

# Is God Fair?

## Theme

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

## Object

Give the children a blank card on which to write "It isn't fair when\_\_\_\_\_."

## Scripture

"But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

Matthew 20:13-15 (NIV)

"It's not fair!" Have you ever said those words? Be honest, now! Maybe your brother or sister was invited to go to the movies with a friend and you weren't invited. What was the your reaction? "That's not fair! Why can't I go too?"

Perhaps you came home from school looking forward to watching your favorite show on TV and your mom says, "You can't watch TV until you have finished your homework."

"Aw mom, that's not fair! By the time I finish my homework my favorite show will be over!"

When we say, "It's not fair!" it usually means that something is not going our way or we want something that someone else has. I have a blank card for each of you. I want you to take the card and write on it, "It's not fair when" and then write something that has happened to you that you didn't think was fair.

In our Bible lesson today, Jesus told a story about a landowner who was hiring men to work in his vineyard. He hired some of them early in the morning, some in the middle of the day, and

some he hired just before quitting time.

When it was time to pay the workers, he paid them all the same. Can you guess what the workers who were hired early in the morning said? Your right, they cried out, "Hey! That's not fair! You paid the workers who worked only one hour the same as those of us who worked all day."

The owner of the vineyard said, "I am not being unfair to you. I paid you what I agreed to pay you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Are you jealous because I am generous?"

The question for today is this: "Is God fair?" Of course he is! But do you know what else? The Bible tells us that he is more than fair, the Bible tells us that "God is love." Does God love us because we love him?" No, the Bible says, "This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins." Wow! That's not fair—that's love.

If we got what was fair, none of us would get to heaven. I'm glad that God doesn't give me what is fair, but gives me his love and grace, in spite of what I deserve!

Father, we thank you for loving us so much that you sent your Son to give us everlasting life. In his name we pray. Amen.

## Interactive Group Activities

by Carol Williams

**Sermon Title:** "That's Not Fair!"

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 20:1-16

**VINEYARD WORKERS:** Children can play this little game most like hide and go seek. The first child will seek for 1 child; then those 2 children will seek for another and then those 3 children will seek together for a 4th child. Each child when found will be given a very small treat (such as an M&M, etc), but the first child found will get 3, the next child will get 2 and then next child found will get 1 treat!!!! Just let the children have fun playing the vineyard workers as time allows.

**THAT'S NOT FAIR CHAIRS:** This will play like musical chairs while children walk around some chairs until the music stops. There will be one chair less than the number of children playing and keep removing one chair after each stopping part. Children will all say, THAT'S NOT FAIR CHAIR and then start the music up once again to continue playing until just one child is left standing with a chair and all the other children will say, THAT'S NOT FAIR! Then tell today's Bible story to the children as they sit in the chairs in a circle today.

**CHALK TALK:** Children can be given different colors of chalk and draw figures and words from today's lesson on the chalk board as they tell parts of today's lesson.

**REWARD RELAY:** Let children divide into teams and take turns running to a box or bowl after they have done what the teacher tells them to do, such as jump to the wall, skip around the room, hop to the chair, etc. Each child and team can get a REWARD after their relay.

**SKIT TIME:** Let the children choose a part to play from today's story. One child or the teacher can be the narrator and read or tell the story again while children act out the parts in a skit. Make sure to video tape if possible so children can watch their skit at a later time.

**CROSS CUTTINGS:** Provide children with crafts materials to cut out a cross and add stickers, glitter, etc. Make little snips all around the cross for decoration and use bright magic markers to write ALL HAVE SINNED AND COME SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD. Add a ribbon to the top of the cross and encourage children to give to someone special to them.

**HAND PAINTING:** Give children paint supplies to draw on each other's hands with ideas from today's story to add a picture and/or words such as LOVE, GRACE, or EVERLASTING LIFE, or THANK YOU GOD FOR BEING FAIR. Children could draw a cross or heart, etc.

**REWARD STICKERS:** Children can each decorate a piece of construction paper or a small booklet with REWARD STICKERS that can be purchased

inexpensively at any retail store with words such as GOOD JOB, or WELL DONE, or YOU ROCK, or KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK, etc. After completing their booklets or piece of paper, children will hand their paper/booklet to the person to the right of themselves to encourage a friend in class.

