



The Suitcase Teacher Ideas

Zeal and excitement are a part of every child. *The Suitcase* celebrates a young child's enthusiasm to put into practice the words of Christ: to feed and clothe the poor; help the needy; and love one's neighbor. This story brings to mind Christ's parables and commands to us, introducing Biblical images and language through the short text.

At 850 words *The Suitcase* can be read at home or used in a school or church setting as a tool to challenge and or inspire children to consider God's heavenly kingdom, and how one might minister to others.

Activity One—Follow Up Questions...Diving in...

Age range: Any age

Materials: *The Suitcase*

Time needed: 20-30 minutes

Teacher Preparation: Would be good to read some of the parables that are mentioned in the book. The Parable of the Mustard Seed; The Pearl of Great Price; The Parable of the Hidden Treasure—all in Matthew 13.

- Before reading the book aloud to the children, speak in a hushed voice to gain their attention, have the kids close their eyes, and ask them to think of what the Kingdom of Heaven might look like. Count to ten while they think, then ask them to save that picture in their head to share with the group later.
- Read *The Suitcase*.
- Potential Questions:
 1. What were some of the things Thomas packed in his suitcase so he could travel to the Kingdom of Heaven?
 2. Why do you think he packed a mustard seed, a pearl, a hammer?
 3. Why did Thomas want to go to the Kingdom of Heaven?

4. Thomas said, “sometimes I just talk too much and it’s important to only listen.” Why is listening important?
5. Why did Thomas’s daddy tell him that he was *already* in the Kingdom of Heaven?
6. What are some ways that we can share the Kingdom of Heaven with other people?
7. When you pictured the Kingdom of Heaven in your head, what did it look like?
8. How does it make you feel that Thomas’s whole family joined in with him on his journey?
9. What can you do *today* that will show the same type of love that Thomas wanted to show?

Activity Two—The Mustard Seed: Write and/or Draw

Age range: Second through sixth grade

Materials: *The Suitcase*, Bible, drawing paper and colored pencils (or other art materials) for each child

Time needed: 50 minutes

Teacher Prep: Read in advance the Parable of the Mustard Seed—Meditate on all of Matthew 13 and ask for God’s guidance as you lead the children...

- The Gospels are jam packed with parables. The Good Shepherd, the Sower of Seed, the Vine and the Branches... So many beautiful and inspiring and even mysterious stories! Have an older child, or teacher **read Matthew 13: 31, 32** out loud. Allow some time for the children to ponder these words.
- Read *The Suitcase*.
- Choose a few questions from Activity One to get the kids thinking.
- Send everyone off to either write their own parable, or draw a picture from a theme in the book, or from the Bible passage. Even if they draw a figure of Darth Vader or Sponge Bob, there is most likely a deep reason why. Ask them about their drawing and commend them on their hard work, their use of color, the shape of the lines, or ask them what they were thinking when they drew it...

Publish Your Students’ Work

Any artwork or quotes that are sent to me will be “published” on The Suitcase Facebook page. Feel free to send along jpegs, or pdfs, or simply include the attachments and/or descriptions in an email to:

jane@janegmeyer.com. Make sure that you have student and parent permission before sending artwork, and please no photos of children’s faces for their own protection of privacy.