

INVESTIGATING GOD'S WORD...

MATTHEW 15-28 | **YEAR ONE** | SUMMER QUARTER



SUNDAY SCHOOL CURRICULUM
FOR YOUNG ELEMENTARY CHILDREN

SS01SU-E

LESSON ONE | MATTHEW 15

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

WELCOME

What makes you clean?
2–3 mins.

DRILL TIME

Parables
3–5 mins.

W.O.W!

Mouth
3–5 mins.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Timeline
2–3 mins.

BIBLE INVESTIGATION

Matthew 15
20–30 mins.

LESSON-AT-HOME

Matthew 15:18
3–5 mins.

OVERVIEW

Matthew 15 opens with another confrontation between the Pharisees and Jesus. The Pharisees accuse Jesus' disciples of not following the Jewish hand-washing regulations. Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for following tradition rather than the commands of God, using as an example their manipulation of the law to withhold money from aging parents. He goes on to say that Isaiah's prophecy is fulfilled in these religious leaders who honor God with words yet not with their hearts. Jesus then teaches the disciples that it is what comes out of the heart, not what goes into the mouth, that causes man to be sinful and unclean.

After dealing with the faithlessness of the Pharisees, Jesus is surprised by the faith of a Canaanite woman. Initially, he ignores her pleas for mercy for her demon-possessed daughter. Then, her profession of faith in God grabs his attention, moving Him to heal her daughter.

Next, we see Jesus healing the lame, blind, and crippled again, motivated by great compassion. He also feeds a group of four thousand men (plus women and children) in similar fashion to the feeding of the five thousand. Christ continues to demonstrate the power of the grace of God in the lives of people.

PREPARATION

Read and meditate on Matthew 15 this week. **Use flannelgraph figures or other pictures to illustrate the lesson.**

TEACHING ENCOURAGEMENT

Parents spend a whole lot of time telling their children to “watch their mouths”—as they should. The words that come out of our mouths simply reveal our unclean hearts that need regeneration and cleansing. Our children, as potential little Pharisees, may be tempted to just put on external religion and obedience instead of heart-felt obedience. And, without Christ, this will be all they can do! So teach your children the difference between external obedience to the law and faith-filled obedience to Christ. Show them their need for a changed heart that will then fill their mouths with words that glorify God. Resist training them to simply obey rules for the sake of the rules. Seek God for true heart change!

THE **WELCOME** SERVES AS BOTH AN OPPORTUNITY TO GREET THE CHILDREN AS WELL AS AN EFFORT TO HELP THEM GET FOCUSED.

EACH WEEK, YOU WILL BEGIN WITH QUESTIONS OR AN ACTIVITY THAT WILL ENGAGE THE CHILDREN AND HELP THEM THINK ABOUT GOD AND HIS WORD.

DRILL TIME GIVES THE CHILDREN THE OPPORTUNITY TO RECALL AND REHEARSE WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN TAUGHT IN THE PAST—AT HOME, SCHOOL AND/OR CHURCH.

THIS ELEMENT ALLOWS THE INVESTIGATING GOD'S WORD... CURRICULUM TO COVER MUCH MORE BIBLICAL "GROUND," SINCE TIME IS NOT EXPENDED REPEATING THE SAME BIBLE STORIES OVER AND OVER AGAIN FROM YEAR TO YEAR.



WELCOME

Greet the students. Welcome visitors.

Say: *Raise your hand if you've ever gotten dirty. How do you go about getting your body clean again?* **Allow answers.** *To clean anything you have to WASH it, don't you? We wash our clothes and our bodies with water and maybe soap or detergent of some kind. Why is it so important to become CLEAN after you are dirty?* **Allow answers.**

In our lesson today, we will meet some Pharisees who think that having clean hands is more important than having clean hearts. Think about that as we study together.



DRILL TIME

Now, let's move on to DRILL TIME—our weekly opportunity to review something we have learned in the past. Are you ready?

