

Mustard Seed

Lesson Objectives

- The children will hear the parable of the mustard seed.
- The children will state that God makes the church grow.
- The children will state one way that the church grows today.

Lesson Text

Matthew 13:31-32

Scripture Memory Verse

Jesus spoke all these things to the crowds in parables.

Matthew 13:34

Lesson Plan

Greeting and Registration

Preclass Activity: People Tree

Welcome and Singing

Centers:

Bible Story: Small Beginnings

Craft: The Mustard Tree

Scripture Memory: Parable Jump

NOTE: Allow time for snack.



Mustard Seed

People Tree

The children will preview this week's Bible Story as they make a collage representing people that God wants to enter his kingdom.

Materials

For each child:

- glue stick
- crayons or markers
- scissors (optional)

For the teacher:

- 1 piece of poster board, 22" x 28"
- thick, black marker
- scissors
- magazines with pictures of faces

Preparation

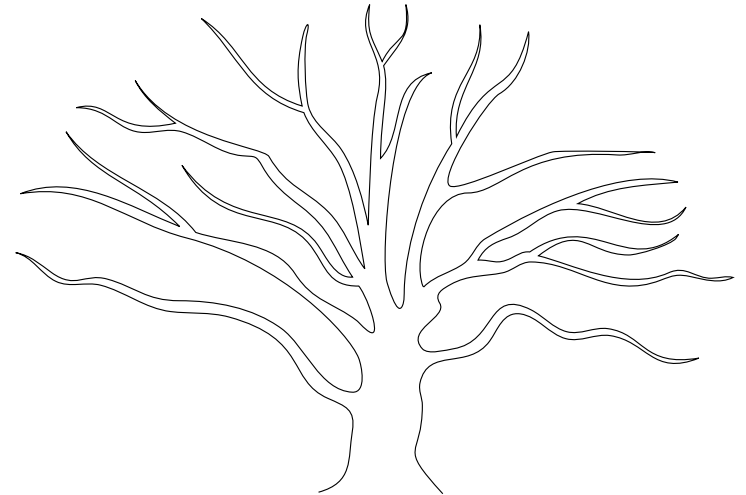
1. Fill the poster board with a simple outline of a tree, as shown.
2. Cut out pictures of people's faces from the magazines for the children to glue onto the poster.
3. Along the bottom of the poster board, neatly print the words: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed."

Instructions

1. Greet the children as they arrive. Explain that today they will be learning about one of the parables that Jesus taught. Tell them that today's Bible Story is about a mustard seed that grows into a great tree. Show the children the tree that you prepared on the poster board. Tell them that they will fill the tree and its branches with pictures of different faces.
2. Distribute the magazines, scissors, pictures you cut out, glue sticks and crayons. Tell the children that they may cut and glue or draw faces onto the tree until it is full.
3. Have the children draw a picture of their own face and sign their names beside them.
4. Hang the poster in a place where the parents and children can see it.
5. If possible, display this poster for the next three lessons in this unit as a reminder of this parable.

Teacher Tips

- For larger classes, have several posters for small groups of children to work on.
- Be careful to remove inappropriate pictures from advertisements in magazines before bringing them to class.



The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed.

B Mustard Seed

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Small Beginnings

The children will hear and participate in the parable of the mustard seed.

Materials

For each child:

- 1 mustard seed
- 1 small cup or plastic bag

For the teacher:

- large writing surface
- 1 pear
- 1 apple
- 1 mustard seed
- permanent pen

Preparation

1. Neatly print the word "parable" on the large writing surface.
2. Study Matthew 13:31-32. Be very familiar with the text below so that you can tell the story while holding your Bible.
3. Write the following words on each cup or plastic bag: "God makes his kingdom grow, Matthew 13:31-32."

Introduction to Bible Story

Open your Bible to Matthew 13. Tell the children that today's Bible Story is from the New Testament book of Matthew. Explain that today they begin a new set of lessons about the parables of Jesus. Show the children the word "parable" on the large writing surface. Hold up the pear and the apple. Tell them that the word "parable" sounds like "pear-apple." Have the children say it with you.

Ask the children if they know what a parable is. *A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Jesus told parables about things that people could see on earth to help them understand things that they could not see in heaven. Jesus told parables to help the people understand different things about God—his love, his kingdom, his church, his purpose.* Tell the children that today they will hear a parable of Jesus that helps us understand how his church grows.

Presenting the Bible Story

Read the following passage below, using the props as indicated.

