

Parable of the Deep Well

Godly Play includes six “guiding parables” (covered in previous Parent Pages) as well as several “parables *about* parables” (like today’s). From time to time in Godly Play presentations, children ask what parables really are. A Godly Play teacher might say, “We have a parable about that!” and present this parable to the child.

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:

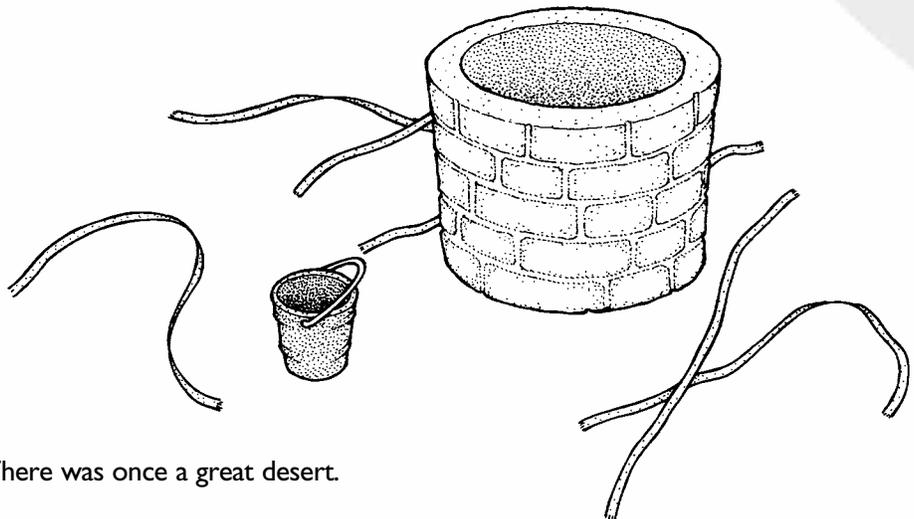
- I wonder what you can tell me about this picture?
- I wonder what this picture has to do with today’s story?

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.

Whether you read the presentation or simply listen as your child shares what was received in today’s presentation, 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



There was once a great desert.

In the middle of the desert was a deep well.

It was so deep that people could no longer reach the water to drink.

They could not even see the water in the well. Sometimes they could feel the damp coolness rising, but there was no way to taste the water.

Wondering

- **I wonder** what the water from the well could really be?
- **I wonder** why the person stopped and wondered?
- **I wonder** if the person should have untied the golden threads, so the next traveler could discover what they were for?

People cannot live in the desert without water. It is hot and it is easy to get lost. The wind changes the shape of the sand. There is nothing green to give shade or for people to eat, so everyone hurries across the sand to get away from the danger.

One day a person stopped. There was no hurry. The person looked at the well. The person looked around the well and saw golden strands in the sand.

The person picked up a rusty object, but no one could remember what it was for. It was like a big cup, but there was nothing to put in it.

The person looked again and kicked the golden threads. They seemed out of place. What were they? Other people thought they were silly and passed them by. This person took time.

The person went back to the big cup with the handle and then to the deep well. Then the person began to walk around picking up the golden threads and tying them together.

The person lowered the bucket into the well and drew forth the refreshing water. The person tasted the water and was changed. When the person moved on, the bucket and the many strands tied together were left, so the next person could also taste the water.

Here, you can taste it too.

Godly Play Using Language

Godly Play teachers support children with the language they use. You can do the same at home:

- Choose “*open*” responses. “Open” responses simply describe what we see, rather than evaluate the children or their work. Open responses invite children’s interaction, but respect children’s choices to simply keep working in silence, too.

Examples of open responses:

- Hmm. Lots of red.
- This clay looks so smooth and thin now.
- Did you know that you’re the only person in the world who would do this just like you did?

- Avoid evaluative responses. Evaluative responses shift the child’s focus from his or her work to your praise. *Examples:*

- You’re a wonderful painter.
- This is a great picture.
- I’m so pleased with what you did.

- Choose *empowering responses* that emphasize each child’s ability to make choices, solve problems and articulate needs. In a Godly Play classroom, a frequently heard phrase is, “That’s the way. You can do this.” Offer help when needed, but aim to restore ownership of the problem or situation to the child as soon as possible.