

**STORIES JESUS TOLD
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INTRODUCTION

STORIES JESUS TOLD

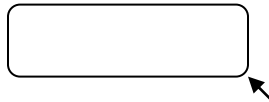
You do not have to be a Christian or know anything about the Bible to enjoy these Ohana group materials.

You do not have to read, talk, sing, pray or share during the group time if you do not feel comfortable doing so. You are welcome to simply come and listen.

These materials are designed to help people examine the stories or parables that Jesus told and how they can be relevant to life today.

Within the session guides you will find links to other topics on what Jesus said about various subjects such as *Who He Is*, *Forgiveness*, *Judgment*, etc. Some of the links will also include His practical teachings on *money*, *marriage*, *conflict resolution*, etc.

Whenever you see one of the link symbols --



-- it is an opportunity for your group to decide if they want to go to that link for the next session. This way, the group can tailor-make each session to fit the needs of the group. If there is no need for digging deeper into a particular topic, then your group should move to the next *Story Jesus Told*.

Even if the group does not want to go to a link, you may personally choose to do so. Simply ask your Ohana leader for the guide sheet on the topic that interests you. You can go through the material on your own or with a friend or another Ohana member.

Thank you for joining us on this journey toward a deeper spiritual experience through *Stories Jesus Told*.

THE SOWER, THE SEED AND THE SOILS

WELCOME

- ❖ Greet each other and introduce any guests.
- ❖ **Hook** into the session topic and get better acquainted – Have a collection of pictures of flowers, plants and trees of various kinds and ask each person to pick one that they like and tell briefly why they like it. OR ask people to share what their favorite flower is.
- ❖ Ask “Why do you think God created so many kinds of plants?”

WORSHIP

- ❖ Sing together some songs about God as Creator. Suggestions: “All Things Bright and Beautiful,” “This Is My Father’s World,” “How Great Thou Art” (PP. 92, 93, 86 of the SDA Church Hymnal) (You could also ask a children’s Sabbath School Director to bring a children’s song about God as Creator)
- ❖ Pray together by going around the circle and each one thanking God for one thing He has created and why you like it. (Examples: “Thank You, God, for making roses that smell sweet,” “Thank You, God, for making kittens that feel soft.” “Thank You, God, for mountains to look at and to climb,” “Thank You, God, for an ocean to swim in.”)

- ❖ **Form into small groups of three or four:**

WORD

- ❖ **Book:** Read Matthew 13:1-9 and answer the following questions:
 - Where and under what circumstances did Jesus tell this story?
 - Notice the various places the seed fell and what happened to it, by completing the chart:

Where did seed fall?	What happened to it?
1. (vs. 4)	
2. (vs. 5,6)	
3. (vs. 7)	
4. (vs. 8)	

- ❖ Read Matthew 13:10-17 and answer the following:
 - What was the disciples' question? (vs. 10)

 - In answering the disciples, what Old Testament passage did Jesus quote? (check the margin or bottom of the page of the Bible for cross references)

- ❖ **Look:** What did Jesus mean by the answer He gave to the disciples in verses 11 to 17?

- ❖ Read Matthew 13:18-23 for Jesus' interpretation of His parable and complete the sentences:
 1. The hard path represents:

 2. The rocky soil represents:

 3. The thorny ground represents:

 4. The good soil represents:

 5. The seed represents:

- ❖ **Return to the larger group**

- ❖ **Took:** (Please do this part personally and privately. The Ohana leader will give you several minutes to complete the sentences.)
 1. Spiritually, I am like the hard path when . . .

 2. I am like the rocky soil when . . .

 3. I am like the thorny ground when . . .

(continue on next page)

4. I am like the good soil when . . .

 5. I want to be like the good soil all the time. To be that way, I need . . .
-
- ❖ The Ohana leader will ask the group to go to God in silent prayer for a few minutes, confessing to God where we each may be failing to be “good ground receivers” of the Word and asking God to change us. After a few moments of silent prayer, the Ohana leader will pray aloud.

WITNESS

- ❖ If your group does not have a Blessing List yet, begin it now.
 - ❖ Discuss together what you might do as a group to help the people on your Blessing List to become “good ground” hearers of the Word.
-
- ❖ **This next week:**
 - Contact your prayer partner.
 - Pray for your Ohana friends and their names on the Blessing List.
 - Invite someone to come with you to the next Ohana meeting.

THE MUSTARD SEED AND THE YEAST

WELCOME

- ❖ Greet each other and introduce any guests.
- ❖ **Hook** into the session topic by opening a package of seeds and giving a few seeds to each person. Let each person share some time when they had just a tiny seed of an idea but it grew into something big. (Example—a home or yard improvement idea that started small but grew into something big; a party that began with a very small guest list but grew, etc.)

WORSHIP

- ❖ Sing together some of your group's favorite praise songs.
- ❖ Invite each person to take three of the seeds from the ones they got during the sharing time. For the first seed, praise God by telling Him one thing you like about Him. As you speak your praise, place your seed in a container in the center of the group. For your second seed, think of one thing to thank God for and place the second seed in the container. For the third seed, think of one request you wish to make to God. If it is a private request, simply tell the group it is a personal request as you place your seed in the container. After all in the group have placed their seeds in the container and expressed their praises, thanks and requests, invite one person to have prayer for the group.

