

Worship Guide for West Morris Gatherings

October 25, 2020

Instructions: *The following worship guide is designed for your gathering time as a micro-church. It includes a service outline for adults, a children's lesson for a separate kids time, and a coloring page. Use this guide however you wish - as something to follow exactly or as a starting point. Remember the Spirit gives individuals for the building up of his Church. Invite all who are gathered to be part of praying, reading scripture, asking & answering questions, and worshipping.*

Welcome - Connecting Time

- Open your time together with casual conversation that gives everyone an opportunity to participate and join in. Some good questions might be:
 - Share a story about your gardening and harvesting experiences.
 - Share one really good thing that happened to you this week and where you have seen God at work this week.
 - What are you thankful for this week?
 - What has God been teaching you?
- Follow-up from the last time you were together. What have you been thinking about differently? What “next step” did you take in applying God’s Word? What “I will” statement did you act on?

Worship - Focusing on the Lord

- A time of worship is about focusing our hearts and attention on God. We often do that through singing, but it can be done many other ways as well. If your group would like to sing, invite someone to lead, or invite someone to share a song on their phone.
- **Worship with the Word** - Read Psalm 145 together. Invite someone to lead by reading the odd-numbered verses (*in italics*), and the group to respond by reading the even-numbered verses (**in bold**) together aloud.

1 I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever.

2 Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever.

3 Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.

4 One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts.

5 They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works.

6 They will tell of the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your great deeds.

7 They will celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

8 The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.

9 The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.

10 All you have made will praise you, O LORD; your saints will extol you.

11 They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might,

12 so that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made.

14 The LORD upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down.

15 The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time.

16 You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

17 The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made.

18 The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

19 He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.

20 The LORD watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.

21 My mouth will speak in praise of the LORD. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.

- **Worship through Guided Prayer** - invite others to pray together in response to Psalm 145
 - What are the mighty acts and great deeds of God you praise him for this week?
 - How do you need God to uphold you or others in the week ahead?
- **Worship in Song** - close out worship with a shared song
 - Give Thanks - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhOUSFgyJnc>

(If you have children in your group, this might be a good time to excuse them to go with 2 teens/adults who can lead the short children's time in the basement, backyard, etc during the teaching time. Follow the "Children's Lesson," an easy-to-use guide with prayer prompts, scripture reading, and activities, at the end of this document. The children's teaching guide focuses on the same scripture passage the adults will be discussing. Alternatively, invite the kids to stay with the group and include them in the group discussion. Consider using some of the questions from the "Children's Lesson" for your discussion. You might just be surprised how God can speak through even the youngest children and the adults might enjoy the hands-on approach!)

Discover - Learning from the Word - The time in God's Word will be a shared conversation among participants. The Holy Spirit speaks through all people. Perhaps designate 1-2 people to guide the conversation, although encourage everyone to ask questions, probe further, and dialogue together!

- ***Read & Imagine***: Invite someone to slowly read Matthew 13:1-9 aloud. As the scripture is read, invite the group to use their imagination to place themselves in the story. What do they see and feel? What are they experiencing? Invite the group to record their thoughts and responses.
- ***Listen Again***: Invite someone else to again read Matthew 13:1-9. Invite the group to pay attention to a word or phrase that stands out.
- ***Share***: What word or phrase stood out? How is God speaking to you in and through this word or phrase? What is God inviting you into?
- ***Discuss***: What do you notice about the Kingdom from this passage? What is surprising? What is comforting? What do you learn about God and about people?
- ***Pray***: Invite someone to read Matthew 13:1-9 one last time. Invite the group to let the words become a prayer of response to God for the situations they're facing in their lives.

Respond - Moving into Action - Don't skip this step! The response may be the most important part of the time in the Word. This is a time to move from hearing and talking about the Word into living into the Word. Discipleship is about obedience and action, not just gaining knowledge, so this response time is critical!

- ***Pause & Pray***: Take a moment of stillness and quiet after the discussion. Invite everyone to ask the Spirit to show them what they need to take from today. What is God showing you? How will you respond?
- ***Listen & Write***: Encourage everyone to write down what they hear from the Lord. Have them come up with an "I will" statement that they will do this week as a result of this passage.
- ***Share & Be Accountable***: Invite people to share their "I Will" statement, as this builds accountability.
- ***Pray in Response***: Respond in prayer. What truth have you heard today? Pray to God about that. What do you need to confess and ask for God's guidance about in response to this truth?

