

A Good Shepherd Parable

The Leaven

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THE LEAVEN MA TERIALS

- parable box containing:
 - tan felt triangular underlay
 - laminated woman figure
 - laminated table
 - laminated piece to be used for leaven
 - laminated bowl
 - laminated loaf of bread



Woman



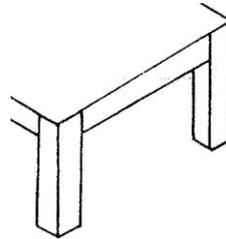
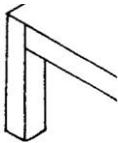
Bowl



Leaven



Bread



Table

ACTIONS

After speaking, walk slowly to the shelf and pick up the parable box with two hands. Return to the circle and sit down.

After speaking, allow at least 10 seconds of silence as you trace the outline of the box to center yourself and the children.

Rest your hands lightly on the box, touching it reverently.

Slowly shake your head and smile.

Nod your head confidently.

Raise your eyebrows and shake your head.

Lift the lid just slightly.

Remove the lid and take out the tan underlay. Smooth it as you speak.

Place the table with bowl on it in the center of the underlay.

Lean forward slightly and lift one hand as though questioning.

WORDS

Watch very carefully where I go to get this story so you will be able to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

All of the words to this story are inside of me. Will you please make silence with me so I can find all the words to my story?

This is a parable box. I wonder if there is really a parable inside this box?

You see parables are very precious.

This box looks a bit like a gift.

Parables are like gifts. We can't go buy one, or even rent one, like we do a movie. Parables already belong to us.

And like gifts, we don't always know what's inside by looking at the box.

We have to take the lid off. If we take the lid off our box, maybe we will discover a parable.

I wonder what this could remind us of? It's not really brown. It's a very soft color. Let's see if it is part of the parable.

Once there was a man who said amazing things and did wonderful things and people began to follow him everywhere.

The people would ask him, "What is the kingdom of God like?" for they had never been there.

Slowly shake your head.

Place the woman figure next to the table.

Put the piece of leaven on the table.
Pretend you are scooping three handfuls of flour from the bowl onto the leaven.

Shake your head.

Start with your hands close together and spread them apart as the meal grows. Place the large loaf of bread over the piece of leaven.

Put all of the laminated pieces into the box in reverse order.

Take the top point of the triangle and place it against the bottom straight side. Fold the top to the bottom. Then fold one side to meet the other side. Fold the point to the straight side. Place in the box and replace lid.

They did not know anyone who had been there.

And the man who said amazing things and did wonderful things said, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven or yeast. "

A woman took a very small piece of leaven and put it in three measures of flour.

At first it was hidden and couldn't be seen.

Then it grew and grew until the small piece of leaven had made all of the meal ready to become bread.

WONDERING QUESTIONS:

■ wonder if the woman wanted to hide the leaven in the bread so no one would find it?

■ wonder what the bread smelled like when she baked it?

■ wonder how quickly the meal became leavened?

Watch carefully how ■ put these materials away so you will know how to use them if you make this your work today or another day.

This underlay needs to be folded so it will fit in the parable box. To fold this triangle we will put the point against this straight line. Now fold the top to the bottom. Then we can fold one side to meet the other side. Fold the point to the straight side. There, now it will fit.

After speaking, stand up and carry the box with two hands back to its place on the shelf. Return to the circle.

Watch carefully where I return this parable so you will know where to get it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

Go around the circle having each child choose their work. Dismiss the children only when all have chosen their work.

What will you make your work today? Let's go around the circle and decide. Now it is time to begin.

THE LEAVEN TEACHER HELPS

Scholars are divided on the possible matching of this parable of the leaven with the parable of the mustard seed. According to C.H. Dodd, in The Parables of the Kingdom, (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1961, p. 154) a case can be made for both understandings. If it stood alongside the parable of the mustard seed, there would be two very similar emphases. One being the smallness of the beginning agent, i.e. mustard seed and leaven, and the relative size of the finished product. The second similar emphasis would be the readiness of that final product. Both the tree and the leavened loaf attest to the readiness for the next scene. The tree was ready to house each of the birds that nested there and the loaf is ready to be baked and kept in its final shape. They are both at the point of being what they were intended to be from the start.

The readiness is for now, not for the next coming of Jesus. This is the goal of the people of God in this life. It will indeed be revealed in greater ways than we can imagine, but the kingdom is also here and now and is to be the work of the people of God.

This parable uses excesses! The amount of meal leavened, 3 measures, would be about 50 pounds and would make enough bread for a meal of 100 people. The message, as with the mustard seed, is that the final product is beyond reality. Just as there is now room for ALL the birds of the air, there will be food for 100 people from this tiny beginning of leaven.

The wondering questions are fairly straightforward in this story, except for the first one. Because the Scriptures use the word "hid" for what the woman did with leaven, I've added this question. It's good for the child to begin to wonder if there is more to any given story than we first perceive. Did the woman want to hide the leaven? Was this wonderful process something that was not meant to be? All possibilities can be explored in this room!

NOTE: If time allows, this is a wonderful opportunity to make bread with the class and SEE, SMELL AND TASTE the results of leavening and meal!

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN:

The leaven is a tiny little piece of yeast that can make a pan of bread dough rise to six to eight times its beginning size. Think of one small action that you have done that has had HUGE results, good or bad.

The leaven needs to have something to grow in; it can't grow all by itself. How can we grow? Do we grow best alone, or with the help of others people? Which people have helped you grow the most? If the liquid put into the bread mix is too hot the yeast will die. If it's not hot enough it will not help the yeast begin to grow. How is that like your life as a Christian?

You will spend much of this week around people who may not be Christians. How will a little bit of you affect people around you? What can you do that can make the lives of other people reflect God's love for you?