WORD

- ❖ **Book:** Read Matthew 13:31-35 to find out what it *says*.
- ❖ Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is like a m_____ s_____. He also compared it to y_____.
- ❖ Think of the size of a seed, such as a radish seed. What is the size of a full-grown radish plant? What would you say is the ratio, in size, of one radish seed to one full-grown radish plant?
- ❖ Also consider that it takes just one tablespoon of yeast to work three to five cups of flour into a dough that will rise into a bread loaf. What is the ratio of one tablespoon of yeast to three to five cups of flour?
- ❖ **Form into small groups of three or four.**
- ❖ **Look** at what this passage *means*:

- Why do you think Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed and to yeast? List as many reasons as your group can think of.
- What was Jesus trying to tell people about the kingdom of heaven through these illustrations?
- What do these two illustrations tell us about God’s part and our part in the growth of the kingdom within us?
- What is one thing from these two illustrations that impresses you most?

❖ **Took:** What can we *take* from these stories and apply to our lives?

How much of God’s kingdom is part of your life?

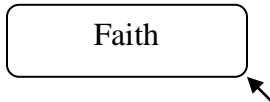
- Not much. I’ve just recently received the “seed” and the “yeast” of the gospel of Jesus into my life.
- I’m barely beginning to grow and to rise.
- I’m about half way toward being a fully devoted “kingdom person.”
- By God’s grace, I can see that His kingdom principles govern my life far more than worldly principles do.
- I praise God that He does the “growing” and the “rising”!

WITNESS

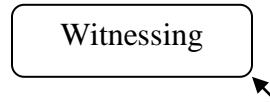
- ❖ Discuss together what these two stories tell us about taking the gospel to the world. What do these illustrations tell us, if anything, about witnessing to unbelievers?
- ❖ How do these stories encourage you about the power of the gospel in today’s world?

- ❖ **Return to the larger group** and review the Blessing List, adding any new names and getting updates on current names.
- ❖ **Conclude your time together** by praying together that God will cause His kingdom to grow in the hearts of the people on the Blessing List.
- ❖ **This next week:**
 - Contact your prayer partner.
 - Pray for your Ohana friends and their names on the Blessing List.
 - Invite someone to come with you to the next Ohana meeting.

Faith



Witnessing



TREASURES

WELCOME

- ❖ Greet each other and introduce any guests.
- ❖ **Hook** into the session topic and get better acquainted with each other by each answering the following: “Have you ever wanted something so much that you sold, traded or bartered one of your most precious possessions to get it? If so, what?”

WORSHIP

- ❖ Give each person a good-sized piece of tinfoil and ask them to fashion something out of it to represent some material possession they own, which they value. Or it could be something they would like to have. Example: house, car, boat, clothing, picture, an antique, etc.
- ❖ Go around the circle and let each person briefly explain what their tinfoil item represents.
- ❖ Our time in the Word today will remind us that the most precious possession we can have is Jesus. Let’s toss our tinfoil trinkets into this waste bag and focus our attention on Jesus, our real treasure.
- ❖ Sing together some of your group’s favorite songs of praise to Jesus.
- ❖ Invite someone to pray.

WORD

- ❖ **Book:** Read Matthew 13:44-46 to see what it *says*. Then answer the following questions:
 - Where, to whom and under what circumstances did Jesus tell these two stories? (Matthew 13:1-3, 36)

Where:

Circumstances:

Who:

- Quickly scan the entire chapter of Matthew 13 to discover what other parables Jesus told at this time. Do you see any connection or common theme in these stories, including the ones in verses 44-46?

- ❖ **Look** at the meaning of the passage:
 - Why did Jesus tell parables? (Matthew 13:10-17; 34,35)

 - What do you think is the point of the two stories about treasures? (Matthew 13:44-46)

- ❖ **Took** – What can we *take* from this passage and apply to our lives?
 - Discuss together: How much would we be willing to give up for eternal life? Family? Health? Career? Friends? Money? House? Life?

 - Please answer the following personally and privately:
 - In your own personal experience, what would it mean and what would it take for you to totally “sell-out” to Jesus? Jot down what comes to mind:

 - Are you willing to “do whatever it takes” to be totally committed to the kingdom of God?
 - Whatever it takes, I’m willing
 - I need help to be willing
 - I’m not willing
 - I’m not sure

WITNESS

- ❖ Discuss together: Do you think the “high cost” of being totally committed to the kingdom of God is a plus or a minus when sharing the gospel with others? How does one go about letting people know what a valuable treasure it is to have Jesus?

- ❖ Review the Blessing List and add any new names.

- ❖ **This next week**:
 - Contact your prayer partner.
 - Pray for your Ohana friends and their names on the Blessing List.
 - Invite someone to come with you to the next Ohana meeting.

W E E D S

WELCOME

- ❖ Greet each other and introduce any guests.
- ❖ **Hook** into the session topic by finding out how many of the people in the group like to garden. Let each one briefly tell why they enjoy it.

WORSHIP

- ❖ Go around the circle and let people share one way in which God has blessed them this past week.
- ❖ Gather any special prayer requests from the group, then get together as prayer partners to pray for each other and for the requests of the group.
- ❖ Sing together some of your group's favorite praise songs.

- ❖ **Form into small groups of three or four.**

WORD

- ❖ **Book** - Read Matthew 13:24-30 to find out what it *says*.
- ❖ Summarize what it says by drawing a cartoon strip in the space below of stick figures to illustrate the story.

❖ **Look** at what the passage *means* by reading Matthew 13:36-43 and jotting down the meaning of each person or thing in the story:

- The sower of good seed =
- The field =
- The good seed =
- The bad seed =
- The sower of bad seed =
- The harvest =
- The harvesters =

Judgment

❖ Why do you think Jesus told this story?

❖ **Took** – What can we *take* from this story and apply to our lives today?

❖ Let each person in the small group complete this sentence:

“One way the story can be applied in today’s world is . . . ”

❖ Then let each person share one way this story can help them, personally, to relate to other people and to God.

