**JOURNEYING TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Session 1 of 4

# The treasure and the pearl

### MEETING AIM

To consider what the parables of the treasure and pearl reveal to us about the kingdom of God.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 13:44-46

### 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.

The events of the past few years may have helped crystallise or even change what young people think is important. Relationships, hobbies, friends or even just the freedom to do what you want might have emerged as the most important, but these two parables challenge us further. What is the kingdom of heaven like?

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Welcome the young people to your group and share out any refreshments you have prepared. Chat about the young people’s week; celebrate their triumphs and share in their disasters.

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** several objects of varying value (such as a chocolate bar, a mobile phone charger, a pen, a key or a £5 note)

Before the session, create a treasure hunt around your venue. Split the group into teams, allowing them to compete against each other. The point of this activity is not the treasure hunt itself, but the questions and reflections that follow. When they have gathered the objects and each team has a complete set, challenge them with the following in a random order:

* Swap all you have found with another group.
* Take one object from another group.
* Hide one object you have found to ensure it cannot be stolen by another team.
* Identify one object from another group’s collection that you would be prepared to swap all you have for.

Decide which group is the winner and award a prize. Then ask the following questions:

* How did it feel to be told to swap what you had gathered with another team?
* How did you decide which object to take?
* How did you decide which object to hide? Was this easy or challenging?
* How did you decide which object was worth swapping your entire collection for?
* Did this activity reveal anything to you about the things you value?

### BIBLE EXPLORATION – 10 mins

**You will need:** pens and paper; video of the parable of the treasure and / or the pearl and the means to play it

Before the session, search online for a video retelling of the treasure and / or the pearl.

Give your young people a pen and paper and ask them to list all the things they value; anything from possessions to friendships, relationships, people and time. Ask the young people to show the three things they value most. Have a time of sharing and discuss the following questions:

* Was it easy to list the things you value? What was your starting point?
* Are the things on your list mostly possessions or people? What do you think this says about the things you value?
* Why is it important to think about what we value?

Show the video of the parables you have found, then go on to read Matthew 13:44-46. You might also want to read the retold parables from the ‘Ready to use parable’ series: [Chelsea and the charity shop treasure](https://www.premiernexgen.com/resources/september-2019--parable-chelsea-and-the-charity-shop-treasure/10333.article) and [Frankie and the football find](https://www.premiernexgen.com/premier-ycw-magazine-online-hub/parable-frankie-and-the-football-find/10088.article). Challenge the group to retell either of the parables to fit their own lives.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Continue your discussion of the Bible passage by chatting through the following questions:

* What do you think these two short parables tell us about God’s kingdom?
* Who, or what, do the treasure and the pearl represent?
* Do you think it is important that the treasures are hidden? What do you think this suggests about God’s kingdom?
* Why do you think the merchant stopped looking when he found the pearl of great price?
* Why do you think Jesus uses these two short parables together? What might this say about the importance of his message?

### CREATIVE RESPONSE – 10 mins

**You will need:** lists of valuable things from ‘Bible exploration’; large sheets of paper; art materials

Having explored the teaching of Jesus in these two parables, return to the list of things you compiled earlier and ask the following questions:

* Would you like to change anything on your list as a result of what you have looked at today?
* If you would change your list, what might that mean for how you live your life from now on as a result of what you have learned?

Comment that Jesus’ teaching about the kingdom of God forces us to question the things we value. Are we prepared to ask ourselves difficult questions? Give out the sheets of paper and art materials and ask the young people to focus on what they have discovered about God, the kingdom, their lives and their priorities, and write or draw about it. Give as much time and space as you can for this, and be available for the young people to chat to you if they would like to.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** playdough; reflective music and the means to play it

Give the young people some playdough and choose a song that will create a reflective atmosphere. Ask the young people to use the playdough to shape something that they have learned this session. Encourage them to take a photograph of it, or even to take what they have created home as a reminder of what God has been saying to them during this session. Close with a prayer.

This session was inspired by ideas from the NexGenPro archive, adapted by **ALEX TAYLOR**.