[Jesus] told them another [HOLD UP THE PEAR AND APPLE.] parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a [HOLD UP THE MUSTARD SEED.] mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. [PRETEND TO PLANT THE SEED IN THE GROUND.] Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, [HOLD YOUR ARMS WIDE APART.] it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches." (Matthew 13:31-32)

Ask the children to assist you in telling this story. Choose two children to hold the pear and apple, one to hold the mustard seed, some to pretend to plant the seed, and the rest to hold their arms wide apart. Tell the parable again, this time with the children's help. Have the children exchange the items and do it again. Choose children to act out the seed growing and birds coming to sit in the branches.

What Does It Mean?

Have the children sit in a circle. Give each one a mustard seed to hold.

- *How would you describe this seed?*
- *What color is it?*
- *What shape and size is it?*
- *What does it smell like?*
- *How much does it weigh?*
- *Do you know what will happen if you plant this in the ground? What did Jesus say in the parable?* (Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches.)
- *Did you realize that the mustard seed grows to become the largest of garden plants? It becomes a tree that is so big that birds can come and sit on its branches!*
- *Jesus wanted to help us understand that his kingdom (which is the church) is like a mustard seed. Even though it may start out very small—with just a few people and a little bit of faith—it will grow to become huge! God wants his church to be the greatest of all so that people from all over can come and find rest in it.*

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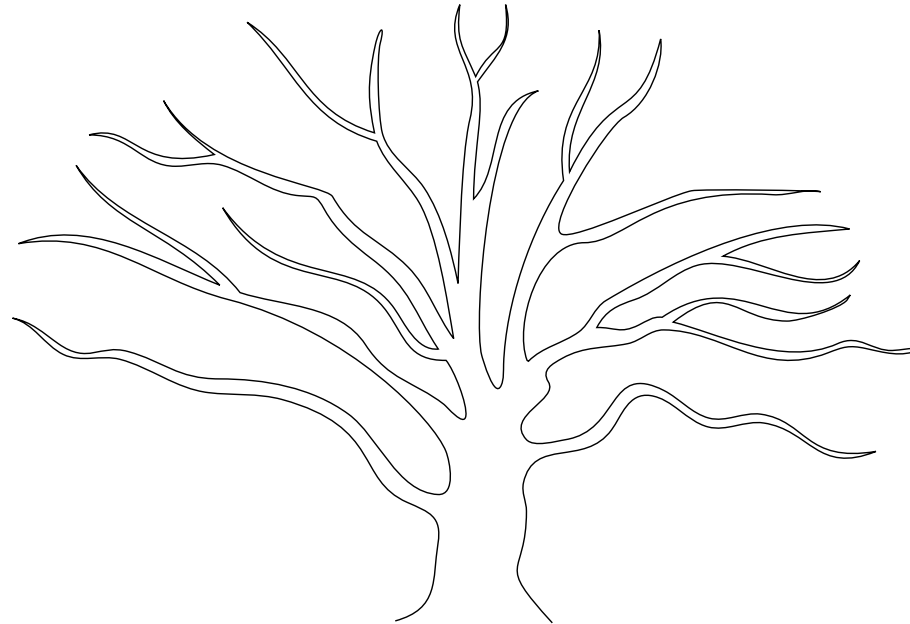
Mustard Seed

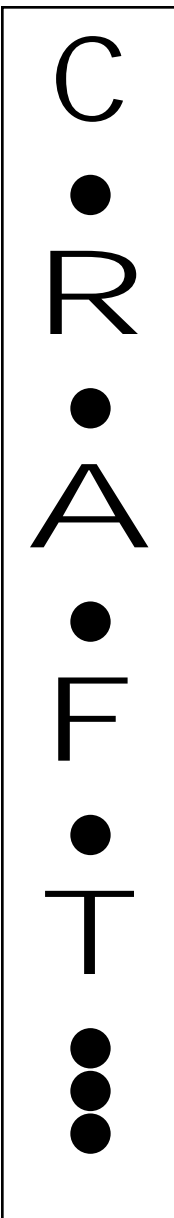
Share and Tell

Tell the children that they can keep their mustard seed to remind them of today's parable. Give the children small cups or plastic bags to hold their seeds. Label them if necessary. Encourage the children to show their seeds to someone this week and tell them the parable of the mustard seed. Close with a prayer thanking God for all the ways he helps us to learn more about him.

Teacher Tips

- Do not encourage the children to taste the mustard seed.
- If your children will be too distracted by each holding his own seed, put one or two seeds in a cup with a lid on it and pass it around. At the end of the activity, give each child a seed to take home.





