

## LESSON 11

# PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN

### LESSON NOTES

**FOCUS: THE WOMAN AND THE LEAVEN (MATTHEW 13:33;  
LUKE 13:20-21)**

- **PARABLE**
- **CORE PRESENTATION**

### THE MATERIAL

- **LOCATION: PARABLE SHELVES**
- **PIECES: PARABLE BOX WITH TAN DOT; BOX CONTAINING LOAF OF BREAD (1  
FLAT PIECE AND 1 RISEN PIECE) AND 3 BOWLS OF FLOUR; BOX WITH TRIAN-  
GULAR GOLD LEAVEN**
- **UNDERLAY: TAN**

### BACKGROUND

The Parable of the Leaven is found in Matthew 13:33 and Luke 13:20–21. Many years ago, a little girl about five-years-old discovered what many people miss today about this parable. When commenting on her expressive art, she said, “The lady is Moses and the bread is not *matzo*.” *Matzo*, the bread for the Jewish Passover, has no leaven in it.

In modern English, the term “leaven” has a positive connotation, but in ancient literature, except for Jesus’ parable, the connotation was universally negative. It was a sign of moral corruption, because fermentation is a process of putrefaction in the mass of dough. Leaven was made by storing a piece of bread in a dark, damp place until mold formed.

The children do not know about this ancient view of leavening, so the parable will define its own terms for them as it unfolds.

### NOTES ON THE MATERIAL

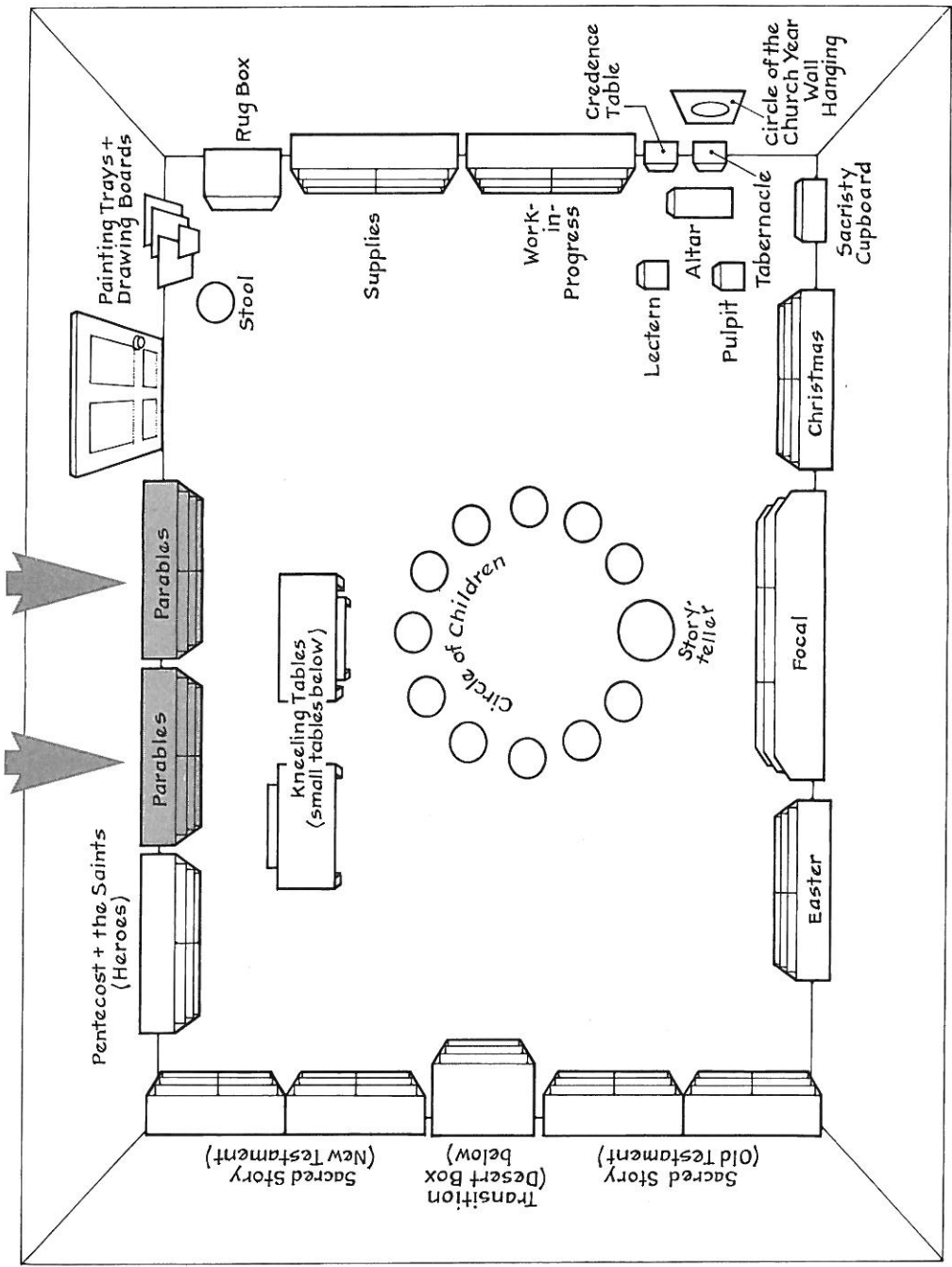
Find the material in a gold parable box with a tan dot, located on the top shelf of one of the parable shelves. The underlay is tan, in the shape of a loaf of bread that has risen.

