

SOWING SEEDS

by Beth Troop



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**CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS
EDUCATIONAL SERIES**

SOWING SEEDS

Parable: The Sower

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SYNOPSIS: Human “plants” sprout along the path—some wilting due to shallow roots, some choked out by thorns, others thriving. The storytelling assistant doesn’t quite get it, with comic results.

BIBLE VERSES: Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-20, and Luke 8:4-18

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 either)

READER (m/f) Gives voice to the biblical parable.

(29 lines)

ASSISTANT (m/f) Tries humorously and unsuccessfully to help tell the story. *(15 lines)*

PLANT 1 (m/f) Eaten by birds. *(Non-speaking)*

PLANT 2 (m/f) Scorched by the sun. *(Non-speaking)*

PLANT 3 (m/f) Choked out by thorns. *(Non-speaking)*

PLANT 4 (m/f) Yielded a huge crop. *(Non-speaking)*

DURATION: 10 minutes.

SETTING: The great outdoors.

TIME: Timeless.

SET

You will need a barrier that extends across the stage area. The barrier may be made of a tall piece of cardboard or a sheet--high enough for the PLANTS to crouch behind it, but low enough that they can be seen when they stand up behind it. Place two chairs facing the audience to the left of the barrier.

COSTUMES

The READER and ASSISTANT may wear regular dress. The PLANTS may dress in all green or normal clothing as desired.

PROPS

- ☐ Backpack containing a Bible and a cell phone
- ☐ Another Bible (for READER)
- ☐ Jewelry
- ☐ Purse
- ☐ Cell phone

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Parables are earthly stories intended to reveal a heavenly meaning. They are by nature stories that people could relate to and which would inspire questions and discussion, thus providing the opportunity for revelation of the truth. We have brought these parables into present time where the listener can relate and once again ask questions, which will reveal the true meaning.

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PARABLE: That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ²Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. ³Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹Whoever has ears, let them hear.” ¹⁰The disciples came to him and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?” ¹¹He replied, “Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. ¹²Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. ¹³This is why I speak to them in parables:

“Though seeing, they do not see;
though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

¹⁴In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

“‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding;
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.

¹⁵For this people’s heart has become calloused;

they hardly hear with their ears,
and they have closed their eyes.
Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts
and turn, and I would heal them.’

¹⁶But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. ¹⁷For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it. ¹⁸“Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word

and at once receives it with joy. ²¹But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ²²The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown" (*Matthew 13:1-23*).



AT START: *Four people are crouching behind the barrier. They will "sprout" as PLANT 1, 2, 3, and 4, respectively.*

READER: *(Speaking to ASSISTANT as they walk toward the front. READER carries a Bible; ASSISTANT carries a backpack. Once up front, they turn and stand in front of two chairs, facing audience.)*
Thanks for helping me tell the parable of the sower. Are you ready to do a little improv?

ASSISTANT: Sure, no problem.

READER: Just listen to what I read and act out the parts. That will help everyone understand and remember the story.

ASSISTANT: *(Nods with understanding.)* Sounds easy enough.

READER: Great!

READER and ASSISTANT sit down on chairs. ASSISTANT sets backpack next to chair. READER opens Bible.

READER: Today we'll be reading a story about a farmer who sowed seeds and what happened to those seeds. *(Begins reading.)* Jesus sat beside a large lake.

ASSISTANT raises arms over head, then sweeps them wide and down to side to indicate "large." READER continues.

READER: Such large crowds gathered around him...

ASSISTANT sweeps hands toward the audience to indicate the crowds.

READER: ...that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying, "A farmer went out to sow his seeds."

READER looks up at audience after he reads that first part, allowing a momentary pause. ASSISTANT stands, looking puzzled, and pantomimes sewing material with a needle and thread.

READER: *(About to begin again but looks questioningly at ASSISTANT.)* What are you doing?

ASSISTANT: I'm sewing, just like the farmer did... *(Sits down.)* though I don't know how a farmer would sew seeds--or why.

READER: *(Leans toward ASSISTANT and whispers loudly.)* He didn't sew (s-e-w.) with a needle and thread. Sow (s-o-w.) means to plant.