Mustard Seed

The Mustard Tree

The children will make mustard trees illustrating Jesus' parable.

Materials

For each child:

- 1 piece of blue construction paper, 9" x 12"
- 1 piece of green construction paper, 9" x 12"
- crayons
- black marker
- glue stick

For the teacher:

- scissors
- brown construction paper, 1 piece for every 10 children
- yellow tissue paper
- large writing surface

Reproducible Pages:

- Page A, 1 copy for each child

Preparation

1. Cut out the mustard tree stencil from your copy of Reproducible Page A. Trace and cut out a mustard tree for each child from green construction paper.
2. Cut out a tree trunk stencil from your copy of Reproducible Page A. Trace and cut a tree trunk for each child from brown construction paper.
3. Cut out the mustard tree pictures along the inner line from the copies of Reproducible Page A.
4. Tear approximately fifteen 1" pieces of yellow tissue paper for each child.
5. Make a sample of the craft following the instructions below.
6. Prior to class, write, "The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32)" on the large writing surface.

Instructions

1. Introduce today's craft: *Today we are learning about how the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that grows and grows into a large tree. God makes the kingdom and the tree grow.* Show the children your sample of the craft. Explain to them how they will be making their own trees today.

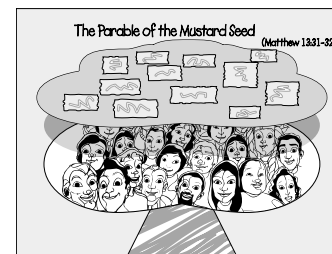
2. Distribute the mustard tree pictures and crayons. Have the children color the faces on their mustard trees.
3. Distribute the blue construction paper, black markers and glue sticks. Have the children copy the words: "The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32)" onto the tops of their papers. When they are finished writing, have them glue their tree pictures to their papers, as shown in Figure A.
4. Distribute the tree trunks you prepared. Have the children glue their tree trunks onto their tree pictures. See Figure B.
5. Distribute the green mustard trees you prepared. Have the children glue the top of the green mustard tree onto the tree picture, as shown in Figure C, so that it can be opened and closed. NOTE: You might need to fold back the top section of the tree for the children.
6. Distribute the yellow tissue squares. Have them glue these to their green mustard trees. See Figure D.

Conclusion

Close with a prayer asking God to help his kingdom grow more and more.

Teacher Tips

- Make the green tree stencil from poster board to make your tracing simple.
- Stack the construction paper to cut multiple trees and trunks.
- Adjust the size of the tree trunk, if necessary, so it doesn't cover the faces.