The loaf of bread in the parable comes in pieces. First, there is a wide, flat piece with a tall, rounded shape above it. This is so the flat piece can be laid down first, the leaven, hidden just above it, and then the rounded piece placed over the leaven when the loaf is leavened. The underlay, then, suggests the leaven and unleavened loaves.

There are three bowls with flour in them. The woman's figure is extended from her shape to a table on which to put the other things. The leaven is a little golden triangle.

### ***SPECIAL NOTES***

**Storytelling Tip:** Please put the leaven in its own mysterious little box. The rest of the parable objects—flat bread, risen bread and the three bowls with flour—can be put together in another little box, placed within the gold parable box that also holds the underlay.



**WHERE TO FIND MATERIALS**

## MOVEMENTS

*You go first to the parable shelves and pick up the box with the small tan circle on it. Tan is also the color of this parable's underlay. You don't need to say anything. Point to the small circle.*

*Bring the parable to the circle of children and place it in the middle to wonder about the box and its content.*

*Move the box to your side. Take off the lid and leave it tipped against the side of the box next to the circle.*

*Take out the underlay. Leave it crumpled up in the middle of the circle for a moment, and then begin to smooth it out.*

*Look carefully into the box. There is nothing there to help get ready. The pieces left all have to do with the telling of the parable.*

## WORDS

Now, let's see. The box is the color gold. Something valuable must be inside. Parables are very valuable, even more important than gold, so maybe there is a parable inside.

The box looks kind of like a present. Parables are like presents. They were given to you even before you were born. They are yours. You don't need to take them. They are already yours even if you do not know what they are.

The box has a lid. It stops us. You see, sometimes, even if we are really ready, it is hard to go inside a parable. They are just like that. I don't know why. Don't be discouraged if you can't find your way in. Keep coming back, and one day the parable will open up for you.

I have an idea. Let's see what is inside the box. Maybe there is a parable inside.

I wonder what this could be? Hmm. I can't tell. It is a kind of brown, though. It is sort of yellow and brown, a kind of tan.

How strange. I wonder what it could really be?

Let's see if there is anything else in the box to help us get ready for the parable.

Oh, no, I have some bad news! There is nothing else. All we can do is just begin.

