



**Mennonite
Church
Canada**

Resource Centre

Finding a Treasure

Children's Story

Cycle A, Proper 12

Title: Finding a Treasure
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Church: Hagerman Mennonite Church, Markham, ON
Theme: God's way and community is growing and making a difference.
Text: Matthew 13:44-52

Wondering Questions:

- I wonder how some stones catch our attention more than others.
- I wonder what kind of treasure our church family looks like among other groups of people.
- I wonder what kind of a jewel God's pure love would look like.

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Advanced preparation:

Collect a small container of gravel and a few craft gems, or shiny rocks. Mix it all together, hiding the prettier stones/gems from view. Have a polished stone or craft gem to give each child as a reminder of the lesson.

Gathering Activity:

Invite and welcome the children to their special time and place in the worship service. Help them settle in to the awareness of being in God's holy presence. Singing *Be still and know that I am God* is one good way of doing this. Open your Bible to Matthew 13 and show them the place where the ideas for today's activity come from. If it has not already been read aloud in the worship service, read verses 44-52 to them. Ask: "What do you think Jesus was trying to teach us with this story?" Listen and invite the children's responses...remember, there are no right/wrong answers. Then say: "Maybe this activity will help us understand what these stories of Jesus meant."

Object lesson:

Does anyone know what a Piñata is? If so, tell us what it is, and how it works.

Encourage the children to describe the process of candy falling all over the ground, and kids rushing to pick it up.

Why do the children rush around to collect the candy? What would happen if they moved slowly? What is it about candy that makes us want to run and get it?

Show the children the container of gravel. Make sure the gems/pretty stones are hidden from view.

If this container of stones were in that piñata, and fell all over the ground, would they run around to collect them? Why not?

Then, spread a towel or table cloth in front of you and scatter the gravel/gem mixture across the cloth. Observe whether any of the children want to take or touch the gems/pretty rocks amidst the gravel.

Some of these rocks might have been good to have in a Piñata after all. Why did we want to touch the gems/pretty stones more than the gravel? Yes, they do look precious. *Sit back thoughtfully and say,* Discovering God's loving way is like finding something really pretty or special among the average or plain stones. If these regular stones are like our everyday activities, the beautiful ones are like the signs of God's love that are waiting to be discovered in the middle of our ordinary lives— just like these pretty stones were waiting to be discovered among all these plain stones.

Today's Bible stories are about how people respond when they learn about God. Like the candy coming from the piñata, or gems showing up among the gravel, discovering God's loving way and people is a precious treasure that is worth dropping what we're doing so we can join this movement! We can call God our friend; join God's people and promise to be God's friends forever. Belonging to God's family is more special than other things around us; it is like being part of a treasure. The love God has for us and that God's people have for each other is a very precious treasure, it is worth wanting more than the most precious jewel. *Pick up and roll the prettiest gem in your hand.*

Gathering as the family of God, as we do every time we come to church, is a way of finding out and remembering just how special our friendship with God and God's people is.

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for wanting to be our friend and helping us be friends to each other in our church. Help us to remember that you and your church are a treasure that is worth dropping everything else for. Amen.

To help children remember what a treasure it is to be part of God's family, give each child a polished stone or craft gem to take back to their seats with them.