Today's questions: *What is a parable? Who told many parables while He was here on earth? What are some of the parables that we have studied in the Book of Matthew?*

Ask for volunteers or call on students.

Answers:

1. "An earthly story with a heavenly meaning."
2. Jesus.
3. The parable of the sower; the parable of the weeds and the wheat; the parable of the mustard seed; the parable of the yeast; the parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl; the parable of the net.

Say: *Jesus taught many of His parables to show His disciples what the kingdom of heaven is like. All who follow Christ will "see" and understand what the kingdom is all about; all those who reject Christ will never understand. Do you want to have eyes that are open to God and His kingdom? I hope you do! Then, you will continue to understand all that Christ is teaching us.*



W.O.W!

THE **W.O.W!** IS THE WORD OF THE WEEK. THIS ELEMENT IS INCLUDED TO HELP THE CHILDREN BUILD THEIR THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL VOCABULARIES. THESE WORDS ARE VITAL TO THE CHRISTIAN'S UNDERSTANDING OF GOD AND HIS WORLD.

It's time to learn another word today. I hope you continue to grow in your Christian vocabulary!

Our W.O.W! (Word of the Week) this week is **MOUTH**. Write the word **on the board**. That's an easy one, isn't it? Everyone point to your MOUTH. Tell me why God gave you a MOUTH. What does it do for you? **Allow answers.**

Your MOUTH is a very important part of your body. It allows you to eat, and it allows you to speak. Food goes into your MOUTH and words come out of your MOUTH.

Have your parents ever told you to "watch your MOUTH?" That's a way to tell you to be careful what you say. The words that come out of your MOUTH are much more important than the food that goes into your MOUTH. We can have MOUTHS that glorify God or MOUTHS that only serve ourselves.

Your MOUTH is very important to God! In our reading today, Jesus talks about the MOUTH and how it is related to being "clean" or "unclean." Watch for our W.O.W!

EACH WEEK, THE BIBLE LESSON WILL BE PLACED IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT BY USE OF A TIMELINE.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE CHILDREN LEARN HOW THE STORY OF REDEMPTIVE HISTORY FITS TOGETHER. BIBLE STORIES MUST NOT BE VIEWED AS DETACHED SCENES—THEY ARE TO BE SHOWN AS A PART OF A MUCH BIGGER PICTURE. THE TIMELINE IS A USEFUL TOOL TOWARD THAT END.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

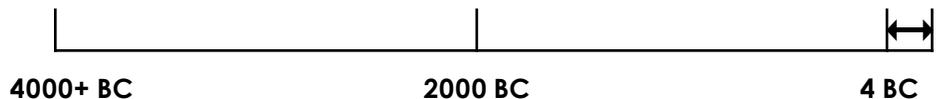
Put this timeline on the board so the children can get an idea of when the stories in the Gospel of Matthew took place.

This Week's Timeline

ADAM & EVE

ABRAHAM

LIFE OF JESUS





BIBLE INVESTIGATION

THE BIBLE INVESTIGATION TIME IS THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE WEEK'S LESSON. IT PLUNGES THE STUDENT DIRECTLY INTO GOD'S WORD, NOT SIMPLY A PARAPHRASE OF A BIBLE STORY.

ALL SCRIPTURE TEXT INCLUDED IN THE CURRICULUM IS FROM THE ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION (ESV).

THE BIBLE READING IS TAKEN IN SHORT SECTIONS, SEPARATED BY TIMES OF DISCUSSION, QUESTIONS, AND APPLICATION POINTS. THIS FORMAT ALLOWS AMPLE OPPORTUNITIES TO STOP, THINK ABOUT AND DISCUSS WHAT IS BEING READ.

Have the children seated so they can see the board. Use flannelgraph figures or pictures to illustrate the lesson.