Mustard Seed

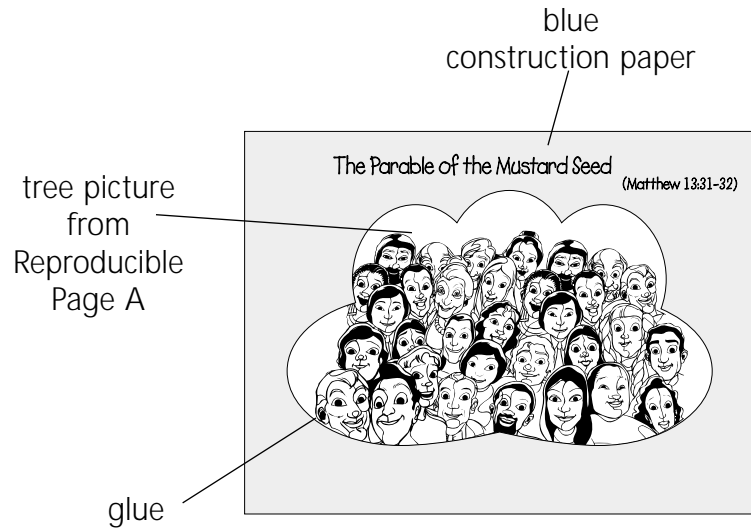


Figure A

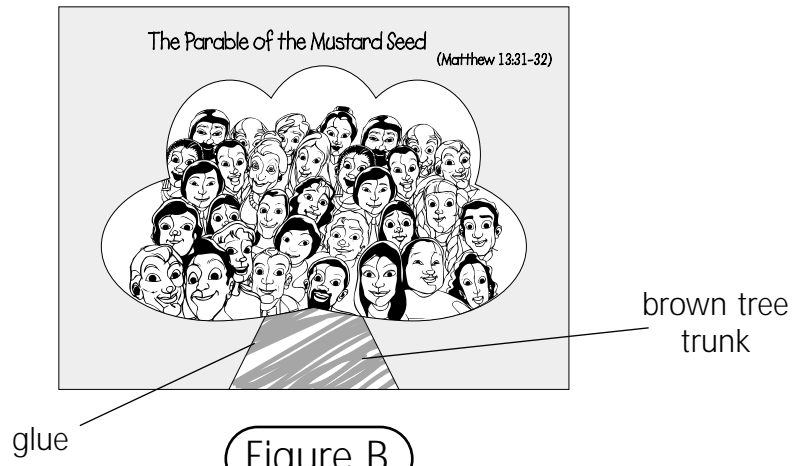


Figure B

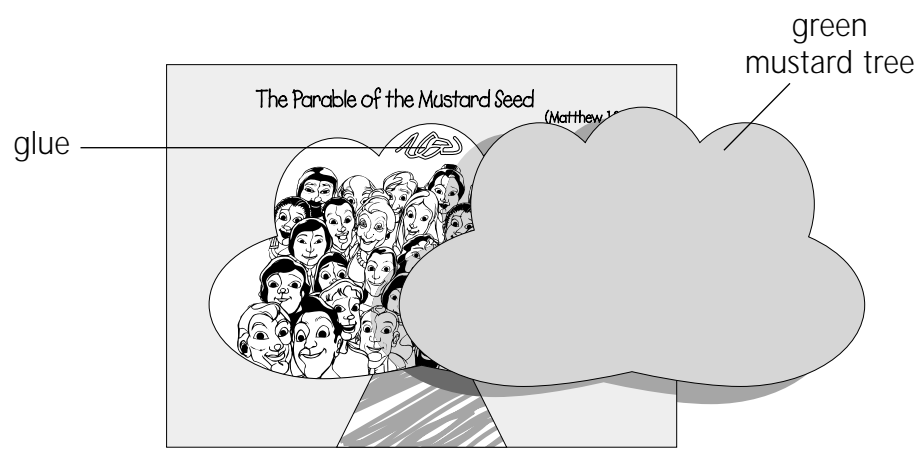


Figure C

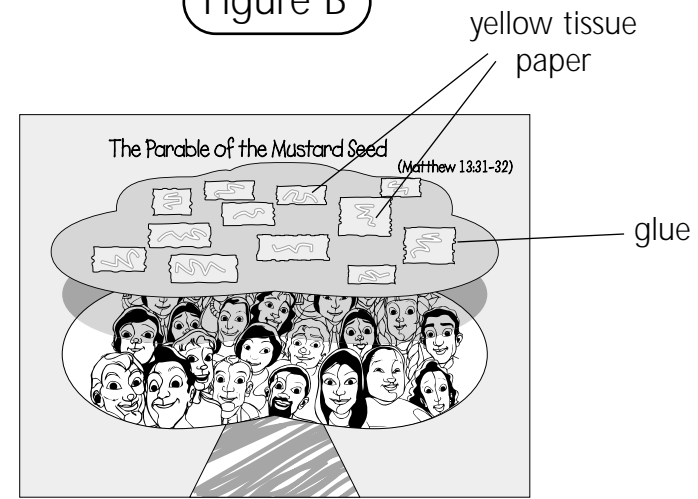


Figure D



Mustard Seed

Parable Jump

The children will learn this week's Scripture Memory Verse through this fun jumping activity.

Scripture Memory Verse

Jesus spoke all these things to the crowds in parables.
Matthew 13:34

Materials

For the teacher:

- large jump rope, about 12'

Preparation

Practice leading this activity.

Instructions

1. Introduce today's activity: *Today in your Bible Story you are learning about the parable of the mustard seed. Jesus spoke to the people in parables to help them understand God and how he wants people to live. Today's Scripture Memory Verse will remind you that Jesus spoke to the people in parables.*
2. Show the children the Scripture Memory Verse on the back of this Lesson Card. Say it to them three times, pointing to the words while they listen. Ask them to say it with you three more times, each time pointing to the words for them. Ask each child to stand next to you and say the verse together with you. Ask for volunteers to say the verse alone.
3. Show the children the jump rope. Explain that they will say the verse as they jump. Begin by demonstrating for the children. Say the verse, jumping with each phrase and having the children echo. Help them hear the cadence they will use while jumping.
Jesus spoke (children echo)
all these things (children echo)
to the crowd (children echo)
in parables. (children echo)
Matthew 13 (children echo)
34. (children echo)

4. Have all the children jump and say the verse together with you several times.
5. Select two children to hold each end of the large jump rope and start to swing it. Select one child to jump in and say the cadence while jumping. Have all the other children saying the verse together.
6. Continue until all the children that want to jump have a chance.
7. Ask for volunteers to say the verse from memory.

