



## SESSION ELEVEN

# THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

### BIG IDEA

*In God's Kingdom, something really small can grow into*

# SOMETHING BIG AND GREAT

### PREP: *(Kids can help!)*

- Buy mustard seeds from your local supermarket or plant shop.
- Collect some seeds from outdoors or the pantry. (Pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds – whatever you can find.)
- Cut out the pictures of seeds and plants from the appendix.
- Sort a piece of fruit per person, (e.g. strawberry, tomato, cucumber, apple, pear, avocado – or you can use the same fruit for everyone if it is easier.)
- Find a chopping board and knife.

### WHAT GOES IN THE BOX?

- Mustard seeds
- Seed assortment
- Seed and plant pictures from appendix
- The fruit



### INTRO

Have you ever done something that you thought was just a little thing but it meant something really big to another person? Like walking to school with a new kid who was shy about going on his own? Or bringing in the paper for the elderly lady next door?

God says His kingdom is like that. He doesn't need big things to start with because his love and power can take the little we have or do and make it into something great.

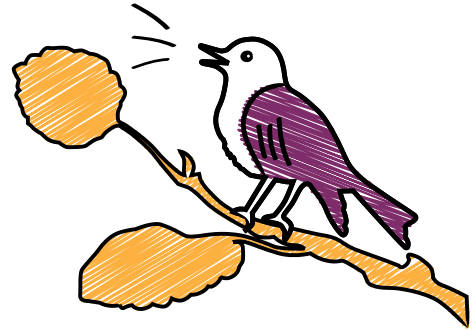
We're going to talk about that sort of mystery today!

### PLAY

- Take out the seed and plant pictures and turn them upside down in the middle of the table.
- Starting with the youngest, pick one square and turn it over.  
The next person then does the same.
- When someone matches a seed card with a fruit card, they keep the pair of cards.  
Keep going until all the pictures are turned over, and pairs collected.
- Count who has the most pairs.

**Do the smallest seeds grow into the smallest fruit?**

**What about the biggest seeds?**



Bigger isn't always better with seeds. Small seeds can grow into really big things.

- Take out the selection of fruit and the chopping board and knife.

Starting with the person who matched the most cards, give everyone a piece of fruit and ask them to cut it open and find the seeds in it. (Be ready to help children cut them open.)

- Everyone shows the seeds they find and holds them up to compare the different sizes of seeds.

### Do you know what the plant looks like that bears your fruit?

Now cut up the fruit and everyone enjoy eating it while you read. (You can put it on one plate for everyone to share.)

### READ

Remember Jesus told stories to help his followers learn their big meaning. Do you remember what they are called?

Perhaps he knew they would remember better when they had to work it out themselves.

Parables are like gifts to be opened and wondered about. Sometimes when Jesus was alone with his disciples, he would explain the deeper meaning of the parable.

### The parable of the mustard seed

“Again Jesus said, ‘What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.’”

### OUT OF THE BOX

- Take out the mustard seeds – let everyone try to pick one up.

See how very small they are?

Sometimes people think they are not able to make a difference for God. They may think they are too small, or too old, or not clever enough or too poor... but Jesus had something to say about that in the parable we have just read.

- What do you think the message was?



## SESSION ELEVEN

### EXPLORE

- Hold your tiny seed, while we talk about some of the things Jesus is teaching us in this parable...

A mustard seed in the time of Jesus could grow into a plant twice as tall as an adult! That is tall enough for lots of birds to nest in its branches.

Look at the tiny seed in your hand and imagine what it could grow into. All the leaves, flowers and branches packed into this tiny seed..

Now, let's imagine something even more amazing.

Think of all the good things of God's kingdom packed inside you – all the kindness and love and joy and peace and grace – all inside you! It may take time to grow, but it is all there ready to grow as you live for Jesus.

Jesus wanted people to know that everything we do to help others is important. The big things are important

and the little things are important. Sometimes we do a little thing and it ends up making a BIG difference. Just like Jesus who started as a small baby born in a stable, grew into a man with a group of 12 good friends, and changed the world forever. We can make a big difference too.

