

## A NOTE TO PARENTS

Many of the “parables of the Kingdom” in Matthew’s Gospel are short and simple, with little “human interest.” Today’s is more complex, but like several of the shorter ones it pictures the Kingdom as seeds or crop: sown, growing, bearing fruit. The farmer in such stories is usually an ambiguous figure—he may be God, or God’s agent, or someone who is just discovering the riches of God’s reign. In today’s story, however, he seems clearly to be God. And an important feature of the story is that he has an enemy.

The existence and power of Satan, God’s adversary, is taken for granted throughout the New Testament. Satan is the “prince of this world,” a powerful spirit who has invaded God’s creation and will someday be driven back ... but who, in the mean time, rules with God’s knowledge and (in a sense) permission. His reign on earth is like the growth of the weeds—the Master knows they are there, knows how they got there, and knows they do not belong there, but refrains from destroying them until the time is ripe.

This scenario seems to make modern adults very nervous. Many of us who profess belief in God still find it hard to acknowledge belief in a literal devil, and even harder to teach such a belief to our children. We assume that any supernatural power must be all good—that nature itself, as the unspoiled creation of God, must be all good, and that the only source of evil is our own sin and brokenness. This view contains equal parts of wishful thinking and guilt, and it is neither Biblical nor true to life. And, though we peddle it to our children, it is an adult fantasy, not a childish one. Children usually have little trouble with the Scriptural concept of a devil. It explains a great deal. It means that while much of the world’s pain, and of our own pain, is the result of human sin, not all of it is. It means that it is okay to be outraged at evil, to hate the waste and pain we find in nature as well as in human life, because God did not make it that way, and he will beat it in the end. The Kingdom is not just waiting for us all to learn to “be nice.” Rather, the whole creation groans together, waiting for the Master to pull out the weeds and gather the crop.

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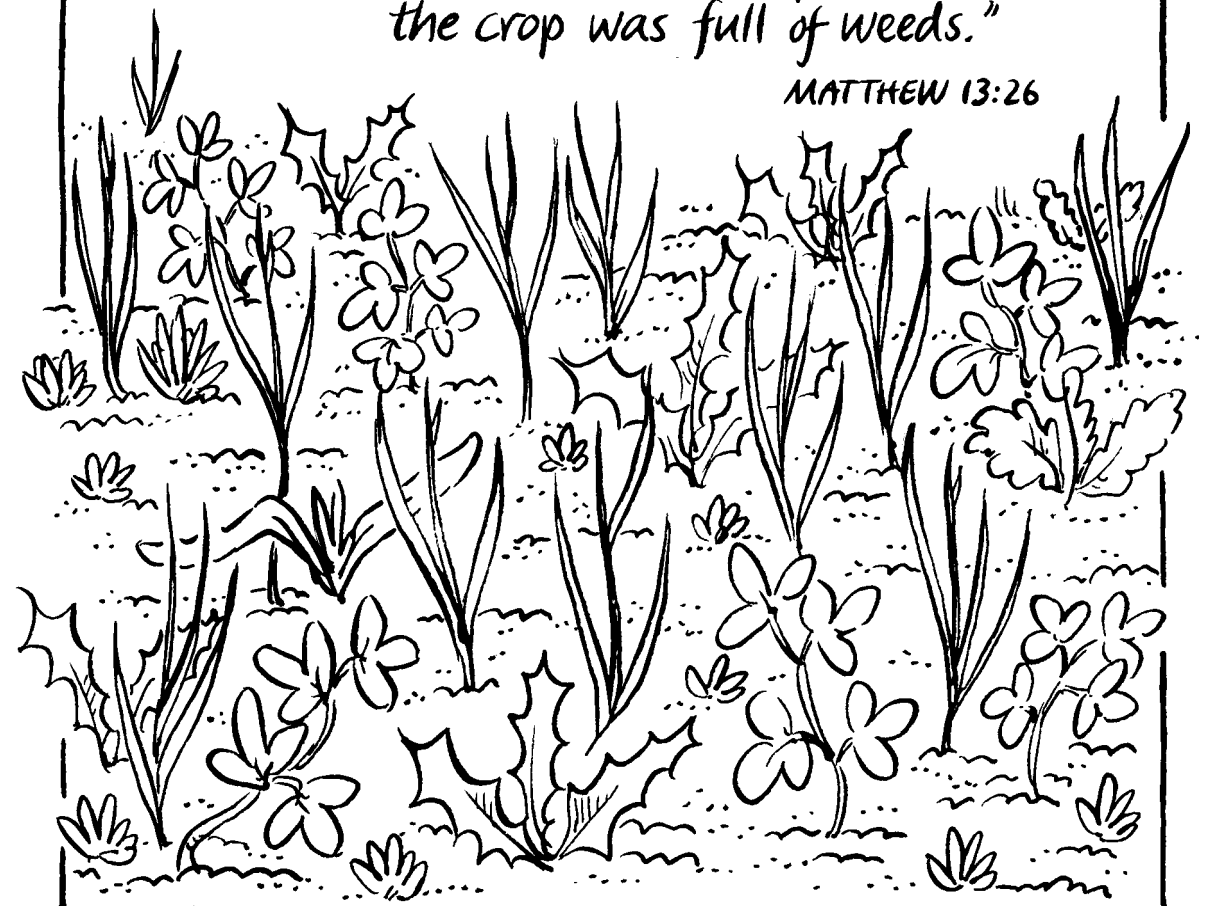
# THE SUNDAY PAPER JUNIOR

Year A  
PROPER 11  
TRACKS 1 and 2

JESUS TOLD THIS STORY:

*“Once a man planted good seed in a field. But when it sprouted, the crop was full of weeds.”*

MATTHEW 13:26



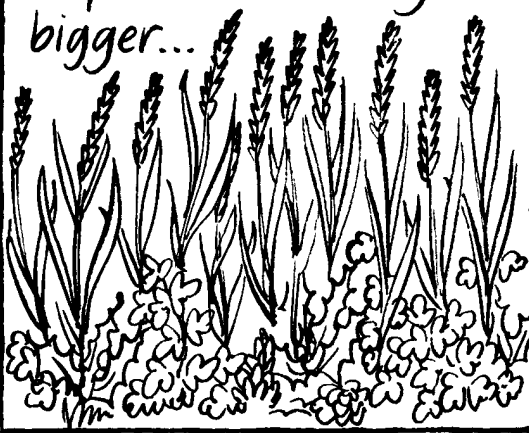
The man's servants went and asked him, "Didn't you plant good seed in that field?"



The farmer answered, "Yes, but my enemy must have sneaked in and planted the weeds."



The farmer said, "Don't pull out the weeds now. You might pull up the crop too. Let them get bigger..."



"Then, when the crop is ready, pull out the weeds first, and burn them. Then you can harvest the crop."



Jesus told lots of stories about crops and seeds. In this story, he says God's world is like a field with good plants and weeds both growing in it. God made it to be very good, but evil got in too. When the right time comes, God will clear out all the evil.

The whole creation is WAITING for God to finish his work



ROMANS 8:19

Draw a bad and scary thing for the angel to clear out of God's world.

