

SABBATH SCHOOL

Level 4 • Unit 10 • Week 4

GOD'S KINGDOM: A VALUABLE TREASURE

OBJECTIVE:

To develop a value awareness to strive for the lifetime goal of entrance into the Kingdom of God.

ATTENTION GETTER:

Prepare: Photocopy maze (see next page)

Say: God's Kingdom is a valuable treasure. Let's talk about the value of the Kingdom and what you think the Kingdom will be like.

Ask: Can anyone give me an idea of why the Kingdom might be a valuable place for us to enter?

Do: Listen to the children's input for a moment and guide their ideas to the things we know and understand about the Kingdom and God's plan for our future, using scriptures to cover the following:

- They will be Spirit beings and will not worry about dying (Luke 20:35-36).
- They will be with God (1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 24; Revelation 21:3).
- They will never suffer injury (Isaiah 11:6-9).
- They will have vast knowledge (Ephesians 3:3-5; Luke 12:2; Proverbs 1:7; 1 Corinthians 13:2).
- Everyone will be happy (Proverbs 29:18; Psalm 128; Revelation 21:4; Isaiah 35:10).
- They will be with other loved ones (Zechariah 8:5; Ezekiel 37; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

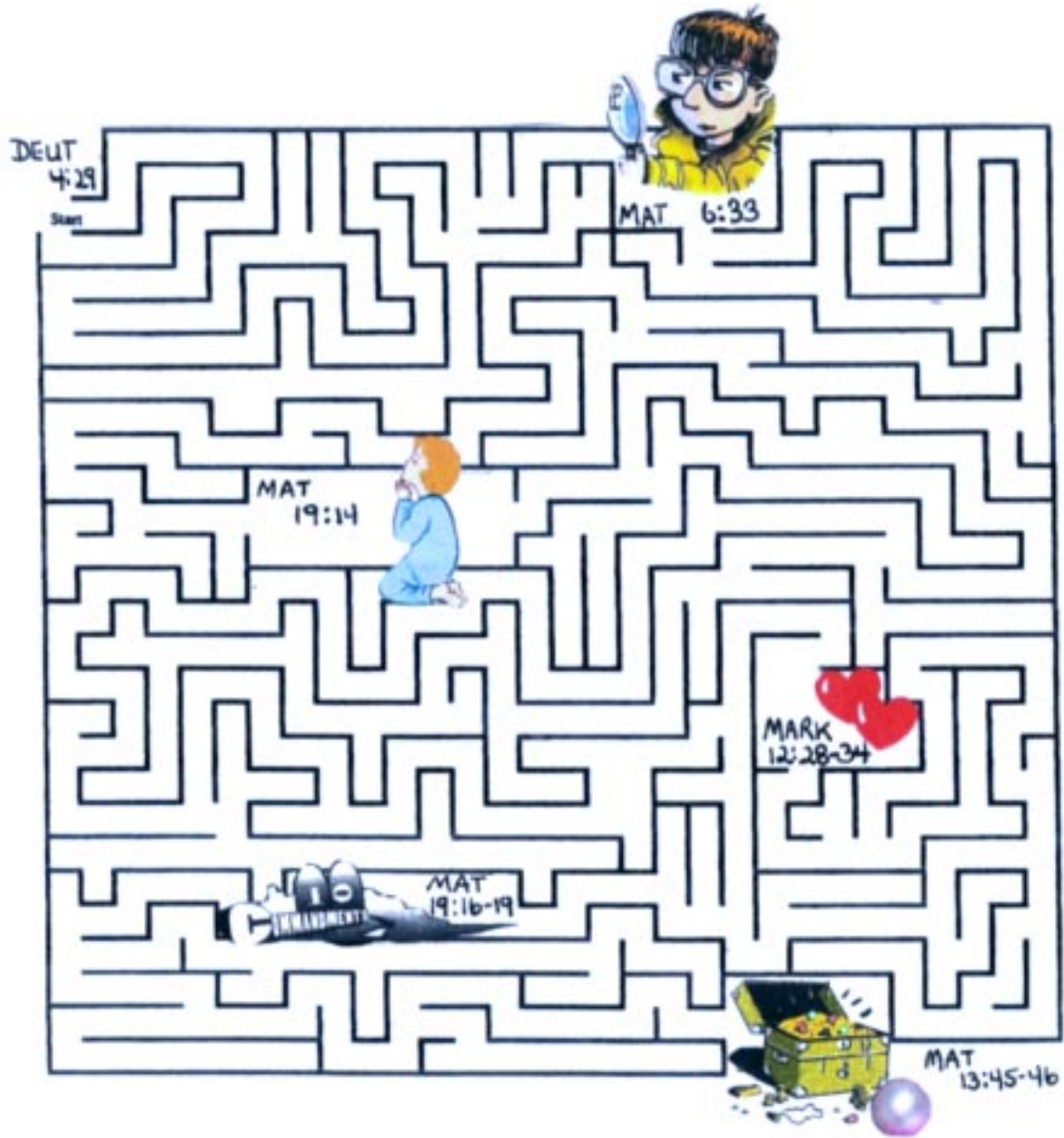
Do: Be sure to emphasize Exodus 19:5 and James 2:5.