*A seed is a beginning. It is small and often looks like it could never be anything important.*

- **Can you think of something that is a seed in your heart that you think God has put there?**

It might be a 'mission' that one day you would love to do for him.

It might be a job/career that you would like to do as part of His kingdom.

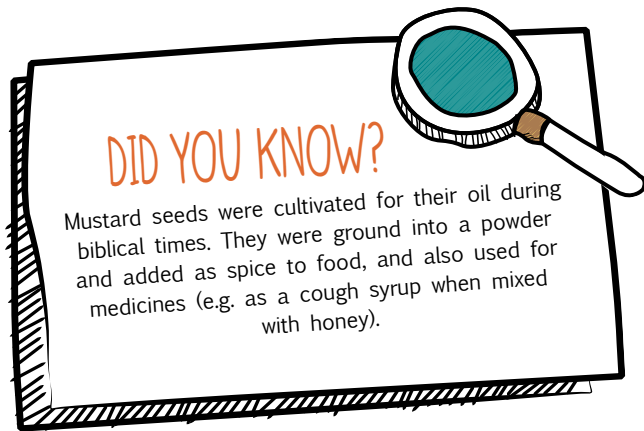
Or it might be a secret kindness mission you could do at school this week that no one else knows about.

### OUT OF THE BOX

- Take the assortment of seeds from the Faith Box. Have a look at these seeds, and try guessing what they could grow into...

**Jesus was talking about what can happen when a seed is planted.** But it has to be planted before it grows...and grows. The branches sprout leaves and it is big enough to shelter birds and probably people!

When we believe in God and are planted in his love, he will take the little bit that we know and help us to grow, and grow, and grow. The more we learn about God and how much He loves us, the more we grow, like the mustard tree. *We change and become something more beautiful. And those things become a blessing to others.*



☞ FAITH SEES A BEAUTIFUL BLOSSOM IN A BULB, A LOVELY GARDEN IN A SEED, AND A GIANT OAK IN AN ACORN. ☞

- WILLIAM ARTHUR WARD -

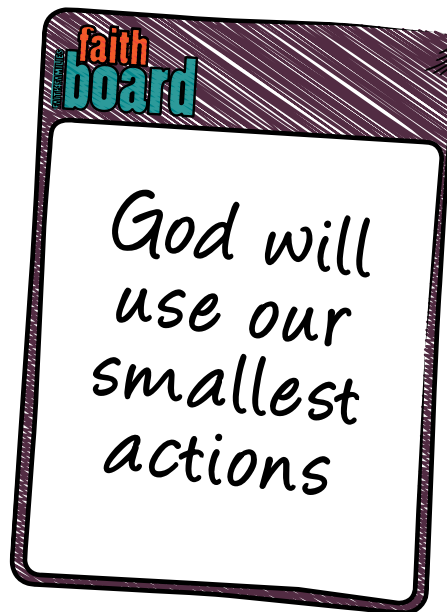
## PRAY

- Choose a seed picture and its matching plant and hold it in your hands.

*“Thank you God that we are like this seed, with so much inside us to grow and be used by you. Please keep using us to build your kingdom. Amen.”*

## LIVE

- Take some time this week to go for a walk. Notice the different trees, and the different birds you can see living in them. See if you can name the trees and the birds.



## OTHER IDEAS

- Make seed pictures – use PVA to glue assorted seeds on to a piece of card to make your own picture.
- Play “hangman” using words from the story (mustard, tree, Mark, plant, grow, etc.)
- Make bird feeders for your garden.
- Go further with this parable and explore the image of yeast in the dough that Jesus also uses – try making your own bread together and watch the yeast at work. Check out how small the yeast is but what a big difference it makes! (You could keep some dough aside with no yeast to see the difference).

**CHECK OUT WHAT YOU NEED FOR NEXT SESSION...**





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