

# The Wise & Foolish Servants | Lesson Plan

How should we use the gifts and opportunities given to us?

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Students will understand the importance of using their talents and gifts responsibly, the consequences of not doing so, and the value of taking the initiative.

## Learning Objectives:

- Identify what a parable is and understand its characteristics.
- Recount the parable of "The Wise and Foolish Servants."
- Explain the importance of using one's gifts and being a good steward of what one is given.
- Discuss the consequences of inaction and the value of taking initiative.
- Identify the lesson of the parable, emphasizing the importance of making the most of one's abilities and opportunities.

## Key Vocabulary:

- **Parable:** A simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson, as told by Jesus in the Bible.
- **Talent:** In biblical times, it was a unit of weight and money; today, it refers to a person's natural abilities or gifts.
- **Stewardship:** The responsible management and care of something entrusted to one's care.
- **Responsibility:** The state or fact of having a duty to deal with something or of having control over someone.
- **Initiative:** The ability to assess and initiate things independently; the power or opportunity to act or take charge before others do.

**Educational Standards:** CCRA.RL.1, CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.L.6, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2

**Academic Subject Areas:** Life Lessons, Bible, Judeo-Christian Values

## What You'll Need

- Video: *Otto's Tales: The Wise & Foolish Servants* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Otto's Tales: The Wise & Foolish Servants* (Click [Here](#))

## Lesson Plan (45 mins.)

Warm-Up: (10 mins.)

1. Begin by explaining that a parable is a simple story used to teach a lesson. Today, students will learn the parable known as "The Wise and Foolish Servants," which is also called "The Parable of Talents" in the Bible.



2. Ask students if they have heard any parables or Bible stories before and share some titles if they have (e.g., The Prodigal Son, The Mustard Seed, Noah's Ark, etc.).
3. Introduce and explain the key vocabulary: parable, talent, stewardship, responsibility, and initiative.
4. Discuss the term "talent." Explain that in biblical times, a talent was a significant amount of money, often representing several years' worth of wages for a common laborer. When the master in today's parable gives his servants gold (talents in the Bible), he is giving them opportunities as well as responsibilities in the form of money. In the present time, a talent refers to a person's gifts and natural abilities, not necessarily money. These talents are often innate, meaning a person is naturally gifted with them, yet they can also be developed over time, just as the gold increases for the faithful servants in today's story.
5. Discuss what it means to take the initiative. Explain that taking the initiative means taking action by doing something needed, helpful, or good without being told to do so. The person who takes the initiative recognizes that an opportunity is available, and they seize it. This is often a sign of growth and maturity in an individual because their eyes are open to the needs and opportunities around them, and they take steps to meet those needs or accomplish a task independently. Taking the initiative demonstrates responsibility, self-motivation, and the ability to lead by example.
6. Ask students to consider their own talents and one way they can use them to help others improve their lives. For example, if someone is good at drawing, how can they use that talent to help someone else? Reinforce that all people are born with special talents that are unique to that person because they play a special role in helping others.
7. Queue up the video and ask students to pay attention to the ways the servants in the parable use their gold.

Watch and Discuss: (25 mins.)

1. Show the video *Otto's Tales: The Wise & Foolish Servants* to the students.
2. Pause at opportune moments to ensure understanding of the following concepts:
  - Who are the main characters in the parable?
  - What did the master give to each servant? Why do you think he gave them different amounts?
  - What did the first servant do with his gold? What about the second servant? Why do you think they chose to invest their gold?
  - What did the third servant do with his gold? Why do you think he chose to bury it instead of using it?
  - How did the master react to the first and second servants? What did he say to the third servant? Why was the master disappointed with the third servant?
3. After the story, discuss the moral of the parable:
  - What lessons can we learn from "The Wise & Foolish Servants?" How can we apply these lessons in our lives?
  - What does it mean to be a good steward? Can you think of ways to be a good steward of your own talents and opportunities?

- What does it mean to take initiative? In what ways can you take the initiative?

Wrap-Up: (10 mins.)

1. Explain that the next activity will help students understand the sequence of events in "The Wise and Foolish Servants."
2. Hand out the "Otto's Tales: The Wise & Foolish Servants Worksheet" to each student.
3. Instruct students to look at the pictures on the worksheet and number the scenes in order from first to last.
4. After completing the worksheet, discuss the sequence of events as a class.
5. Ask students to explain why good stewardship is important and what they can learn from the three servants in today's story.
6. Evaluate students based on their ability to:
  - Correctly sequence the parable of "The Wise & Foolish Servants."
  - Explain the lesson of the parable.
  - Discuss the importance of stewardship and initiative.
7. Close with an encouraging call to action. Highlight the lesson from "The Wise & Foolish Servants," focusing on the importance of good stewardship and taking the initiative. Explain how talents are given both for the good of the individual and also for the good of others, so we must use them and not hide them. Challenge students to think of one way they can use their talents to help others this week.

Extension Activities:

An extension activity for the parable "The Wise & Foolish Servants" would be to have students engage in a "Talent Showcase" project. In this project, students will identify one of their own talents or abilities and develop a plan to use it in a way that benefits others. Each student will create a poster or presentation outlining their talent, how they plan to use it, and the steps they will take to achieve their goal. For example, a student who is good at drawing might create greeting cards for a local nursing home, while another who enjoys gardening could plant flowers in a community garden. This project encourages students to reflect on their own abilities, understand the importance of stewardship, and take practical steps to make a positive impact. It reinforces the lesson of the parable by emphasizing action and responsibility, helping students to see the real-world application of the story's moral. At the end of the project, students can share their experiences and outcomes with the class, fostering a sense of accomplishment and community.

**Don't have time for the complete lesson? Quick Activity (15-20 mins.)**

After reading the story, distribute the worksheet and allow students to complete it on their own. Conclude with a discussion about the importance of stewardship, taking the initiative, and using one's talents to help others.