

ENRICHMENT LESSON

PARABLE OF THE DEEP WELL

LESSON NOTES

FOCUS: A RABBINICAL PARABLE ABOUT PARABLES

- **PARABLE**
- **ENRICHMENT PRESENTATION**

THE MATERIAL

- **LOCATION: PARABLE SHELVES**
- **PIECES: PARABLE BOX WITH 1 WELL, 1 CONTAINER OF GOLDEN THREADS AND 1 BUCKET**
- **UNDERLAY: BROWN**

BACKGROUND

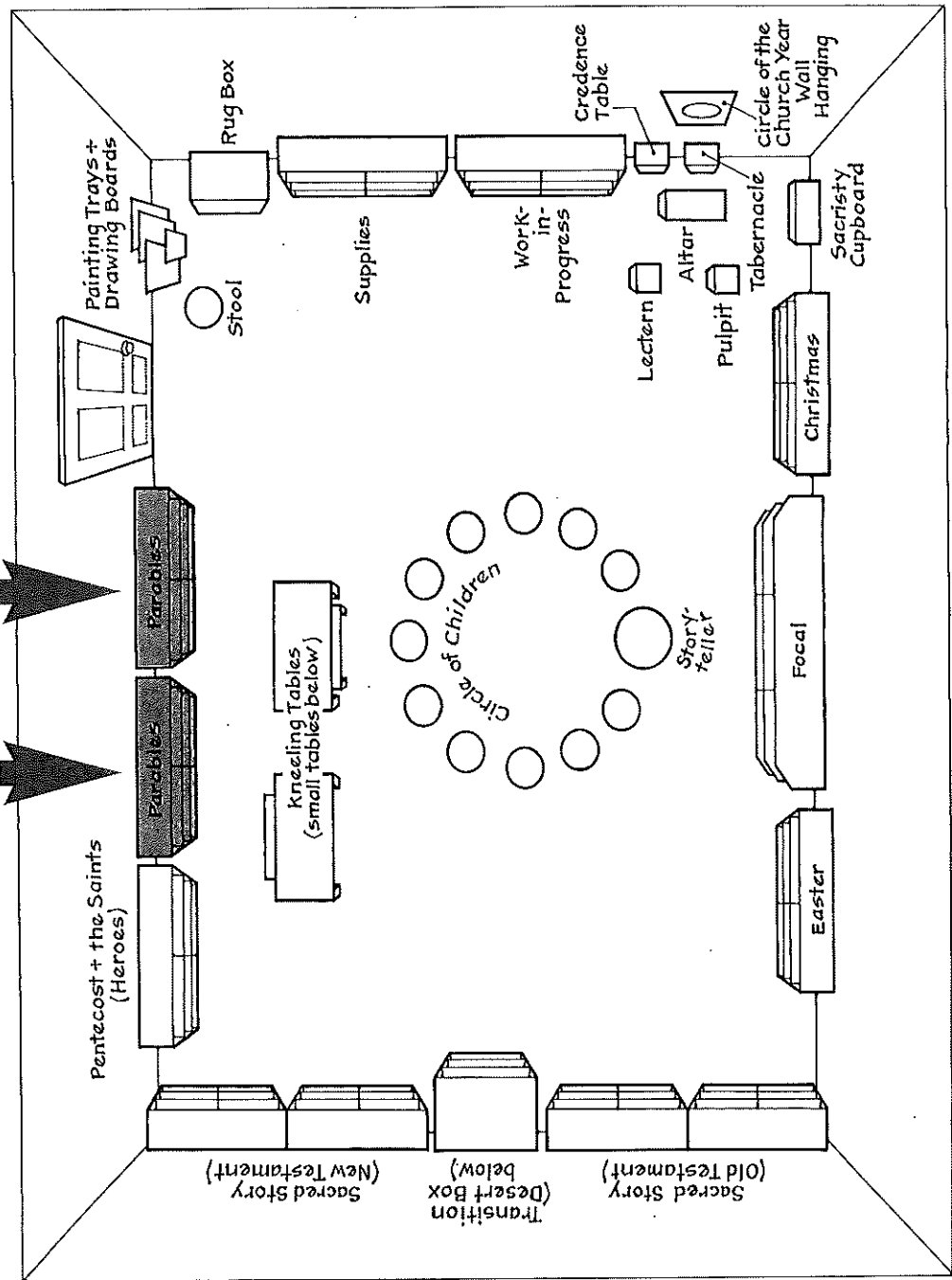
From time to time children ask what parables really are. To help them find their own interpretation of what a parable is, another parable can be proposed. You might say, "We have a parable about that," and present this parable to the child. You also might want to present it to the group as well.

This parable has its roots in the traditions of the rabbis. You can find more information by looking up "Midrash Rabbah on the Song of Songs 1.1.8." as quoted in *Hear Then the Parable*, by Bernard Brandon Scott (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) or consult the great translation of the *Midrash Rabbah* by H. Freedman and Maurice Simon (London: Soncino Press, 1999).

NOTES ON THE MATERIAL

Since this parable is not a parable of Jesus, you will find it in a plain wooden box on the second shelf of one of the parables shelves. In the box is an underlay of brown felt in an irregular shape.

Inside the box is also a round "well," about the same size as the largest nesting box used for the Parable of Parables. In a clear container are many golden "threads," lengths of gold cord about 4"-5". (If they are shorter they will be hard to tie together.) You will also find a small bucket, small enough to be able to be "lowered into the well."