Jumping Variations

- If you cannot use a jump rope, try one of the following alternatives:
- Place a long piece of rope or string on the floor and have the children jump back and forth over it while saying the cadence.
 - Have the children say the verse while doing jumping jacks.
 - Have the children say the verse while hopping on two feet, then one foot and the other.

Conclusion

Ask the children what a parable is and why Jesus spoke to the crowd in parables. Close with a prayer thanking God for using parables to make it easier for us to understand things.

Teacher Tips

- If you are physically unable to lead this jumping activity, ask an assistant to help lead the jumping.
- If you have children with physical disabilities, encourage them to participate by saying the verse with the other children, holding the rope (if appropriate), clapping, etc.
- Decide whether the children in your group can accomplish this activity successfully. If too many children will be discouraged by jumping rope, then adapt it accordingly.



Mustard Seed

Jesus spoke all these things to
the crowds in parables.

Matthew 13:34

Lesson Objectives

- The children will hear the parable of the mustard seed.
- The children will state that God makes the church grow.
- The children will state one way that the church grows today.

Lesson Text

Matthew 13:31-32

Scripture Memory Verse

Jesus spoke all these things to the crowds in parables.
Matthew 13:34

Lesson Plan

Greeting and Registration

Preclass Activity: Parable Play

Welcome and Singing

Centers:

Life Application: How Do You Grow?

Game: Tic, Tac, Tell

Bible Skills: Put It There

NOTE: Allow time for a snack.



pre class

ACTIVITY

Parable Play

The children will review this week's Bible Story as they do this word search activity.

Materials

For each child:

- pencil

Reproducible Pages:

- Page B, 1 copy for each child

Preparation

Complete the activity on your copy of Reproducible Page B.

Instructions

1. Greet the children as they arrive. Remind them that this week they learned about Jesus' parable of the mustard seed. Tell them that in their Preclass Activity they will do two word activities using important words from their Bible Story.

2. Distribute the copies of Reproducible Page B and pencils. Encourage the children to work together with a partner or small group. Have the children who did not hear this week's Bible Story work with those who did.
3. Circulate among the children to offer help and encouragement.

Teacher Tips

- Play contemporary Christian music during this activity.

Answer Key

A	S	D	M	F	G	H	J	K	M
L	Z	X	U	B	I	R	D	S	A
O	J	E	S	U	S	W	E	R	T
T	Y	U	T	I	O	H	F	P	T
P	A	R	A	B	L	E	I	A	H
E	S	D	R	G	H	A	E	J	E
R	K	L	D	Z	X	V	L	L	W
C	C	V	B	S	E	E	D	A	N
H	M	Q	W	E	R	N	T	R	Y
U	I	G	O	P	A	S	D	G	F
S	M	A	L	L	G	T	R	E	E
H	J	R	K	L	A	S	D	F	G
H	J	D	A	S	D	F	G	H	J
K	L	E	K	I	N	G	D	O	M
Z	X	N	C	V	B	N	M	Q	W
E	R	T	Y	P	L	A	N	T	S

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How Do You Grow?

The children will review this week's Bible Story as they think of ways God's church grows today.

Materials

For each child:

- 1 seed

For the teacher:

- 1 potted plant
- 1 seed of the potted plant (or similar)

Reproducible Pages:

- Page C, 1 copy for each child

Preparation

Read Matthew 13:31-32 to review this week's Bible Story.

Reviewing the Bible Story

Open your Bible to Matthew 13. *In your Bible Story this week, you learned Jesus' parable of the mustard seed. Jesus spoke in parables to teach the people about God. Do you remember what a parable is? It is a story that helps to explain something. In the parable of the mustard seed, Jesus was helping the people to understand something very important about the church.* Read Matthew 13:31-32 to the children.

- *What did Jesus say the kingdom of heaven was like? (a mustard seed)*
- *What size did Jesus say the mustard seed is? (smallest)*
- *What does the mustard seed become after it is planted? (largest garden plant; tree)*
- *What do you think Jesus wanted us to understand about the kingdom or the church? (Even though it may start very small with a few people and a little faith, it will grow to become a great and very large group where people from all over can come and find rest.)*

Life Application

Show the children the potted plant that you brought. Ask the children to describe the plant. Show them the seed and place it next to the plant.

