

## Chat with the Children

- Take everyone through the story with the images:
    - path
- 

## Speaking in parables...

- Why did Jesus speak in parables?
- They were stories, they were memorable...
  - but they carried with them a way of looking at the world which was different from that which most people had then (and have today).
  - as people listened, they began to see the world in a different way from the way they'd seen it before, even without realising it!
- Some people would, immediately or over time, come to see the world in that new way, from Jesus' perspective, from God's perspective.
  - they are the ones Jesus calls "blessed" in v.16, because they see clearly!
- But many people who, no matter how they hear the message - as a sermon, as a parable, as a drama, as someone's life lived out before them - reject it.
  - and at each rejection they become a little more hardened, a little more calloused.
- And so Jesus spoke in parables, knowing that many had hard hearts, but aiming through these stories that look at the world in a different way, to break in to some at least of those hard hearts.
  - *compare how story (Dot Cotton/Ethel/Euthanasia) got people thinking!*

## Let me tell you a story

- "Who've you got for Physics?", Ian asked James.
- *"Mr Sharkey, thankfully! I hate Physics, but somehow he makes even the most obscure bits tolerably intelligible! What about you?", James replied.*
- "Mr Bates"
- *"Well, shouldn't matter too much to you - you're good at it!" said James.*
- "Yeah, well - but you know how much I struggle in French!", laughed Ian. "Who else is in your class?"
- *"Alistair - he'll be top of the class; Robert, he's not bad either; Fiona, Kim, Ross - can't remember who else."*
- As the year progressed, James worked away at his Physics, but it was Mr Sharkey's teaching that made the difference. In the final exam, James came away with a B - an absolutely incredible result, given how much he'd hated Physics in third year. Of course, Alistair did get an A - but the others didn't do so well.
- Robert had done well in third year, and he just assumed he'd be fine. He certainly understood things in class when they were explained, but he never bothered to do the class work, and as for revision.... that was joke! When it came to the exam, he just couldn't remember!
- Kim and Fiona sat together - that had been their problem. Don't like to say anything about girls, but they'd spent the whole year chatting, and never seemed to pay any attention. Talk about dizzy!!
- And as for Ross... what on earth he was doing in a Physics class I have no idea! I can't recall him ever paying the least bit of attention to Mr Sharkey - lost cause from the very beginning. No interest, no motivation, no result! Don't remember him even bothering to turn up for the exam!
- *"I'm really glad I was in Mr Sharkey's class - made all the difference!"*
- **For the kingdom of heaven is like a teacher who explains things clearly to the whole class:**
  - but some don't bother to listen, are hardened to the message;
  - others hear, and seem to understand, but don't let it sink in, and when troubles come, they have no depth of understanding;

## **Matthew 13:1-23 Through a Different Lens: The Sower Entry, 14/11/2010, am**

- still others are around when the message is proclaimed, but are distracted by other things, and other priorities; though they may hear, for them too the message never changes them;
- but there are those who receive God's word with joy, who listen and learn, who take it in and allow it to grow within them, changing the way they look at the world - and they, in turn, are able to communicate that message to others!

### **The Parable of the Sower tells us...**

#### **Something about God:**

- he sows, desires new life, reaches out...

#### **Something about the Gospel:**

- it is seed, bringing new life, needs to be planted into people's lives and take root...

#### **Something about our responsibilities:**

- we are to do what our Father in heaven does, sharing the gospel, scattering seed - not always knowing which seeds will grow, but always seeking to plant...

#### **Something about our hearts:**

- path/hard hearts - resistant
- rocky/shallow hearts - quick to take in, quick to die off...
- thorns & weeds/choked - allowing other things priority...
- good soil - what does that actually look like? more than just "churchiness", but heart change...

### **Conclusion**

- So what can we learn from this story, this parable?
  - whether in Jesus' original, or translated into our world...
- Learn to see clearly some fairly basic things:
  - there is a new life, a message, a gospel that makes a difference - its not all just an illusion, a comforting thought
  - there is a Lord who sows, who scatters seed, seeking new life...
  - there is a need to share our faith, and not hoard the seed!
  - there is a coming harvest, exam time, day of judgement
- My prayer as we finish is that we would, each one of us, see with the eyes of faith, see clearly the coming judgement, the need to share our faith, the faithfulness of God in bringing the harvest....