

Aim:**Refer:****Resources:** Pictures of Pilgrims Progress are available here: <http://www.bunyanministries.org/>

Discuss the parable of the farmer planting seeds.

What does each ground represent?

Where possible think of a person who is an example of each ground, eg. Someone from the Bible or Pilgrims Progress.

Jesus used several object lessons to teach about the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven. Read the following verses and discuss

- Luke 17:20-21 (It is here now)
- Romans 14:17 (It is life in the Holy Spirit)
- Matthew 13:31 / Mark 4:30-31 (mustard seed)
- Matthew 13:33 (yeast)
- Mark 4:26-27 (seed sprouting)

We cannot see the Holy Spirit and sometimes it is hard to , and His work is not always instantaneous – it is a work in progress, we are slowly changing to be more like Jesus.

Philippians 1:6 says, *"And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns."* NLT

In the first parable of the farmer planting – what did Jesus say the seed represents? Luke 8:11 (The Word of God)

2 Peter 1:4 says, *"He has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share His divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires."* NLT

Read and discuss Matthew 13:36-42 and Matthew 13:47-49

Someone who has never confessed their sins, who does not care about others and only cares about pleasing themselves, someone who does not want Jesus to save them would not be happy in heaven. Just like a wild animal who wants to be free and will be unhappy in a cage. Heaven would be like prison to these people.

I looked then, after Christian, to see him go up the hill called Difficulty. Now, about the midway to the top of the hill was a pleasant arbour made by the Lord of the hill for the refreshing of weary travellers and when Christian got there he sat down to rest and fell into a fast sleep, which detained him in that place until it was almost night and in his sleep his roll fell out of his hand. Now, there came one to him, and awaked him, saying, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." And with that Christian suddenly started up. Now, when he was got up to the top of the hill, there came two men running to meet him; the name of the one was Timorous, and of the other Mistrust; to whom Christian said, Sirs, what's the matter? You run the wrong way. Mistrust said, "Just before us lie a couple of lions in the way and they would pull us in pieces." Mistrust and Timorous ran down the hill, and Christian went on his way. But, thinking again of what he heard from the men, he felt for his roll that he might read therein and be comforted; but he felt and found it not. Falling down upon his knees, he asked God's forgiveness and then went back to look for his roll, eventually finding it where he had slept.

Returning to the top of the hill called Difficulty he entered into a very narrow passage and espied two lions in the way. Then he was afraid and thought to go back; but the porter at the lodge, whose name is Watchful, cried unto him, saying, "Fear not the lions for they are chained and are placed there for trial of faith. Keep in the midst of the path and no hurt shall come unto thee." Then he went on, trembling for fear of the lions; he heard them roar but they did him no harm.

Christian is climbing the hill called Difficulty; then instead of resting briefly and perhaps reading his roll, he falls asleep.

Discuss: How can a person fall spiritually asleep?

When Christian is scared and wants comfort, he realises he has lost his roll – which could represent his personal relationship with God.

What does he do?

What should we do if we realise we have lost our personal relationship with God or if we realise we haven't spent much time with God?

Discuss the meaning of Timorous and Mistrust: (Timorous means nervousness or lack of confidence)

Discuss: What would have happened if Christian had not trusted and obeyed the Porter?

The porter said to Christian, "This house was built by the Lord of the hill, and He built it for the relief and security of pilgrims. What is your name?"

"My name is now Christian, but my name at the first was Graceless; I came of the race of Japheth, whom God will persuade to dwell in the tents of Shem." The Porter asked why Christian was so late and Christian explained about sleeping and loosing his roll.

Then Watchful, rang a bell, at the sound of which came out at the door a beautiful girl named Discretion. She asked Christian from where he was, and whither he was going; and he told her. She asked him also how he got into the way. Then she asked him what he had seen and he told her. She called out Prudence, Piety, and Charity, who, after a little more talk with him, had him come into the family.

They gave him something to drink and talked together until supper was ready. They asked why he had become a pilgrim and talked of everything he had seen on his way including the things shown him by Interpreter and the people he had met in the way.

Now I saw in my dream, that thus they sat talking together until supper was ready. Then their talk at the table was about the Lord of the hill; especially about what He had done and wherefore He did what He did, and why He had builded that house. And by what they said, I perceived that He had been a great warrior and had fought with and slain 'him that had the power of death,' but not without great danger to Himself; and that they heard Him say and affirm that He would not dwell in the mountain of Zion alone.

Thus they talked together till late at night; and after they had committed themselves to their Lord for protection, they betook themselves to rest: the Pilgrim they laid in a large upper chamber whose window opened toward the sun-rising; the name of the chamber was Peace and he slept till break of day when he awoke and sang.