❖ **Return to the larger group.**

WITNESS

❖ Review the blessing list and add any new names.

❖ Encourage each other to invite someone to the next Ohana group meeting. Put an empty chair in your circle and conclude your time together by praying that God will fill the chair next week.

❖ **This next week:**

- Contact your prayer partner.
- Pray for your Ohana friends and their names on the Blessing List.
- Invite someone to come with you to the next Ohana meeting.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

WELCOME

- ❖ Greet each other and welcome and introduce guests.
- ❖ **Hook** into the topic and get better acquainted by sharing with each other a time when a stranger helped you.

WORSHIP

- ❖ Sing together some of your group's favorite praise songs.
- ❖ Pray together and thank God for the blessings of strangers who have helped during our lives. Ask God to make us willing to help others.

WORD

- ❖ **Book** – Read Luke 10:25-37 to find out what it says.
- ❖ Make sure you understand the elements of the story by answering the following questions:
 - To whom and under what circumstances did Jesus tell the story of the Good Samaritan?

- The characters in the story are:

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____
- (d) _____

- ❖ **Form into small groups of three or four to do the next sections.**

- ❖ **Look** at what the passage *means* by discussing the following questions:

- Why did the lawyer question Jesus? (Luke 10:25)

- What do you think of the way Jesus answered him?

- Why do you think the priest and the Levite passed by the injured man?
Note: A Levite was like an assistant to the priests. Levites worked in the Temple as doorkeepers, musicians, custodians, etc.

- Why did the Samaritan stop and help the man? (vs. 33)

Note: Samaritans and Jews disliked each other. They would not speak to each other or associate with each other. Their prejudices went back hundreds of years to a time when the Samaritans, who were then part of Israel, departed from the faith. Later, the rest of the Jews did the same; but because the Samaritans were first to apostatize, the Jews did not like them.

- ❖ At the end of his story, Jesus asked the lawyer “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” What is your reaction to the lawyer’s reply to this question? (vs. 37)
- ❖ **Took** – What can we *take* from this story and apply to our lives today?
- ❖ Jesus told the lawyer “Go and do likewise” and His words apply to us today, as well. Most of us have kind impulses to help when we see someone in need, but often our fears stop us. Which of the following have you ever said to yourself?
 - It’s inconvenient.
 - Someone else will help out.
 - People will think I’m a nut.
 - Others may think I’m a fool.
 - I’ll scare people.
 - People will reject me.
 - It’s not going to make any difference.
 - I’m not positive they need my help.
- ❖ All of the above statements make up negative self-talk. As a group, go back over each of the above excuses and substitute a positive statement you could say to yourself when tempted to pass up the opportunity of doing a kindness because of your fears. Jot down your ideas in the space provided by each statement above.
- ❖ Being a Good Samaritan starts where you are. Individually and privately, take a few moments to write down some acts of kindness you could perform this next week in the following arenas:

At home (Suggestions: put a love note in a spouse's or child's lunchbox. Say something affirming to a loved one. Listen attentively.)

At work (Suggestions: Put a flower on a co-worker's desk, put an affirming note on the desk of someone who has done a good job, etc.)

In the community (Suggestions: put a quarter in an expired parking meter, offer to return a grocery cart for someone, read clerk's name tags then use their names to thank them for doing a good job.)

- ❖ If you have time and feel comfortable doing so, share with each other the ideas each of you came up with for doing "random acts of kindness" this next week. Encourage each other to make a game out of looking for ways to help people.
- ❖ **Return to the larger group.**

WITNESS

- ❖ Brainstorm some ways your group could do kind deeds together in the community and simply say to people "We want to show you God's love in a practical way." Some suggestions would be to conduct a *free* car wash. Go to a large store parking lot together and look for ways to help people. Help people put groceries in their cars, offer to return shopping carts, etc. Go downtown together and put money in expired parking meters. You could also leave a short note. On a holiday such as Valentine's Day, place a carnation and note on car windshields. Let your mind run free as you brainstorm together. Then, pick one activity that your group can agree on and set a date and do it! Plan to work together for an hour or two. Enjoy yourselves as you bring unexpected happiness to people.
- ❖ Review the blessing list and add any new names.
- ❖ Encourage each other to invite someone to the next Ohana group meeting. Put an empty chair in your circle and conclude your time together by praying that God will fill the chair next week.
- ❖ **This next week:**
 - Contact your prayer partner.
 - Pray for your Ohana friends and their names on the Blessing List.
 - Invite someone to come with you to the next Ohana meeting.

THE FOOLISH FARMER

WELCOME

- ❖ Greet each other and welcome guests.
- ❖ **Hook** into the topic and get better acquainted by sharing briefly what you would do if you unexpectedly received an inheritance of a million dollars. How would you spend the money?

WITNESS

- ❖ Share with each other any “random acts of kindness” you performed this last week.
- ❖ Get an update on the group’s discussion of last week about doing a group activity to show love in the community. Have you done something as a group? If so, discuss how it went. If you have not, set a definite time to do such an activity.
- ❖ Review and update the Blessing List.

WORSHIP

- ❖ Sing together some of your favorite praise songs.
- ❖ Gather prayer requests from the group and/or pick some of the names from the Blessing List and pray for these requests and names. Do this by inviting people to volunteer to pray for one name or one request. This way, each request is mentioned by at least one person during the prayer time.
- ❖ Conclude your prayer time by softly singing together a chorus such as “I Love You, Lord,” “God Is So Good,” “Thank You, Lord”, etc.

