

Lesson #3-26

The Rich Man and Lazarus

Luke 16:19-31



Key Verse:

He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

Luke 16:31

The Point:

God calls us to care for those others do not.



Introduction

Jesus tells a parable about a rich man and a poor man. The poor man, Lazarus, lived near the rich man but went hungry every day. Soon, both men die. When he dies, Lazarus is carried to be by Abraham's side in blessedness, but the rich man is sent to a place of suffering. He sees Lazarus with Abraham and asks Abraham to have mercy on him. However, Abraham denies the rich man's request, reminding him that, while he was living, the rich man got to experience good things, and Lazarus did not. Now, the situation is reversed: Lazarus gets to experience good things, while the rich man does not.

The Point

God calls us to care for those others do not. Jesus shows how the Scriptures, through the stories of Moses and the prophets, exemplify God's passion for the marginalized and God's frustration with those who ignore them. God's kingdom is for all. As people of faith, we are called to pray for, serve, and work for justice on behalf of those who feel abandoned and neglected by society.

Activities a la Carte

Activities

Supplies

Introduction

Story Symbols

Explore the story through symbols.

10 min.

- † Purple robe or cloth
- † Picture of a banquet or party
- † Brown robe or cloth
- † Picture of an empty dish

Learning the Story

Mine, Mine, Mine!

Act out the story of Lazarus and the rich man.

10 min.

- † Bible
- † Activity Sheet #3-26.A

Activities

Father Abraham

Learn a classic song.

10 min.

- † Optional: Internet-connected device

Hard Parables

Discuss the difficult parts of today's story.

10 min.

- † Numbered slips of paper
- † Full-sized candy bar or other reward
- † Paper clips

Prayer

God's Story @ Home



Introduction (10 minutes)

Story Symbols

Explore the story through symbols.

Supplies:

- † Purple robe or cloth
- † Picture of a banquet or party
- † Brown robe or cloth
- † Picture of an empty dish

Preparation:

1. Find pictures to use during this activity.

Instructions:

1. **Today we are going to hear another parable. Can anyone remind me what a parable is?** *[A story with a surprising twist that teaches a lesson.]*
2. **Like the other parables we have heard, this one was also told by Jesus. In this parable, we hear about two characters: the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man and Lazarus lived very different lives.**
3. Show the purple robe or cloth and the brown robe or cloth. **One of these cloths represents the rich man, and one represents Lazarus. Which do you think represents the rich man? Which represents Lazarus?** *[The purple cloth represents the rich man and the brown cloth represents Lazarus.]*
4. Hold up the purple cloth. **In the ancient world, purple was traditionally seen as a color of wealth and power because it was very expensive. The rich man in the story would probably wear lots of purple. Hold up the brown. Lazarus did not have wealth and power like the rich man. He could not afford to wear purple.**

5. Show the pictures of the banquet and the empty dish. **One of these pictures represents the rich man, and one represents Lazarus. Which do you think represents the rich man? Which represents Lazarus?** *[The picture of the banquet represents the rich man and the picture of the empty dish represents Lazarus.]*
6. Hold up the picture of the banquet. **In today's story, the rich man has a big banquet! He probably would have had a lot of friends and the money to throw such a big party.** Hold up the picture of the empty dish. **In today's story, Lazarus did not have any food and only had dogs to keep him company. In Jesus' day, dogs were not considered beloved pets. Instead, dogs were seen as dirty animals.**
7. **These symbols show us that these two characters are very different. Lazarus is a person who many would consider unclean, poor, and someone to be ignored. The rich man was someone who had a lot of money and could live a very comfortable life. Let's hear about what happens to both of these characters.**

Learning the Story (10 minutes)

Mine, Mine, Mine!

Act out the story of Lazarus and the rich man.

Supplies:

- † Bible
- † Activity Sheet #3-26.A

Preparation:

1. Make a copy of Activity Sheet #3-26.A for each reader.

Instructions:

1. Ask one person to read the story from Luke 16:19-31.
2. Invite readers to perform the script.
3. After the reading, invite everyone to discuss:
 - **What does fairness look like?**
 - **Do you think what happened in this story was fair? Why or why not?**
 - **Why does God care about those who are poor and forgotten?**
 - **What do you think happened to the rich man's five brothers? Do you think they changed their ways, or kept ignoring the poor?**

Activity (10 minutes)

Father Abraham

Learn a classic song.

Supplies:

- † Optional: Internet-connected device.

Preparation:

1. If you do not know the familiar song “Father Abraham,” search for the song and learn the music to accompany the lyrics and gestures.

Instructions:

1. Ask everyone to stand as they are able, and teach them the song and motions:
Father Abraham had many kids.
Many kids had Father Abraham.
I am one of them, and so are you.
So let's all praise the Lord. (Yell “right arm” and move right arm, as if marching.)
2. Continue repeating the song and adding, “left arm,” “right leg,” “left leg,” “chin up,” “turn around.”
3. After everyone has learned the song and actions, have them form a line and learn the names of Abraham's sons and grandsons, and great-grandsons, and great-great-grandsons...
4. Give each person names of sons to remember, and have them recite it going down the line. See how fast you can go!