Say: You will be there if you love God and obey Him. This makes the Kingdom especially valuable to each one of us because we will be a part of God's treasure.

Do: Hand out "Find the Way to the Kingdom" maze activity. Read the directions at the top of the sheet. Let the children do the maze. (The scriptures will be covered during their lesson.)

FIND THE WAY TO THE PEARL OF GREAT VALUE

This maze is like traveling the road of life. It will help you become aware of what God wants you to know about making it into His valuable Kingdom. The goal of getting to God's Kingdom is the best goal a person can ever have in their lifetime. As you follow the trail to reach the treasure, you will cross over each scripture clue. When we do our lesson, we will investigate each scripture to see what we must do to find the pearl of great price.



BIBLE LESSON:

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

My father is Julius Gaspar and for many years he has been the most famous dealer in pearls anywhere on the Gulf of California along the Mexican coast. It is here that the finest black pearls on the market are found. My father is known from Guadalajara to as far away as Mexico City for the fine pearls he takes from the sea.

Last July he made me, Martin Gaspar, the second partner in his business. There was a big celebration as my father changed the sign over his office door to read "Gaspar and Sons" instead of "Gaspar and Son." My father beamed and said, "Now I have two sons working with me. We will sell twice as many pearls, and we'll find only the finest in the ocean." Then my father took me into his office and showed me the trays filled with pearls of all shapes, colors and sizes.

My father explained everything I needed to learn. My father would not let me dive for pearls until I learned many other things, just as my older brother had learned two years before me. My father had to be sure I understood his business. He had to be sure I understood him. Over many weeks I earnestly learned about the pearls and about my father's ways. I could not wait to be allowed to dive for the precious treasure.

Say: Let's pause here for a moment as we read the first scripture at the beginning of our maze.

Do: Read Deuteronomy 4:29 (or let one of the children read it).

Say: Just as Martin in the story is earnestly learning about his father's pearl business, we must earnestly seek to know God to gain the treasure of the kingdom. Now let's read the second scripture in the maze also.

Do: Read Matthew 6:33.

Say: As our scripture shows, God wants to give us all of our desires, but we must first seek to learn about Him and His kingdom before He can trust us with responsibilities in His treasured Kingdom. Now let's go back to our story.

The day finally arrived when I was allowed to join my father as he set out to sea with his fleet of five boats. Each boat is 25 feet long and has a high pointed projecting bow, a stern like a canoe and a sail. Each boat carries about four men. Our boat carried my father, a man named Leo, my brother Luke and me.

We left very early while it was still dark and reached the pearling beds at dawn. We anchored the five boats in a close cluster over the reef where the shells grow. Although my father had made me a partner in his business and I had heard many stories from experienced pearlers, everything was new to me. I still felt like a child with much to learn. I was only 15.

Say: Let's pause again and read the next scripture we came across in our maze.

Do: Read Matthew 19:14.

Say: God wants us all (grown-ups included) to feel like children. We all have much to learn about God and His Kingdom. We must be teachable as little children are. Now back to the story again.

My father showed me how to pull up the full baskets of oysters and how to stack the shells in the boat. He then picked up the lead weight that was tied to the boat and with his basket empty he went over the side. Down he went with his heavy weight until he reached bottom. The water was clear so I could see him prying the oyster shells from the rocks. When the basket was full he gave a tug on the rope and I pulled him up.

At the end of the day our five boatloads of shells yielded no valuable round or pear-shaped jewels but only a handful of buttons and irregularly shaped dull pearls. I could see that this pearling business was very hard work.

After I became familiar with my father's business I had a dream in my mind to find the pearl of great value, but I had to get someone to teach me how to dive since my father was a very busy man and he was not yet ready to teach me.