WORD

- ❖ **Book:** – Read Luke 12:13-21 to find out what it *says*.
- ❖ To whom and under what circumstances did Jesus tell this story? Briefly scan Luke 12:1-12 and jot down notes:
 - To Whom:
 - Under What Circumstances:

- ❖ What was the request that a man in the crowd asked of Jesus? (Verse 13)
- ❖ What was Jesus’ response? (verse 14)

- ❖ The story Jesus told was about a rich man who had a bumper c_____ and decided to build bigger b_____ to store his g_____.

The rich farmer planned to live off his excess and take life e_____.
But God called him a f_____.

- ❖ What was Jesus' punch line to this story? (verse 21)
- ❖ **Form into smaller groups of three or four.**
- ❖ **Look** at what the passage *means* by discussing the following questions:
 - Why do you think the man in the crowd made the request he did to Jesus?
 - Notice how many times the foolish farmer in Jesus' story used a personal pronoun. Circle the words *I*, *I'll*, *my* and *myself* in the passage:

He thought to himself, "What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops." Then he said, "This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods." And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years."

- What would you say this rich man's problem was?
 - Can you think of three reasons why God would call the rich farmer a "fool"?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - What do you think is the real meaning of this story?
-
- ❖ **Took** - What can we *take* from this story and apply to our lives today?
 - In two minutes, write down as many things as you can think of that you own or are in the process of buying, such as a house or car. Mentally, go through each room of your home, jotting down what is in there that you own.

- Have someone read the following scripture:
 You may say to yourself,
 “My power and the strength of my hands
 have produced this wealth for me.”
 But remember the Lord your God,
 for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.
 Deuteronomy 8:17,18.
- Go back to the list you just wrote of things that you own and write in big, bold letters across your list: **Remember the Lord your God.**


Car
House
Sofa and chairs
Television and VCR
Remember the Lord your God
Dining table and six chairs
Refrigerator
Computer

- End your time together as a group each praying and thanking God for giving you so much.

❖ **Return to the larger group.**

WITNESS

- ❖ Discuss together ways your group could share it’s wealth with others. Examples:
 Help a student with tuition at a Christian school. “Adopt” a child in a third world country by giving a certain amount each month for necessities and schooling.
 Help pay for child-care for a working, single Mom. Buy a supply of diapers/infant formula for a baby whose parents are struggling financially. Give to someone in your church to go on a short mission trip.
- ❖ **This next week:**
 - Contact your prayer partner.
 - Pray for your Ohana friends and their names on the Blessing List.
 - Invite someone to come with you to the next Ohana meeting.
 - Continue to look for ways to do “random acts of kindness.”

Money


LOST AND FOUND

WELCOME

- ❖ Greet each other and welcome guests.
- ❖ Get better acquainted by finding out and writing down on your Ohana member list the birth dates and anniversary dates of the people in your Ohana group.

WITNESS UPDATE

- ❖ Take some time to share together any “acts of kindness” performed by the members of the group. Were these positive, negative or neutral experiences?
- ❖ Discuss any group projects that are going on such as a free car wash or some other community activity.
- ❖ Did your group think of some way to collectively share it’s wealth? (Last session’s topic) If so, discuss any additional planning that needs to be done.

WORSHIP

- ❖ Sing together some of your group’s favorite praise songs.
- ❖ Pray together by each person completing the sentence, “You are wonderful, God, because . . .”
- ❖ Conclude your prayer time by softly singing together a short song of praise such as “God Is So Good,” “Alleluia,” “Thank You, Lord,” etc.

WORD

- ❖ Form into smaller groups of three or four.
- ❖ **Hook** into the topic by each sharing briefly some time when you got lost.
- ❖ **Book:** – Read Luke 15:1-31 to find out what it *says*.
- ❖ Summarize what you just read by answering the following questions:
 - What prompted Jesus to tell these three stories? (Luke 15:1,2)
 - The first story is about a lost s_____.
 - The second story is about a lost s_____.
 - The third story is about a lost s_____.

- ❖ **Look** at what the passage *means* by discussing and completing the following sentences:
 - These three stories represent three kinds of lost people. The lost sheep represents someone who is lost and . . .

 - The lost silver coin represents someone who is lost and . . .

 - The lost son represents someone who . . .

 - What do you think of the attitude of the elder brother? Have you ever met anyone like that?

- ❖ **Took** - What can we *take* from this story and apply to our lives today?
 - With which one of these “lost” stories do you most identify? The lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son? Why?

 - Have you ever felt like the elder son? What attitude do you think God would want you to have toward lost people who are found? What can you do to cultivate a more loving attitude toward them?

 - All three stories conclude with rejoicing. (Luke 15:6,7, 9,10, 22-32) Notice particularly the words in verses 7 and 10: “There is more *rejoicing* in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons . . .” “There is *rejoicing* in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” Discuss together how you feel about a God who throws a party over lost people who are found:

- Read together:

**The Lord your God is with you,
He is mighty to save.
He will take great delight in you,
He will quiet you with his love,
He will *rejoice* over you with singing.”**
--Zephaniah 3:17

❖ Conclude your time together by praying together and praising God for finding you and rejoicing over you!

❖ **Return to the larger group.**


❖ **WITNESS**

- Take a look at the names on the Blessing List. Which persons on the list are like the lost sheep who knows it is lost but doesn't know how to get back home? Which ones are like the lost coin which doesn't know it is lost? Which ones are like the lost son who chose to leave the father, chose to return but is fearful of what will happen when he returns? Talk about how you can help each of these persons find their way home.
- Invite three people to pray for the names on the Blessing List. Have one person pray for those who know they are lost but don't know how to get home. Have another pray for those who don't know they are lost and a third person to pray for the *prodigal sons* who know what they need to do to come home but are fearful.

