

All-Age Worship

Ridley Hall, Cambridge

LESSON 5 | THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT DINNER

Bible Passage | Luke 14:15-24

APPROX TIME 45 MIN

Overall Theme:

- This plan for the Parable of the Great Dinner centres on two main themes- our response to the invitation to the Dinner and our reaction to who else is invited.

PREPARING

STUDY THE PARABLE

Read and Meditate on Luke 14:15-24

When your All-Age planning team gets together, begin by reading Luke 14:15-24 and discussing its meaning. What themes do you find there? How can those themes be best represented?

Reflect on the Bible Passage

How does this Parable compare with a similar parable in Matthew 22:1-14?

What is the importance of the passage within its setting in Luke?

How can we respond with thankful hearts to Christ's invitation?

Who are the "unexpected guests" around us that we might need to learn to care for?

Pray

Take some time to pray about the parable and ask God to lead you in the best way to present it. Pray for those who will be at your all-age service.

PREPARING

BEFORE THE SERVICE

Things to Make and Prepare Beforehand

- You will need the help of about 5 people, plus musicians.
- Prepare the drama.
- Write the various prayers and make the strips of paper for the paper chains.
- Make the JOY Cards.
- Collect newspapers for the opening games.



THE SERVICE PLAN

1. Welcome and Opening Games

Leader welcomes everyone and lead two opening activities (outside or in a large inside space) and split people into groups

* Making hats, etc for the “Party”

* Toilet paper race. Each team is given one loo roll with which to wrap one team member. Once they are wrapped they run down to an appointed place and back. The team whose member returns first wins.

When the game is finished and the winners are applauded (or given prizes, i.e. chocolates), the leaders ask everyone to move to the sanctuary.

2. Opening Songs

- Holy is the Lord
- Read it in the Bible

After the songs, ask everyone to sit down.

3. Drama of the parable

A servant enters dusting people as she comes in, making a few comments...

My master is wonderful – he’s really thoughtful and generous. The other day, he decided to have a great dinner – a massive banquet. It was amazing. SO many courses, the best food you could have, music, dancing, champagne – wow, that’s really what I call a party.

Sorry, I’ve not introduced myself - I’m his servant – I do a lot of the fetching and carrying and taking messages to everyone....I don’t mind – sometimes it’s difficult, but other times I delight in being able to go and give messages about exciting things happening.

The other day, when he had this banquet, I was so excited to take this amazing message about the food and music and party my master was having. He gave me the invite list and off I went. All I had to say was ‘come, for everything is ready now’ – these people had already received the invitation, it was just a question of letting them know it was all ready.

But, one by one I went up to those invited and heard excuse after excuse. The first one told me ‘I’ve just bought a new house – I’ve got to go and see it – please do accept my apologies!’

Bought a new house? Surely he would have seen it before he bought it? Why would he have needed to go and see it there and then – I just don’t understand – maybe he just didn’t realise how good this party was!

The next person said ‘I’ve just bought the latest iota-phone – it’s amazing – look at these incredible apps – I really need to try them out – so, I don’t think I’m going to be able to come to the party after all. Now call me old-fashioned – but it’s a phone – why did she need to try it out then? Ok, yes, so it might be quite



useful and I'm sure some day we'll all be finding out the temperature in Timbuktu on our phones – but a party like this is a once in a life-time event.....

Finally I reached the last person on the list who promptly told me they had just got married! Well, it's alright for some!

So, I went back to my master and reported all these things to him. He really was not happy – he looked around at all the food – the musicians were arriving, the whole place was being decorated – I'm sure I even saw a bouncy castle.

Now, my master is generally quite chilled – but I know the tell-tale signs of anger - He pulled at his collar, wiped his brow, and began to turn a scary shade of red. But then, an idea must have come into his mind because he got all excited again:

He put his arm on my shoulder – 'go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame' But even when that was done there was still plenty of room.

So he told me to go out into the roads and lands and compel people to come in so that his house would be filled with guests. And then he said this 'For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.'

The tables were filled with all types of people – the poor, the blind, the lame, criminals – many that you might not invite to your own party..

But - do you know – that was the best party ever. Every guest was so thankful to be invited, they ate and drank and danced the night away. I'll never forget that night!

4. Theme Song

Tell me a story, tell me a story
A parable of the Kingdom of God
Jesus has gathered the people together
To show them the way of the Kingdom of God

Verse 5:
A landowner planned a great party
And sent a slave with invitations
But people were busy and would not come
And gave the slave weak explanations
So the host said 'Go out
'to the streets and lanes
'Bring the poor and the blind and the lame
from highways and byways
compel them to come
So my household will burst at the seams!'

Verse 1:
The Kingdom is like a farmer of wheat
Who planted his wheat in a field
And late one night an enemy came
And secretly snuck in some weeds
And the workers of the field
Said to the farmer
'Should we tear out the weeds from the wheat?'
But the Farmer said, 'No,

'Wait for the harvest.
'Wait for the harvest to come'.

Verse 2:
The Kingdom is like ten Bridesmaids
Who waited all day for the Groom
And five had oil, and five had none
For lamps that would lighten his way
And when the shout came
That the groom was coming
The girls with the oil went inside
But the ones without oil
Had to go buy some
And they were left standing outside

Verse 3:
Christ told a story about two men
Who went to the temple to pray
One was a Pharisee, tall and proud,
The other a lowly Tax-collector
And the Pharisee prayed,
'Lord, I thank you
I'm not like this man at my side'
But the Tax-collector prayed,
'God, have mercy'
And he went away justified.