Introduction: *We continue in the Book of Matthew this quarter. Remember we have already learned that the Book of Matthew is the first of four GOSPELS in the New Testament. A GOSPEL is a book that brings GOOD NEWS. What GOOD NEWS will we continue to hear in the Book of Matthew? Let's find out!*

Read Matthew 15:1-2.

¹ Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, ² "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat."

Discussion: *This sounds like some BAD NEWS, doesn't it? What did the Pharisees say Jesus' disciples were doing wrong? [They weren't washing their hands before they ate.] Do you think the Pharisees were just worried about germs? No! They washed hands before eating as a RITUAL that they thought would make them pleasing to God.*

*Listen to what Jesus says to them. **Read verses 3-6.***

³ He answered them, "And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? ⁴ For God commanded, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.' ⁵ But you say, 'If anyone tells his father or his mother, "What you would have gained from me is given to God," ⁶ he need not honor his father.' So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God.

Discussion: *Do you hear what Jesus is saying? The Pharisees taught that it was okay for a person to give money to the priests instead of using that money to take care of aging parents. Is that honoring your mother and father? [No way!] So while the Pharisees criticized the disciples for unclean hands, they themselves had unclean hearts that dishonored parents.*

*Listen to more of what Jesus says to them. **Read verses 7-9.***

⁷ You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: ⁸ " 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; ⁹ in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' "



THIS GREY SIDEBAR FOUND ON ALL PAGES IS FOR THE TEACHER TO WRITE NOTES AS HE OR SHE PREPARES THE LESSON.

OTHER TEACHING TIPS OR IMPORTANT EXEGETICAL INFORMATION WILL ALSO APPEAR ON THE SIDEBAR FROM TIME TO TIME.

Application: *It is very tempting to just follow the rules on the outside, while our hearts are not “in it.” Do you ever do that? Do you just obey your parents on the outside but in your heart want to disobey? The Pharisees acted like worshippers of God, yet had hearts far away from God. Their MOUTHS said one thing, but their hearts said another. We can be just like these Pharisees!*

Now, listen for our Word of the Week! **Read verses 10-11.**

¹⁰ And he called the people to him and said to them, “Hear and understand: ¹¹ it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person.”

Discussion: *Did you hear it? The Pharisees were more concerned with what people put into their MOUTHS—in other words, what food they ate or did not eat. The Mosaic law had all sorts of rules for what food was unclean and could not be eaten. The Pharisees thought those food laws were more important than what was in a person’s heart.*

Let’s read on. **Read verses 12-14.**

¹² Then the disciples came and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?” ¹³ He answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. ¹⁴ Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”

Discussion: *Jesus called the Pharisees “blind” because they refused to see the truth. They were more interested in their laws than in true heart change that only comes from God.*

Listen to these last words of Jesus. **Read verses 15-20.**

¹⁵ But Peter said to him, “Explain the parable to us.” ¹⁶ And he said, “Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷ Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? ¹⁸ But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. ¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. ²⁰ These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.”

Application: *Do you get it? It’s not what goes into our MOUTHS that makes us sinful, it is the words that come out of our MOUTHS that*



demonstrate our sinful hearts! Out of the heart comes all that makes us unclean. Obeying all the rules will not take away your sin! Only by the Holy Spirit washing and cleansing our hearts can we be clean from sin. This is what the Pharisees didn't understand. Do you?

*Now, onto another story. **Read verses 21-24.***

²¹ And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²² And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon." ²³ But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying out after us." ²⁴ He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Discussion: *What did the Canaanite woman want from Jesus? [She wanted Jesus to cast the demon out of her daughter.] Why did Jesus refuse to help her? [Because He was only sent to help the children of Israel.] What will this desperate woman do now?*

*Let's see. **Read verses 25-28.***

²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." ²⁶ And he answered, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." ²⁷ She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." ²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