❖ **This next week:**

- Contact your prayer partner.
- Pray for your Ohana friends and their names on the Blessing List.
- Invite someone to come with you to the next Ohana meeting.
- Continue to look for ways to do “random acts of kindness.”
- Help with any community or outreach activities your Ohana group has planned.

Salvation



Gospel



WELCOME

- ❖ Greet each other and welcome guests.
- ❖ **Hook** into the topic and get better acquainted by sharing with each other an injustice in society and/or the legal system that bothers you.

WORSHIP

- ❖ Have someone read:

**Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne;
love and faithfulness go before you.** – Psalm 89:14
- ❖ Pray together, thanking God that He is a just and faithful God.
- ❖ Have someone read:

**Sing to God, sing praise to his name,
Extol him who rides on the clouds—his name is the Lord—
and rejoice before him.
A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows,
is God in his holy dwelling.** – Psalm 68:4,5
- ❖ Sing together some of your group's favorite praise songs.

WORD

- ❖ **Book:** – Read Luke 18:1-8 to find out what it says.
 - What were the circumstances when Jesus told this story? Scan Luke 17:20-30 and fill in the following blanks:
 - a. The Pharisees asked Jesus when the k_____ of G_____ would come. (Luke 17:20)
 - b. Then Jesus began telling His d_____ what His second advent would be like. (Luke 17:22-24)
 - c. He said His coming would be like l_____ which flashed across the s_____.
 - d. He also said that in the days just before His coming, people would be unconcerned about spiritual things just like they were in the days of N_____ and L_____ (Luke 17:26-28)
 - Why did Jesus tell the story of the persistent widow and the unjust judge? (Luke 18:1)
 - List the characteristics of the judge: (Luke 18:2 & 6)

- If you were asked to give a character reference on the woman, what would you say about her?
- **Note:** “In ancient Oriental society a widow was often the most helpless of persons, particularly if she had no sons to champion her rights. This widow apparently had none to protect her. Furthermore, she had nothing wherewith to bribe the callous judge or to offer in payment for justice.” SDA Commentary, Vol. 5, p. 844
- Why did the judge finally help this woman? (Luke 18:4,5)

❖ **Form into smaller groups of three or four for the next two sections:**

Second Coming

- ❖ **Look** at what the passage *means* by discovering the spiritual applications.
 - Since Jesus had been talking of what it will be like just before His second advent, what significance do you see in the fact that Jesus told His disciples this parable “to show them that they should always pray and not give up”? Why is it especially important for Christians living in end times to be persistent in praying?
 - Because of her status as a poor widow, the woman was powerless. Compare that to what the Bible says about all of us: *When we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.* (Rom. 5:6) How does sin make us powerless? What does Jesus do about our powerlessness?
 - The poor widow had an *adversary*. 1 Peter 5:8 tells us our *adversary* is the devil. How could being persistent in prayer gain us justice against our adversary, the devil?
 - How is God, the Father, *unlike* the judge? (Luke 18:7,8) Review the previous section where you listed the characteristics of the unjust judge. For each of the negative characteristics of the judge, list an opposite, positive characteristic that God possesses:

Why is the fact that God is a just judge good news for Christians living in the last days?

Judgment

- Why did Jesus end His story with the question, “when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?” How does this question relate to His parable? What connection does it have to the fact that Jesus had been talking about the time just prior to His second coming?

Faith

- ❖ **Took** - What can we *take* from this story and apply to our lives today? Please answer these questions individually and privately.
 - As you examine your life can you see times when it seems an adversary is fighting against you or you have been treated unjustly? Take a minute to jot down some examples of this in your life:
 - Have you ever felt like giving up?
 - From reading this parable, what do you think you should do?
 - If you feel like sharing your responses with your small group, you may do so.
 - End your time together as a small group by praying for each other.
- ❖ **Return to the larger group.**

WITNESS

- ❖ Discuss together:
 - Do you know of injustices occurring to Christians?
 - Can our Ohana group do anything about these things?
 - What can we do?
 - Review and update the Blessing List.
 - Put an empty chair in the middle of your group. Stand and form a circle around the empty chair and pray for God to bring someone next week to fill the chair.
- ❖ **This next week:**
 - Contact your prayer partner.
 - Pray for your Ohana friends and their names on the Blessing List.
 - Invite someone to come with you to the next Ohana meeting.

WORK, WAGES AND GRACE

WELCOME

- ❖ Greet each other and welcome guests.
- ❖ **Hook** into the topic and get better acquainted by sharing briefly what your very first job was. If you are a young person who hasn't had a job yet, share what kind of job you would like to have.

WORD

- ❖ **Book:** - Read Matthew 20:1-16 to find out what it says.
- ❖ Outline the story by filling in the blanks:
 - A landowner hired men to work in his vineyard early in the _____
He agreed to pay them _____ for a day's work.
 - At the t_____ hour, he hired more men and agreed to pay them _____
 - Again, the landowner went out at the s_____ hour and the n_____ hour and hired laborers.
 - At the e_____ hour, the landowner found still others standing around doing nothing so he asked them to go to w_____.
 - When pay-time came, he paid everyone _____
 - When the men hired early in the day saw that everyone got the same pay, they _____
- ❖ **Note 1:** A “penny” or “denarius” was a Roman silver coin worth about 15 cents which was the ordinary pay for a day's labor.
- ❖ **Note 2:** The “third hour” would be about 9 a.m.; the sixth hour, noon; the ninth hour, three p.m.; the eleventh hour, 5 p.m.
- ❖ Notice what the landowner said about wages to each group of workers. Which ones knew exactly what they would get? Which ones did not?
- ❖ **Look** at what the passage means by **working together in pairs** to discover the *spiritual meaning* of this story.
 - If you had been one of the workers hired early in the day, how would you feel when you received your pay?
 - How would you feel if you had been one of the last hired?
 - What do you think about the order in which the landowner paid the workers?

