

TOTAL REVOLUTION in OUR WORLD

Session #1: The Parable of The Talents (Luke 19:11-27)

Session Objective: The objective of this session is to help students realise that they have a role to play in the appearance and formation of the Kingdom of God on earth. We can't sit around and wait to be rescued from a world gone to hell; we are to use the talents and gifts God has given to us to change this world for the better. This session will also remind students that there are eternal consequences for how we spend our time, treasure and talent here on earth.

Minimum Prep: Read through the entire session outline and the parable. Prepare an environment where discussion can occur.

Extended Prep: If you have some extended prep time, consider a dramatic reading or a straight skit with a narrator and several actors. If you videotape it you can edit and add sound effects!!

Session Outline

Leader Preamble: *Use the series preamble provided above. Continue on with the following session introduction:*

This week we are going to be starting with a look at a story Jesus told about the Kingdom of God and moving on to discuss what talents and resources each one of us has that can be applied to the Kingdom Mission. Let's read (or watch the video/skit) Luke 19:11-27.

Small Group Questions:

- 1. Verse 11 tells us WHY Jesus told them this particular parable. Did you catch it? What does that tell us about the nature of the Kingdom?**

Jesus told this parable to explain that he would not be coming back right away and so we better get our acts in gear and start building! If Jesus comes back and we've been holding down pews for 2000 years without actually doing anything, he is not going to be happy. The Kingdom is something we start here that continues after Jesus returns.

- 2. In this story the servants are given very small amounts of money. Jesus seems to be making the point that what we do on earth will determine what we could handle in the life to come. Do you believe that there are eternal consequences for the way you live? Do you think that's fair?**

Leader Note: Jesus told this story fairly often and altered it to suit his purposes. In the Matthew 25 version the slaves are given large amounts of money but each was given a different sum. Here the amounts are small but the same for all. The point in this version seems to be more about being faithful with small things in this life will result in larger blessings in the life to come. This could generate an interesting side discussion on heaven and eternity. Be prepared for it! Research. Heaven is not a giant cloud ride. Check it out.

- 3. How did the master decide who had been successful and who had been a failure? Was the criteria 'total production' or 'total faithfulness'?**

The criteria for success is total faithfulness. Those servants who used what they were given to produce gain for the master were rewarded, those who were lazy were punished.

- 4. Jesus did not give this parable as a total guide to the Kingdom, rather he made one or two broad points. What one or two points do you pick up on that should be part of the heartbeat of the Kingdom we are building?**

In the Kingdom of God, people would be rewarded or appreciated not in terms of total production, but in terms of what they did with what they were given. The point Jesus seems to be making is that all of us have been given something, either big or small, for the work of the kingdom. Figure what it is and put it to work. Success is not how spectacular you are, it is how faithful you are.

Transition:

Leader note: The following paragraph represents a sample of how you might transition the group from the pulse of the parable to the dream of the Kingdom. You can reword it as you choose.

Jesus seems to be telling us in this parable that we are in this game for the long haul, he's not going to come back right away and do our work for us. It is as though he's saying: There is a Kingdom to be built, you have the tools to get started on the job. Figure out what you have and

get using it! Success is not how much you do, but is rather how much you do with what you are given!

Let's spend the rest of tonight talking about what we have as individuals and as a group that could be used to build the Kingdom.

Leader Note: If you wanted to extend this series or supplement it in Sunday School, this could be an ideal spot to do a Spiritual Gift and/or Temperament Profile Test. You could then use the results to discuss what each of you could bring to the Kingdom task. If you do not have that kind of time, carry on with this session plan as is.

Dreams of The Kingdom:

1. **God wants to change this world and he wants to use you to do it. That will mean making use of your skills, gifts, opportunities and passions to pursue the Kingdom. What problems in the world are you passionate about?**

This is your chance to get the students talking about their concerns for the world. Are they worried about pollution? Animal rights? The economy? Gender relations? Justice issues? School violence? Drug abuse? Get them talking about their passions.

2. **What skills and gifts do you have? Are you friendly to strangers? Are you a good speaker or teacher? Are you a hard worker? Do people feel comfortable sharing their problems with you? Let's go around the room and list our best three characteristics or strengths.**

Some of the students might feel uncomfortable with this. They might feel like they are bragging. Explain to them that it is not wrong to be honest about how God has gifted us; it is giving glory to our creator. All our gifts are from our Father so none of us deserve any credit anyway! It would be a shame to deprive the kingdom of the blessings you were created to offer simply because of false modesty!

3. **Sometimes other people see things in us that we don't see. Let's go around the room and offer a strength that you see in the person sitting on your right.**
4. **If the Kingdom of God is the rule of God in all things, then there are many many places in which our gifts and talents can be spent. What are some ways you could use your gifts and talents for the greater growth of the Kingdom?**

Comments and Feedback

Leader Note: This is your place each week to record significant sharing or growth in the lives of your students for subsequent follow up. You can also use this space to provide feedback on the material. All suggestions are welcome.

Please see the following handout. You have permission to reproduce these handouts for your group.