

SERIES: PARABLES OF JESUS
LESSON 3—THE BANQUET

Bible References: Luke 14:15-23

Key Verse: 1 Timothy 2:4—“...[God] desires all people to be saved and come to full knowledge of the truth.”

SCHEDULE

- Opening Activity
- Key Verse
- Bible Lesson
- Small Group Activities
- Review
- Prayer Part

ITEMS NEEDED:

- Craft items such as gloves to cut the fingers from as well as small wiggle eyes, felt, yarn, and other items to make and decorate finger puppets
- 1 balloon with today's key verse hidden inside

OPENING ACTIVITY

SAY: We're going to begin today's lesson in a very different way today. I'm going to read a children's story to you - this is NOT a story from the Bible but is a fun story that is very much like one of Jesus' parables that we're going to look at today.

YOUNGER CHILDREN—If you want, have them find a place in the room to lie down and close their eyes. Remind them that a parable is a story that teaches a life lesson. Challenge them to figure out the point of the story.

OLDER STUDENTS—Tell your students that later in the morning you are going to have them write or tell their own parable. Remind them that a parable is a story that teaches a life lesson. The story you are going to share is an example of this. This is NOT a story from the Bible but is similar to a parable Jesus told. Challenge them to figure out the point of the story.

Read “The King of Malakom” from the end of this lesson.

ASK: What was the point of this story?

SAY: A parable is a story that teaches a life lesson. Jesus taught many truths through parables.

ASK: Who remembers last week's parables? (Take a few answers.)

KEY VERSE

SAY: Before we see today's parable, we're going to get our key verse.

Choose 1 volunteer—

SAY: Parables have hidden meanings and today I have hidden our key verse inside a balloon. (Next week we're going to hide the verse in something...well, a little more messy. So be sure to come back next week!)

Give your volunteer three options for how they want to pop the balloon:

-You can pop it

-I can pop it

-Or I can hold it and you can CAREFULLY poke it with a pencil.

Retrieve the verse and ask if your volunteer wants to help read it.

Read 1 Timothy 2:4

Have your students REPEAT the verse after you.—“...[God] desires / all people / to be saved /and come to full knowledge / of the truth.”

ASK: What does this verse mean? (That God wants EVERYONE to know Him, to be saved and to go to Heaven.)

SAY: God DOESN'T just love a few people or just love good people. God loves everyone and wants everyone to come to Him by faith through Jesus Christ. God also DOESN'T want this truth to be hidden. He's want EVERYONE to know the Good News.

TESTIMONY—This is a good place for you, another leader or even a student to share their salvation story of how they came to Christ. This is God's plan for all.

BIBLE LESSON

SAY: God wants everyone to be saved. I need some volunteers to help me act out today's Bible story.

(NOTE: Today we're NOT going to use signs. Just assign parts as each new person in the story is mentioned. For example, the parable begins with "A man..." So at that point, choose someone to represent the "man." Ask your volunteers to say their parts also.)

Read Luke 14:14-24 from your Bible.

ASK: What point is Jesus making here? What is going on here?

ASK: What was the situation where Jesus told this story? (We didn't tell you...We wanted to see if you would ask!)

ASK: Do you think you would understand better if you knew the situation? (Yes.)

SAY: Jesus was eating at the house of one of the leading Pharisees.

ASK: Who can tell me some about the Pharisees? (They were religious leaders. Many of them were self-righteous although some of them truly had hearts for God. They had very

little regard for people who were sinful and for tax collectors or people they considered to be less than themselves and showed very little love or care for these people, etc.)

SAY: Jesus first told a different parable to the Pharisees and the others who were invited to the banquet when He noticed how they chose the best places for themselves. Then to the Pharisee who had invited Him, He said,

“When you make a dinner or a supper, don’t call your friends, nor your brothers, nor your kinsmen, nor rich neighbors, or perhaps they might also return the favor, and pay you back. But when you make a feast, ask the poor, the maimed, the lame, or the blind; and you will be blessed, because they don’t have the resources to repay you. For you will be repaid in the resurrection of the righteous” (Luke 14:13-14).

SAY: Then a man spoke us and said, “Blessed is he who will feast in the Kingdom of God!” Remember how the Pharisees and religious leaders had some deep misunderstandings about who God loved and who God would welcome to Himself? After the man makes this statement about those who will be in the Kingdom of God, Jesus told the parable we just heard.

ASK: In what ways does it help understanding the story if you understand the setting of what’s going on? Did it make sense knowing that Jesus was invited to a banquet and is talking to people at a banquet about who is invited to God’s banquet?

ASK: What were the three things we taught you last week that will always help you to understand the Bible better?