- *How does a little seed like this become a plant like this? (plant it in the ground; give it water and light; etc.)*
- *The Bible says that God makes things grow. When you plant a seed in the ground and give it enough water and light, it will grow—because God makes it grow!*
- *Jesus wants us to understand that if we "plant" our faith and our life in Jesus, he will make our faith and his church grow.*

Hold up the plant. Ask the children what they see. Ask the children what part of the plant can't they see. Explain that the roots are a very important part of the plant although they are hidden in the ground. The plant grows first in the ground where you cannot see and then above the ground where you can see.

Distribute the copies of Reproducible Page C to the children. *God's church—the kingdom on earth—is like this plant. It grows in ways that we can see and in ways that we cannot see. For example, when more and more people are baptized, we can see the church getting bigger and bigger. That is like watching the leaves of a plant get bigger and bigger. But when disciples are reading, praying and growing stronger in their faith, you may not be able to see the ways that they are growing right away. But as each disciple reads the Bible, prays to God and shares his faith, then the church will grow as more and more people learn about God and are baptized.*

Give each child a seed. Say each of the different "Ways to grow" from your copy of Reproducible Page C and have the children place their seed on the corresponding pictures.

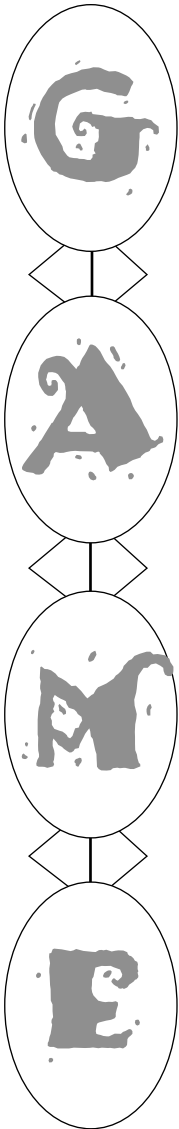
Conclusion

Ask the children how they see the church growing. Share from your own life about people who have been studying the Bible with you, or ways that your faith is growing from Bible study, prayer and discipleship. Close with a prayer thanking God for all the ways that he helps the church to grow.

Teacher Tips

- If your budget permits, give each child a package of seeds to take home and plant and watch grow.





Tic, Tac, Tell

The children will play this game as they think of ways that God's church grows today.

Materials

For the teacher:

- 5 pennies
- 5 dimes

Reproducible Pages:

- Page D, 1 copy for each child (optional)

Preparation

Practice leading this activity.

Instructions

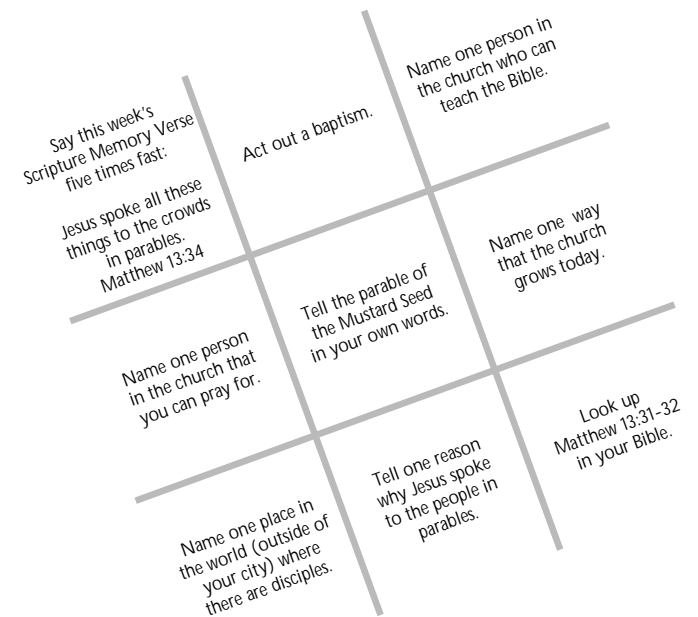
1. Introduce today's activity: *In your Bible Story this week, you learned about Jesus' parable of the mustard seed. Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a tiny mustard seed that grows to become a tree. Jesus wanted people to understand that God can use just a few people to make his church grow big and strong. In your game today, you are going to think about ways that the kingdom of heaven—God's church—grows today.*
2. Show the children the sample game board on the back of this Lesson Card. Explain that this game will be played like tic-tac-toe. Tell the children that when it is their turn to put a marker on the space, they must first do what is written in that space.
3. Divide the children into two teams. Be careful to balance the children who did not hear this week's Bible Story with those who did. Give the pennies to one team and the dimes to the other team. Choose a team to go first.
4. Tell the team that begins that they may place their coin on any space on the board. Once they choose a place, read what is written on the space and have them do it as a team. If they are successful, they may place their marker. If they are not, then they may not place their marker and the other team may go.
5. Continue until one team achieves three-in-a-row. If neither team is able to get three in a row, then begin a new game. Play as many rounds as time permits.