Discussion: *Why did Jesus change His mind and help this Canaanite woman? [She demonstrated faith in Christ.] How did she demonstrate faith in Christ? [By her seeking even the crumbs from the Lord's table.] By the words that came out of her MOUTH, this woman professed faith in a loving and powerful God. Her daughter benefited from that faith!*

Application: *When you have a need, do you seek Jesus? All of the children of God have a right to come to His table and seek to be cared for. How do you know if you are a child of God? By putting your total faith in Jesus!*

*Now Jesus moves on. Let's read. **Read verses 29-31.***

²⁹ Jesus went on from there and walked beside the Sea of Galilee. And he went up on the mountain and sat down there. ³⁰ And great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the blind, the

APPLICATION POINTS ARE
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LESSON.



crippled, the mute, and many others, and they put them at his feet, and he healed them, ³¹ so that the crowd wondered, when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel.

Discussion: *Now these were some people with great needs! Lame, blind, crippled, mute...what did Jesus do for these people? [He healed them!] How did the crowds respond to these miraculous healings? [They were amazed. They praised God.]*

Application: *You and I may not be lame, crippled, blind or mute—but we still need the healing power of God in our lives. We need to be healed of our spiritual blindness, our spiritual lameness, and our spiritual death. God’s grace for us is that He opens our eyes to see Jesus! Then, our response must also be praise for God.*

*Let’s read more. **Read verse 32.***

³² Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I am unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.”

Discussion: *Why did Jesus want to feed the people He had just healed? [He had compassion on them.] The compassion of Christ leads Him to even take care of their need for food! Isn’t that a comfort to you?*

*The rest of this story may sound familiar. **Read verses 33-34.***

³³ And the disciples said to him, “Where are we to get enough bread in such a desolate place to feed so great a crowd?” ³⁴ And Jesus said to them, “How many loaves do you have?” They said, “Seven, and a few small fish.”

Discussion: *How many people did Jesus feed miraculously in the last chapter? [Five thousand men, besides women and children.] How many loaves and fish did He have then? [Five loaves and two fish.] You would think the disciples would know by now that Jesus can provide food for even the largest of crowds. But they still seemed to be blind to that fact.*

*Let’s finish the chapter. **Read verses 35-39.***

³⁵ And directing the crowd to sit down on the ground, ³⁶ he took the seven loaves and the fish, and having given thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the



crowds. ³⁷ And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up seven baskets full of the broken pieces left over. ³⁸ Those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. ³⁹ And after sending away the crowds, he got into the boat and went to the region of Magadan.

Conclusion: *How many did Jesus feed this time? [Four thousand men, plus women and children.] Jesus is the bread of life! He is the one who feeds our souls. Did the bread and fish make their souls pure and clean? [No.] Remember, it is what comes out of the heart and out of the MOUTH that makes us unclean. We need new hearts, not just full stomachs or healed bodies. And that comes not by the law, but by the grace of God in Christ!*



LESSON-AT-HOME

Distribute the “Lesson-At-Home” bookmarks. Read the Scripture Memory verse (Matthew 15:18) to the children..

Matthew 15:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ “But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.

Say: *There’s our Word of the Week again. Why do the words that come out of our MOUTHS make us unclean? [They just reveal what’s going on in our hearts.] We need our hearts to be changed so our MOUTHS can be clean. Keep this verse in your mind when you speak, so your words may glorify God!*

Review the verse a couple of times.

Direct the students’ attentions to the bottom half of the bookmark. It includes reminder points of today’s lesson that can be discussed with their parents and reviewed during the week.

Close in prayer and dismiss the students.

THE LESSON-AT-HOME SECTION IS THE CLOSING TIME EACH WEEK. BOOKMARKS ARE GIVEN TO THE STUDENTS THAT INCLUDE THE SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE AND A LESSON REVIEW. THE LESSON REVIEW CONTAINS WORDS AND PHRASES THAT CAN SPARK MEMORIES AS WELL AS CONVERSATION WITH PARENTS.