Picture This
Parable of the Rich Fool

BIG IDEA: God wants us to treasure our relationship with Him more than any of our possessions.


KEY VERSE: “Put away riches for yourselves in heaven. There, moths and rust do not destroy them. There, thieves do not break in and steal them. Your heart will be where your riches are.” Matthew 6:20-21 (NIrV)

SCHEDULE

SMALL GROUP CONNECT
7–15 minutes

LARGE GROUP LESSON
30–40 minutes

REFLECT AND RESPOND STATIONS
7–15 minutes

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES
15–25 minutes

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As I turned into our subdivision with kids in tow, I could see that something wasn’t right. Smoke billowed skyward from the general direction of our house. It wasn’t the kind of smoke that emoted the happy thoughts of an early fall bonfire. This was ugly smoke—black, billowing smoke that signified something was terribly wrong. As we approached the source, we were relieved to see that it wasn’t our house that was on fire. Another family, though, on a nearby street, was not so fortunate.

After parking the car, the kids and I made the short walk to the burning house as fire trucks, with sirens blaring, raced by. When we arrived, throngs of neighbors were gathered around the yellow-taped perimeter, watching as the firefighters battled back the flames. I felt this odd mixture of emotions. It was honestly a little thrilling to see the men in fire gear fighting the fire. At the very same time, I felt a deep sadness for the family whose life was being thrown into chaos. Fortunately, no one was injured in the fire, but in a matter of minutes, almost all of their earthly possessions had been destroyed.

Sometimes it’s easy to forget how fragile life is. It’s easy to forget how quickly we can lose not only our stuff, but our lives as well. This is the realization that’s at the heart of the “Rich Fool” parable. If you’re not familiar with it, you can read it in Luke 12:13–21. The parable reminds us that earthly possessions all have expiration dates. Moths and rust destroy them. Thieves steal them. Fire consumes them. Your IKEA furniture falls apart. And if you should expire before your stuff does, you still can’t take it with you. Jesus presents an alternative investment strategy, though—invest in the eternal.

In Matthew 6:21, Jesus says, “Instead, put away riches for yourself in heaven. There, moths and rust do not destroy them. There, thieves do not break in and steal them. Your heart will be where your riches are.” Think for just a moment what your greatest pursuits are in life. Are they earthly pursuits or heavenly pursuits? Will they eventually be destroyed or will they last forever? Let’s prayerfully resolve to avoid being “rich fools.”

David Rausch
Mooblio President
The Basics of Blocking: Using Levels

“Blocking” is a drama term that refers to how you move and position your body while acting or teaching. Good blocking is like visual candy for kids—it pulls them deeper into your message. Poor blocking, on the other hand, can put your kids to sleep. One of the most effective ways to employ blocking to your advantage is to use a variety of levels (the highs and lows of your space). In fact, at the moment you change levels, you’ll probably notice an increase in the kids’ attention. From high to low, here are some different levels you can use along with the message they convey:

**Elevated level:** If you stand on a chair, a ladder, or some other tall, stable object, you’ll be towering over the kids. This is the most dominant level and it’s great when you want to have an overbearing presence. Are you speaking as if you were Goliath or an angry king? Place yourself high above the kids to help them feel the overwhelming power of the situation.

**Standing level:** This is your baseline level—the one you’ll use most often. People often address kids from a standing position, so it’s one they’re very familiar with and it doesn’t necessarily convey either dominance or intimacy.

**Seated level:** This level is beginning to put you closer to the kids and therefore is a more relaxed and comfortable level. It’s a good level to be at when you want to share something from the heart. This might be a great level to use while sharing a personal story, depending on the nature and energy of the story.

**Kneeling level:** Kneeling puts you almost at eye level with the kids and is therefore the most personal and intimate of the levels. You might employ this level near the end of a lesson when you’re sharing the truth about Jesus’ immense love for them. If you get on your knees, and speak softly and slowly, the kids will eat up every word you say!
UNIT DESCRIPTION

“Picture this!” That’s what we say when we want people to imagine what something would look like. It was also one of Jesus’ favorite expressions. Well...not really, but kind of! Jesus often told parables to create a clear and memorable picture of what it looks like to follow God. It’s as if Jesus was saying, “Picture this—a man had two sons...” During “Picture This,” kids will get to interact with Jesus’ parables by creating a series of their own fast-paced pictures! Best of all, while they’re releasing their inner Picasso, they’ll also be learning and experiencing what it means to follow our ever-living, ever-loving God.