WHERE TO FIND MATERIALS

MOVEMENTS

WORDS

Go to the parable shelves and get the plain wooden box. It is on the second shelf. The original six gold parable boxes (the parables of Jesus) are on the top shelves. Bring the box back to the circle and place it before you in the middle of the circle.

Watch carefully where I go so you will always know where to find this lesson.

Sit back and look at it for a moment.

This is a parable, but it is not one of the parables of Jesus. We keep them in gold boxes. This box is plain wood. Many of you have asked what a parable really is. This is a parable about that, among other things.

Slide the box beside you. Open the lid and take out the underlay. Place the underlay in front of you so that it is rather crumpled up.

Smooth out the underlay. Take your time.

Hmm, I wonder what this could really be? It is rather brown, but it has no real shape.

I wonder what could be so brown? There is no green or blue here at all. Hmm.

Let's see if there is anything else in here that can help us get ready.

Pull out the well, but do not name it.

Oh, look. Here is...something.

Wait. Hold it in your hands. Be at ease with silence if there is any. See if the children will help you build the metaphor.

Place the "well" in the middle of the underlay.

Hmm.

Place the little bucket anywhere on the underlay.

Let's see if there is anything else. Oh, look.

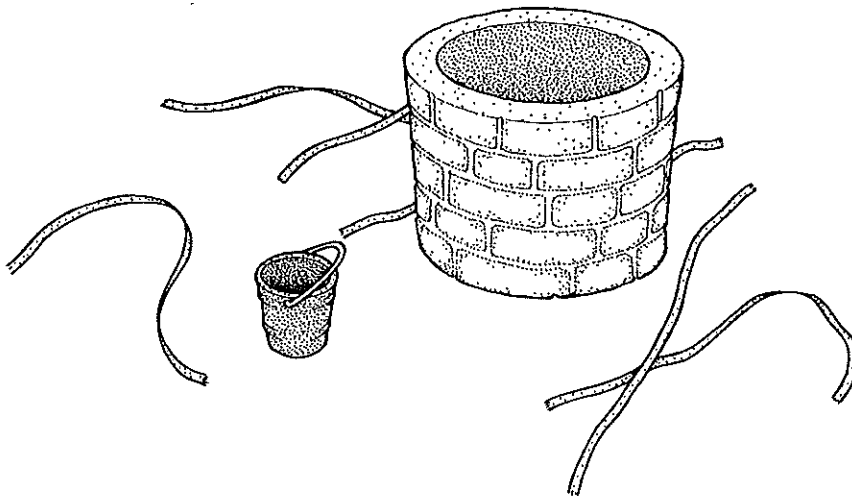
Bring out the gold threads, but do not name them.

Here's more. I don't know what they are, but there are lots of them.

Scatter the golden threads (cord pieces) across the underlay. Sit back and reflect on what is there.

MOVEMENTS

WORDS



THE PARABLE OF THE DEEP WELL (STORYTELLER'S PERSPECTIVE)

Sweep your hand across the brown underlay. ⇨ There was once a great desert.

In the middle of the desert was a deep well. It was so deep that people could no longer reach the water to drink.

Lean out over the well and look down into it. Touch your face as if you had just felt the refreshing coolness. Lean back and ponder this. ⇨ They could not even see the water in the well. Sometimes you could feel the damp coolness rising from the well, but there was no way to get the refreshing liquid from its depths.

People cannot live in the desert without water. It is hot and it is easy to get lost. The wind changes the shape of the sand. There is nothing green to give shade or for people to eat, so everyone hurries across the sand and dirt to get away from the danger.

One day a person crossed the desert. When the person came to the well, the person took time. There was no hurry. The person looked at the well and the little golden strands in the desert.

Pick up the little bucket and look at it. Turn it around and then put it back away from the well. ⇨ The person picked up a rusty object, but no one could remember what it was for. It was like a big cup you could carry, but where would a person get any water?

Move your hand across the desert and "kick" at some of the strands with your fingers. ⇨ The person looked again and kicked the golden threads. They seemed out of place. What were they? Other people thought they were silly and went on their way. This person took time.

MOVEMENTS

Tie about six or seven of the threads together as you talk. You then tie the long strand to the handle of the bucket.

Hold up high the strand with the bucket attached and begin to "lower" the bucket into the well. Let the cord collapse and go into the well; the bucket cannot be seen since it is shorter than the side of the well.

Pour the "water" from the bucket into your hand and "taste" some. Pass the bucket around the circle. The children are invited by your gesture to also "taste" it.

Alternative ending: After tasting the refreshing water untie the golden strands and scatter them.

WORDS

☞ The person went back to the big cup with the handle and then to the deep well. Then the person began to walk around picking up the golden threads and tying them together.

☞ The person lowered the bucket into the well and drew forth the refreshing water. The person tasted the water and was changed. When the person went on the way, the bucket and the many strands tied together were left, so the next person could also taste the water.

☞ Here, you can taste it too.

Now, I wonder what the water from the well could really be?

I wonder where the desert could really be?

I wonder if you have ever crossed that desert?

I wonder what the deep well could really be?

I wonder if you have ever come close to the golden threads?

I wonder what the golden threads could really be?

I wonder why the person stopped and wondered?

I wonder how to wonder?

I wonder why?

☞ Now, what about this ending: When the person went on the way, the little golden strands were untied and scattered again, so the next person could figure this out too.

I wonder which one of the endings you like best?

I wonder which one is the most important?

I wonder what part of the parable is especially about you?

I wonder if there is any part of this parable we could leave out and still have all the parable we need?