HOLD UP THREE FINGERS: When you’re reading the Bible, it helps to know to three things:
-*Hold up one finger*—Who is talking and to whom are they speaking?
-*Hold up two fingers*—What’s the situation or setting? What’s going on here?
-*Hold up three fingers*—What’s the background? What caused this situation or created the need for what is being said?

Dismiss to Small Groups

SAY: Right now it is time for our small groups, so I’m going to dismiss you one row at a time.

Dismiss rows of chairs to the tables in the rooms. Give them specific directions where to go.

Small Groups

SMALL GROUPS

YOUNGER STUDENTS—Finger Puppets

Give each student items to make TWO finger puppets. These will be made from the cut-off fingers of gloves and decorated however your students desire. See the end of the lesson for some sample pictures. Let them know that they'll be using their finger puppets to review today's story and, if you have time, to make up parables of their own.



REVIEW

(The following activities can take place either in a large group or a small group setting.)

- Lead your students in using their finger puppets to act out today's Bible story.
- Ask your students (or their fingers!) questions from today's lesson.
- Also take time to review today's key verse, the spiritual truth of today's parables. You can even have your students give their finger puppets a voice and let them repeat the key verse after you.
- Let your students come up with their own parables to teach an important lesson. You might be surprised at what they share. If you want, you can even tell them to think about these stories and you'll give them time next week to share their parables.

PRAYER TIME

Set the finger puppets aside, take prayer requests and pray.

EXTRA TIME

Help your students memorize today's key verse.

Small Groups

SMALL GROUPS

OLDER STUDENTS—Create Your Own Parable

Challenge your students to come up with their own parable teaching an important life lesson. Give them time to either write it out or to think it through. Then give anyone who desires the opportunity to share their parable with the rest of your students.

REVIEW

(The follow activities can take place either in a large group or a small group setting)

-Ask your students questions from today's lesson.

-Take time to review today's key verse the spiritual truth of today's parables.

- If you want, you can even tell your students to think about other parables they can create and that you'll give them time week to share their parables.

-The past two weeks and today's lesson all came from the Gospel of Luke. Have a Bible Skills race to see who can be the first to find the following parables:

Luke 10:30-37—The Good Samaritan

Luke 15:1-7—The Lost Sheep

Luke 15:8-10—The Lost Coin

Luke 15:11-24—The Lost Son

Luke 14:16-24—The Banquet

A few other Parables from Luke:

Luke 14:7-11—Parable of the Guests

Luke 13:18-20—Parables of the Mustard Seed and Leaven

Luke 7:40-50—Parable of the Debtor

Luke 8:4-15—Parable of the Sower

Luke 8:16-21—Parable of the Lamp

PRAYER TIME

Take prayer requests and pray.

EXTRA TIME

Help your students memorize today's key verse.

CHILDREN'S STORY
The King of Malakom

Long ago in a jungle now lost from the memory of man, a king reigned. He was called the King of Malakom. The king was strong and bold, a lion who had ruled from the beginning of time. He was older than the trees and wiser than the owls. His eyes burned with fire and his heart was full of compassion. He was a good king, kind and generous, fair to all his subjects and his kingdom covered the face of the earth.

One day the king called his servants together. Koholeth was among them. He was a monkey who had grown up in the King's palace. Everybody called him Koli.

"The time has come for my son to be married," the King announced. "Go throughout the kingdom and invite all to attend."

The next day the servants left the king's palace and began their journey. With great joy Koli left as well. He couldn't wait to see the animals' excitement at such a grand announcement.

He first approached a zebra. The zebra was strong and powerful, wild and free. No one could tame him or tell him what to do. Like the wind, he went where he pleased and did what he chose.

"Greetings in the name of the King!" Koli proudly announced. "You are invited to a wedding feast for the King's son."

"The King? You must be mistaken, little friend," the zebra snorted with wind rustling his mane. "I have no King."

With those words he charged away in a care-free gallop.

Koli, although confused, continued his journey.

Next he saw a giraffe, tall and stately. She was beautiful. Koli was amazed by her height and the tallness of her neck. She ate leaves from the top of a large tree.

"Greetings in the name of the King!" Koli called up to her. "You are invited to a wedding feast for the King's son."

But there was no reply.

Koli cleared his throat and began again. "I say, beautiful giraffe, I bring you greetings in the name of..."

"I heard you," the giraffe snapped without even looking down.

"I don't understand," Koli commented.

"I don't talk to animals who are shorter than I," the giraffe snuffed and began eating again.

"But..."

"Leave me, little one," the tall animal demanded with a stomp of her hoof.

Koli was disheartened, but continued his journey.