SET-UP INSTRUCTIONS

- Set up a paper pad on an easel in the teaching area where all of the kids can see it. Be sure there are enough pieces of paper on the pad for all of the drawings. Each “Parable Picture” will need its own piece of paper.
- Place a marker near the paper pad.
- Print out the “Parable Picture Cards” and cut them apart. Place them in the teaching area for use during the “Picture This” drawing challenge during the telling of the Big Bible Story.
- Place a Bible in the back of the room, behind where the kids sit.
- Place a bag of individually wrapped candy in the teaching area where the kids can’t see it.
- Place a bucket or container of some sort in the teaching area. Use it to collect extra candy from the kids.
- Choose which of the Reflect and Respond Stations you would like to make available. Set out the appropriate materials for each of those stations.

“Picture This” drawing challenge options:

- For older kids: Choose a different kid to draw each of the pictures. When someone has correctly guessed the picture, tear the paper from the pad and have the artist stand with it to the side.
- For younger kids: If the younger kids struggle with the drawing, draw the pictures yourself while the kids guess what the picture is. When someone has guessed correctly, tear the paper from the pad and have the kid who guessed stand with it to the side.
- For added fun: Consider splitting the kids into two teams and creating a competition. Give the teams a point each time they correctly guess a drawing first. In the end, count up the points and announce a winner.
PICTURE THIS INTRO

Large Group Leader: Hello everyone and welcome to another amazing week of “Picture This!” During “Picture This” we’re taking a look at some of the different parables that Jesus told. Wait! Hold the phone—who remembers what a parable is? (Take answers from kids.) Great job! In the Bible, a parable is a short story that gives us a picture of how God wants us to live. Jesus told parables all the time. It was a way for Jesus to make His teachings easy to understand and to remember.

Before we get started with today’s parable, we’re going to play a quick round of “Picture This.” I’ll draw some pictures as fast as I can while the rest of you guess what it is. You’ll have 2 minutes to guess as many pictures as you can.

Begin drawing the following pictures one at a time: Money, T.V., Bike, Clothes, Video Game System, and IPad™. When the kids guess one picture correctly, move on to the next one. Continue drawing until the 2-minute timer is up.

THE BIG BIBLE STORY—PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL

(Place your Bible ahead of time in the back of the room, giving you an excuse to walk back there. Pick up your Bible and open to Luke 12:13-21.) In the Bible, in Luke 12, it says that more and more people were following Jesus all the time. In fact, on one particular day, there were so many people trying to get near Jesus that they were stepping on each other. (Carefully “push” your way through the kids toward the teaching area as if you’re jostling to get closer to Jesus.) As people were pushing their way toward Jesus, a man from the crowd shouted out to Him, (Read from Bible. Shout as if trying to be heard over a crowd.) “Teacher,” he said, ‘tell my brother to divide the family property with me.”

You see, the man’s dad had died. And in the Bible, when that happened, all of the dad’s stuff was divided between the sons. Apparently, though, this man wasn’t happy with how much of the stuff he got. It was like the man was pointing to his brother and yelling in a whiny voice, “But he got more!” Can you all yell that with me in an obnoxiously whiny voice? (Yell it one more time with the kids.)
The man wanted Jesus to solve his problem. But Jesus is out-of-this-world, super-duper wise. In fact, because Jesus is God, there’s never been anyone wiser than Him. Jesus knew the man’s problem wasn’t with how much stuff he had, the problem was with his heart. So, Jesus warned the man. He said to him, *(read from Bible: Luke 12:15)* “Watch out! Be on your guard against wanting to have more and more things. Life is not made up of how much a person has.” Then Jesus told him a parable called “The Rich Fool.” Let’s play “Picture This” again to find out what the parable is all about.

Choose a kid to come to the teaching area. Show him the “Parable Picture” card with the picture that needs to be drawn. For younger kids, you may need to whisper the word to them. Have the kid quickly and silently draw his picture on the paper pad until the rest of the kids can guess what it is. Next, tear the paper off and have the artist stand with it to the side. Choose another kid to draw the next picture and repeat the above instructions. In the end, there should be five kids standing across the teaching area holding the following pictures in this order: corn on the cob, saw, barn, couch, and tombstone. See the “Drawing Challenge Options” in the Set-Up Instructions for more details.

Great job! These pictures actually tell the parable of “The Rich Fool.” Let me show you. In our parable for today, Jesus said, “There was a rich farmer whose land produced a crazy-good crop. *(Point to corn picture.)* In fact, the farmer had so many crops he didn’t know what to do with them all. So instead of giving away the extras, the man tore down *(point to saw picture)* all of his little barns and built himself some great big, gigantic barns *(point to barn picture).* Now the man could keep all the stuff he ever wanted! He thought to himself, “Self…now that you have everything you ever wanted, you can totally take it easy!” So, the man laid back *(point to couch drawing)* and said, “Aaaaah…life is good!” Can you say that with me? *(Have kids say, “Aaaaah…life is good!”)* But that same night, before the man could enjoy any of his stuff, he died *(point to tombstone).*

When Jesus finished His parable, the man and all the people stood in stunned silence. *(Pause for a split second longer and deliver the next line a bit slower and more intentionally.)* “That,” Jesus said, “is how it will be for anyone who stores things away for himself but is not rich in God’s eyes.”