And what do you think about the amount he paid each group?

- Notice Jesus' beginning words, "For the kingdom of heaven is like . . ." and His ending words, "So the last will be first and the first will be last." What would you say is the main point of this story?

- Read Ephesians 2:8, 9. "For it is by g_____ you have been saved, through f_____ and this not from y_____, it is the g_____ of God --- not by w_____, so that no one can b_____."

- Read Titus 3:5. "He saved us, not because of r_____ things (works) we had done, but because of His m_____."

- How do Ephesians 2:8,9 and Titus 3:5 relate to the parable Jesus told?
 - (a) In a spiritual sense, what might the penny wage represent?

 - (b) What is the "work in the vineyard" that God calls people to do? Does this "work" earn a place in God's kingdom?

 - (c) Spiritually speaking, what is the reward that God's people receive? How and when do they receive it? In what ways does God pay the late arrivals first?

 - (d) Have you ever heard of long-time believers grumbling about new believers? Why would they do so? And to whom are their complaints really directed?

**God's way of saving us is totally upside down
from the way the world operates.**

We are accustomed to being paid according to how much we've done.
Jesus' story of the workers illustrates God's amazing grace
in accepting us into His kingdom some other way.

- ❖ **Took** - What can we *take* from this story and apply to our lives today? Let's play

a “what if” game:

- What if God accepted people into heaven on the basis of how *long* they served and followed Him? If Jesus came today, who would make it into heaven on that basis? With your pencil, color in the boxes of those who would make it because they served God a long time. Draw a big X through the boxes of those who would not make it because they had not served God very long.
 - Very old people
 - Children and young people
 - People who have been Christians a long time
 - New Christians
 - The thief on the cross
 - The apostle John
- What if God accepted people into heaven on the basis of how *much* they *do* for Him? If Jesus came today, who would be on the top of the list for having done the most? Look at the following list from a human standpoint and number each one according to how much it appears they have done for God. (“1” representing those who have done the most; “5” representing those who have done the least.)
 - ___ Long-time foreign missionaries
 - ___ A timid person who has trouble talking to people about Jesus
 - ___ Full-time evangelists who baptize hundreds of people
 - ___ Children
 - ___ A person who gives millions of dollars to Christian work
 - ___ Parents with full-time jobs and family responsibilities
 - ___ People who spend every day feeding the homeless
 - ___ Handicapped and/or home-bound Christians
- If this were how God operated, who would make it into heaven? Only the “1’s”? Or could a concession be made for the “2’s”? What would happen to the “3’s”, “4’s” and “5’s”?
- How does God save us and on what basis does He receive us into His kingdom? Read:

**He saved us not because of righteous things we had done,
but because of *his* mercy.** Titus 3:5 NIV

**God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.
He who has the Son has life.** 1 John 5:11 NIV
- Take a few minutes to pray together and thank God that He does *not* operate like humans do when they give out wages and rewards.
- **Return to the larger group.**

WITNESS

- ❖ Review and update the Blessing List. Have each person in the group pick at least one of the names to pray for during the closing prayer time.
- ❖ Put an empty chair in the middle of your group. Stand and form a circle around the empty chair and pray for God to bring someone next week to fill the chair. Also, let each person pray for one name on the Blessing List.

- ❖ **This next week:**
 - Contact your prayer partner.
 - Pray for your Ohana friends and their names on the Blessing List.
 - Invite someone to come with you to the next Ohana meeting.

Gospel

Salvation

STORIES JESUS TOLD . . .

THE WEDDING BANQUET

WELCOME

- ❖ Greet each other and welcome guests.
- ❖ **Hook** into the topic and get better acquainted by briefly telling about some time when you attended a special event and felt out of place because you weren't dressed appropriately.

WORSHIP

- ❖ Sing together some of your group's favorite praise songs.
- ❖ Look up one of your favorite Bible verses. In an attitude of prayer, go around the circle, each of you reading your verse as a prayer to God, praising and thanking Him for what that particular scripture means to you.

WORD

- ❖ **Book:** - Read Matthew 22:1-14 to find out what it *says*.
 - Make sure you understand the story by completing the following:
 - a. The main character is _____ (vs. 2)
 - b. The event: _____ (vs. 2)
 - c. Invitations had been issued, but when the servants went to escort the invited guests, the first group responded by _____.
(vs. 3) The second group responded by _____

(vs. 5,6)
 - d. A third invitation was given to _____
(vs. 10,11)
 - e. When the king came to see the guests, he found one man who was _____

(vs. 11)
 - f. The man's excuse: _____

Judgment

- ❖ **Form into smaller groups of three or four.**
- ❖ **Look** at what the passage *means*. The parable Jesus told of the wedding banquet has a *prophetic* meaning as well as a *spiritual* meaning. Read the following texts, writing and discussing what you find. (The first is done as an example)

Revelation 16:15

A wedding feast: *It doesn't mention a wedding feast, but sounds like it's talking about the Second Coming of Christ.*

When: *At the second coming of Christ*

Second Coming

The bridegroom: *Doesn't say*

The bride: *Doesn't say*

The clothing: *Doesn't say what it is, but that it is important to have it on and not be naked.*

Other comments, questions, and observations: *People who stay awake and have the right clothes with them are blessed.*

Revelation 19-6-9

A wedding feast:

When:

The bridegroom:

The bride:

The clothing:

Other comments, questions, observations:

Revelation 3:18

A wedding feast:

When:

The bridegroom:

The bride:

The clothing:

Other comments, questions, observations:

Galatians 3:27

A wedding feast:

When:

The bridegroom:

The bride:

The clothing:

Other comments, questions, observations:

What does it mean to “put on” or “be clothed with Christ”?

