

Chapter 5

Featured Story

Jesus Wants Us to Hear and Accept His Word (Mark 4:1–20)



We Learn from the Bible

Lesson Goals

- to identify God's Word as the readings and teachings in the Bible
- to describe the importance of preparing our hearts for God's Word
- to recall that we hear God's Word at Mass in the Liturgy of the Word

Lesson at a Glance

Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer
Engage Activity

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story
Core Learning Activity

Find (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of the Eucharist
Lesson Wrap-Up
Closing Prayer

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and chapter 5 activity booklet
- permanent marker, soil, clear plastic cup, grass (or other) seeds, spray bottle full of water, scoop or spoon for the soil, scoop or spoon for the seeds, wet napkins

Music Suggestions

- "Thy Word," by Cedarment Worship for Kids, Vol. 2 (Cedarment Music, LLC)
- "Open My Eyes," by James David Carter (WLP)

Background Focus

The Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1–20) presents one of those uncomfortable challenges that Jesus often issues. It is a message that, perhaps, brings forth the difference between hearing and listening.

Hearing the Good News is easy. It simply involves paying attention to the words that are being said. It may even involve agreement with what is being said. Listening, on the other hand, seems to imply something deeper. It includes not only the act of hearing, but also some real sense of reflection and integration into one's life.

This chapter focuses on the importance of listening to God's Word and taking care that our hearts are "good soil" in which it can be rooted. As we listen to God's Word at Mass, it is good for us to challenge ourselves to see if we are just hearing the readings or if we are really listening.

Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite your child to turn to page 1 in the chapter 5 activity booklet and locate the prayer on the page.
- Begin prayer by making the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer, and invite your child to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross. Have your child put the activity booklet away for now.

Engage Activity

- Create two columns on a piece of paper, and label one “Listening” and the other “Not Listening.”
- Ask your child to share how they know when someone is really listening to them. Encourage them to think of the words or actions of someone who is listening (*eye contact, nodding head, asking questions, etc.*). Write their responses on the piece of paper under “Listening.”
- Invite your child to share the words or actions of someone who is not listening to them (*moving around, not looking at them, talking while they are talking, etc.*). Write these responses under the correct column.
- Tell your child that in today’s lesson they will learn about the importance of listening and how we listen to and learn from the words of the Bible during Mass.

✚ Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite your child to find Mark 4:1–20 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible* (pages 1532–1533).
- Direct your child to turn the page and place an “I found it!” sticker next to the Featured Story (page 1534).
- Ask your child to look at the images on pages 1534–1535, and invite them to tell what they think is happening in the pictures.
- Invite your child to read the title of the Featured Story, and tell them that this story is often called the **Parable** of the Sower. Explain that parables are stories that Jesus told to teach important lessons.
- Read the Featured Story and help your child with the new vocabulary. Ask several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - What happens to the seeds that fall on rocky ground? (*they give up*)
 - What happens to the seeds that are planted among the thorn bushes? (*they don’t bear fruit*)
 - What happens to the seeds planted in good soil? (*they bear fruit*)

Understand It!

- Explain to your child that the seeds and the different kinds of soil in the story stand for something else—Jesus is not really talking about seeds and soil. Invite them to share what they think seeds and soil might represent. If they don’t guess correctly, tell them they will find out in the reading.
- Read Understand It! on page 1535 together.
- Ask the following questions to check for comprehension:
 - What do the seeds stand for? (*God’s Word*)
 - What do the different kinds of soil stand for? (*our hearts*)
 - What kind of soil do we want our hearts to be? (*good soil*)
- Invite your child to share what they think *God’s Word* is. Explain to them that this is a name for the readings and teachings in the Bible. The Bible is also called Sacred Scripture.

Live It!

- Invite your child to read Live It! on page 1535. Explain that this is a fun drawing activity they can do at another time.
- Have your child turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. Read the directions, and invite them to circle one good act they will do today.

Tell It!

- Ask your child to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1535.
- Encourage your child to summarize the Bible reading, using the images in Tell It! to guide their retelling.
- Have your child use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages that capture their interest. Remind them to save enough stickers to use on the remaining chapters.

Core Learning Activity

Hearts of Good Soil

- Prepare in advance by setting up all of the supplies: a permanent marker, soil, a clear plastic cup, grass (or other) seeds, a spray bottle full of water, a scoop or spoon for the soil, a scoop or spoon for the seeds, wet napkins. If you wish to create your own cup with seeds along with your child, make sure you have enough supplies.
- Invite your child to write their initials on the bottom of the plastic cup with the marker. Have them fill their cup three-quarters full with soil. Have your child place a small amount of grass seed on top of the soil. Then have them spray the seeds and soil with water.
- Find a place near light where your child can set the cup.
- Ask your child if the soil being used is rocky soil, soil with thorn bushes, or good soil. (*good soil*)
- Tell your child that the cup and seeds can be a reminder of how we are to make sure our hearts are “good soil” where God’s Word can grow in us. Encourage them to care for the seeds by giving them a bit of water and keeping them near light over the next week or so.

X Find (20 minutes)

God’s Treasure of the Eucharist

- Remind your child of the four main parts of the Mass, or ask if they can recall them (*Introductory Rites, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist, Concluding Rites*). Write each of these on a piece of paper.
- Explain that the Liturgy of the Word is the part of the Mass where we hear God’s Word in the Bible. Tell them that Sacred Scripture is a guide for our lives and that we look to them for guidance about how to be faithful to God as a follower of Jesus.

- Review some basics about the Bible, such as how it is made up of the Old and New Testaments and that the New Testament includes the four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—as well as letters written to the early Church by some of Jesus’ first followers.
- Tell your child that we hear several different Bible readings during the Liturgy of the Word. Write the name of each on a piece of paper and explain in these or similar words:
 - First Reading: This is usually from the Old Testament and reminds us of God’s love for us.
 - Responsorial Psalm: This is a reading or song of a psalm from the Old Testament.
 - Second Reading: This is a reading from one of the New Testament letters that were written to the early Church.
 - Gospel Reading: This New Testament reading tells us about Jesus and his teachings.
- Explain to your child that there are a lot of words in the different readings in the Liturgy of the Word and that they might not be able to understand all of them. Assure your child that this is okay, but that they should listen anyway. Tell them that they will understand more as they grow and learn.
- Help your child understand that after the readings, the priest or deacon speaks to help us understand God’s Word and how to follow it. Ask your child if they know the name of this talk that the priest gives. (*homily*)
- Invite your child to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. Give them a few minutes to color in the letters marked with an X to reveal the word *Bible*.

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite your child to think back over all of the different things they did in this lesson, and invite them to share some of the key things they learned.
- Ensure that the following points are made:
 - God's Word is another name for the readings and teachings in the Bible.
 - It is important to prepare our hearts for God's Word.
 - We hear God's Word at Mass in the Liturgy of the Word.
- Ask your child to place the chapter 5 sticker in the correct circle on the treasure map.



Closing Prayer

- Direct your child to the words the priest or deacon says after the Gospel reading, found on page 3 of *The Order of the Mass and Key Words* booklet. Tell them that at the end of the Bible reading, you will read the part of the deacon or priest and they will respond, "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ."
- Begin prayer by making the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Read Mark 4:16–20 (page 1534 of *The Catholic Children's Bible*).
- Conclude by saying, "The Gospel of the Lord," and encourage your child to respond, "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ."
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Family Suggestions

For additional ideas, activities, and prayers that can be used by your family for this chapter, please refer to the Family Page on page 4 of this chapter's activity booklet.