**SING A SONG:** JESUS LOVES ME; GOD IS SO GOOD

**SHARE A SNACK:** Each child could be given a cookie to frost and a small "reward" to be placed on top, such as sprinkles or M&M's, etc!

**Song: "Jesus Loves Me" by William B. Bradbury**

[Words and Music \(pdf\)](#) 

[MP3 Accompaniment Track](#)

**Song: "God Is So Good" - Traditional**

[Words and Music \(pdf\)](#) 

[MP3 Accompaniment Track](#)

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### **About Carol Williams**

Carol and her husband have served churches in Illinois, Minnesota, Mississippi, Michigan, and Indiana. Carol loves to work with children so you will find her teaching in Junior Church and children's Sunday School. She also has clowning ministry in which she is known as Bubbles tc (the clown).

# PARABLE OF THE WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD (MATTHEW 20:1-16)



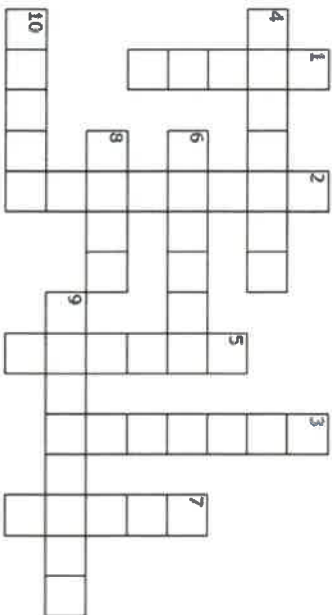
“But he answered one of them, “Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go.”

Matthew 20:13-14a

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# Crossword Puzzle



- ACROSS**
- People who labor, usually for wages or a salary
  - The place where God lives
  - A period of time equal to sixty minutes
  - A place where grapes are grown
  - Pay received for working
- DOWN**
- Coins or bills used to pay for something
  - To give or share freely with others
  - To gripe or complain
  - Not playing by the rules
  - Two things that are of the same value

HEAVEN	GRUMBLE	MONEY	WORKERS	VINEYARD
GENEROUS	HOURLY	WAGES	UNFAIR	EQUAL



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# Children's Worship Bulletin

## Workers in the Vineyard

Matthew 20:1-16

## Word Search Puzzle

D V O M O N E Y Q K J F E Q L  
 R Y H Q P G Y V V D B S K P  
 E U G V H E H E A V E N U I H  
 C S S Z Q N M J N R U N N O  
 E A V I N E Y A R D R S F G U  
 I M I D T R I Z V E B M A D R  
 V W R S X O U F N P D T I O V  
 E O S P M U Q W M E E B R M C  
 D R R D G B S O K R R T Q E R A  
 E K R Y P P D M I T H V L U S W  
 H E Y V N P H E G E B Q E A A  
 O R C A V S Y I C M W G P K L  
 N S L H N Q R G U B A R W J K  
 U H G S Z L W R U W H I F E G  
 G B Z Y G D D G T X R E V Q B N

MONEY	HOURLY	EQUAL	WORKERS	VINEYARD
LANDOWNER	HEAVEN	GRUMBLE	KINGDOM	GENEROUS
WAGES	HIRED	UNFAIR	RIGHT	RECEIVED

Your Church Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_

## PARABLE OF THE WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD

(MATTHEW 20:1-16)



'These men who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.'

Matthew 20:12

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Each number represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute the correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
T	O	J	Z	H	F	A	D	S	U	E	I	N	X	Y	V	L	W	Q	B	R	P	K	C	G	M

- 25-11-13-11-21-2-10-9 \_\_\_\_\_
- 18-2-21-23-11-21-9 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6-12-21-9-1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 10-13-6-7-12-21 \_\_\_\_\_
- 16-12-13-11-15-7-21-8 \_\_\_\_\_
- 26-2-13-11-15 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5-2-10-21 \_\_\_\_\_
- 25-21-10-26-20-17-11 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5-12-21-11-8 \_\_\_\_\_
- 17-7-9-1 \_\_\_\_\_

VINEYARD	UNFAIR	WORKERS	GRUMBLE	HIRED
LAST	GENEROUS	FIRST	MONEY	HOURLY



The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard