Mark 4

*“Listening Heart”*

**Scripture:** Mark 4:1-41

**Memory Verse:** *“But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it and bear fruit…”* Mark 4:20

**Lesson Focus:** We need a heart that will listen to God.

**Activities and Craft:** Coloring Page and Worksheet

Craft for 1st & 2nd graders: Growing in God’s Word Flower Pot

**Introduction:** “What do you hear?” Game:

Have the kids sit in rows. Tell the first child in each row a word and have them whisper it to the next child and so-on down the row. Have each child at the end of the row tell you what word they heard. You may play this several times changing out the kids at the front of the row.

Tell the kids that today, Jesus is going to talk about our “ears.” He’s going to remind us that we may hear something but we don’t really listen and let what we hear change us from the inside out.

**Bible Lesson:**

 **Mark 4:1-2:** *“Jesus teaches in parables”*

 Jesus is teaching by the Sea of Galilee and there is a great multitude of people listening

to Him. There are so many people that He has to get in a boat in the water and teach from the boat to the people on the shore. But Jesus taught in a different way. He taught by parables.

√ What is a parable? (a story that teaches a truth)

 **Mark 4:3-9**

 **Parable #1: The Parable of the Sower:**

1. Sower (a man who plants seeds) plants seeds in the ground.
2. The seed falls on different types of soil and with different results.
3. Seed falls on wayside (or road) and the birds eat it up. The farms in Palestine had rows of plantings with paths between that the farmers walked on to care for the plants. The paths got beaten down so that nothing could grow.
4. Seed falls on stony ground where there is not much earth. The seed germinates and starts to grow – but there is not enough earth and the sun dries it up because there were no roots.
5. Seed falls among thorns and the seed grows but is choked out by the weeds.
6. Seed falls on good soil and grows and yields crops.

Then after Jesus tells the parable – He says this:

 “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

√ What does Jesus mean by that statement?

√ Do you all have ears?

√ How many ears do you have?

√ Are there times when someone is speaking to you and you do not listen? Why or why not?

Jesus is speaking God’s truth to these people. He is using a story to tell God’s truth. He knows that when we listen we don’t always really listen. Jesus wants us to listen so that our hearts change. So that we are moved by God’s word and allow it to make a change inside of us.

 **Mark 4:10-13;** *“Why Jesus speaks in parables.”*

 The 12 disciples ask about what this parable means.

 Jesus tells them that they will be told plainly what the Kingdom of God is.

 Jesus brings a new way that God is going to deal with mankind and sin. Jesus will

die for our sin and when we believe, we become part of God’s Kingdom here on earth and eventually for eternity in heaven.

In Mark 4:12, He quotes Old Testament prophecy that states that not everyone will accept and believe in what Jesus is saying. They will hear Jesus’ words but not understand or believe. The condition of your heart will determine how you respond to God’s truth.

Jesus also challenges the 12 disciples as to why they do not understand this parable in Mark 4:13.

**Mark 4:14-20;** *“The Parable Explained.”*

1. The “seed” is the Word of God. The sower sows the Word on different types of soil in our hearts. When we hear God’s Word - how do we listen so that our heart responds to God’s Word.
2. The seed that falls on the street and the birds eat it;
* Hard heart; these are people that hear God’s Word and then Satan comes and convinces them to not believe.
1. Seed that falls on stony ground:
* Heart that listens and then soon forgets; these are people that hear God’s Word and immediately believe it – but do not grow roots. So that when troubles come they do not have enough faith to keep believing.
1. Seed that falls among thorns:
* Heart that is distracted by the world; These are people that hear the Word of God but are distracted by the world (riches, etc.) and they become unfruitful in this world.
1. Seed that falls on good soil:
* Good Heart that listens to truth; people who hear God’s Word, accept it – grow deep roots and produce fruit for the Kingdom of God.

**Mark 4:21-29; “***The Challenge of Jesus!”*

1. God’s light is shining truth. Things are not hidden.

(He who has ears – let him listen.)

1. Be careful with what you hear.
	1. Use what you hear from God’s Word – we need to do what God’s word says.
	2. When we listen and respond to God’s Word – He will reveal more truth to us daily.
2. Sow God’s seed. If you are a follower of Jesus you are also a sower. You plant God’s seed wherever you grow by telling others about Jesus. God always causes the growth in people’s lives – but we must be faithful to plant the seed.
3. The Parable of the Mustard Seed: God’s seed is powerful. A mustard seed

Is very small and even though it starts out as a small seed it grows into a strong bush. The seed of God’s truth is powerful. The Kingdom of God can be compared to a mustard seed because it starts out with us believing in our hearts and as we all grow we become a part of the Kingdom of God.

1. Faith! Jesus challenges the disciple’s faith by sleeping through a great storm.

√ What do the disciples ask Jesus in Mark 4:38?

√ What did Jesus say to the storm? Mark 4:39

√ What did Jesus say to His disciples? Mark 4:40

√ How did the disciples respond to what Jesus did? Mark 4:41

This storm was a lesson for the disciples. They felt like Jesus was ignoring the storm that they were in. They thought that they were going to die and Jesus was just sleeping through it. Jesus was exhausted and could sleep soundly knowing that they were in God’s hands. But He could also with a word command nature to obey Him. He then challenges them to have more faith in God.

**Application:**

1. What is the condition of your heart?
2. What is the condition of your ears? When you hear God’s word to you listen and change?
3. Go back to class and look at the “Heart Arrow Chart.”

 Talk about:

When we hear God’s Word we listen and then respond.

 Which arrow represents your heart?

1. Hard Heart
2. Forgetful Heart
3. Distracted Heart
4. Soft Heart that can grow for God

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