

The Rich Man (Fool): Treasure Chests

Luke 12:16–34.

Memory Verse: For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Luke 12:34)

Preparation:

- Jesus and Man puppets
- Three shoeboxes decorated to look like barns on one side, and treasure chests on the other.
- Three lunch bags (or burlap bags) filled with newspaper and tied with string at the top to represent bags of wheat.
- Children’s offering envelopes (extra boxes for those who want them.)
- Small empty milk cartons and construction paper
- Paper hearts and drinking straws
- Tissue or newspaper
- Memory verse typed on small squares of paper

Read paraphrase of “The Rich Fool” using Jesus and Man puppets. Begin by showing just one small barn.

Jesus: Once there was a rich man whose farm produced very well. It grew lots and lots of wheat.

Man: (proudly) I have the best farm around! Look at all my wheat! (try to stuff 3 bags in one barn.) What am I going to do with it all? I don’t even have a barn big enough to hold it! I know! I’ll build more barns – bigger barns that can hold all my wheat. Then I won’t have anything to worry about. I can relax, eat, drink and be merry! (get more barns and fill them with wheat.)

Jesus: But God said, you foolish man. This very night you will lose your life. (Put man puppet on the floor or behind you – depending on how graphic you want to be! You might want to lighten things up by having the man die in a silly way.) And all that wheat you’ve stored up – who will it belong to now? What good will it do you after you’re gone? So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves, (turn boxes around to reveal treasure chest sides) but are not rich toward God.

Listen to me, all of you: you don't need to *worry* so much about what you will eat, or what you will wear. Instead, do all you can to be part of God's kingdom, and those other things will be given to you.

Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is God's good pleasure to give you the kingdom of heaven! Learn to be **generous**, **share** what you have and you will have unfailing treasure in heaven that cannot be stolen or destroyed. "For (see if children can join in) where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Discussion

- Was the man in our story a bad man because he was rich? (No). What did he do that was wrong? (He didn't **share**). It is not bad for people to be rich; many rich people love God and use their money in loving ways.
- The man's wheat was very important to him, wasn't it? What do you think he wanted to do with it? (Keep it, sell some, or use the money to buy other things.)
- Draw a quick treasure chest on the chalk or dry erase board. What else was important to the man? Recall how the man said he wanted to "relax, eat, drink and be merry." Ask the children to name some of their favorite hobbies, foods, drinks, and toys, and list them on the treasure chest.
- Talk about how these things cannot last forever! Food that you don't eat will eventually go bad. Toys (e.g. bikes, game systems) break, wear out or get rusty. You may really enjoy certain toys or hobbies now, but you will eventually get tired of them.
- Instead of keeping all of our "riches" to ourselves, how can we **share** them? {Remind the children of the bird feeders made last week, or ask if any remembered to bring in food items.}
- Jesus says that when we are **generous**, and when we **share** what we have, we will have treasure in heaven that cannot break or wear out or get rusty.

Art Activity

- Cover the milk cartons with construction paper and decorate to look like treasure chests. Help the children write the words “Treasures in Heaven” on the boxes.
- Give each child 3-4 paper hearts.
- Generate a list of ways we can share (our time, talents and treasures). For example:
 - Donate food or clothes
 - Share toys with other children
 - Take turns
 - Help with work around the house
 - Read a story to someone
 - Draw a picture for someone
 - Make a card for someone who is lonely
 - Help someone who is hurt or sick
 - Be a friend to someone who is lonely
 - Help clean up in your house, classroom or church
- Write a way of sharing on each heart (write words for children who cannot copy them from the board.)
- Attach the hearts to straws with tape
- Holding the straws in the milk cartons, tuck newspaper or tissue paper around them until they stand up straight.
- Remind the children of the memory verse “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Luke 12:34)
- Give a copy of the memory verse (printed on small squares of paper) to each child and staple the verses to the milk cartons.

Prayer: Dear God, you have blessed us with so many things – our homes, our clothes, our food, our toys. Please help us to remember how important it is to share. Help us to find “treasure” in helping others and in doing your will. Amen