Conclusion

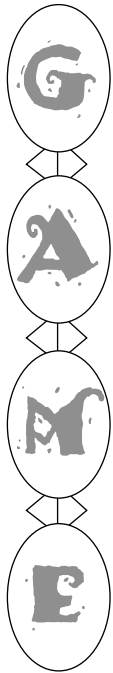
Ask the children how it makes them feel to know that God's church is growing today the same way it did over two thousand years ago. Distribute the copies of Reproducible Page D (if available) and encourage the children to play this game at home. Close with a prayer thanking God for the church.

Teacher Tips

- You may substitute other small objects for the dimes and pennies.
- Prepare your own answers for each of the spaces on the game board so that you can help the children if they get stuck.
- If you have children with strong reading skills, divide them into pairs and have them play individually or in smaller teams.

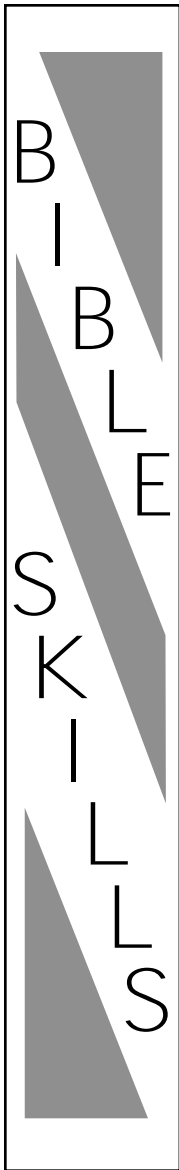


Mustard Seed



<p>Say this week's Scripture Memory Verse five times fast:</p> <p>Jesus spoke all these things to the crowds in parables. Matthew 13:34</p>	<p>Act out a baptism.</p>	<p>Name one person in the church who can teach the Bible.</p>
<p>Name one person in the church that you can pray for.</p>	<p>Tell the parable of the mustard seed in your own words.</p>	<p>Name one way that the church grows today.</p>
<p>Name one place in the world (outside of your city) where there are disciples.</p>	<p>Tell one reason why Jesus spoke to the people in parables.</p>	<p>Look up Matthew 13:31-32 in your Bible.</p>





Put It There

The children will find missing words from this week's Bible Story.

Materials

For each child:

- pencil

For the teacher:

- large writing surface

Reproducible Pages:

- Page E, 1 copy for each child

Preparation

1. Complete the activity on your copy of Reproducible Page E.
2. Practice leading this activity.

Instructions

1. Introduce today's activity: *This week in your Bible Story, you learned about Jesus' parable of the mustard seed. Jesus spoke to the people in parables to help them understand things about God. In the parable of the mustard seed, Jesus helped the people to understand how God's church grows. In our activity today, you are going to practice looking up the parable of the mustard seed and fill in some missing words.*
2. Tell the children to find a partner and open their Bibles to Matthew 13. Offer assistance as needed. Tell them to find Matthew 13:31-32 and put their finger on it. Ask the children to follow along as you read it aloud.
3. Tell the children to keep their fingers in their Bibles as you distribute the copies of Reproducible Page E and pencils. Tell the children that they will use their Bibles to find the missing words in the parable on their pages and write them in.
4. Invite the children to read aloud with you as you read the parable on your copy of Reproducible Page E. When you come to the first blank, ask the children what word they think belongs in the space. When they have the correct word, write it on the large writing surface and have them write it in the blanks on their pages.
5. Do this for each blank on their pages. When all the children have filled in all the blanks, ask for volunteers to read the parable on their pages alone or with a partner.

Additional Reading

If time permits, assist the children in looking up the following passages. Point out that these are also parables that Jesus taught the people:

- Matthew 13:44-45
- Mark 4:26-29
- Mark 4:30-32 (Mark's account of the parable of the mustard seed)

Conclusion

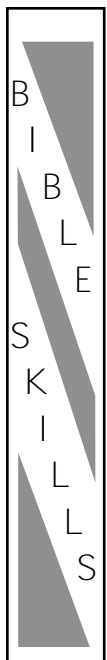
Ask the children what their favorite parable is and why. Explain that Jesus' parables are stories with a very important message about God. Encourage the children to learn more of Jesus' parables. Close with a prayer thanking God for the parables of Jesus.

