

# *The Divine Dozen*

## *-Sample-*

*12 Parables of Jesus  
That Every Child Should Know*

## Introduction

Jesus said and did so many wonderful things in his ministry that it's hard to break gospels down into parts to teach to children. But kids always love a story, and hence, we're presenting ***The Divine Dozen: 12 Parables of Jesus that Every Child Should Know*** in presentations that are fun and easy!

**Let us ease your anxiety about teaching parables.** Some teachers shy away from teaching the parables for a couple of understandable reasons:

1. The parables often contain harsh consequences for the actions of the characters in them (such as allusions to eternal punishment), and teachers find themselves anxious about how to present this without scaring students;
2. Just as Jesus' own audiences often stumbled in how a Parable applies, we can stumble too! *What does the oil in the lamp of the Ten Virgins symbolize? And how do we make that applicable to children?*

With our tools, there is nothing to fear on either count. Children can take a lot of harsh truth, so long as the focus is on the positive. Jesus' parabolic references to "outer darkness" and "fiery flames" needn't be swept under the rug. We use the parables to provide balance in children's lives by focusing on his outstretched arms and the joys of fellowshiping with him.

As for applying the Parables to children's lives today, one of the best ways is by having their principles infused into modern day tales. That why we've designed these lessons so that you will be reciting a tale of a party, or school situation, or something that could happen to any child. Then the application is explained so that most children can understand.

**Each lesson contains 5 helpful ingredients:**

- A **Lesson Capsule** will let you know in a glance which parable is being taught and how we will apply it to modern living.
- **The Parable** is included along with the corresponding scripture verses. Most often, the parable is taken from the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible, with some variations. If the words are too big or the sentences too convoluted for children, we have used one of several easier children's versions. Sometimes lines have been removed that may be over children's heads and replaced with an ellipsis (...). Our goal is to make the verses as understandable as possible and not to lose children's attention. Hence any variations serve that end.

- A list of **Materials** that are needed will serve both the lesson and the activity that follow. Sometimes no materials are required at all—just your kind voice and the lesson. Most supplies for the snacks and games are probably already in your supply cabinet.
- **Preparations** show you what you need to do before the class sits down. Prep instructions for the lesson precede the lesson, and preparations for the activity precede the activity. Preparations are designed to be easy as well.
- The **Lesson** itself will bring life to the words of Christ that kids can use in their everyday lives. Often you will be reciting these modern day tales, but no fear: **Teacher’s words are in bold** to make things easy to follow. Because you will often be speaking while doing something with your hands, we suggest you read the parable aloud as part of the prep. Try to move any little props that are sometimes included while reading. It will give you confidence to make sure the story runs smoothly.
- An **Activity** follows each lesson to help you reinforce how the parable applies to every day life. Activities vary from lesson to lesson—sometimes it’s a game, sometimes a snack, sometimes a work sheet. You can present the lessons in any order and even pick which parable you use based on the lesson and activity materials you have on hand!

**Formatting of these lessons is designed for easy use and flexibility.** While all lessons follow a similar format, they are not connected to each other. Hence, you can use them when you are short of material and pick and choose in any order you wish.

**Here is a list of all the parables along with their lesson titles.** You can probably identify most of the parables and get a sense for how fun and upbeat these lessons are:

1. **Henry’s Bestest Birthday Party Ever! (Parable of the Unwilling Party Guests) (Sample Lesson Featured)**
2. **Let’s Be Backyard Good Samaritans** (Parable of the Good Samaritan)\*
3. **Read the Warning Signs!** (Parable of the Weather Signs of the Times)\*
4. **Pride Cometh Before the Fall!** (Parable of the Pharisee & the Publican)\*
5. **Chinese Fire Drill!** (Parable of the Faithful Servant)\*
6. **Jesus’ People Will Rise! (Eventually.)** (Parable of the Laz’rus and the Rich Man)\*
7. **Some Bad People are “Nice!”** (Parable of the Wheat & the Weeds)\*