Next he came to a hippopotamus. The hippo was big, fat, and happy.

"Hello, Mr. Monkey," he called out from his pool of water.

"Greetings in..."

Then Koli paused. The hippo was *so* fat. Could he fit through the door to the King's palace? Would he break a chair if he sat on it? What if he ate too much?

"I had better not invite him," Koli thought and continued on his way.

Then he met a Jaguar. The cat's legs were strong and sturdy. His shoulders were broad and his jaws were powerful. He was the fastest animal in the jungle.

"Greetings in the name of the King!" Koli announced, not as proud as when he first began this journey, but proud nonetheless. "You are invited to a wedding feast for the King's son."

"A feast?" the Jaguar coolly commented, licking his lips, and looking at the little monkey. "I like to feast."

"Then come to the King's palace and..."

"But I have no time for such a journey," the Jaguar said. "I have work to do. Places to go. Animals to eat—I mean, meet," he stuttered.

Koli paused for a moment. The Jaguar's eyes glared at him. "I had better be going," Koli said, quickly stepping away.

"But wouldn't you like to be dinner—I mean, to have dinner with me tonight?"

"Not tonight," he said disappearing into a bush.

Koli next encountered a sloth hanging in a tree. But the sloth looked *so* tired and he moved *so* slowly. It would take him a day just to climb a tree, and he talked at the same pace. A conversation with him would take an hour.

"He'd never make it to the banquet in time," Koli thought. "And I don't have time to invite him."

So he left the sloth without saying a word.

Next the monkey encountered a boar, but again this animal seemed an unlikely candidate for the King's table.

"Just look at him. He's covered with mud!" Koli told himself. "He might leave pig-prints all through the palace! And he's ugly too. Just look at those dirty teeth. Who would want him at the banquet?"

So Koli left the boar.

After a short time, Koli came upon a parrot sitting in a tree. He was beautiful, with bright and colorful plumes. This was a guest the King could take pride in. Surely, this parrot wouldn't pass up an invitation to the King's table.

"Greetings in the name of the King!" Koli said.

"Greetings in the name of the King!" the parrot replied.

"You are invited to a wedding feast for the King's son," Koli announced.

"You are invited to a wedding feast for the King's son," the parrot repeated.

Koli was perplexed. "Do you understand what I'm saying?"

"Do you understand what I'm saying?" the parrot said.

"Of course I do," Koli replied.

"Of course I do," the parrot responded.

"Good-bye, parrot," Koli said sadly.

“Good-bye, silly monkey,” the parrot cackled as it flew away.

Next Koli happened upon a skunk. It was black and fluffy, with a huge white stripe down its tail. Koli paused and eyed it for a moment.

“Would a skunk be welcome at the King’s table?” He pondered the question for a moment and concluded that the smell might cause the others to lose their appetites.

So Koli passed by the skunk with a simple, “Hello,” but no mention of the King’s feast.

Koli soon saw an old rhinoceros. His legs were stout and strong. His shoulders were broad and his neck was powerful. The horn on his nose revealed his age and authority.

“Greetings in the name of the King, kind Rhinoceros!” Koli proclaimed. “You are invited to a wedding feast for the King’s son.”

“King? What King?” the rhino said slowly. His deep voice rumbled as he spoke.

“The King of Malakom,” responded the monkey.

“King of Malakom?” The rhino’s face wrinkled as if he was searching his mind for some distant memory of that name. After a pause he continued, “Look, little friend, the King of Malakom is just a fairy tale.”

Koli was shocked. “But I’ve seen him. I grew up in his palace.”

“I think you’ve been drinking too much sour coconut juice, little monkey.”

“But, Mr. Rhino, I haven’t had any coconut juice.”

“Well,” he said slowly, “maybe someone hit you on the head.”

“But...But...”

“Now, run along, my little friend,” the old rhino said as he slowly turned and walked away. “And quit drinking that sour coconut juice. The jungle doesn’t have a King.”

Koli stood for a while, still confused by the rhino’s surprising statements. Then, with a saddened heart, he sat down beneath a coconut tree. The time for his return had come, but his journey had been unsuccessful. He was very disappointed. What would he tell the King?

With his head hanging low, he turned again toward his homeland, toward the palace of the King.

As Koli approached the palace, he could hear cheers and laughter and smell the feast being prepared. Animals were scurrying everywhere. Cooks were cooking. Bakers were baking. Butlers were, well, doing whatever it is that butlers do. Everyone was busy and everyone was excited. Surely, this would be a feast unlike any other in history.

Cheers greeted the monkey as he entered the palace gate, and although he forced a smile, his heart was troubled.

“Welcome back, Koli,” they would say. “Did you have a pleasant journey?”

