

MD KIDS CURRICULUM: LUKE

Week 18: Rich Man and Lazarus (from Luke 16:19-31)

To the Teacher:

The story of the rich man and Lazarus is a famous parable of Jesus', often used to talk about hell and what happens when we die. However, this was not Jesus' point. It was a parable to illustrate to his listeners, the Pharisees, about how they were failing to love others. It was not intended to be a depiction of what happens to our souls. It is important our kids get the real meaning of this parable, to love and care for others. Try to steer the conversation away from questions about hell, as this is not the main point.

- **Big Idea:** God cares deeply for the poor and wants us to care for them too.
- **Question:** Have you ever looked at something someone has and wished you could have it? Do you think there are other people who see what you have and wish they could have it? Do you think there is anyone who wishes they had food and clothes like you have?

- **Starter:** 'Trading Places'

Have the kids sit in a circle. Explain that when you call out a feature, anyone with that feature will have to get out of their seat and find a new seat. For example, 'everyone with a red shirt' would have to get out of their seat and switch seats with another.

This is just a fun and silly exercise to get the kids moving and to setup the story where the rich man wanted desperately to trade places with Lazarus after death, though he was unwilling to share his place with him in life.

- **Story:** from Luke 16:19-31

[READ]

Jesus once told this story:

"There was a rich man who was dressed in fancy clothes and lived in luxury every day. Outside his home laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores. He was so hungry he wished he could eat the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Because he was not well, he could only lay there while stray dogs came and licked his sores.

Eventually the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. The rich man was tormented in his death, but he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with the beggar

Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and let it drop onto my tongue to cool me, because I am in agony in this fire.'

But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember while you lived you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. Besides, there's a great chasm set between us, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from where you are to us.'

He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, my five brothers. Let him warn them, so they will not end up in the same place of torment as me.' Abraham replied, 'They have the story of God from Moses' writings and the Prophets; let your brothers listen to them.'

'No, father Abraham,' said the rich man, 'they won't listen. But if someone from the dead goes to them, they will believe and repent.' Abraham said, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

[Things to Point Out]

- This is a parable Jesus told to make a point to the Pharisees about how they were living and how they should care for the poor, not a real life description of what happens after we die.
- The poor man was named Lazarus, but Jesus did not give the rich man in the story a name. Maybe he wanted the Pharisees listening to imagine that person could be them.
- The rich man knew Lazarus' name, but never cared for him. He even expected Lazarus to serve him in death by asking Abraham to send Lazarus to cool him!
- Abraham told the rich man his family should listen to 'Moses and the Prophets', which was the Scriptures for the Jews (*the Torah, or as we know it, Old Testament*). The Scriptures are filled with commands to love and care for the poor!
- Ask: How did Jesus give to others and show love for the poor?
- Think of Abraham's closing statement, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets (*to care for the poor*), they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead".
 - ▶ Perhaps Jesus is foreshadowing his own rising from the dead when telling this story.
 - ▶ Many of the Pharisees still did not believe after Jesus rose. What will it take for us to believe?

- **Prayer:**
Father, thank You that You see us in whatever situation we are in and You love us. Thank You that You want to welcome us into Your Kingdom. Please help us through Your Spirit to love others this way too, and to share what You have given to us with those who need it, because Jesus has shared his life with us. Amen.

- **Craft:**
 - You could choose to have the kids make a list of people they see or know who are in need (could be someone homeless they drive by on the way home). Then have them make cards for those people telling about how God loves them.
 - OR Use coloring sheet attached.

- **BLESS Activity:**
For kids to do during the week
BLESS: Ask your parents how you can care for the poor as a family this week. If you made a card, ask your parents to take you to bring that card to the person along with a meal or something else they might need.

