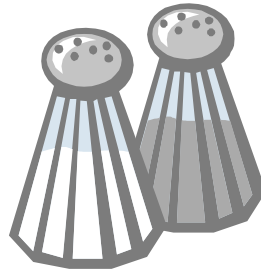


SPICE RACK[©]

E-Curriculum



by Mark DeVries

“WEEDING WAINBOW”

Matthew 13

I. To the Classes (Attendance, Announcements, First-Timers)

II. Engaging the Brain

A. Quickie Review Questions

1. Can anyone give a definition of a parable? (a story with a hidden meaning thrown alongside it)
2. Why do you think Jesus told so many stories about growing things?
3. If Jesus were to come and tell parables today, what might he talk about in place of his farming stories?

B. Potted Plant Patrol



1. Before class begins today, bring five or six similar looking plants to class. They should all be green, but none should have flowers or fruit on them or anything that might make them look like non-weeds. You should be able to easily find these in your yard.
2. Line up the pots of plants (could be little bowls of plants) on the front table.
3. Place a number in front of each plant.
4. As the students come in, give each of them a card and ask them to number the card with as many numbers as you have plants (1-5 if you have 5 plants).
5. Without waiting for the total group to arrive, have each person guess whether each plant is a WEED or a GOOD PLANT. Ask them to write one of those two answers next to each of the numbers on their cards.

6. Once everyone has completed this process, ask the following process questions:

- How many of you thought number one was a weed?
- Number two? Etc.
- Why was it hard to tell the weeds from the good plants?
- Is there a principle here for Christians? What is it?

C. You Be the Judge: Bad News/Good News

1. Bring 10 to 20 pictures to class today—pictures from magazines, newspapers, etc.
2. Explain how this game will work.
 - a. The game is called “Bad News/Good News.”
 - b. You (the teacher) will hold up a series of pictures.
 - c. After each picture, everyone in the class is to yell out either “BAD NEWS!” or “GOOD NEWS!”
 - d. Instruct the class to yell BAD NEWS if they think the person pictured would be bad news to be around.
 - e. Instruct the class to yell GOOD NEWS if they think the person pictured would be a good person to hang around.
3. Invite the class to ask questions to clarify the instructions.
4. Play the game, showing one picture after another without comment between the pictures.
5. Process Questions



- What made you think that certain people pictured would be good news?
- How accurate do you think your guesses were?
- Who in this class do you think would be the best judge of character?
- To whom, outside this class, would you most likely go to for counsel to help discern whether a person you were hanging out with was good news or bad news?
- Do most of your friends make good decisions about whom they hang around?
- Do you feel like you really get to choose whom you hang around or is it just thrown at you?

D. Brainstorming: Can you think of any stories (books or movies) where the person you think is the bad person is really a good person? Or the person you think is really the good character is really a bad character?

1. A Few Ideas: Harry Potter stories, Mission Impossible, etc.
2. If you're really feeling creative, you can show a video clip of one of these movies or read a passage from one of the stories.

3. Process Questions

- Can you think of any stories from the Bible where an unlikely person, someone who everyone sees as bad, is chosen by Jesus?
- Can you think of people you know about whom you would say, “It wouldn’t be right for them to be at church or a part of our group”?

III. Igniting the Heart

A. Lectio Divina--Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43

1. Explain how the Lectio Divina process works:



- a. You (the teacher) will read the text slowly while the class listens for anything in particular that might stand out in the story.
- b. You will then ask for an initial response: “What caught your attention in this story?”
- c. After a few people have given input, you will read the story again slowly, this time asking the group to listen for what God might be saying to each of them individually through the story.
- d. Finally, you will ask the group for their responses to the question, “What do you think God might be saying to us in this text?”

2. Invite the group to ask questions to clarify the instructions.

3. Walk through the Lectio Divina process.

4. Process Questions

- After the first reading: “What caught your attention in this story?”
- After the second reading: “What do you think God might be saying to us in this text?”
- In this story, is there any hope that the weeds will eventually turn into good plants?
- Do you think Jesus is saying that people are either GOOD PLANTS or WEEDS—and that there is nothing anyone can do to change their nature?
- Why does Jesus recommend that the weeds be left alone until harvest?
- Do you think there are weeds in our church?
- How does God call us to respond to them?
- In this story, the workers are very clear about which plants are weeds and which plants are good. Is there anything wrong with being 100% sure about which people are and aren’t good?

