

The Vineyard Workers

Lesson At-A-Glance

Scripture Reference
Matthew 20:1-16

Church Season
Pentecost

Lesson Focus
The last will be first.

Bible Memory Verse
**So the last will be first,
and the first will be last.
Matthew 20:16**



Tear here for easy use!

Gather (10 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Arrival Activity Kids give and receive high fives.	Activity Pages 	Pencils
Opening Conversation Kids review previous week, build relationships, and learn the new Bible Memory Verse (BMV).	Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers	None
Opening Prayer Kids pray backwards and forwards.	None	None

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
The Vineyard Workers Story Kids act out the story.	Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers	None
Sooo Not Fair Kids play the parts of Eric and Sara.	Leaflets	None
The Last Letter Is First Kids look up verses for a backwards word search.	Spark Bibles, Leaflets	Pencils


Lesson At-A-Glance

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Fun Facts Kids compete for first place.	Leaflets	None
Playing Favorites Kids create Möbius strips.	Leaflets	Scissors, tape, markers
First or Last? Kids read from their Möbius strips.	None	Möbius strips from Playing Favorites

Tear here for easy use!

Send (5 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Closing Conversation Kids review the BMV and look at the Faith on the Go! options.	Leaflets	None
Closing Prayer Kids pray for the last to be first and the first to be last.	Family Pages 	None



Visit www.sparksundayschool.org for more Spark content! Watch a short Lesson Prep Video that will prepare you and give you confidence to explore this Bible story with the kids you are leading. You will also find four downloadable resources for this lesson: an Activity Page, a Family Page, and two additional in-class activities.

Gather (10 minutes)

Arrival Activity

If some kids arrive earlier than others and you need a lesson-based activity, make copies of the downloadable Activity Page and set them out for kids to try.

As kids come in, tell them the order in which they arrived and give them a high five. Use plenty of enthusiasm! **You're the fifth one here today! That's awesome! High five!** Kids that have already arrived can get in on it too, giving high fives and cheering with each arrival. When everyone has arrived, do one big group high five and continue with the opening conversation.

Spark Resources

Activity Pages



Supplies

Pencils

Opening Conversation

Who was able to try a Faith on the Go! activity this past week? Tell us what you did. Allow some time for sharing.

Who can tell me the Bible Memory Verse from last week? If kids remember the BMV, invite them to recite it for the group. Guide the kids to help them remember parts they don't.

Gather in a circle. **Who was here first today? What did I do when you got here? And who got here last? What did we do when you got here?**

Raise your hand if you got to do something really fun this week. Give kids a chance to share what they did. **Now raise your hand if you had to do something you didn't want to this week.** Share again. **We're going to play a game with some of these things you said. I'll repeat one of the things you just said and then the whole class will line up in order, from who wants to do that thing most to who wants to do it least.** Designate a spot where the line starts. **Your place in line will depend on how quickly you move and how well you can convince the people around you that you need to be in that spot. But no pushing! Here we go.** Repeat one of the things said earlier. Go between good and bad things. After 4 or 5 items, end with, **Who wants to work in a vineyard all day?**

Now grab your Bibles and get back in line right where you were.

Today's story is about people working in a vineyard. We're going to memorize a verse from the story. Look up Matthew 20:16. Matthew is the first of the four Gospels. In unison, read the verse from page 1083 in the Spark Bible. **We're going to make the first be last and the last be first. The person in the front of the line is going to move to the back of the line and say the first word of the verse. As soon as he or she says it, the next person in line moves to the back of the line and says the second word. We'll keep going like that till we've read the whole verse.** First do it with Bibles, then try it with Bibles closed, and finally do it in unison. When they've got it down, have kids put I Memorized It stickers in their Bibles. **Nice work, everyone! Let's pray together.**

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles

Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies

None

Tear here for easy use!

Opening Prayer

Repeat after me:

Amen. (Repeat.)

Day this for you thank, (Repeat.)

Jesus Dear. (Repeat.)

Dear Jesus, (Repeat.)

Thank you for this day. (Repeat.)

Amen. (Repeat.)

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

None

Tear here for easy use!

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

The Vineyard Workers Story

Jesus told the Vineyard Workers story to help us understand the kingdom of heaven. Today we're going to act it out. Choose one kid to be the landowner and send him or her to one side of the room. **This side of the room is the vineyard.** Designate a marketplace for the rest of the kids to hang out in. Divide them into:

Early workers

9 o'clock workers

Noon workers

3 o'clock workers

5 o'clock workers

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles

Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies

None

The story starts in Matthew 20, verse one. I'll read it as the narrator, and when it gets to a dialogue part you can read it. The story is on pages 1082-1083 in the Spark Bible.

Read through the story, pausing for actions and to prompt the readers. You can embellish actions as well to create more movement. (Example: "The workers hopped quickly to the field.") When it gets to paying the workers, the landowner can give out high fives, just like the arrival activity. After reading the story, gather in the "vineyard" and discuss the I Wonder statements on the first page of the leaflet.

If this story is about the kingdom of heaven, what do we learn from it? Who is invited into the kingdom? How are we treated in the kingdom? What do we do when we are invited into the kingdom? How do you think you would feel if, after you'd worked all day, someone told you, "The last will be first and the first will be last"?

