**GROWING TOGETHER:** FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Session 4 of 4

# The talents

### MEETING AIM

To learn that we shouldn’t be afraid to show our faith in what we say and do.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 25:14-30

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in-person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your situation.

This parable can distract us with some troubling questions. Is God like a tough investment banker who has no time for those who don’t show entrepreneurial spirit? The challenge here is to lead children through the financial dealings to the heart of the story, which is about being ready to use what God has given us. The money image recalls earlier parables about the treasure and the pearl, reminding us how precious God’s kingdom is. This parable is an opportunity to explore with children how they can be bold in putting their faith into practice, rather than hiding it away.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Welcome the children as they arrive and share out any refreshments you have provided. Chat together about what has happened since you last met; share in the triumphs and difficulties of the children’s lives and share something appropriate from your own life. Ask the children if they have a party piece they can show the rest of the group, such as counting in Estonian or dancing the cha-cha.

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

This is an improvised drama game which encourages children to accept and build on each other’s suggestions. Invite someone to suggest a scene, eg: “Let’s go camping!” Everyone shouts: “Yes, let’s!” and joins in by pretending to put up a tent. Someone then adds to the scene, eg: “Let’s put this tent on wheels!” Everyone shouts: “Yes, let’s!” and mimes turning the tent into a vehicle. Someone then builds on that idea, eg: “Let’s fly this tent to the moon!” Everyone shouts: “Yes, let’s!” and acts out a journey into space. Practise with this example and then start again with a new suggestion. Encourage lots of energy and imagination!

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** paper; envelopes; three lidded boxes – large, medium and small; marker pen

Before you start, write out the messages below on separate pieces of paper and put each one into an envelope. On the top of the large box write: ‘£1.5m’, and on the bottom: ‘Have a pay rise!’ Atop the medium box, write: ‘£600,000’; on the bottom: ‘Have a pay rise!’ On the small box, write: ‘£300,000’ and (on the bottom): ‘You’re fired!’ Inside the first two boxes, place a piece of paper that reads: ‘Double your money’. Set out the boxes on the floor.

Give someone the first envelope to open and read: “You all work for a very rich man. He is about to go away on business, so he gives three of you these sums of money to look after. What will you do with it while he is away?”

Invite three volunteers to choose and stand by one of the boxes, but don’t touch the boxes yet. Remind them that this is their boss’ money and that he’ll be coming back! Discuss together what they might do with it and what the risks or rewards might be. If they need guidance, give them two options: use this money to make more money (how?) or hide it to keep it safe. Ask the children to decide what they will do.

Give someone the second envelope to open and read: “You remember that your boss is a hard man who will do anything to make money. You are scared of him. What will you do with his money while he is away?”

Invite children to discuss and reconsider their decisions if necessary.

Give someone the third envelope to open and read: “In this story, the workers with £1.5m and £600,000 did business deals with their boss’ money. The worker with £300,000 was scared, so hid the money. Now the boss is back and wants to know they have done!”

Invite children to find out how much money each made by opening the boxes and doing the sums as necessary. Then turn over the boxes and find what happens to each worker: two get pay rises, while the third is fired.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

* Which part of the story do you like best?
* If you were in this story, who would you be?
* What do you think about the way the boss rewarded and punished his workers?
* What questions would you like to ask God about this story?
* The money in Jesus’ original story wasn’t called *pounds*, it was called *talents* – does that change how you think about the story?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** sunflower seeds; small plant pots; potting compost

Show the seeds and ask what might happen if you planted them, or kept them in a drawer. What might happen?

As you plant seeds together, chat about the story and what it shows us about doing things God’s way. Talk about whether we put our faith into practice or hide it. Have you ever been teased or criticised because of your faith? How can we show that we are Christians in what we say and do? Come up with some practical examples together.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** pots from ‘Creative time’; watering can

Gather everyone in a circle, holding your plant pots. Say this prayer:

“Loving Lord, you have planted us like these little seeds, not so that we can hide away, but so we can grow more than we can possibly imagine. Make us bold to grow and show the life that you have given us. Amen.”

Pass the watering can around and water your seeds.

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