B. Table Turning Debate: Are There Times We’re Called to Judge?



1. Select two vocal folks from your group to begin the debate. Explain that you will assign each one of them one side of these two sides of the debate:
 - a. Christians are never called to judge others under any circumstances.
 - b. Christians are sometimes called to judge other people.
2. Each of the debaters can pick two other people in the class to serve as “legal counsel,” who will feed them arguments and information during the debate.
3. Set up two tables in the front of the room, with three chairs at each table—one at each table for the debaters and two at for the legal counselors.
4. Bring a whistle or a buzzer of some kind to class today (actually a crazy human sound might work just as well).
5. Make the sound (or ask for a volunteer to make the sound at you [the teacher] touch the volunteer’s shoulder) and explain that whenever the debaters hear this sound, they are to begin. When they hear that same sound twice in a row, they are to switch sides (e.g., the person who is arguing against judging will immediately change to argue in favor of judging).
6. Explain that when the sound is made three times, each of the debaters is to find someone else in the class to take their place and the debate goes on for another round.
7. It will likely be helpful to move the debate along by blowing the whistle/ crazy human noise before the debaters get bogged down.
8. Lead the group through a few rounds of the debate.
9. Process Questions

- Which side of this debate do you think the parable of the weeds supports the most?
- What do you think the field refers to in this story—do you think Jesus is talking about the whole world or just people who claim to believe in God?
- Do you think churches should allow anything and everything in the church?
- If yes, should the church allow prostitutes and ax murderers to be ministers?
- If no, where would you draw the line?

C. Case Study: How Does It Feel?

1. Read the following imaginary case study to the group:

Sally has been attending the youth group since she was in 7th grade. In her five years of involvement, she has been a regular at Bible studies and in Sunday School classes. She is often the most enthusiastic person on mission trips and local service projects. A few months ago, she was arrested for possession and selling of cocaine and is now out on bail. The news of her arrest and her secret life has spread all over the church. She comes back to the youth group, and most of the kids, not knowing how to act, keep their distance. Though one of the adult leaders embraces her when she comes in, none of the youth themselves take the initiative to say anything to her. A

few of the parents call the youth director and say that if Sally is allowed to come to the youth group, their children will no longer attend.

2. Process Questions



- You are Sally. How do you feel after heading back to youth group for the first time?
- What would you be most disappointed about?
- In your opinion, is Sally a “weed” or a “good plant”?
- Who is the worst character in the story?
- Which character in the story totally missed the point of Jesus parable of the weeds?
- Who is the best character in the story?
- If you were the youth director, what would you do?
- Who gets the most hurt when people try to rid the church of “weedy” people?
- In determining who the best and worst characters were, have we just “judged”?

IV. Taking It Home

A. You and the Text: Journal Sheet

1. Distribute journal sheets and pencils.
2. Give the group three minutes to complete their journal sheets.
3. Process Questions

- Look at the last question first—what words did you use to sum up this parable?
- How many of you have ever felt judged by someone?
- How did it feel?
- What would you say the main story of this parable is for our group?

B. Close the class in prayer, allowing the ideas the group has worked through in class today to be the basis for your prayer.

↓ JOURNAL SHEET BELOW ↓

JOURNAL SHEET

Matthew 13

“Weeding Wainbow”

- 1) What kind of gardener are you?
 - I make sure every weed is pulled up quickly.
 - I let the weeds grow for a season and then pull them all up together.
 - I hack the weeds with a tool and try to hide them under the dirt or mulch.
 - I leave them alone. Weeds make me happy.

- 2) When it comes to judging the people around you, how good are you at picking out the “weeds” from the “good plants”?
 - I can tell them right off, and I steer clear of them.
 - I can tell when someone is a “bad egg,” but I try to be friends with them.
 - I’m a horrible judge of character and keep getting surprised by people who I thought were good turning out to be real jerks.
 - I’ve never really thought about it. People are just people.

- 3) What is Jesus saying about the church in this parable?
 - There are good folks and bad folks in every church; don’t be surprised by it.
 - There are good folks and bad folks in every church, so don’t try to run off the bad folks.
 - God will take care of deciding who are the good folks and who are the bad folks. It’s none of your business.
 - If a church has problems, it’s all Satan’s fault.

- 4) What is the point of this parable for you?
 - I need to quit judging folks so much.
 - I need to ask myself whether I am a “good plant” or a “weed.”
 - I need to move to Nebraska and become a farmer.
 - I don’t need to worry about changing myself. I am what I am.
 - I need to quit being surprised when I see people acting like “weeds.”

- 5) Have you ever felt judged by people around, like other people saw you as a “weed”? Tell about it.

- 6) Which problem do you think we have the most in our group?
 - The weeds are taking over the class.
 - We’re spending way too much time trying to get rid of the weeds and not enough time letting the good stuff grow.
 - We don’t even know that something’s supposed to be growing here.

- 7) Put the main point of this parable in one word: _____