

If I Were a Rich Fool

Bible Story: If I Were a Rich Fool (The rich fool: Bigger barns) • *Luke 12:13-21*

Bottom Line: When you focus on stuff, you can miss what matters.

Memory Verse: “I have learned the secret of being content no matter what happens. I am content whether I am well fed or hungry. I am content whether I have more than enough or not enough.”

Philippians 4:12b, NIV

Life App: Contentment—deciding to be happy with what you’ve got.

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

Comic Strip Parables (review the Bible story)

What You Need: Bibles, paper squares; 5 for each kid, colored pencils or markers

What You Do:

- Review the Bible story. Read the Bible story, Luke 12:13-21. Ask the kids:
 - What was the issue between the two brothers? (*They were concerned about the inheritance; they were greedy for more money; they were more concerned about stuff than about their friendship*)
 - In verse 16, Jesus tells a parable. What is a parable? (*A story used to teach something*)
 - What was the problem the man had in the parable? (*He had more stuff than he could store*)
 - What was the man’s solution for handling all his surplus of stuff or crops? Who was the man focused on? (*Build bigger barns and keep it for himself so he could take life easy*)
 - What is God’s reply to the man? (*He calls the man a fool; tells the man he won’t get to enjoy any of it because he is going to die*)
 - Why do you think God calls the man a fool?
- Hand out the paper squares and colored pencils.
- Let kids draw a cartoon representing the story, one scene per paper square. They can create a character that is focused on getting more and more stuff. What will their character collect? Maybe she can’t get enough M&Ms® or phones or dogs. Where will she store her stuff? Encourage the kids to be creative. What happens to their character because she is focused on her stuff? How does her stuff end up hurting her?
- *For kids who struggle with drawing:* Give them an option to write a story script. You could also let kids work in groups of three and use a camera to video themselves acting out the story.
- Share the cartoons or stories.

What You Say:

“You came up with some really creative stories. Your characters were certainly focused on their stuff just like the rich man in the parable. The rich man was only concerned about how much he had and how he wanted to keep it ALL for himself. But Jesus doesn’t want us to live that way. What does Jesus say matters? What is more important than stuff? (*our relationship with God; loving others more than stuff*)

[Bottom Line] When you focus on stuff, you can miss what matters. Don’t be like the rich man in our story, who was so focused on stuff that he missed what mattered.”

[Make It Personal] (Share about a time when you were so focused on your stuff that you missed out on what mattered. Maybe you were hanging with friends and you were so focused on what people were wearing or what you would eat that you didn’t enjoy the time with your friends. Or share about a time you used your “stuff” to help someone else, or a time you gave your stuff to someone else.)

Challenge Questions**What You Say:**

(Use the following as a discussion starter for your group.) “Think about a time at home when you chose your stuff—something you owned—over people. Maybe you didn’t want to share or you were furious when something was broken. Now think about a time when you were the victim and someone else chose stuff over you—they refused to share or were mad at you for getting too close to something they thought mattered more than your feelings. It’s tough to remember sometimes that stuff is never more important than people. What can you do to remind yourself this week? Maybe post a note up in a place where you have this problem most.”

2. More and More (application activity)**What You Need:** Blocks**What You Do:**

- Divide the group in half and give each group an equal pile of blocks.
- Both groups will build a tower simultaneously. Assign each group one of the following building methods:
 - For one tower, place one block down. Each layer of the tower is built by placing one block perpendicular to the block below it.
 - For the other tower, place two blocks next to each other to form a rectangle. Each layer of the tower is built by placing two blocks placed perpendicular to the blocks below it.
- Let the groups build until one tower gets too tall and crashes down.
- *Optional: After the first towers have been built, allow the groups to switch building methods and do the activity again.*
- After the two towers have been built, ask the following questions: Both towers used the same number of blocks. Which tower was taller? Which tower was more stable and lasted longer before it fell?

What You Say:

“Bigger is not always better; more is not always good. It is a dangerous thing when we let our stuff become more important than people—when collecting more and more things causes us to miss what matters most. When you can’t share your stuff with friends, you are showing your friends your stuff is more important than they are and your relationships become like our wobbly tower; they become unstable. But when you focus on Jesus and you prioritize people over stuff, you show your friends they matter to you and your relationships are more like our stable tower. **[Bottom Line]** When you focus on stuff, you can miss what matters and you can miss out on opportunities to show others Jesus’ love.”

3. Opposite Verse (*memory verse activity*)

What You Need: “Opposite Cards”, Bibles

What You Do:

- Sit in a circle and look up the verse and read it together.
- Set the “Opposite Cards” in the center of the circle.
- Kids draw a card and think of the opposite or antonym to the word. For example, if the word is cold, the opposite could be hot; if it is bored, the opposite could be excited, etc.
- Kids say “I am content whether I am _____ or _____,” filling in the word from the “Opposite Card” and its opposite in the blanks. For example, if the word on the card is “cold,” he would say, “I am content whether I am cold or hot.”
- Continue until everyone gets a turn or you run out of cards. If time allows, kids can create their own opposites.

What You Say:

“It is easy to be content when things are going our way—when we have everything we need or want. But God wants so much more for us. He doesn’t want our contentment to be tied to our stuff or to situations in our lives. God wants us to be content no matter what. Whether you have tons of stuff or not a lot, you always have Jesus and that is what matters most. **[Bottom Line] When you focus on stuff, you can miss what matters most.** When you need stuff in order to be content, you can miss out on what matters; you can miss out on your relationship with Jesus and you can miss out on showing others Jesus’ love.”

Pray

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Pray with the kids, praising God because He is awesome. Go around the circle and let each kid say something about God (He is great, He is trustworthy, He is always present, etc.).
- Next pray with the kids, thanking God for all the stuff in their lives. Go around the circle and let each kid thank God for something they have (food, clothes, games, family, video games, football, etc.).
- Close with asking for help to be content no matter what and rather than focusing on stuff, ask God to help us to see what matters most: our relationships with Christ and with one another.