

Life of Christ

The Vineyard Workers

Matthew 20:1-16

Younger Verse

You are all children of God by believing in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:26

Older Verse

You are all children of God by believing in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:26

Lesson Goals

Understand that God wants all people to be saved
Know that we all receive eternal life when we accept Christ
Recognize that God wants us to help others be in His family

Welcome Time

Ask: Have you ever been late to school? Does it feel good when you are able to join your class and eat lunch and play? Today we will talk about God giving everyone a chance to join His family.

Bible Story

*Please note: This portion of the lesson is given to help in teaching the lesson. Please read through the story and read it in the Bible before teaching it. Do **NOT** read from this piece of paper. Instead, make a note sheet and place it next to the story in the Bible.*

We have learned about many stories Jesus told that had a special meaning. Do you remember what these stories are called? (Parables) In today's lesson, Jesus told a story to remind His disciples not to worry about who is first.

Jesus told about a man who owned a **vineyard**. A vineyard is a big piece of land that has lots of grapes growing on it. The man needed help in his vineyard. Early one morning, he went to town to hire some people to work in the vineyard. The workers agreed to work all day for 1 silver coin.

At about 9:00, the owner went back to town to find more help. He saw more people standing around, so he hired some of them to help with his vineyard. The man also went out at 12:00 and 3:00 and found more men to work in his vineyard.

Around 5:00 in the afternoon, the owner returned and found some men standing around. He asked the men why they had done nothing all day. They answered that no one gave them jobs to do. Quickly, the kind man hired them to work in his vineyard.

At the end of the day the workers lined up to get their money. The owner asked the boss to first pay the people that were hired last. When they came to get their money, to their great surprise, they got 1 silver coin! They were so excited. The kind man had paid them very well.

The others who were there all day became excited. They figured that since they had been there all day, they would get lots of silver coins. When it was their turn to receive their money, they all received 1 silver coin. They could not believe their eyes! It seemed so unfair. They complained and did not understand why the owner gave them the same wage as the one who had only worked a little while.

The owner explained that he *had* been fair to the workers. They had agreed to

work for 1 silver coin for the day. They should have been happy with what they got and happy that the others received good money.

In this story, the owner represents God, who is always looking for more people to be in His family. The workers represent people. Some accept Christ when they are young, and some later in life. But all receive the same gift—eternal life.

Jesus wants us to understand that we **all** get more than we deserve. When we ask Jesus into our hearts, we receive forgiveness from our sins and eternal life. God didn't have to do that for us. We should be grateful for this precious gift!

God doesn't play favorites. He wants **all** people to be in His family. Jesus told this story about the vineyard workers so we would understand that truth. No matter when a person accepts Christ, they become part of God's family. He gives them the gift of eternal life. So let's not waste time worrying about who God likes best. Let's spend our time helping others to be in God's family with us!

Review Questions

1. What is a vineyard? (large area of land used to grow grapes)
2. Jesus told the story about the vineyard owner. How much did he tell the first workers he would pay them? (1 silver coin)
3. At the end of the day, all the workers got the same amount of money. What was unusual about this? (Some workers had worked all day, while others had only worked a short time.)
4. What does this story tell us about God's kingdom? (God wants all people to be in His family, and He doesn't play favorites)

Prayer Time

Thank God for His gift of eternal life. Pray that we will see people the way that God sees them—through eyes of love.

Life Application

God is like the vineyard owner who just couldn't get enough workers! He keeps looking for more people to join His family. He doesn't have a time limit. As long as someone is alive, they can still receive Christ.

Sometimes, we give up on people. We think they have done too many bad things for God to love them. But God still wants them to have eternal life! All they must do is ask for forgiveness and receive Jesus into their heart. Then they are in the family!

God doesn't put limits on His love and forgiveness. He has open arms for all who will come to Him. And He wants us to have a loving attitude toward others. We shouldn't look down on others. Remember that God made every person, and all are precious and valuable to Him.

Planning for Next Lesson
A Mom Asks Jesus for a Favor
Matthew 20:20-28

Preschool Lesson for The Vineyard Workers

(Bring some grapes to share with the kids; they can munch on them while you are telling the story!)

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We can be happy that God loves us and others.

Pray that we will love others the way that God does.

Hands-on Activities for The Vineyard Workers

Bring magazines. Have the kids make a collage of different types of people: children, older people, different races, etc. Then write today's Bible verse and discuss how God wants all people to be saved, regardless of age or background.

Serve grapes or raisins as a snack to remind the kids of the story. You may want to have the children line up, and then go to the back of the line to begin serving the snacks. Talk about how Jesus said the last will be first and the first will be last.

Make silver coin rubbings to help children remember the generous owner. Place paper over nickels and quarters. Lightly rub to see the impression of the coin!

Another snack idea: Freeze grapes. They taste slushy and delicious! Or, wash the grapes and coat with powdered sugar for a sugary treat!

Weave together small grapevine wreaths (or buy little ones in a craft store). Glue the verse to the grapevine to help them remember to be kind. If this craft is not feasible for you, draw a grapevine and write the verse on the page.