Ephesians 5:25-27

A wedding feast:

When:

The bridegroom:

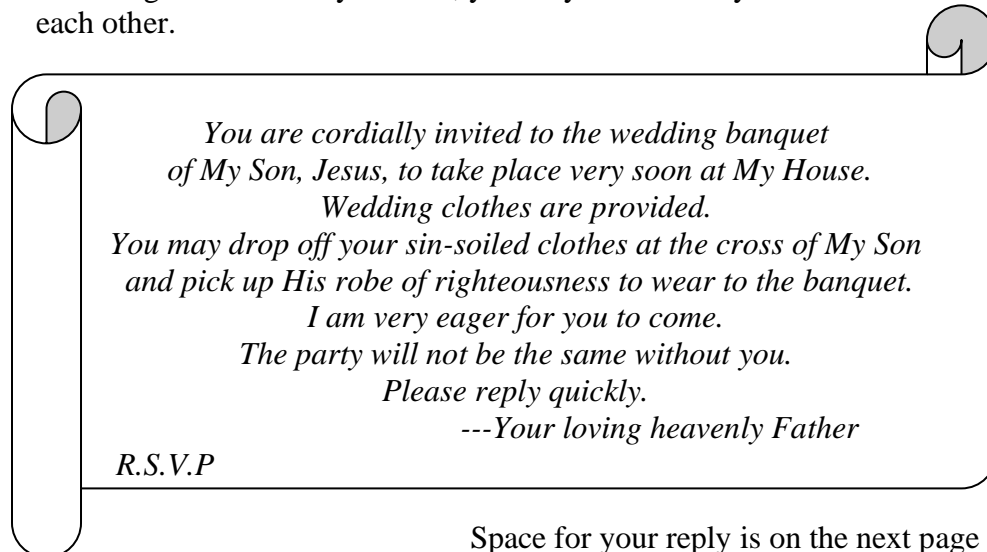
The bride:

The clothing:

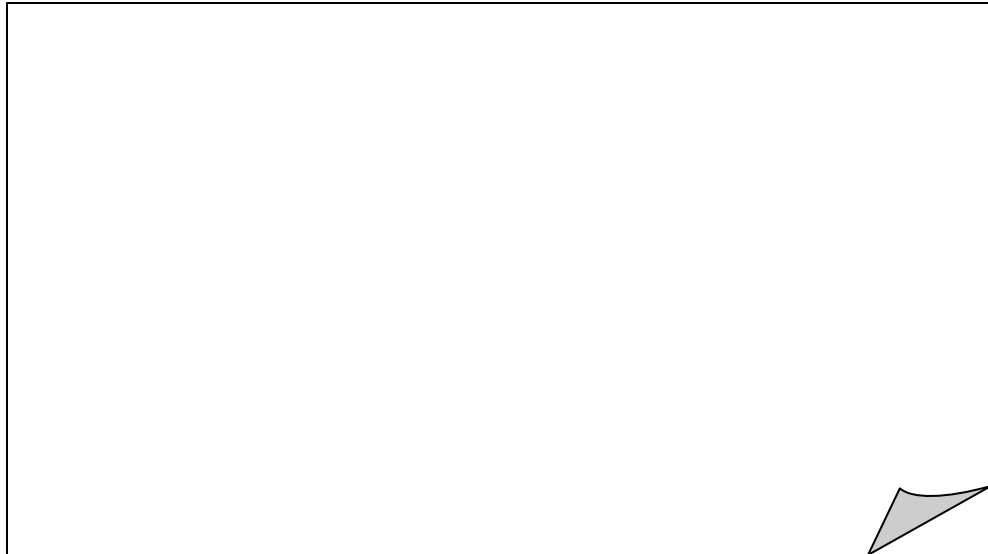
Other comments, questions, observations:

What do you think it means to be “clothed with Christ”?

- ❖ **Took** - What can we *take* from this story and apply to our lives today?
 - Read [Isaiah 64:6](#) and [Isaiah 61:10](#) and talk about how we can get the proper clothing for the wedding feast of the Lamb.
 - Conclude your time together by each one writing a personal RSVP to the following invitation. If you wish, you may share what you have written with each other.



Space for your reply is on the next page



- ❖ **Return to the larger group.**

WITNESS

- ❖ Review and update the Blessing List. As you go over the Blessing List, think of it as a Guest List for the Wedding Banquet of the Lamb. Discuss together if there is anything you can do to encourage these people to respond to God's invitation.
- ❖ Put an empty chair in the middle of your group. Place your Blessing List on the chair. Stand and form a circle around the empty chair and pray for God to impress the people on the Blessing List to respond to God's invitation. Also pray that someone will come and fill an empty chair in an Ohana group next week.
- ❖ **This next week:**
 - Contact your prayer partner.
 - Pray for your Ohana friends and their names on the Blessing List.
 - Invite someone to come with you to the next Ohana meeting.

STORIES JESUS TOLD . . .

THE TEN VIRGINS

WELCOME

- ❖ Greet each other and welcome guests.
- ❖ **Hook** into the topic and get better acquainted by briefly telling about some time when you (or someone you know) missed an important occasion because you (or they) waited too long to make the necessary arrangements.

WORSHIP

- ❖ Invite someone to read:

Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts.
Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.
Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.
---Psalm 105:2-4
- ❖ Sing together some of your group's favorite praise songs.
- ❖ Pray together by each one offering a sentence prayer in which you "tell of one of his wonderful acts" to you this past week.