Sending Forth - Invite someone to read Romans 15:13 over the group as a sending forth blessing.

Announcements - Here are a few announcements to share with your gathering.

- Next Sunday, November 1, we will be worshipping on Facebook Live and in-person and at West Morris Church (2302 West Morris St) at 10:30 AM. Everyone is encouraged to be part of this special service of prayer and communion for our nation's election.
- Join the 8-week "Spiritual Conversations" discipleship class on Monday nights from 7-8:15 PM on Zoom.
- Looking for information? The West Morris website is always the best place to go - www.westmorrisfm.org.

Children's Lesson

Opening Song - The Farmer - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mj9s66DLQXI>

Pray - Invite everyone to join in prayer by responding to the prayer prompts.

- God, I praise you because _____.
- God, I'm worried about _____.
- God, I need you to _____.

Read - Matthew 13:1-9 - The Story of the Farmer

**Help children look this passage up in their Bibles and invite them to read it. If kids have different Bible versions/translations, invite them each to read theirs. The passage is included below in the NIRV, which is an easy-to-read version.*

“That same day Jesus left the house and sat by the Sea of Galilee. Large crowds gathered around him. So he got into a boat and sat down. All the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things using stories. He said, “A farmer went out to plant his seed. He scattered the seed on the ground. Some fell on a path. Birds came and ate it up. Some seed fell on rocky places, where there wasn't much soil. The plants came up quickly, because the soil wasn't deep. When the sun came up, it burned the plants. They dried up because they had no roots. Other seed fell among thorns. The thorns grew up and crowded out the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil. It produced a crop 100, 60 or 30 times more than what was planted. Whoever has ears should listen.”

Talk - Discuss the scripture using some/all of the following questions. Encourage everyone to participate!

- I wonder what the most important word is in this story from Jesus.
- I wonder what part could be left out and not really change the meaning.

- I wonder what your favorite part of the scripture was. Why?
- I wonder what part of the scripture was your least favorite part. Why?
- What did you learn about God in this story? What did you learn about yourself and other people?
- I wonder what this scripture has to do with anything going on in your life today.
- I wonder who else might need to hear this scripture.

Pray - Invite kids to pray in response to the story and what God is showing them.

Create - Provide soil, seeds and small cups for the kids to plant. Talk about what seeds need in order to grow (sun, water, oxygen and warm temps). How is that similar to us? What do we need to grow?

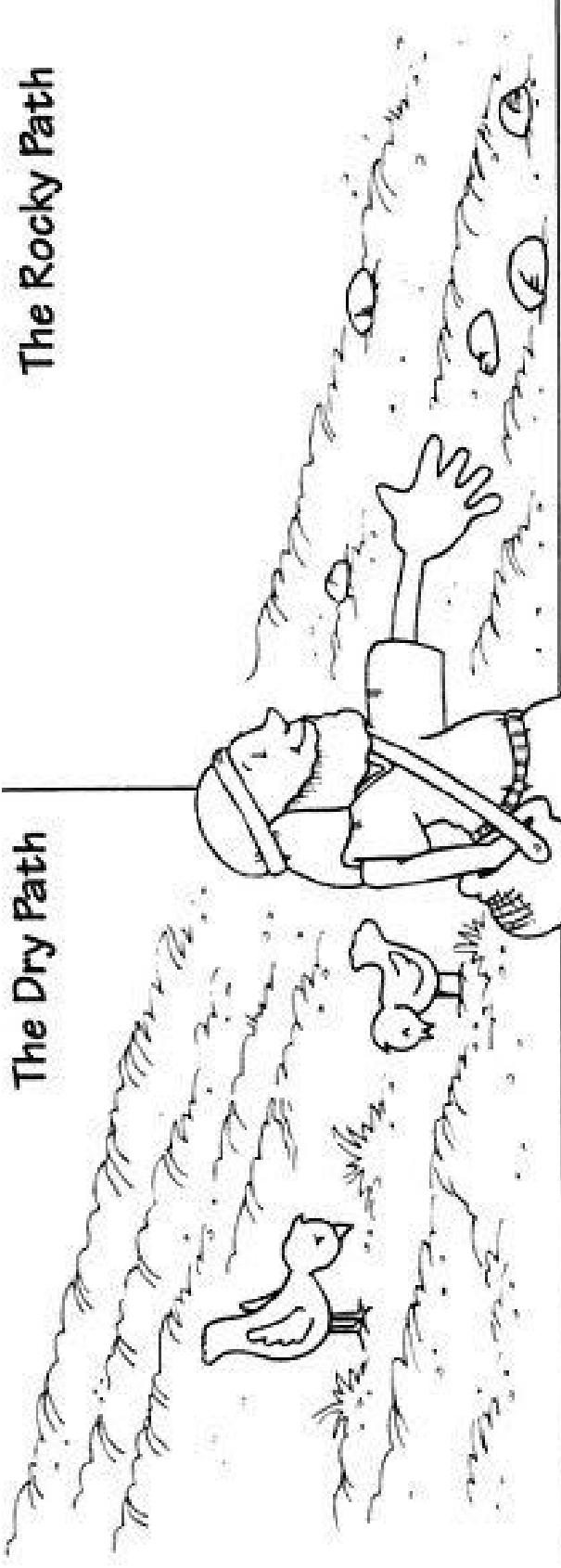
Creative Alternatives: Invite the kids to draw a picture they could use to retell the story or that shows what God is teaching them about this scripture. Kids can also color the picture below and/or complete the Children's Activity Bulletins (included in separate files for younger and older kids).

