

Parable of the Great Pearl

Matthew 13:45

In the Godly Play presentation of this brief parable (found only in Matthew 13:45), the storyteller avoids the temptation to use the largest pearl for the great pearl. Greatness has to do with more than size. Children often regard big things as more important than small; for example, they might feel that adults are more important than children. Furthermore, our culture holds up big things for us to admire, too, from big houses to big cars to big bank accounts. Enjoy the “countercultural” undercurrent in today’s story.

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 Godly Play presentation. 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.

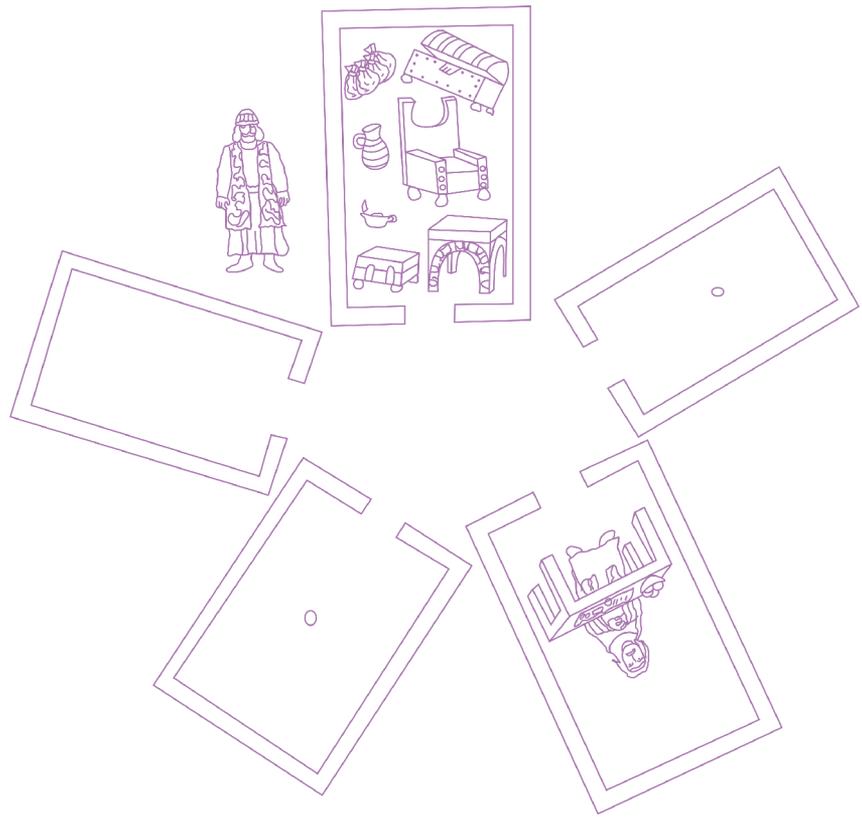
Whether you read the presentation or simply listen as your child shares what was received in today’s presentation, ask the Wondering questions printed in the left column. Remember, there are many right answers! Be open to what the parables can mean to you and your child. God will teach you new meanings 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 someone who said such wonderful things and did such amazing things that people followed him. As they followed him, they heard him talking about a kingdom, but it was not like the kingdom they lived in. It was not like any kingdom they had ever visited. It was not like any kingdom that they had ever even heard of.

Wondering

- **I wonder** what the great pearl could really be?
- **I wonder** what could be so precious that a person would exchange everything for it?
- **I wonder** if you have ever come close to the great pearl?



They couldn't help it. They had to ask him what the kingdom of heaven was like. One time when they asked him, he said, "The kingdom of heaven is like when a person who buys and sells fine pearls, a merchant, goes to search for the great pearl.

"When he finds the great pearl, he goes and exchanges everything for the great pearl."

Godly Play Deep Listening

In every Parent Page, we offer information about Godly Play to help you understand both its methodology and purpose. A key component of Godly Play is the rediscovery of "deep listening."

In ancient times, the Bible was not a book. It was stories, often told around a campfire. The children snuggled in with their extended families. The cold and dark were pushed away by the light and warmth of the fire and

the community. The children listened, even if half asleep, to the elders' tales. They learned how to do this by custom.

Today children are more likely to channel surf on a TV set or jump via mouse clicks from website to website. The ability to listen deeply with wonder is becoming lost. Godly Play teaches children once again how to truly listen.

The children, in turn, may teach *you*.