8. **The Hypocrisy Basket & the Hurt Basket** (Parable of the Two Debtors)\*
9. **Uh-Oh! Too Late to Include God!** (Parable of the Ten Maidens)\*
10. **Fashion, Jewelry & Other True Weirdnesses** (Parable of the Rich Land Owner)\*
11. **God Forgives: Yeah, Even You!** (Parable of the Lost Sheep)\*
12. **Persistent Prayer Does Not Annoy God!** (Parable of the Persistent Widow)\*

All children love stories, and none are so important as those told by Jesus to his followers. Children who are versed on them from an early age will learn balance—that actions have consequences, and Christians have Jesus who carries away all wrongdoings. With these fun and easy lessons, you can infuse children’s minds with Christian concepts they can carry with them all week long!

\*If you enjoy the sample lesson included here, please visit <http://www.teachsundayschool.com/parables.html> to get the complete set of 12 lessons on the Parables of Jesus

## Sample Lesson

### Henry's Best Birthday Party Ever

**Lesson Capsule:** Kids can learn a great lesson in snobbery via this lesson using clothes pin characters—and the great joys that come from not being a snob!

**Scripture:** *Luke 14:15-24*

When one of those who sat at table with him heard this, he said to him, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" But he said to him, "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.'"

**Materials:**

- 16 clothes pins (the kind with the spring that stand up on end)
- 4 index cards
- 2 marker pens, 1 black & 1 blue (other dark colors can be substituted)
- Scissors

**Preparation:**

1. Cut your 4 index cards into 4 squares so that you have 16 squares altogether.
2. On three, draw a smile face using the black marker: ☺
3. On twelve, draw a smile face, also using the black marker. But instead of drawing a smile, draw a straight line for a mouth: ☹
4. On the final square, draw a smile face in blue. This will be “Henry.”
5. Attach all smile faces to the grip of the clothes pin.
6. Stand the 16 clothes pins up on a table but off to one side.
7. Put your marker pens off to the side.
8. Sit at the head of the table by your 16 little “people.”

**Lesson:**

**Henry was very much looking forward to his 11<sup>th</sup> birthday party. For one, his parents could finally afford the water park!**

Bring out Henry in front of you, pretending he is walking with little taps on the table.

**He wanted to invite the four kids who had had birthdays at the water park many times. He wanted to show them that he fit in. Some of them had laughed at his backyard birthday parties.**

Bring forward the four smile faces.

**To his surprise, they started making excuses.**

Make little taps with one smile face as if she is talking. **“I’m going to Charlie’s party that day. It’s at a country club!”** March that smile face off to the other side of the table.

Bring forth another smile face. **“Charlie’s party. Sorry!”**

Bring forth another smile face. **“Country Club! Aren’t you a little old for a water park birthday?? Bleh.”**

Shake Henry. **Grrrrr, Henry thought. Why, he had just heard that last smiley person bragging about his tickets to the water park for the summer!**

Bring out the 4<sup>th</sup> smile face. **“Sorry. I’m going to the Bahamas with my parents on a cruise. Pffffffft!”**

**Henry was despondent. He went to his mom.** Have Henry look up at you. Shake him a bit. **“Mom! Why can’t I have my birthday at the country club?”**

Speak to him: **“I don’t think that’s the answer, Henry. I think what you need to do is think of *who would be most happy* to come to your party. You don’t want to be surrounded by people who aren’t grateful no matter what you do. You want to be surrounded by people whom you have *made very happy*. That’s what birthday parties are all about.”**

Put Henry back down on the table. **So, Henry got busy. Instead of thinking about *himself*...he thought about who would be most happy.** Lay the four smile faces down.

Bring forth frown face #1. **Jenna was so shy that she never got asked anywhere. Henry hadn’t ever really noticed her...until he asked her to come. For the first time...He saw a real smile on her face—even if it was just for a moment.** Put aside.

Bring forth frown face #2. **Karl was so poor, Henry wasn’t even sure he owned a bathing suit. He casually put in that he had extra bathing suits.** Put aside.