Sooo Not Fair

Before reading Sooo Not Fair, have kids share some of the things they help out with around their homes. You can have them raise their hands if they get an allowance, but avoid talking about how much their allowance is. You can also share any chores you had when you were their age or talk about what sorts of things their grandparents may have done when they were that age.

Spark Resources

Leaflets

Supplies

None

Let's read Sooo Not Fair on the front of the leaflet. As we read it I want all the boys to pretend they're Eric, the big brother, and all the girls to pretend they're Sara, the younger sister. Ask for a couple of volunteers to read the story.

Have any of you been in a situation like this? "Eric," were you surprised to get your allowance? "Saras," why wasn't it fair to for Eric to get his allowance?

Tell me again our Bible Memory Verse, Matthew 20:16. Who in this story was first and who was last?

The Last Letter Is First

Read through the directions for The Last Letter Is First on the second page of the leaflet. Kids can do this activity individually or pair up to check answers.

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles

Leaflets

Answer Key

3rd word—Matthew 20:1 (KINGDOM)

5th word—Matthew 20:2 (LABORERS)

11th word—Matthew 20:4 (VINEYARD)

9th word—Matthew 20:6 (FOUND)

9th word—Matthew 20:7 (HIRED)

24th word—Matthew 20:8 (LAST)

21st word—Matthew 20:10 (WAGE)

10th word—Matthew 20:11 (LANDOWNER)

22nd word—Matthew 20:15 (GENEROUS)

6th word—Matthew 20:16 (FIRST)

Supplies

Pencils

Ask a volunteer to read Look It Up! on the second page of the leaflet. Help kids find Mark 10:28-31 on page 1114 in the Spark Bible. Encourage them to share what sounds familiar.

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

Fun Facts

Divide into two teams, the Workers and the Landowners. Give the kids one minute to review the Fun Facts on the third page of the leaflet. Then close the leaflets.

Spark Resources

Leaflets

We're going to have a competition to see who can remember the most Fun Facts. I'll ask a question, and if you know the answer, clap your hands once. If you get it right, your team gets two points; if you get it wrong, your team loses one point. The winner will get a special prize.

Supplies

None

Make up questions from the Fun Facts, such as:

How much does a truckload of grapes weigh?

Is the oldest vineyard in Slovenia or Slovakia?

True or False: the study of vineyards is called viticulture.

Keep track of the scores. When you're out of questions announce who came in first and who came in second. **And of course, in light of today's story, everybody gets the same prize! High fives all around!**

Playing Favorites

Ask kids to follow the directions for Playing Favorites on the third page of the leaflet. Remind the kids to think of the favorites/least favorites as opposites. It could be a favorite band on one side and their least favorite band on the other, or school subjects, or even attitudes like happy and sad. Once the rectangle's ends are taped to make one long strip, show kids how to give it a half twist and tape the ends together to create a Möbius strip.

Spark Resources

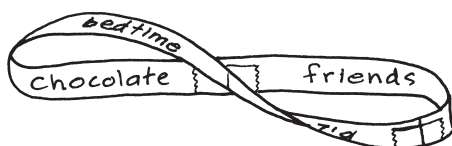
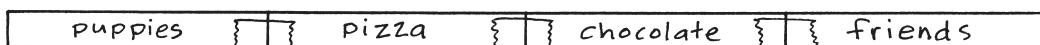
Leaflets

Supplies

Scissors

Tape

Markers



Tear here for easy use!

First or Last?

Jesus taught us that the first were last and the last were first. Everything is mixed up! Hold your Möbius strip so that you are looking at one of your favorite things. Ask for a volunteer to scroll through his or her strip and read through without flipping the paper. After they read through all eight things they'll realize that both sides of the strip end up coming to the front. **The front is the back and the back is the front! How is this like our memory verse today?**

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Möbius strips from Playing Favorites

Send (5 minutes)

Closing Conversation

Just like the vineyard workers worked in the vineyard, we've got some ideas how to work on our faith this week! Take a look at Faith on the Go! on the last page of the leaflet. Discuss which options the kids will try this week.

Remember how we learned our Bible Memory Verse? We're going to do that again, but this time let's make two lines and see who can say it faster. Line up in two equal groups. Join a group if necessary. Race to see which can say the verse more quickly by having the front person move to the back and say the first word. Remember, the next person can't move to the back until the preceding word is said. For a smaller group you could also do this all as one team and use a stopwatch to see how fast you can work together.

And who wins? Well, the last shall be first of course!

Jesus taught us that, even when it doesn't seem fair, there's room for everyone in the kingdom of heaven. Who's last and who's first doesn't always make sense to us. But what we do know is that, no matter the order, God loves us all unconditionally!

Spark Resources

Leaflets

Supplies

None

Closing Prayer

For our closing prayer I'll say a line and you respond: "The last are first and the first are last." Practice the line a few times.

Dear Jesus,

When others cut in line to get the best seat. . .

When we wish we were on the winning team. . .

When we get straight As and when we barely pass. . .

When we lose our temper. . .

When we share your love. . .

In your name we pray,

Amen.

Be sure to send a leaflet and a Family Page home with each kid.

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None

Tear here for easy use!