually or in groups.

Option 1 Create a poem about this parable.

Option 2 Create a banner of the memory verse, illustrating it with a graphic from the parable.

Option 3 Write an original parable to illustrate God's grace.

Option 4 Compose a song praising God for His Word.

Option 5 Read and discuss what it means that "Jesus is the Word of God." Explain how John1:1, 2, 14 applies to the parable about the sower.

Option 6 Count the seeds in one piece of fruit. Estimate how many pieces of fruit would be produced by one plant. Estimate how many seeds would be produced by the fruit of one plant.

Option 7 Use your imagination to create a way to convey the idea that God doesn't look for quick results. He knows that growing takes time.

Allow time for students to report back to the class.

* Be aware of any food allergies and adjust accordingly.

Debriefing

Say: **Often, when this parable is studied the focus is on the four types of soil on which the seed falls. Today our focus has been on the work of God in scattering His Word everywhere. What did you learn about God from this parable today?** (He is generous; He gives His Word to everyone; etc.) **Let's repeat our power text, John 6:63:**

"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life" (John 6:63).

What is our power point?

God gives us His Word extravagantly.

Accommodations for students with special needs

Allow students with special needs to work in groups in which they would feel most comfortable participating and where they could contribute to the best of their ability.

YOU NEED:
- ☐ copies of heart pattern (p. 154)
- ☐ pens/pencils/markers

The Harvest Is Sure

Say: **Today we have learned that God is extravagant; He gives His Word to everyone, even to those who don't seem promising.** Ask: **How long does it take for a seed to grow into a mature plant?** (It depends on the plant; some take days, some weeks, some years.) **What seeds grow quickly into mature plants?** (Accept responses.) **What plants take a long time to mature?** (Accept responses.) Say: **Another lesson we can learn from this parable is that God is patient. He doesn't look for quick results. He knows that growing takes time. God plants the seed of His Word in us. What do we need to do?** (Be patient and let it grow.) **What is our power point?**

God gives us His Word extravagantly.

Distribute copies of the heart (see p. 154) without writing on it. Instruct the students to write on the heart a sentence something like this: "God has planted His Word in me. I'm letting it grow." Encourage them to put this in their Bible or in a prominent place at home.

4

SHARING THE LESSON

Share a Seed

YOU NEED:
- ☐ copies of heart (p. 154)
- ☐ scissors
- ☐ glue
- ☐ *seeds
- ☐ pens/pencils

Invite students to share with the class if they had the opportunity last week to sow seeds by telling someone about the treasures found in the Word of God. Ask: **What does sowing seeds represent? What about your faith in God's Word makes you want to share it with someone else? With whom did you talk about the Bible? How did you share your passion for studying the Bible?**

Make copies of the heart with words (see p. 154). Have scissors, glue, and seeds available. Instruct the students to glue a seed onto the heart. Have them sign their name to the heart. Allow each of them to make several of these. Distribute them to other church members after Sabbath School is over.

*Be aware of any food allergies and adjust accordingly.

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Pray that God will reveal His love to each of your students this week, and that they will share that love by loving their neighbor-in-need.

Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **Jesus tells the parable of the yeast and mustard seed. By God's grace our faith, though small, will grow.**

Notes

Student lesson

Growing Season

Have you ever planted a garden or worked on a farm? In some parts of the world, people buy most of their food in stores. Perhaps if Jesus lived in those places today, He would tell a parable of the cereal aisle! His parables were always about things with which people were familiar. He wanted people to look at them and remember the lessons He taught.

A boy shifted the heavy seed sack from his right to his left shoulder. He'd been out with his father since early morning planting. He decided he would rather live in the city, where his cousins didn't need to worry about growing seasons.

"Time to eat. I hope there's enough here to satisfy your hunger," his father said, smiling. "It's a good thing we're farmers." Then his tone became serious. "I heard that new Rabbi tell a story about planting."

"The teacher they call Jesus?" the boy asked. "Why would He talk about planting?"

"Why?" his father asked in surprise. "As I was saying, a farmer was planting seed in a field near the lake where the Rabbi spoke from a boat."

"A boat?" the boy asked.

