

# Parable of Parables

**Godly Play includes** six “guiding parables” (covered in previous Parent Pages) as well as several “parables *about* parables” (like today’s). Sometimes during a Godly Play parable presentation, a child will ask, “What’s *really* inside a parable?” This is a moment Godly Play teachers wait for. Now they can say, “We have a parable about that! A parable *about* parables!”

## How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense *relives*—the experience of today’s lesson. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:

- I wonder what you can tell me about this picture?
- I wonder what this picture has to do with today’s story?

Just listen. This is *not* a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the presentation, another recall a single moment that had meaning, and yet another talk about his or her own creative response. Again, your role is not to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to *listen* in a supportive way.

You are supporting the formation of young—sometimes very young—theologians.

Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today’s lesson offered below. If you choose to tell the presentation, *you will need a set of nesting boxes*. Godly Play Resources offers such a set; call 1-800-445-4390 or visit [www.godlyplay.com](http://www.godlyplay.com) and ask for the “Parable of Parables.”

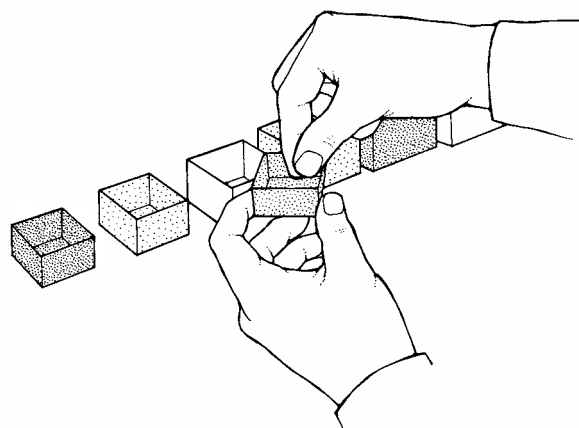
Whether you read the presentation or simply listen as your child shares what was received in today’s lesson, ask the Wondering questions printed in the left column. Remember, there are many right answers! Be open to what the parables can mean to you and your child. God will teach you new meanings every day. Parables cannot ever be all used up. Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying “Amen.”

## The Presentation

I wonder what really is inside a parable. All we have to do is take off the lid to find out.

What is this? Is it a box inside a box? Oh, no! It’s a parable inside a parable, like a box is inside a box. That is very interesting, but what we really want to know is what is inside a parable. Let’s look in this one to find out.

What is this? Another box inside of a box? Okay. I understand. A parable is inside a parable, like a box is inside a box. I get it. We don’t need any more boxes inside of boxes. Let’s see now what is really inside a parable.



# Wondering

- **I wonder** who is going to make the next parable box?
- **I wonder** what the whole line of boxes makes?
- **I wonder** if you have ever come close to the unseen part of a parable?

Okay. So there are boxes inside of boxes, like parables are inside of parables. Look, here's another one. Here's another one. (*Continue in this way until only one box is left.*)

Now, this must be the last one. This must be the one we have been waiting for. Now, we can see what is really inside of a parable.

(*Pretend to take something tiny out of this smallest box, as shown in the illustration above.*) It's hard to see isn't it. That is why people who loved parables very much put the unseen part in a box, so they could find it and even take it with them. They didn't want to lose the parable. It was too precious.

The next people who came along also loved parables very much, but the parable box the first people made wasn't quite right for them, so they made their own.

The next people who came along also loved parables very much, but the box the other people made didn't agree with them very well. They wanted one that was just right for them, so they made their own.

People kept doing this. Even after a thousand years, this was still going on.

Finally, your grandmothers and grandfathers, who loved parables very much, found the parable box the people who came before them had made. They liked it, but it was not just right for them, so they made their own.

Finally, we come to the time of your mothers and fathers. They love parables very much too, but the box that their mothers and fathers made was not quite right for them. They had to make their very own.

## Godly Play Classroom Structure

**A Godly Play classroom** is structured to support children's work in four ways:

- It makes *materials* inviting and available by keeping the room open, clean and well-organized. A useful phrase for a Godly Play room is, "The material is for you. You can touch this and work with it carefully when you want to."
- It encourages responsible *stewardship* of the materials by helping children learn to take care of the room themselves, repairing, cleaning and polishing.

- It provides a respectful *place* for children's work by reserving space in the room for ongoing or finished projects. When a child is still working on a project at the end of work time, he or she is reassured: "This project will be here for you the next time you come. You can take as many weeks as you need to finish it. We never lose work in a Godly Play room."

- It sets a leisurely *pace* that allows children to engage deeply in their chosen responses, providing them a safe space filled with safe *time*.