

Parable of the Mustard Seed

Matthew 24:32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19

The Parable of the Mustard Seed is found in all three synoptic gospel (Matthew 24:32; Mark 4:30–32; Luke 13:18–19). The mustard in the parable is not the domestic mustard we use for flavoring. The mustard of southwest Asia grew and spread quickly. Farmers did not like it because it could take over a field and ruin its useful production of grain. It is a shrub and not a tree. These historical matters are not interesting to children, but are mentioned to invite you to discover more about this parable as an adult.

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense *relives*—the experience of today’s lesson. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:

- I wonder what you can tell me about this picture?
- I wonder what this picture has to do with today’s story?

Just listen. This is *not* a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the presentation, another recall a single moment that had meaning, and yet another talk about his or her own creative response. Again, your role is not to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to *listen* in a supportive way. You

are supporting the formation of young—sometimes very young—theologians.

Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today’s lesson offered below. A smaller version of the materials used in today’s Godly Play presentation is available for home use; to order, contact Godly Play Resources (1-800-445-4390 or www.godlyplay.com) and ask for the “Miniature Parable of the Mustard Seed.”

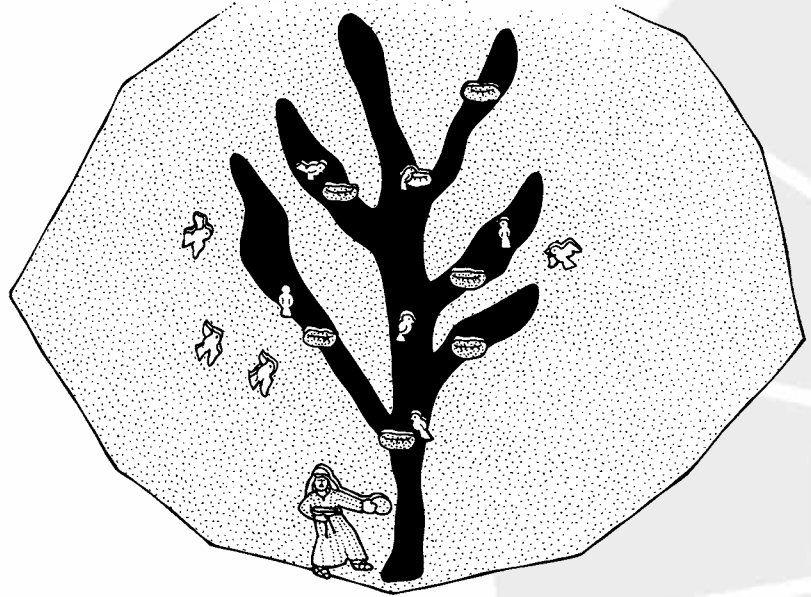
Whether you read the presentation or simply listen as your child shares what was received in today’s lesson, ask the Wondering questions printed in the left column. Remember, there are many right answers! Be open to what the parables can mean to you and your child. God will teach you new meanings every day. Parables cannot ever be all used up. Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying “Amen.”

The Presentation

There was once someone who said such wonderful things and did such amazing things that people followed him. As they followed him, they heard him speaking about a kingdom, but it was not like the kingdom they lived in. It was not like any kingdom they had ever visited. It was not like any kingdom anyone had ever heard of.

Wondering

- **I wonder** if the person who put the tiny seed in the ground has a name?
- **I wonder** what the nests could really be?
- **I wonder** if you have ever come close to this kind of tree?



They couldn't help it. They had to ask him. What is the kingdom of heaven like?

One time when they asked him that he said, "The kingdom of heaven is like when a person took the tiniest of all the seeds, a grain of mustard seed, a seed so small that if I had one on my finger you would not be able to see it.

"The person put the tiny seed in the ground, and it began to grow. The shrub grew up so big it was like a little tree, and the birds of the air came and they made their nests there."

Godly Play How Can You Help

In every Parent Page, we offer information about Godly Play to help you understand both its methodology and purpose. Here we list a few of the ways in which you, as a parent, can support Godly Play in your church.

Other adults who want to support the work of a Godly Play program can contribute by:

- taking turns providing festive and healthy food for the children to share during their feasts

- keeping the art and supply shelves replenished with fresh materials
- using your creative skills to make the classical materials for Godly Play presentations

As regards this final suggestion, Godly Play Resources provides kits for assembling and finishing many of the materials used in Godly Play lessons. To obtain a catalog, call 1-800-445-4390 toll-free or visit online at www.godlyplay.com. Check with your child's Godly Play teacher about current needs in the Godly Play classroom.