

**One truth shared:** Jesus promises to keep Christians safe while living in a world of unbelievers.

*Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.*

*“The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’*

*“An enemy did this,’ he replied.*

*“The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’*

*“No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’”*

*Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.”*

*He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.*

*“As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.”*

**Matthew 13:24-30,36-43**

## Wheat and Weeds

Why won't God do something?

Ever wonder that before? Why won't God do something about terrorism? Why won't God bring justice to those being oppressed? Why won't God take care of those who persecute Christians so that his Word and his kingdom can flourish?

Those are good and logical questions to ask, much like the question the servants asked in Jesus' parable. An "enemy" had come and planted weeds among the wheat. The servants asked the owner of the field, "Do you want us to pull them up?" A quick and easy solution, right? Get rid of the weeds! But the owner explained the problem—if you pull up the weeds, you might take some wheat along with. A better plan was to leave both until the harvest and then separate the weeds and wheat.

Satan has sown many weeds in this world. There are many unbelievers who follow Satan's ways instead of God's ways, and quite a number of them pose big problems (even big threats!) to us the wheat. But rather than removing them from the world now, God has a different plan—to wait until the harvest called judgment day to sort and separate the weeds and the wheat.

In the meantime, we need to trust the owner of the field—the Son of Man, or Jesus himself. He is the one who conquered the devil and this sinful world with his life, death, and resurrection. He is the Master Farmer, who graciously sowed seeds of the gospel into our hearts and sent his Holy Spirit to make those seeds grow. He is the One who tends the farm with care and protects us, the wheat, from the weeds.

Moreover, who knows how God might graciously work yet so that some of those weeds might become wheat (believers) before the harvest of judgment day? Who knows how God might use the challenges of living among weeds for good in our lives? Only the Lord knows.

Trust God's plan. Trust God's care for the garden of his kingdom. Trust that God will sort the weeds and the wheat on the Last Day. While the weeds will sadly face the fires of hell, we the wheat will be gathered to his storehouse of heaven. Lord, keep us safely to that day!

**Prayer:** Jesus, life in this world is not easy. Living as wheat among wheat is so challenging. Strengthen and support us through this weary life until that last and glorious day when you gather us to our heavenly home. Amen.

## Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

### Year A – Proper 11

#### Define Christian

**One truth shared:** Jesus promises to keep Christians safe while living in a world of unbelievers.

### Wheat and Weeds

**Starting the Discussion:** *This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

Who has any gardening experience? Who can share anything they know about plants and weeds and how they grow? (Bonus points if you know anything at all about wheat!)

**Connecting:** *This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they've looked at it.*

Jesus says that we are living right now as wheat among weeds. What do you find to be the greatest challenge of living among so many unbelievers (weeds) in this world? Why?

**Digging In:** *Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- Give at least two good reasons why God doesn't want to "pull up the weeds" yet from this world.
- Work together as a group or with a partner to find two or three Bible verses that will give us strength to endure a difficult life when the weeds of this world seem to be strangling us and our faith.

- Jesus might come back on the Last Day to sort the wheat and the weeds at any moment. Explain why that thought leads us to live with urgency.
- In the Second and Third Petitions of the Lord's Prayer we pray, "thy/your kingdom come, thy/your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Explain what those two requests mean, then explain how they connect to this parable about the wheat and the weeds.

*Conclusion: Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the "connecting question" above.*

Share two things you can do this week to be wheat that is strong and flourishing.