Verse 4:

A landowner planted a vineyard and
he let it to tenants to tend it
But they wouldn't share their harvest crop
And beat and killed those sent to split it

So the landowner said,
'I'll send my son,
They'll respect him just as they would me'
But the wicked tenants said,
'Come, let's kill him.
The vineyard will be ours indeed!'

5. Reading of Luke 14:15-24

Reading by a teen or pre-teen

6. Homily

Who can tell me what special thing is happening in this country today? (General Election was held the day of this original service) Not everyone here is able to vote in the general election so we're going to have our own votes today which everyone can join in with. That's why you should have a strip of green paper and a strip of red paper.

Our parable today is the story of the great banquet, a huge party. Jesus told this parable when he was at a party with a group of Pharisees, the religious leaders of his day. Let's think about parties for a few minutes.

1 Who likes parties? Wave your green paper in the air if you like parties.

What is it you like about parties?

(The chance to dress up – not in paper clothes and hats like we've made today, but in nice smart or pretty clothes? What else?)

We can see from the story that was read to us that God is a fan of parties and he invites us to *his* party.

Later, we're going to say thank you to God for inviting us to his party and for the fun we have as we spend time with him.

2 Imagine how you might feel when you invite your best friend to your party, they say they'll come and then, on the day, they don't come after all. They make some lame excuse, like having to play with the apps on their new phone, or go to see their new house.

Hold up your green strips of paper if you think you wouldn't really mind.

Now hold up your red strips of paper if you think you would be upset or angry or sad.

In the story, Jesus was saying something hard to the Pharisees, the religious leaders. He was saying that God had invited them to his party, but actually, even though they had said they would go, they didn't turn up.



God has invited us to his party too but sometimes we do what the Pharisees did and we take God's invitation for granted. It makes God sad when we do that, so later on in the service we'll have the chance to say sorry to God for the times when we take for granted his invitation to his party.

3 Now imagine how you would feel if you accept an invitation to your best friend's party thinking that all your other friends will be there too. But when you get there you find out that none of your friends are there at all. Instead, the people at the party are all the people that you dislike the most – the person at school who makes fun of you, the person who most reminds you of everything about yourself that you struggle with, someone who is spiteful to you, someone you're jealous of because they seem so much more gifted than you think you are....

Hold up your green strips of paper if you would be happy about that. Be honest!

Hold up your red strips of paper if you think you would be unhappy.

In the story that Jesus told, the friends who the master had invited to his party all made excuses and didn't go. Because he'd got everything ready, the master told his servant to go out into all the streets and alleys of the town to bring people in. He told the servant to go and fetch the poor, the crippled, the blind or lame to the party. He wanted his house to be full for his party.

Jesus was telling the people who were listening to his story, that if they refused his invitation to God's party, then he would invite other people instead. The Bible doesn't tell us how the Pharisees felt about this but we can imagine that they were very cross and unhappy.

We can be like that too when we go to church. We see someone who is homeless and is smelly and dressed in dirty clothes. We think they shouldn't be in church dressed like that. Or we see someone who is addicted to drugs or drink and we think they shouldn't be there. We wonder what God is doing inviting people like that to his party.

In a moment we're going to have the chance to say sorry to God for the times when we're cross or upset because God invites people we don't really like to his party and they come to church. But the main things to take away from today's story is the reminder not to take for granted God's invitation to his party, and not to be upset or jealous when we think he has also invited the people we don't like very much. And instead of being upset or jealous we should welcome those people to God's party and help them to feel as at home as we do.

7. Prayer, Part I

Leader explains that during the prayer time we will use the red and green strips of paper to pray.

On the Red paper we can write out our confessions- those times when we have rejected God's invitation or have been upset when we see who else has been invited.

On the Green paper we can write out our thanksgiving- thankfulness for God's invitation, his love and mercy in accepting us and all kinds of other people to his Great Banquet.

During the next song, write on your Green and Red slips and bring them to one of the stations where people are ready with staplers to make them into paper chains.



8. Song

Faithful One

(Meanwhile, everyone writes and then brings their strips to the various stations to get them stapled. They also are handed a JOY (Jesus Others Yourself) Card)

Note: A sample sheet of JOY Cards is printed in the last page of this lesson. They can either be printed on cardstock or laminated

9. Prayer, Part 2

A leader drapes the green chains over the altar at the end of the song

Then asks for child volunteers to hold the red chain in a line in front of everyone, while a priest pronounced the absolution.

After the absolution, the leader instructs the children to rip up the chain symbolizing God's freedom to us from guilt and sin.

The leader explains the JOY Cards- they are an easy prayer tool to help us remember good priorities when we pray: invite the children to keep them in their school bags or home work book so that they see it all the time and remember to pray.

Jesus- to thank God for sending Jesus, for the parables he told, how he healed and loved others, how he died on the cross for our sin and rose again, etc.

Others- to remember other people needs, friends that are sick or discouraged, people we have trouble being kind to, people across the world who are lonely, afraid or hungry.

Yourself- finally to pray for ourselves and our own needs.

10. Closing Song

Mighty to Save

11. Dismissal and Blessing



Jesus
Others
Yourself



Jesus
Others
Yourself



Jesus
Others
Yourself



Jesus
Others
Yourself



Jesus
Others
Yourself



Jesus
Others
Yourself



Jesus
Others
Yourself



Jesus
Others
Yourself



Jesus
Others
Yourself



Jesus
Others
Yourself