Act - Invite the kids to act out one of the types of seeds in Matthew 13 (the ones eaten by birds, choked out by weeds, killed by the hot sun, or the ones that grew well). Ask the other kids to guess which type of seeds they are.

Play - In remaining time, play games with kids or allow them to play outside/on playground/go for a walk to discover God's creation.

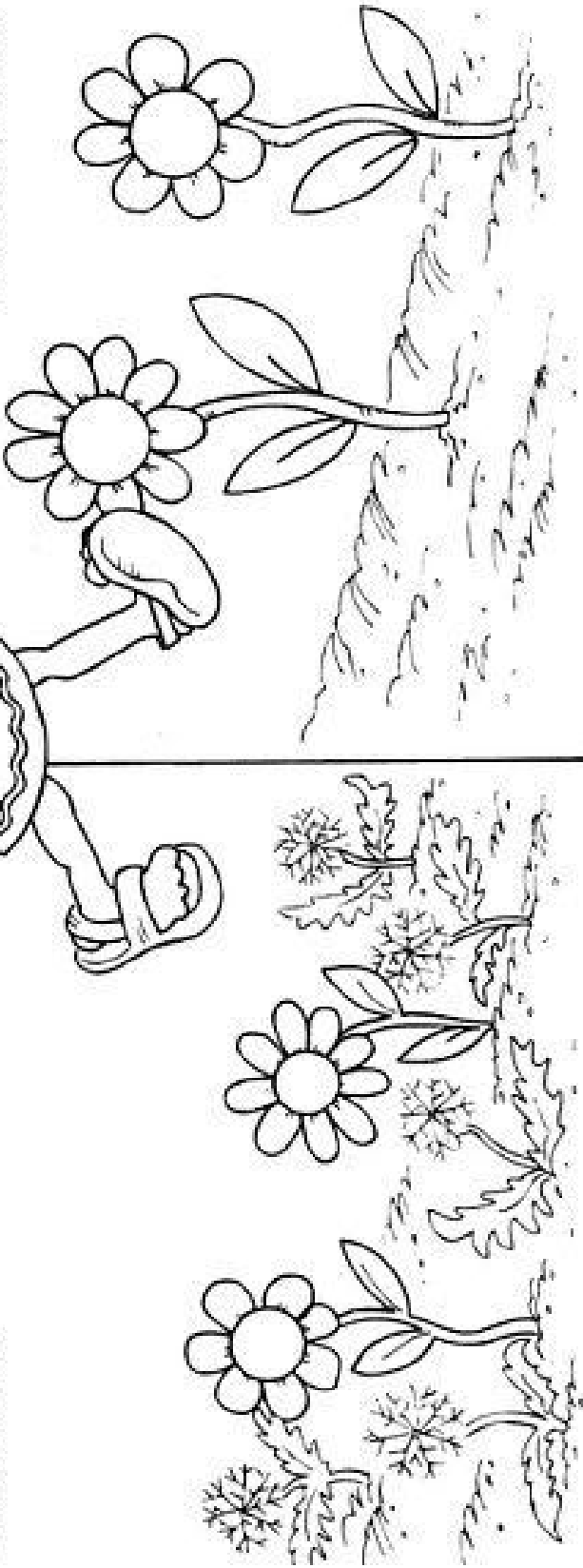
The Dry Path

The Rocky Path



The Weeds

The Good Soil



THE SOWER