There was once someone who said such amazing things and did such wonderful things that people followed him. As they followed him, they heard him talking about a kingdom, but it was not like the kingdom they lived in. It was not like any kingdom anyone had ever visited. It was not even like any kingdom anyone had ever heard of. They couldn't help it. They had to ask him what the kingdom of heaven was like.

## MOVEMENTS

*You take out the woman-table figure and place it in the middle of the underlay. Turn it so she is right-side up for most of the children in the circle. She faces away from you.*

*Place the three containers of flour on the table. Line them up, because they will be covered by the flat bread representation.*

*Place the figure representing the flat bread over the three containers for the flour, making a stirring movement with your finger.*

*The leaven is a small gold triangle. Place it above—not covering—the flat bread and the three measures.*

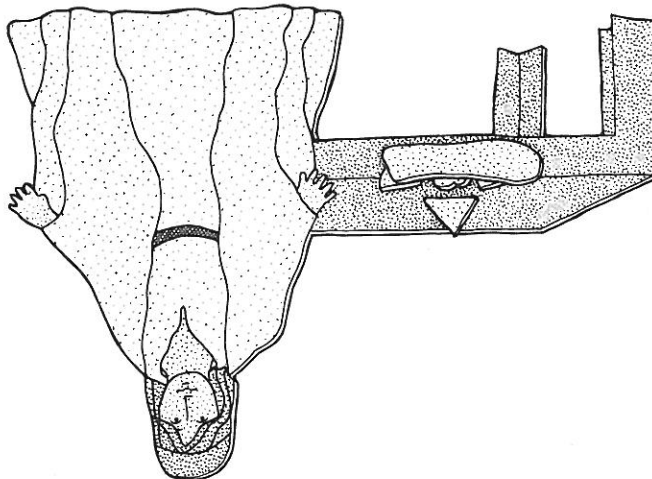
## WORDS

◆ One time when they asked him this, he said “The kingdom of heaven is like a woman...”

◆ “...who took three measures of flour, which is a lot...”

◆ “...and mixed them together.”

◆ “She hid the leaven in the mixture which swelled up and was leavened all over.”



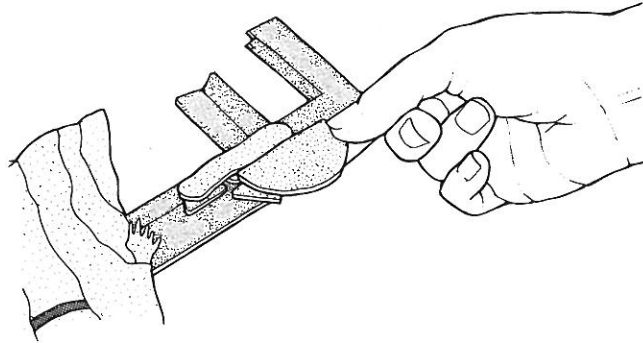
**THE LEAVEN AND THE FLAT BREAD (STORYTELLER'S PERSPECTIVE)**

*Place the bigger rounded figure of the bread above (not on top of) the flat one and on top of the leaven so the risen loaf and the flat bread are one.*

◆ “It got big and puffy like the bread you buy in the store.”

## MOVEMENTS

## WORDS



### CREATING THE RISEN LOAF (STORYTELLER'S PERSPECTIVE)

*Pause. Lean back. Begin the wondering.*

■ Now, I wonder if the woman has a name? I wonder who she could really be?

I wonder if the woman was happy?

I wonder what the bread could really be?

I wonder what the leaven is, really, in the parable and in life?

I wonder if you could take the bread that was leavened all over and put it back like it was before the woman hid the leaven in it?

I wonder if you have ever come close to a place where this happens? I mean really, not just in the parable or making bread?

*Lean back and reflect for a moment on all of these wonderings. You then begin to put things away, slowly and carefully, one at a time.*

■ While I am putting everything away, please begin to think about what work you are going to get out.

Watch now, where I go to put this parable away, so you will always know where to find it.