

Investigating God's Word...

One Story
Year

Matthew 15-28

Sunday School Curriculum

Summer Quarter

Lesson Sequence

Summer Quarter

The **Lesson Sequence** gives the teacher an overview of the entire quarter.

The central goal of the ***Investigating God's Word...*** curriculum is to enable children the opportunity to read and study the entire Bible—from Genesis to Revelation—by the time they “graduate” from 6th grade.

Week One	Matthew 15
Week Two	Matthew 16
Week Three	Matthew 17
Week Four	Matthew 18
Week Five	Matthew 19
Week Six	Matthew 20
Week Seven	Matthew 21
Week Eight	Matthew 22-23
Week Nine	Matthew 24
Week Ten	Matthew 25
Week Eleven	Matthew 26:1-46
Week Twelve	Matthew 26:47-27:31
Week Thirteen	Matthew 27:32-28:20



Suggested Schedule

Welcome <i>What makes you clean?</i>	2-3 min.
Drill Time <i>Parables</i>	3-5 min.
W.O.W! <i>Mouth</i>	3-5 min.
Historical Context <i>Timeline</i>	2-3 min.
Bible Investigation <i>Matthew 15</i>	20-30 min.
Lesson-At-Home <i>Matthew 15:18</i>	3-5 min.

Lesson One

Matthew 15

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.

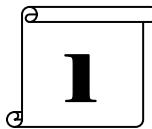
Next, we see Jesus healing the lame, blind, and crippled again, motivated by great compassion. He also feeds a group of four thousand men (plus women and children) in similar fashion to the feeding of the five thousand. Christ continues to demonstrate the power of the grace of God in the lives of people.

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!



Welcome

Greet the students. Welcome visitors.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Each week, the Bible Lesson will be placed in historical context by use of a timeline.

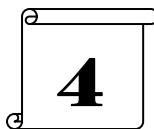
It is essential that the children learn how the story of redemptive history fits together. Bible stories must not be viewed as detached scenes—they are to be shown as part of a much bigger picture. The timeline is a useful tool toward that end.

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 in your MOUTH and words come out of your MOUTH.

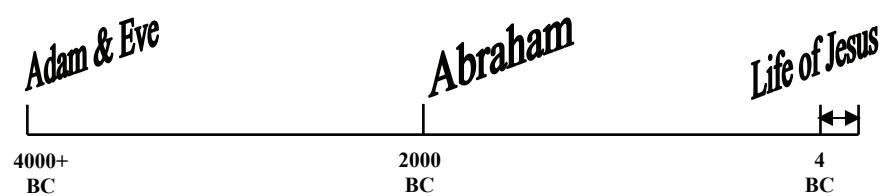
Have your parents ever told you to "watch your MOUTH?" That's a way to tell you to be careful what you say. The words that come out of your MOUTH are much more important than the food that goes into your MOUTH. We can have MOUTHS that glorify God or MOUTHS that only serve ourselves.

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!



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.





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 New International Version (NIV).

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.

¹Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, ²“Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before 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.

³Jesus replied, “**And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?** ⁴For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother’ and ‘Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.’ ⁵But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, ‘Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,’ ⁶he is not to ‘honor his father’ with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

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.

⁷You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:⁸ “‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.⁹ They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by 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 exegitical 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.

¹⁰Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. ¹¹What goes into a man’s mouth does not make him ‘unclean,’ but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him ‘unclean.’”

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.

¹²Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?” ¹³He replied, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. ¹⁴Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, 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.

¹⁵Peter said, “Explain the parable to us.” ¹⁶“Are you still so dull?” Jesus asked them. ¹⁷“Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? ¹⁸But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man ‘unclean.’” ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. ²⁰These are what make a man ‘unclean’; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him ‘unclean.’”

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 Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²² A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession.” ²³ Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.” ²⁴ He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep 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 The woman came and knelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she said. ²⁶ He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to their dogs.” ²⁷ “Yes, Lord,” she said, “but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” ²⁸ Then Jesus answered, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

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 Points
are woven into the fabric of the discussion, rather than being left to the end of the lesson.

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 left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a mountainside and sat down. ³⁰ Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them. ³¹ The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised 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 Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse 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.

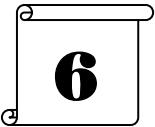
³³ His disciples answered, “Where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd?” ³⁴ “How many loaves do you have?” Jesus asked. “Seven,” they replied, “and a few small fish.”

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 He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. ³⁶ Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people. ³⁷ They all ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ³⁸ The number of those who ate was four thousand, besides women and children. ³⁹ After Jesus had sent the crowd away, he got into the boat and went to the vicinity 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 (NIV)

¹⁸ But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man ‘unclean.’

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.