The Parable of the Great Banquet

Background

Focus: the great banquet (Luke 14:15-24)

Material


It contains:
- a green felt underlay
- a paper host
- a paper table
- 6 paper food items
- a paper field
- paper oxen
- paper rings
- a paper menorah
- a paper chalice
- 4 sets of paper guests

Movements

Go to the shelf and pick up the box containing the materials.
Bring it to the circle.

Sit back and reflect for a moment about what might be inside.

Words

Watch where I go to get this material.

Look, this box is the color gold. There may be a parable inside because parables are as valuable, or even more valuable, than gold.

The box also looks like a present. Parables are presents. They were given to you before you were born. They are yours, even if you don’t know what they are.

This box looks old, and parables are old. Maybe there really is one inside.

Do you see the lid? It is like a closed door. Sometimes parables seem closed to us, even if we are ready to enter them. You need to keep coming back for them, and one day they will open.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sit for a moment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move the box from in front of you to your side. Remove the lid and lean it up on the box on the side where the children are sitting.</td>
<td>I know what let’s do. Let’s look inside to see if there is a parable there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take out the underlay. Leave it folded in the middle of the circle. As you talk about it, begin to smooth it out.</td>
<td>I wonder what this could really be? It’s so green. It’s shaped like a square. It could be a blanket… or a rug. Let’s see if there’s more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take out the large table and place it in the center of the underlay.</td>
<td>Hmmm. This looks like a table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sit back for a moment, then begin.</td>
<td>There once was someone who did such amazing things and said such wonderful things that people followed him. As they followed him, they heard him speaking about a kingdom. The kingdom was not like the one they were in. It was not like one that anyone had ever visited. It was not like any kingdom anyone had even heard about. So they had to ask him, “What is the kingdom of heaven like?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place the host at the head of the table. Then place the six plates of food, the menorah, and the chalice on the table.</td>
<td>One day when they asked him that, he said, “The kingdom of heaven is like this: once a person invited many people to a great feast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motion across the table.</td>
<td>When the feast was ready, the servants said to the guests, ‘Come, for all is now ready.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lay the paper field flat on your hand and circle the table.</td>
<td>But they all made excuses. The first said, ‘I just bought a field and I have to go see it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place the field back in the box.</td>
<td>Please excuse me.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lay the paper oxen flat on your hand and circle the table.</td>
<td>Another said, ‘I just bought five yoke of oxen and I have to go try them out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place the oxen back in the box.</td>
<td>Please excuse me.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lay the wedding rings flat on your hand and circle the table.

Still another said, 'I just got married, so I cannot come.

Place the rings back in the box.

Please excuse me.'

Pause. Touch the food on the table.

Take the poor people from the box and place them at the table.

When the servant told his master about the excuses, the master said, 'Go quickly into the streets and alleys of the city and bring in the poor…

Place the crippled at the table.

… the crippled…

Place the blind at the table.

… the blind…

Place the lame at the table.

… and the lame.'

Point to the empty spaces.

But still there was room.

Place others around the table.

So he said, ‘Go out to the highways and roads and get people to come, so my house will be filled.'"

Pause for a moment, enjoying the parable. Then begin the wondering.

• I wonder how it felt to be invited to this great feast?

• I wonder if these people have names?

• I wonder why these people came and others wouldn’t?

• I wonder how the master feels about the guests?

• I wonder how the guests feel about the master?

• I wonder how many could really be at this table?

• I wonder if you have ever been near a table like this?

• I wonder where this table might really be?
When the wondering draws to a close, place the pieces back into the parable box. Name each piece as you put it away.

Take the parable box back to its shelf and return to the circle. Help the children decide what work they will get out.