"Yes. It was a brilliant idea. The people crowded around the Rabbi trying to listen to Him. They nearly pushed Him into the lake. He climbed into a boat. Everyone thought, *That's it! He's leaving.* But instead He pushed off from shore, dropped anchor in shallow water, and began teaching." The father's eyes glowed as he remembered.

"So the Rabbi started telling a story about a farmer. Every head turned to look at the farmer nearby. He was sowing the hillside above us.

"The Rabbi talked about planting. Planting. Just like we're doing right now. As the farmer arced his arm over the soil you could almost see the seeds flying."

The boy searched the basket for another fig.

"The Rabbi said, 'A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown' " (Matthew 13:3-8).

The boy looked at his father. His eyes still glowed. "I've thought a lot about this story," his father continued. "I don't think the Rabbi was really talking about planting."

"Then what do you think He was talking about?"

"I think He was talking about the kingdom of God."

"So you think Jesus compared God to a farmer?"

"Yes. The Rabbi said, 'The kingdom of God is like a farmer sowing seed.' "

"So what is the seed?"

"I think the seed is God's Word."

The boy sat up. "You mean the Torah?"

"Yes. Have you noticed how every synagogue has God's Word written on scrolls? God wants everyone to have access to His Word. So He scatters the seeds of His truth everywhere."

"What if the seeds go to waste because they are not well received by people?" the boy asked.

"You may think so, my son," his father said. "But the heavenly Farmer scatters it anyway, hoping it will take root and grow." His father held one tiny seed between his thumb and forefinger. "No one knows how many seeds this one grain will produce, do they?"

The boy shook his head as if to say, "No."

"And imagine how many seeds will be produced from all the seeds in this sack."

"It would be impossible to count," the boy said. He wasn't sure how to ask the question that was forming in his mind. "Father," he said, "do you think this Rabbi, Jesus, knows something we don't?"

"Like what?"

"Well . . . do you think He knows God better than we do?"

Father looked intently into the eyes of his son. "Yes, I think He does."

The boy and his father both turned to look at the open field waiting for them. The boy felt peace as he decided to accept God's kingdom and the seeds of God's Word in his heart.

KEY REFERENCES

- Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
- *Christ's Object Lessons*, chap. 2, pp. 33-61
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 8, pp. 103-105
- Our Beliefs nos. 1, 11, 4

POWER TEXT

"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life" (John 6:63).

POWER POINT

God gives us His Word extravagantly.







Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 60.

Sunday

READ Read Mark 4:1-20 and this week's lesson, "Growing Season."

CREATE Draw an open Bible and write on it the power text, John 6:33. Begin memorizing it.

PRAY Thank God for giving you everything you need to grow in Him.

Monday

READ Read Psalm 119:105.

COLLECT Gather seeds, a small piece of cotton, a small cup filled with dirt, and a plate or shallow pan.

DO Put a couple seeds on the piece of cotton, in the dirt, and on the plate. Keep them moist until Friday.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for giving His Word to you.

Tuesday

READ Read Matthew 13:3-9.

REMEMBER No matter how unpromising people may seem, God can make His Word productive in their lives.

SHARE Sow a seed today by telling someone about the treasures found in God's Word.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for scattering His Word everywhere.

Wednesday

READ Read Luke 8:1-3.

IDENTIFY What was Jesus proclaiming as He traveled from place to place?

THINK How might the parable of the sower be the good news of the kingdom of God to you?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for the good news He has given you.

Thursday

READ Read Luke 8:5-8.

COMPARE Compare Luke's account of the parable to Matthew's account. Matthew, as one of Jesus' 12 disciples, was probably present when Jesus told this parable. Luke, who never met Jesus, heard this story from someone else.

THINK Who is doing all the work in the parable of the sower? What is the job of the seeds?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you grow.

Friday

READ Read Luke 8:11-15.

DO Check your seeds. Have they shown signs of sprouting? Carefully pry one seed open so you can see the beginning growth of the plant.

THINK What does the seed represent?

REMEMBER Everything needed to grow is built into the seed.

THINK How is the seed like God's Word in you?

REPEAT Share the power text by memory at family worship.

PRAY Thank God that His Word contains everything you need to grow and become more like Jesus.