

**Sow a Seed**

(based on Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23)

One day, Jesus told a story.

“A farmer went out to sow some seeds. He put all his seeds into a sack and went out to the field. He walked all through that field, scattering seeds everywhere. Finally, there were none left in his bag, so he came home and waited for the seeds to grow.

“Now some of those seeds fell on the pathways, but they didn’t have a chance to grow. The birds came and ate them up.

“Some seeds fell on rocky ground. The seeds started to grow. Then the sun came out, and the plants dried up and died because they could not put down deep roots.

“Some seeds fell among the weeds. The seeds started to grow, but the weeds grew faster. The seeds were too crowded and couldn’t develop properly.

“Some seeds fell on the good soil. The seeds put down deep roots and began to grow. Soon they grew into hardy plants. They grew and grew and grew until they produced lots of grain.”

The disciples were puzzled. “What does this story mean?” they asked Jesus.

“The seed is the message of God’s love,” Jesus explained. “God joyfully plants the seeds of love everywhere. You are like the soil.

“Sometimes you are like the hard ground. God’s message of love doesn’t make sense. You are not ready to hear it yet. Don’t worry, God still loves you. God keeps on planting.

“Other times you are like the rocky soil. God’s message of love starts growing in you. Maybe some bad things happen to you, and God’s love seems far away. Don’t worry, God still loves you. God keeps on planting.

“Sometimes you will be like the weedy soil. At first, God’s message of love starts growing in you. Then all kinds of worries come along and confuse you. When that happens, God’s love seems to disappear. Don’t worry, God still loves you. God keeps on planting.

“And sometimes you are ready to hear about God’s love. The message of love grows deep down inside of you. It grows and grows and grows. Other people see God’s love in you too. When that happens, God rejoices and keeps on planting.”



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- If your family is not familiar with the term *parables*, describe them as stories that use word pictures to help people understand an idea. Jesus' parables were always about things that are familiar to the people, but the stories had a deeper meaning. Jesus told parables to help people think deeply about God and living in God's grace.
- Wonder together:
 - Why didn't the farmer know in what kind of soil the seeds would grow best?
 - What did Jesus want to learn from this parable? What can happen when Jesus' message is "planted" in us?



Responding to God's Grace

- Act out the story. First be the birds, swooping down to eat their seeds on the road. Then crouch on the floor as seeds and stretch upward when it's time to grow; then wilt back down in the sun. Be weeds, choking out the good plants. Finally, be the seeds on good ground, growing up straight and tall.
- After Jesus told the parable, the disciples asked him to explain what it meant. Jesus said the parable was about how open the people and their hearts were to hearing and acting on God's word. Consider what type of soil you are today. Are you different soils at different times?
- Divide a sheet of paper into four columns—"Dry Path," "Rocky Soil," "Weedy Soil," "Good Soil." List things in your lives that feel as if they fit in these categories. Consider what makes following God's ways hard (dry path), obstacles that get in the way (rocky soil), people or activities that distract you (weedy soil), and what supports you (good soil). Go through the categories that need help, and brainstorm together some "fertilizers" that might improve conditions.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Consider planting some seeds or beans to illustrate this parable at home.
- Use play dough or other materials to create a sculpture or diorama of this parable.
- Pray this prayer each day this week:

Loving God, thank you for the stories Jesus told that help us understand more about your way of grace. Amen.