

# INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

## **To the Leader:**

This week's lesson is on *Intentional Discipleship*. There are seven characteristics for the Church of the Nazarene, and the fourth trait is Intentional Discipleship. These traits depict what we believe should characterize every Church body.

Intentional discipleship is helping people develop obedient intimate relationships with Jesus. In these relationships, Christ's Spirit transforms their character into Christlikeness – changing new believers' values into kingdom values, and involving them in His mission of investing in others in their homes, churches, and world.

There are many ways to grow spiritually. Below are a few examples of ways to carve out time from your busy life and create space for God:

- Read the Bible.
- Pray daily.
- Listen to Christian music.
- Read Christian literature.
- Find an accountability partner who will pray every day that you will be Christlike.
- Find an accountability partner who loves you so much they will ask you hard questions.
- Develop the discipline of regularly telling others what God is doing in your life.

As you prepare for and present this lesson, be mindful of the different ways we can and need to know God more and grow in Intentional Discipleship as you teach the parable of the sower.

Our children's world is busy and full of things that keep them focused on anything *but* spiritual growth. Ask God to guide you as you teach them how to have good "soil," so they may grow in Christ.

## **Objective:**

To understand that being a follower of Jesus requires intentionality in thinking about Christ, becoming more like Christ, and doing what Christ does.

Students will learn about the different soils, as described in Luke, and be able to identify which soil they currently are and what is needed to be the healthy soil.

## **Material Needed:**

Cup  
Dirt  
Seeds

Marker  
Pencils  
Parable of the Sower matching activity sheet

### **Early Arrival Activity:**

Plant seeds in a plastic cup to leave until the end of the series in a sunny area. Sharing about Jesus is like planting a seed.

### **Scripture and Memory Verse:**

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30).

### **Bible Story with Discussion:** The parable of the Sower, Luke 8:4-15

*Ask the students the questions printed in bold. Answers will vary, but here are some prompters, if needed.*

**How many of you have ever planted a garden?**

**Those of you who have, what do you have to do?** *(Till the soil, remove the rocks and debris, plant seeds in a sunny area, put the seeds in the ground, water, weed, etc...)*

**What would happen if we just found any old place to put the seeds?** *(The plant may not grow or grow well, it may get trampled, etc...)*

**Today our lesson comes from a parable, which is a story Jesus told in order to teach an important lesson. Jesus loved to tell parables. After telling a parable, He would then tell those listening what He wanted them to learn from the story.**

**Today’s story is The Parable of the Sower.**

**There was a large crowd of people gathering around Jesus, coming from town after town. Jesus took this opportunity to tell this story:**

**A farmer went out to sow his seeds. As he was sowing his seeds, I can only imagine a gust of wind blew, because the seeds scattered. Some fell along the path he was on. Those seeds were stepped on and the birds, who love to eat seeds, flew down and ate what was there.**

**Some seeds fell on the rocks. Although the seeds sprouted and a plant started to grow, it quickly withered away because there was no moisture in the rock to feed it.**

**Other seeds fell among thorns. Those type of plants grow fast and pretty much take over anything in their way. So the seed that sprouted among the thorns was able to grow because it was in the ground. But the plants with the thorns also grew with it and began to choke out the tender new plant, and it soon died, also.**

**The rest of the seed the farmer scattered fell on the good soil. It fell on moist soil that was cleared of rocks and weeds. The seed was soon able to germinate and before long was sprouting, growing tall and healthy. It grew so well that at the end of the season, when the farmer went to harvest his crop, he had a hundred times more than what he had planted!**

**After Jesus told this story, His disciples were curious. “What does this parable mean?”**

**Jesus wanted everyone to learn something very important. That’s why He told this story. So He began to share what it meant.**

**The Word of God is like the seed the farmer planted.**

**Remember the path the seeds fell on? Jesus told them that we are on a path like that. The devil does *not* want anyone to understand what they hear about God. The birds that flew down and took away the seeds is like the devil trying to keep as many people as possible from knowing God or believing what they hear.**

**The seeds that fell on the rocks are like people who are full of joy when they hear about Jesus, but they don’t have any roots, like the seed. They believe for a while; but when they start to have some hard times or are tempted, they fall away from God.**

**The thorns the seeds fell among, Jesus told them, are like people who accept Jesus into their heart and begin to grow but soon become focused on things in life, like being worried or concerned about money and things they want to have and do. That is what consumes their thoughts, so they never mature to become healthy and strong.**

**The seed, though, that was planted in the good soil stands for those who have had heard the Word of God, believing it to be Truth. Because of that they continue to learn from God, seeking Him with all their heart. Whether things are good or bad, they persevere, trusting God for everything.**

**Review Game:** "Parable of the Sower" matching activity page

*This is a large group activity. Pass out one page per child. Once every child has received their page, lead them through the Parable of the Sower matching activity.*

**Activity / Craft / Science:**

Divide students into groups of 5. Students will create a skit, acting out the parable. The children will learn that a parable was told in order to teach an important lesson.

Encourage the students to demonstrate the people Jesus explained when asked what the parable meant.

**Personal Challenge or Take Away Prayer:**

What type of soil have I been? How can I become the healthy soil, which grows by what God is teaching me? (This is a great time to tell them different ways to grow in Christ, as mentioned in the Note to the Leader area.)

Write a letter or note to God about it.

**PRAYER:**

Jesus, thank you that we can all grow in You. Show me how You want me to learn from You this week. Amen.