“Well, it was interesting,” he would reply and hasten away.

“Koli,” a voice gently roared behind him.

Koli froze and sadly turned to face his King.

“How was your journey?” the King asked.

“Not good, my King. I invited the animals, but...” he paused before continuing, “but none are coming.”

The King seemed unmoved by this disappointing news.

“Did you invite *all* the animals?” he questioned, raising one eyebrow.

“Well, not exactly,” the monkey said in embarrassment. “I was afraid the hippopotamus might break a chair, and the sloth was so slow that I didn’t think he could make it in time. The boar was *really* muddy, and the skunk smelled. I didn’t think they would be welcome here.”

“Koli,” the lion said, placing his huge paw on the monkey’s shoulder. “You might be right. The hippo might break a chair. The sloth might be too slow. The boar might leave mud tracks everywhere. The skunk’s smell might even ruin some appetites, but they are all welcome at my table.

“Just because they look and smell different,” the King continued, “does not make them bad. If they are willing to make the journey, they are welcome in my palace.”

“Do I still have time to invite them?” Koli asked.

“If you leave today, you will have time.”

Without a moment’s hesitation, the little monkey began his second journey into the jungle. This time he passed the zebra playing in a field and the tall giraffe who was still eating from the tops of trees. As fast as he could he went to the pool of water where he had met the hippo.

“Hello, Mr. Monkey,” a voice came from the water.

Koli turned in time to see the hippo’s head raise from its shaded resting place.

“Greetings in the name of the King!” Koli announced, as proud as when he had first began inviting animals. “You are invited to a wedding feast for the King’s son.”

“How wonderful!” the hippo exclaimed, shaking in the water. “I haven’t been to a wedding feast for years. I’d love to come.”

Then Koli quickly passed the Jaguar who called out from a distance, “Good day, tasty-monkey—I mean, hasty-monkey, would you like to stay for lunch?”

“Not today,” the monkey cried, disappearing once again into the thickets. He soon found the sloth, still hanging from the same branch in the same tree.

“Greetings in the name of the King!” Koli announced, “You are invited to a wedding feast for the King’s son.”

The sloth quietly snored.

Koli cleared his throat and began again, louder. “Greetings, sleepy sloth.”

The sloth stirred with a start and then looked down at the monkey.

“H-e-l-l-o, l-i-t-t-l-e m-o-n-k-e-y,” he said with slow, slurred speech.

“You are invited to a wedding feast for the King’s son.”

The sloth yawned. “A w-e-d-d-i-n-g f-e-a-s-t? T-h-a-t m-e-a-n-s i-t’s t-i-m-e f-o-r m-e t-o w-a-k-e u-p.”

“So you’ll come?” Koli said excitedly.

“I’-l b-e t-h-e-r-e. D-o y-o-u t-h-i-n-k I c-o-u-l-d t-a-k-e a n-a-p w-h-e-n i-t’s o-v-e-r?”

“Sure,” Koli said as he raced away to find the boar.

Soon Koli found a trail of muddy pig-prints. He followed them until he came to the boar who was rubbing his tusk against a fallen log.

“Greetings in the name of the King!” Koli announced, “You are invited to a wedding feast for the King’s son.”

“Splendid,” the boar proclaimed. “I might even take a bath. Gotta look good for the King, you know!”

Next Koli found the skunk.

“Greetings in the name of the King!” Koli announced, “You are invited to a wedding feast for the King’s son.”

“You want *me* at the wedding feast? Even though I smell?”

“The King specifically sent me to invite you,” Koli said, leaving out that he had purposely not invited him earlier.

“Then I’ll come. I might even put on some perfume.”

The day of the feast came. Many guests arrived. The hippo broke the first chair he sat in but still enjoyed himself. The sloth arrived in time as well and managed to stay awake the entire dinner. The boar took a bath, but still left muddy pig-prints everywhere he went. The skunk put on some perfume, but it only made him smell worse.

Yet the King didn’t care what they looked like or smelled like. They were his guests and he treated each of them with honor. They would always be welcome at his table.

In this story the King of Malakom represents God, the King of kings*, who welcomes all who come to him.

Whether you are tall or short, young or old. Whether you have a long nose and big toes or little feet and lots of meat. No matter what color hair you have. No matter what color your skin may be. Even if you smell bad, you are still welcome at God’s table.

Then after this life, all those who have come to God through Jesus His Son will be welcomed into Heaven.

(*Note: *Malakom* in the Hebrew language of the Old Testament is translated as *kings*. Therefore, King of *Malakom* literally means the King of *kings*. Also, the monkey’s name, *Koholeth*, is translated from the Hebrew word for *preacher*.)