I remembered my father's friend Carlos. He was a much loved and respected neighbor to those in the pearling trade. He was also a cautious diver and had found many valuable gems. I would ask him to teach me to dive.

Say: We now come to the next scripture in our maze. Let's read part of it.

Do: Read Mark 12:31-33 (concentrate on verse 33 only).

Say: We have already learned we must know and love God, but the second part of that commandment is to love our neighbor. In our story Martin knew he could count on the help of his neighbor because Carlos was a loving neighbor. As we travel toward the Kingdom, we learn we can not reach the treasure without letting others help us and helping others as well. Martin needed help if he was going to find the great pearl. He was willing to learn from Carlos. Someday when he got older he would be able to teach others what he had learned. He would become a good neighbor to someone else. We must all learn to give our neighbors a helping hand when needed. Back to the story.

In 12 feet of water over a reef of black rocks, Carlos dropped the anchor.

"Now I teach you to dive." He said. "First start with the breathing."

The old man began to take in great gulps of air until his chest expanded to almost twice its size. Then "whoosh," he let it out loudly.

"This is called taking in the wind." He said. "It is very important. You must practice it a lot. I obeyed his command. For me it was not easy to learn "taking in the wind." I coughed a lot. Carlos said, "You must practice often and stretch your lungs."

Carlos taught me many things that day and we gathered many baskets of shells, but none contained the great pearl that I longed to find.

Say: Our next scripture in the maze is Matthew 19:17-19. Let's read it.

Do: Read Matthew 19:17-19.

Say: We cannot find the pearl of great price without obeying the Commandments of God. In the story, Martin cannot find his treasure without knowing how to breathe correctly when he dives. His life depends on it, just as our life depends on obeying God. Now back to the story.

The day after I learned how to dive I worked in my father's office. My father's fleet was out all day and as they headed back from the pearl beds, a sudden fierce storm overtook his boats and destroyed them. The man named Leo and my brother, Luke, lost their lives. The men in the other boats did not make it back either, only my father survived. It was a great blow for our family.

I wanted to comfort my father and mother but I did not know how. Early one morning, while it was still dark, I took the lantern and the diving weights and I set out on my own toward the lagoon where Carlos taught me to dive. In the lagoon was an entrance to a cave that was so narrow no man was able to squeeze through the opening, but I was still a child and very thin. I knew I could enter and so I did.

As soon as I anchored the boat, I slipped over the side with the lead weight. When I reached the bottom I squeezed myself through the cave opening and when the bubbles cleared, I saw shells larger than any I had ever seen. I started to pry them loose, but they wouldn't budge. I had to dive many more times before I pried one loose. It was too heavy to lift into the boat. I tied it to the rope and towed it along in the water.

On shore I worked at opening the shell. Once open I felt under the frilled edge of the oyster's flesh. I removed several small pearls. The last one I pulled out was round and smooth and the color of smoke. The pearl was a 56.3 carat black pearl. A black pearl of this size is worth anywhere from \$10,000 to \$20,000. News of the great find spread through our town like wildfire. Everyone wanted to know where and how it was found.

If only my brother was still alive, I would have been able to share my find with him. My brother had given his life to the sea in search of the pearl that I found. It was senseless to lead anyone to the cave because I knew that most pearlers were too big to fit through the cave's opening. For now, the secret pearl bed belonged to me. There was great treasure yet to be discovered at that location. The time had not yet come for me to share my valuable find.

Say: Many people lose their lives in search of valuable treasure such as gold, silver or even beautiful pearls but God promises we will gain eternal life if we search for the treasures that He wants to offer us in His Kingdom. It is very important that we follow His instructions. If you have time at home look up the scriptures in the maze again to review what you must do to find the treasure of God.

LESSON APPLICATION:

Supplies: Pearls (at least 20 per child)

Glue

Copies of treasure chest (see end of lesson)

Thread or string to string pearls (optional)

Needles (correct size for thread/string and pearl holes—optional)

Scissors (optional)

Prepare: Buy several small bags of pearls and fast drying glue from a hobby shop. Make sure you have enough to give at least 20 pearls to each child. Make copies of the treasure chest (see end of lesson) on card stock paper. (Blue paper makes a nice background representing water.)

Option: Make copies of treasure chest on regular white paper and then have kids cut out the chest and glue it onto card stock paper. Also have thread or string handy so kids can string their pearls before gluing onto the treasure chest. Needles may also be needed. Make sure the needle size will work with the thread or string and size of holes in pearls. Also bring several pairs of scissors.