1. Ishmael	8. Judah	15. Gad	22. Hezron	29. Carmi
2. Isaac	9. Issachar	16. Asher	23. Hamul	30. Achar
3. Esau	10. Zebulun	17. Er	24. Zimri	31. Azariah
4. Jacob	11. Dan	18. Onan	25. Ethan	32. Jerahmeel
5. Reuben	12. Joseph	19. Shelah	26. Heman	33. Ram
6. Simeon	13. Benjamin	20. Perez	27. Calcol	34. Chelubai
7. Levi	14. Naphtali	21. Zerah	28. Dara	35. Ram

Activity (10 minutes)

Hard Parables

Discuss the difficult parts of today's story.

Supplies:

- † Numbered slips of paper
- † Full-sized candy bar or other large reward
- † Smaller rewards

Preparation:

1. Prepare small slips of paper with numbers. On only one slip, write the number "1." On all of the other slips, write the number "2."

Instructions:

1. **There are many difficult parts to today's story. This activity allows for some time to discuss the harder questions, recognizing that there are no easy answers.**
2. Give each person a numbered slip of paper or invite them to draw them from a hat or basket.
3. **Today you are all winners! Lucky you! You will each receive a special prize based on the number that you drew.**
4. Have them get together with the matching numbers. You should have one person standing alone and everyone else together.
5. Give the "2" group their reward. **Congratulations, Group Number 2! Simply because of who you are, you each receive this brand new, shiny, one of a kind paper clip!**
6. Turn to Number 1 and give that person the full-sized candy bar.
7. **These are your prizes. What would you like to do now? Are you happy with what you received? Maybe you would like to try to trade with someone for something better? Maybe you would like to share?**

8. Invite them to consider and discuss their options. Wrap up the activity with the following questions:
 - **Was this game fair?**
 - **In our Bible story for today, was what happened to Lazarus fair? The rich man?**
 - **Have you had things happen to you that did not seem fair?**
 - **What is the difference between God being fair and God being just?**
9. **It is important to remember that God loves all of God's children. Some people do not have more than others because they are better than others, just like our Number 1 person did not win because they were better than the rest of you. It is often because people are greedy that some people have more than others. It is our job to see that God's gifts are shared and distributed with all of God's people to the best of our ability.**

Prayer

Before ending, make a point to come together to pray. Use the following or say your own prayer.

**Lord, help us to see
The hurt in our world.
Help us to give love
To those who need it.
We pray for your healing
For those who hurt.
Work through us to do your will.
Amen.**

If you have the "Living the Word: Sharing God's Story @ Home" sheet, remember to use it throughout the week as a part of your family devotions!



Mine, Mine, Mine!

Act out the story of Lazarus and the rich man.

Narrator: Jesus was arguing with the Pharisees, the religious leaders, about what to do with money in our lives. He told the following story:

Lazarus sits at the center of the staging area, looking miserable.

Lazarus: I am so hungry! I can't remember the last time I had something to eat.

The rich man saunters by (perhaps wearing fancy clothes) and snottily ignores Lazarus.

Lazarus: Help me, help me! I don't have anything nice to wear. Can you spare a pair of socks to keep my feet warm?

Rich man: No! My clothes are mine! Mine, mine, mine!

Lazarus: But you can't possibly need all that you have. You have so much more than you need.

Rich man: Mine, mine, mine!

Lazarus: I have not eaten proper food in weeks. Can I have just the scraps from your table?

Rich man: No! My food is mine! Mine, mine, mine!

Lazarus: But even just the scraps? You're going to throw them away anyway.

Rich man: Mine, mine, mine!

Lazarus: Can I come inside your gate? The dogs are licking my sores and it is really disgusting.

Rich man: My yard is mine! Mine, mine, mine!

Narrator: The rich man did not want to share anything with Lazarus. But that very night, Lazarus and the rich man did share something: they both passed away. The rich man was taken to a place of suffering, and the poor man was taken to be with the heroes of the faith.

Abraham appears and sits with Lazarus.

Mine, Mine, Mine!

Act out the story of Lazarus and the rich man.

Rich man: How could this happen to me? I thought I would live forever! And how can it be that Lazarus, who was dirty and covered in sores, is with the heroes of the faith?

The rich man looks at Abraham.

Rich man: Father Abraham! I can see you! How can Lazarus be with you?

Abraham ignores him.

Rich man: Father Abraham, please! You are one of the heroes of the faith, one of the greatest ancestors of my people. Please. I am in agony. Will you send Lazarus to care for me?

Abraham: My child, you are my child, but you cannot ask Lazarus to hurt himself to care for you. He suffered enough in life. Now, in death, he finally has peace.

Rich man: But I am suffering!

Abraham: Yet while he was suffering, you looked away. You wouldn't share anything that was yours, even though he was greatly in need.

Rich man: Then please, send him to tell my brothers about this, so they will not be tortured as I am.

Abraham: Send him to your brothers? No, no, my son—Lazarus is not for running errands. He suffered greatly in life. Now he finally has peace.

Rich man: But they might end up here, too.

Abraham: If they won't listen to God's messengers who ask them to care for the poor, why would they listen to Lazarus?

Rich man: Maybe someone who came back from the dead would convince them.

Abraham: If they can't listen to God's messengers, they won't listen to someone who rises from the dead, either. I am sorry, my child, but Lazarus finally has comfort, and he will not be taken away from it.