Parent and teacher guide

Matthew 23:13–26

Read Matthew 23:13–26 together. This modern classroom story is an application, not a Bible event or invented speech of Jesus. Jesus confronts particular hypocritical leaders; do not portray Jewish people as uniquely sinful. Jesus and His first disciples were Jewish. All of us need grace. Spiritual blindness here means misleading judgment, not a claim about people with visual disabilities. Discuss pride, greed, repentance, faith in Jesus and practical repair—not earning salvation. Never ask children to disclose private sins to the group. Receiving praise does not itself make a good deed wrong.

Verse 14: the Russian Synodal/RST text includes a warning about exploiting widows under a cover of long prayers. ESV places this verse in a textual footnote rather than its main text because of manuscript differences. We do not invent or insert an ESV verse 14. The second source-outline point is discussed as that textual note, not falsely quoted as ESV. Child application: never use religious words to take advantage of others.

Page 1: sharing books, crayons and other supplies; a welcoming invitation. Page 2: justice, mercy and faithfulness; marked word-search key follows. Page 3: LOVE GOD; cobra beside the left chair, ice cream among upper leaves, campfire between shelf books, submarine on left chair, grill beneath table, stethoscope at right curtain. Page 4 numbers, top to bottom: 4, 1, 3, 2. Personal response and drawing: open answers. Forgiveness is not earned by completing the activities.

Six connected warnings

13 · Shuts the entrance to God

The leaders blocked others from entering the kingdom. Michael’s club rule is an illustration: do not place your pride between a friend and learning about Jesus.

14 · Exploits others

See the textual note. Taking a friend’s supplies for yourself illustrates greed; it is not a retelling of the widows’ situation.

15 · Gathers followers without bringing them near God

A large group is not proof that a leader is right. Help friends follow God’s truth, not just copy you.

16–22 · Gives blind spiritual guidance

The leaders invented misleading rules about oaths, gold and gifts. God, not expensive things or clever loopholes, makes a promise serious.

23–24 · Keeps little observances but loses what matters

Jesus did not say small acts of obedience were worthless. He said not to neglect justice, mercy and faithfulness while attending to small details.

25–26 · Cleans the outside, not the heart

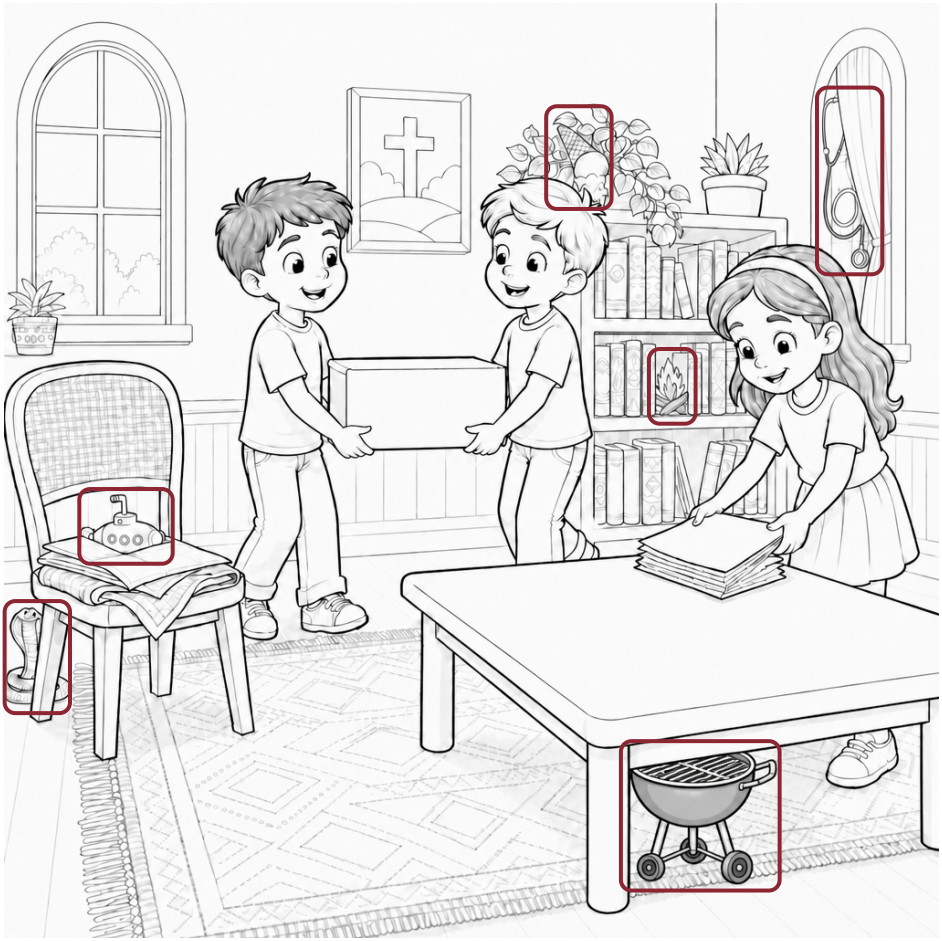
A polished appearance cannot remove greed. Come honestly to Jesus in repentance and faith, and let changed actions follow.

Word-search answer key



JUSTICE • MERCY • FAITHFULNESS • JESUS • HEART • TRUTH

Picture answer key



LOVE GOD

Matthew 23:13–26

13 “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.

15 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

16 “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’

17 You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred?

18 And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’

19 You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred?

20 So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it.

21 And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it.

22 And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

23 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.

24 You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

Matthew 23:13–26 · ESV

25 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

26 You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

Sources & printing

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Bible.com: https://www.bible.com/bible/59/MAT.23.ESV

Landscape duplex, flip LONG edge. Outside [4|1]; inside [2|3] rotated 180°. Print at 100% (or fit if printer margins require it). Fold once. The QR route is prepared locally and must be deployed before distribution.