Do: Give each child a copy of the lesson story to do a treasure hunt for the words "pearl" or "pearls."

Say: You have a copy of the story that we just read and now we are going to go on a treasure hunt for pearls inside the story. Please find all the the words "pearl" and "pearls" that you can find in the story and circle them. Do not circle the word "pearling" or "pearler," only the words "pearl" and "pearls."

When you have found all the "pearl" and "pearls" words, please count them. I will give you a small pearl for each one you've found. These pretty pearls will then be glued on to your treasure chest. Note: There are 20 "pearl" and "pearls" in the story.

Do: Give each child the number of pearls that they have counted in the story. They can glue them onto their treasure chest one by one or string them on a string and glue them on.

Once you have finished this activity you can make the following suggestion and tell them the correct number of words that could have been found in the story.

Suggest: When you go home, look around your house for other valuable things to glue on to your treasure chest. Try to find things that are valuable to you; it can be a picture of something you like that you cut out of a magazine or catalog, it can be pennies to represent money; it can be stickers of things you love. Use your imagination to fill up your treasure chest and don't forget to put a small picture of yourself in the chest too. Remember you are one of the most valuable things that your parents possess and you are very valuable to God and the Church.

MUSIC:

Sing "God Is Calling Children," page 51 of the United Church of God hymnal.

MEMORY VERSE:

Matthew 13:45-46 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

Say: In our lesson we learned how valuable a perfect pearl can be. We also learned how hard it is to find one. We learned how valuable we are to God. To God we are pearls and God is searching in the ocean of humanity to find the perfect little pearls to gather into His Kingdom. He has given up a lot to prepare a Kingdom for us. He gave up His own Son who had to die so that His plan can take place soon.

Ask: Can anyone tell me what we must do to become those perfect little pearls that God is looking to place into His treasure chest, the Kingdom?

Do: Refer to the scriptures in the maze again.

family activity

THE POINT:

To familiarize ourselves with a few scriptures that preview the blessings and value of being in the Kingdom of God, and how people will be blessed when God's Kingdom family rules the earth under Christ.

FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:

Help your child with the "Look Inside the Kingdom" activity sheet and look up the scriptures with them so they can learn some of the valuable changes that will take place when God's Kingdom comes.

Discuss the benefits of God's Kingdom and how we must have this as a goal in our lives to strive toward. You may need to spend a moment explaining the difference between God's Kingdom and the Millennium. Be sure to stress the great value it represents to them and how valuable they are in God's eyes and your (their parents') eyes also. Stress that you want them to be there to share the Kingdom with the rest of God's jewels.

Work as a family to fill up your child's treasure chest. Search for small treasures around the house that are valuable to you and glue them onto your treasure chest. You can use magazines and catalogs and cut out pictures to represent valuable items to glue into your chest. Or find pennies and coins, stickers, gemstones or old jewels. Another option is to find pictures that represent God's Kingdom and glue them onto your pearl-filled box. Then you could call it "the Kingdom Chest."

MEMORY VERSE:

Matthew 13:45-46 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

LOOK INSIDE THE KINGDOM

Directions: Fill in the blanks. Use the words or phrases at the bottom of the page to choose from. If you are not sure, be sure to look up the scripture.

1. When God sets up His Kingdom, what will happen to all the deserts around the world?

"...And the desert shall _____ and _____ as the rose; it shall _____ abundantly and _____, even with joy and singing..." (Isaiah 35:1-2).

2. Since God will also change the disposition of animals, who will lead the wolf, leopard and lion?

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a _____ shall lead them" (Isaiah 11:6).

3. What kind of place will the Kingdom be?

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be _____ (Hebrews 12:28).

4. What will everyone be doing in God's Kingdom?

"And...everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to _____, the LORD of hosts, and to _____" (Zechariah 14:16).

5. What can we become in God's Kingdom if we really try to obey God now?

"...If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a _____ to Me above all people..." (Exodus 19:5).

6. How bright will your personality be in God's Kingdom?

"Then the righteous will _____ forth _____ in the kingdom of their Father..." (Matthew 13:43).

little child

rejoice

blossom

shaken

worship the king

shine

special treasure

as the sun

keep the Feast of Tabernacles

rejoice

blossom

ANSWER SHEET:

1. rejoice, blossom, blossom, rejoice
2. little child
3. firm, stable
4. worship the king, keep the Feast of Tabernacles
5. special treasure
6. shine, as the sun