Bring forth frown face #3. **Timothy stuttered and it made kids avoid him. Shake Tim. “R-r-r-really? You w-w-w-w-w-ant me? I’m d-d-d-d-reaming this!”** Put aside.

Bring forth frown face #4. **Tyler was new. He was sad to leave his old city and had been grumpy enough that kids said, Oh well. Shake Tyler. Be grumpy: Nobody talks to me. Why are you asking me.”** Put aside.

Shake Henry. **“Well...I want to be your friend. ”**

Shake Tyler. **“Okay, whatever. I mean...THANKS!”**

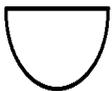
**And that was all of Henry's class. So he sent a message over to the Rescue Mission. "Do you have any kids who would like to come to the water park? I would like to invite four kids to my birthday."**

Voice of authority on phone: **Wow! That's awfully nice of you! I think you could give four kids without homes a day they will never forget!"**

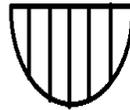
**What do you think happened? Did Henry have a good party??**

Bring over four remaining frown faces.

Take the marker pen, and under the line of all 8 mouths, draw a half circle so that they now have a huge smile:



Draw a smile on Henry that is biggest, like this:



**When Henry saw all the huge smiles at his party, he knew he created a party that these people would never forget...and neither would he.**

**The parable about the unwanted guest is really about Christianity. Some of the most important people in the world won't want Jesus. They won't think they need him.**

Pick up the four discarded smile-face clothes pins as an example.

**They will think they can have more fun without him...and you know what? Maybe they can for a while. But when it comes time for the big party in heaven??**

Put down the four smiles and pick up all the others. **Here's who will be most happy.**

**Let's try to remember when we're waiting for the big, huge party in heaven that our life on earth counts. We can make it most special by doing acts of kindness and feeling great joy when we can watch people smile who haven't smiled in a long time.**

**And if we really want to be happy here on earth, the greatest joy is found in doing things for others.**

**Now, we've watched others smile over a great and unforgettable party. Now, let's try and put smiles on each other!**

## Make a Smile on All: Game

- Tape a blank piece of paper to everyone's back using masking tape at the top and bottom securely.
- Give each child a dark crayon (Crayola, or not the waxy kind; it needs to be dark enough to write on a person's back)
- Have students stand in a circle with their backs to the circle.
- When you say "Go!" have them begin the task of putting a smile face and their initials on the paper on everyone else's back.
- The first person to add their "smile" to everyone else is the winner, though everyone should keep going until all have everyone's smile on their back.

### **Teacher's Comments at the End:**

**You spent the whole game trying to make others smile. But what happened to *you* while you were doing that?** You ended up with just as many smiles or more on you.

**If you focus on others, and how to give smiles throughout life, you'll find that's the way to end up with the most smiles yourself!**

**And then when life is done, we can end up at Jesus' big party in heaven!**

**Copyright Notice**

The material enclosed is copyrighted. You do not have resell rights or giveaway rights to the material provided herein. Only customers that have purchased this material are authorized to view it. If you think you may have an illegally distributed copy of this material, please contact us immediately.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying or by information storage and retrieval systems. It is illegal to copy this material and publish it on another web site, news group, forum, etc. even if you include the copyright notice.

**Legal Notices**

While all attempts have been made to verify information provided in this publication, neither the author nor the publisher assumes any responsibility for errors, omissions or contrary interpretation of the subject matter herein. The publisher wants to stress that the information contained herein may be subject to varying state and/or local laws or regulations. All users are advised to retain competent counsel to determine what state and/or local laws or regulations may apply to the user's particular operation. The purchaser or reader of this publication assumes responsibility for the use of these materials and information. Adherence to all applicable laws and regulations, federal, state and local, governing professional licensing, operation practices, and all other aspects of operation in the US or any other jurisdiction is the sole responsibility of the purchaser or reader. The publisher and author assume no responsibility or liability whatsoever on the behalf of any purchaser or reader of these materials. Any perceived slights of specific people or organizations is unintentional.