**BIG BIBLE STORY QUESTIONS**

At the end of the Bible story have the kids turn briefly to their small groups and discuss the following questions: **For Younger Kids:** What do you think Jesus was trying to tell people through this parable? Why do you think the man stored up all of his stuff instead of giving some of it away? **For Older Kids:** What do you think Jesus was trying to tell people through this parable? What do you think it means to be “rich” in God’s eyes? After a few minutes, draw their attention back to the teaching area. You may want to ask the kids for some of their answers to hear what they were thinking.

**THE RICH FOOL CANDY GRAB**

In the beginning of today’s story, Jesus warned the man against wanting to have more and more things. Did you know there’s a word in the Bible for that? The word is “covet.” Can you say that word with me? *(Have kids repeat the word with you.)* Take a look at what the word “covet” means:

**CG:** Covet: *(verb)* To really, really, really, want to have something.
Why do you think Jesus warned people not to covet stuff? *(Take some answers from kids.)* Great answers! When the rich man in Jesus’ parable died, did he get to take all of his stuff with him? No way! The rich man spent all of his life trying to get stuff that he couldn’t keep. Do you know what that feels like? *(Say with increased enthusiasm.)* Wait! Here’s a better question—who likes candy?

As the kids begin to raise their hand or shout out, quickly throw handfuls of individually wrapped candy to them. Continue throwing candy until it looks like most of the kids have multiple pieces. It’s okay if some kids have more than others. When you’re finished, determine which kids got the most by asking who got more than 1 piece, who got more than 5 pieces, 10 pieces, etc. After getting the kids excited about how much candy they got, tell them they have to return all of their candy except for one piece. Have the kids bring their extra candy back to you and then tell them to return to their seats.

Is anyone a little bummed out? I know, I know—you might have seen that one coming, but doesn’t it kind of stink to think you were going to get a bunch of candy, only to find out you only got to keep one measly piece? The rich man must have felt like that times a million!

BEING RICH IN GOD’S EYES

That’s why Jesus said it’s foolish to try to store up all kinds of stuff in this life—you don’t get to keep it. Eventually it all goes away. Jesus said that instead of being rich with a bunch of stuff, we should be rich *in the eyes of God.* Wait a second! Rich in the eyes of God? What in the world do you think that means? *(Take some answers from kids.)* To be rich in the eyes of God means that we’re full of faith, hope, and love. It means that we trust and follow Jesus and live the way He wants us to live. And when we do that, we receive a treasure that lasts forever and ever—life with God in heaven. Nothing can take that away from us. In fact, that’s what our Bible verse for today says. Take a look at this. *(Encourage kids to open their Bibles to Matthew 6:20-21. When ready, choose a kid to read the verse aloud or read it aloud yourself.)*

When we spend all of our time coveting more stuff, we want that stuff, we love that stuff, and we give our hearts to that stuff! But when we spend our time following Jesus, we give our hearts to Him. There’s nothing wrong with wanting to have some new clothes or a cool bike, but sometimes, like the rich fool, we want more stuff than we really need. And sometimes that stuff becomes more important to us than following Jesus. So instead of working so hard to get the newest and coolest stuff, work on loving and following Jesus more and more every single day. The reward for doing that lasts forever!

Close the Large Group time by praying for the kids in whatever way the Holy Spirit prompts you. Following the prayer, explain to the kids which of the Reflect and Respond Stations will be available. Remind them to move about the stations very quietly. Tell them they are free to respond to God in whatever way the Holy Spirit leads them, but if they need suggestions, some of the stations will give them ideas for how to pray, write, or draw. Give each child one “GO! Home” sheet and instruct them to take it with them to the stations. Place small group leaders at the different stations to quietly help the kids. The stations listed below are just the ones that have prompts that are specific to today’s
Large Group Lesson | Elementary

lesson. For more instructions on how the Reflect and Respond Stations work as well as a full list of possible stations, see the “GO! Guide.”

CG: “Picture This” title graphic
Music: (Optional) Play quiet instrumental music

REFLECT AND RESPOND STATIONS

Prayer Station prompt: Write a prayer to God thanking Him for giving you all the things you need in life.

Journal Station prompt: Make a list of all the ways you want to be “rich” in God’s eyes. In other words, tell God about some ways that you want to follow Him more closely.

Bible Station prompt: Read it for yourself: Luke 12:13–21. Write to God your favorite part of the parable. Tell Him why you liked it.

Art Station prompt: Do you have more stuff than you really need? Draw a picture of some of the stuff you have that you could give to someone who needs it more. Talk to your parents about maybe giving it away.