

7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)

Interpreting Parables**How do we read/interpret parables?**

1. Look at the context of the parable. What prompted Jesus to tell this parable? At whom is the parable directed?
2. Are there any cultural or historical elements for which we need to account? (Modern readers often miss the shock that the original hearers would have heard because we don't understand the cultural context.)
3. What is the "twist" or unexpected element? Many of the parables were shocking to their first hearers. What is shocking in your parable?
4. What is the main point(s) or lesson(s)? (Pay special attention to the end of the parable. There may be more than point or lesson.)
5. Does Jesus give an interpretation?
6. What kind of response is expected?
7. Summarize the parable in your own words.

**Be aware of the temptation to allegorize parables. While a few parables have an allegorical interpretation, we can greatly misunderstand many parables by trying to force an allegorical interpretation onto them.*

Interpreting the Parables

In groups of 3-4 analyze the following parables. You will need to write your responses on the sheet provided and be prepared to (1) turn in one copy for the group and (2) present your findings to the class.

Group 1	The Parable of the Wedding Banquet	Matthew 22:1-14
Group 2	The Parable of The Unmerciful Servant	Matthew 18:23-35
Group 3	The Parable of the 10 Virgins	Matthew 25:1-12
Group 4	The Parable of the Rich Fool	Luke 12:16-21