WORD

- ❖ **Book:** - Read Matthew 25:1-13 to find out what it *says*.
- ❖ Scan the chapter before this passage (Matthew 24) to see what it is about. How would you say the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-13 connects with what Jesus talked about in Matthew 24?
- ❖ Notice the elements in the story:
 - There were t_____ virgins. Five were foolish because _____ and five were wise because _____.
 - The bridegroom was a long time in coming and they all _____.
 - At midnight the cry rang out "the bridegroom is coming. Go out to m_____ Him.
 - F_____ did not have enough o_____ in their l_____ and asked the other five to give them some of theirs.
 - The five wise said "N___, because there may not be enough for both of us. Go and b_____ some for yourselves."
 - But while the five foolish women were shopping for o_____, the bridegroom came and they missed the wedding banquet
- ❖ What was the punch line to Jesus' story? (verse 13)
- ❖ **Form into small groups of three or four**
- ❖ **Look** at what the passage *means* by discussing the following questions:
 - What would you say about the fact that all ten of these women went to sleep?
 - It was not a good move.

- They should have brought along some coffee to drink to keep them awake.
 - Going to sleep is a natural thing to do when you're tired.
 - I would have done the same thing.
 - Other _____
- What are the spiritual implications of falling asleep while waiting for Jesus, the heavenly bridegroom, to come?
 - What do you think the oil might represent?

(Zechariah 4:1-6 gives some clues)

Holy Spirit

- What do Christians need to do to get enough oil?
- From a spiritual standpoint, what do you think about the fact that the five wise women did not share their oil?
- What does it mean to “keep watch?” Compare with Matthew 24:42; 26:41.

❖ **Return to the larger group.**

❖ **Took** - What can we *take* from this story and apply to our lives today? Spend a few quiet moments, individually and personally, to do the following spiritual inventory:

- Right now, in my spiritual life, I am
 - Wide awake
 - Drowsy
 - Sound asleep
 - I want to be alert, but I'm struggling

Second Coming

- Take a few minutes to write out a prayer to God for whatever you need in your life to be an alert, wide-awake Christian while you wait for Jesus to come.

Dear God,

WITNESS

- ❖ Review and update the Blessing List.
- ❖ Discuss ways your group could do a community outreach project together. Pick

- one that you can implement soon and plan how and when to do it.
- ❖ Assign one or two names from the Blessing List for each person of the group to pray for as you conclude your time together.

 - ❖ **This next week:**
 - Contact your prayer partner.
 - Pray for your Ohana friends and their names on the Blessing List.
 - Invite someone to come with you to the next Ohana meeting.

STORIES JESUS TOLD . . .

THE TALENTS

WELCOME

- ❖ Greet each other and welcome guests.
- ❖ **Hook** into the topic and get better acquainted by each taking a slip of paper and writing down the abilities and skills of the person seated on your right. Do not write the person's name on the paper. Have someone gather all the papers and read what is on them while the rest of the group guesses who the person is.

WORSHIP

- ❖ Pray together by praying a sentence prayer for the person on your right, thanking God for the abilities and skills He has given him/her.
- ❖ Sing together some of your group's favorite praise songs.

- ❖ **Form into small groups of three or four** to do the next sections.

WORD

- ❖ **Book:** - Read Matthew 25:14-30 to find out what it *says*.
- ❖ Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is like a _____.
The man called his servants together and gave each "according to his a _____." (vs. 15) He gave one servant f _____ talents, another t _____ and another o _____.

- ❖ Describe what each of the servants did with their talents.

- ❖ When the master returned, how did he reward the servant who had received five talents? The two talents? The one talent?

- ❖ **Look** at what the passage *means* by discussing the following questions:
 - In the story, who does the man who traveled to a far country represent?
 - Why did the master give the servants varying amounts? Why didn't he divide his goods equally among them?
 - Why do you think the man who received one talent acted the way he did? What was his real problem? (verses 18, 24-27)
 - Jesus told this story to illustrate the importance of His people using the gifts and abilities He has given them. He wants His followers to be active while they wait for His second coming. What are some of the talents God gives? Look up the following scriptures and jot down as many abilities and gifts that

you find in these verses:

- Exodus 35:30-35 and Exodus 36:1,2:

(In the NIV, you will notice the word “willing” used to describe the attitude of God’s people in using their gifts. See Ex. 35:21,22,26,29, 36:2)

- 1 Corinthians 12:28

- Ephesians 4:11-13

- From these verses, what would you say is the purpose of the gifts?

- What should be the attitude of Christians as they use the gifts God gives them?

❖ **Took** - What can we *take* from this story and apply to our lives today? Take a quick, spiritual inventory by checking all the boxes that have applied to you during your life or currently apply:

- Sometimes I feel depressed that I don’t have many talents.
- I’m grateful for the gifts God has given me.
- I often wish I had the gifts that other people have.
- I have so few abilities that I feel “why try to do anything at all?”
- Even though I don’t have many abilities, I want to develop what I have.

The talents, however few, are to be put to use.

The question that most concerns us is not, How much have I received?

But, What am I doing with that which I have?

----Ellen White, Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 329

- Sometimes we don’t realize what gifts God has given us. We need others to help us see how God has gifted us. We also need a little encouragement to “try out” our gifts. Talk together about the gifts you see in each other and encourage each other to use and improve your gifts.

- ❖ **Return to the larger group.**

WITNESS

- ❖ Review and update the Blessing List.
- ❖ If your group has made any plans for a social event or a community outreach event, continue your planning and job assignments. As you work together, notice how the gifts of each member of the group can be used and incorporated into your project.
- ❖ **This next week:**
 - Contact your prayer partner.
 - Pray for your Ohana friends and their names on the Blessing List.
 - Invite someone to come with you to the next Ohana meeting.