ASSISTANT: *(Sheepishly.)* Oh, I knew that! *(Pretends to toss needle and thread.)*

READER: OK, so where were we? *(Looks at Bible.)* Ah, yes! A farmer went out to sow, or plant, his seeds. *(Stops to look at ASSISTANT again.)*

ASSISTANT scratches head, then jumps up, raising pointer finger in the air to indicate an idea. Cups one hand, as if holding seeds. Pantomimes planting seeds when indicated by READER. For each one mentioned, ASSISTANT walks along front of barrier and "spreads" seeds over the indicated crouching individual.

READER: As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path...

PLANT 1 begins to stand slowly. ASSISTANT jumps in surprise at the sight. PLANT 1 begins flapping hands around head as if being attacked by birds as READER resumes.

READER: And the birds came and ate it up. *(Pause.)*

PLANT 1 exits, running. ASSISTANT stares in that direction for a moment, then continues planting.

READER: Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up because the soil was shallow.

PLANT 2 jumps up and raises arms joyfully. ASSISTANT again jumps back in surprise.

READER: But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. *(Pause.)*

PLANT 2 suddenly drops arms and appears weak by putting back of hand to forehead and sinks down behind barrier.

READER: Other seed fell among thorns, *(PLANT 3 rises slowly.)* which grew up and choked the plants.

PLANT 3 puts hands around neck and also sinks back down behind barrier.

READER: Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown.

PLANT 4 stands quickly and places hands on hips, looking confidently toward audience, and remains standing.

READER: Whoever has ears, let them hear.

ASSISTANT: *(Wipes hands together to indicate being all finished with the seeds. Sits down next to READER.)* That's it? Of all the seeds we planted, that's all we have left? What kind of a story is that?

READER: Getting a little caught up in the story? It's called a parable, because the story itself stands for something else. Jesus used parables to hide the truth from some people, like the religious leaders who could quote the law from beginning to end but didn't show the kind of love that Jesus expected of them. They did not believe Jesus was the Son of God, so he told stories that these religious leaders might have understood if their hearts had been open to what he was saying.

ASSISTANT: Well... (*Shrugs and glances at audience.*) I don't really get the point of the story myself.

READER: That's OK. Neither did Jesus' disciples, but he explained it to them since they were willing to follow him and really wanted to learn from him. When we listen to what God has to say, he guides us in our learning and draws us closer to him. But when we think we already know it all, parables like this remain unclear riddles.

ASSISTANT: I'm all about getting closer to Jesus!

READER: Me too! So here's the explanation Jesus gave his disciples:
The seed is the word of God. The Bible.

ASSISTANT: Oh, I get it!

ASSISTANT takes Bible out of backpack and holds it out in front of him/her toward the audience, then runs to barrier and stands in front of it, facing the direction where PLANT 1 had previously exited. Holds out Bible as PLANT 1 re-entered. PLANT 1 takes Bible.

READER: The ones on the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts so that they may not believe and be saved.

PLANT 1 looks at Bible quizzically, then hands it back to ASSISTANT, shakes head, and exits again.

ASSISTANT: Hey! (*Tries to get him/her to return, but PLANT 1 does not listen.*)

READER: The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy.

PLANT 2 pops up, smiling, fist pumping, raising arms as if in praise. ASSISTANT jumps up and pumps one arm upward.

ASSISTANT: Yessss!

READER: But—

ASSISTANT: *(Brings hand down and shrugs.)* Here we go again!

READER: These have no root; they believe only for a while and in a time of testing fall away.

PLANT 2 brings down arms, looks at hands as if wondering what he/she has just done, then shakes head and sinks behind the barrier. ASSISTANT sits down again, shaking head. Sets Bible on floor next to him/her, reaches in backpack and takes out cell phone, and is soon absorbed in phone.

READER: As for what fell among the thorns...

PLANT 3 jumps up from behind barrier, covered in fancy jewelry, talking on phone, carrying an expensive-looking handbag. Walks out from behind barrier, still talking on phone.

READER: They are the ones who hear; but as they go on their way, they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature.

PLANT 3 exits without stopping, still self-absorbed.

READER: *(Looks at ASSISTANT.)* Did you hear what I just read?

ASSISTANT: Huh? Oh, sorry—I was just checking my messages. It's just that this story is getting a little depressing, so I kind of tuned it out.

READER: While I was reading the Bible? *(Looks at audience and rolls eyes.)*



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P.O. Box 248 - Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406

Toll Free: 844-841-6387 - Fax 319-368-8011

customerservice@christianpub.com