Teacher Tips

- Substitute the large writing surface for individual cards with the answers written on them.



Mustard Seed



Put It There Put It There Put It There Put It There Put It There Put It There Put It There Put It There Put It There

Put It There

Answer Key

He told them another parable :

“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches.”

Matthew 13:31-32

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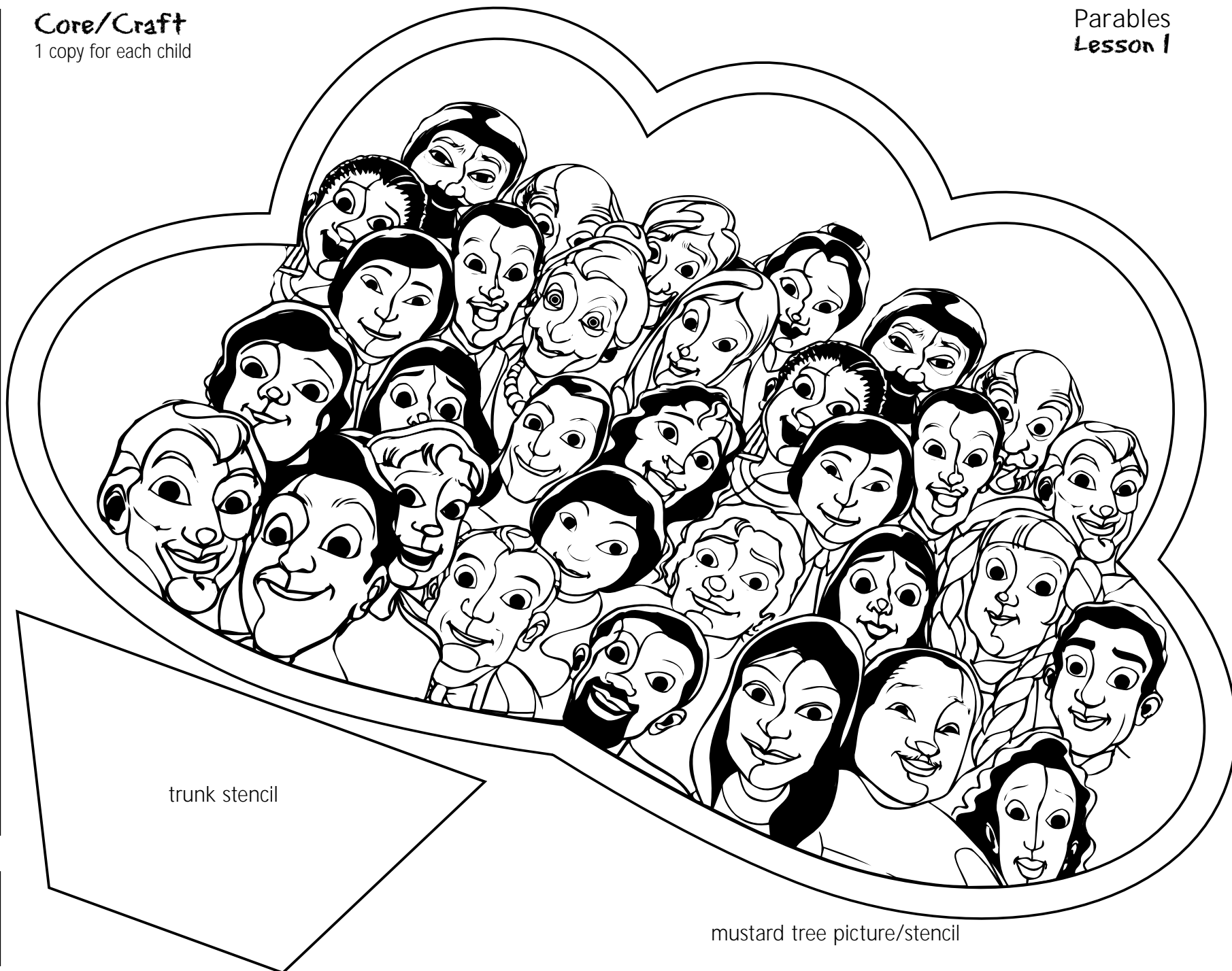
Core/Craft

1 copy for each child

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PAGE

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Parable Play Parable Play Parable Play Parable Play Parable Play Parable Play Parable Play Parable Play Parable

Parable Play

Name _____

Instructions: Find the hidden words listed in the box to the right.

A	S	D	M	F	G	H	J	K	M
L	Z	X	U	B	I	R	D	S	A
Q	J	E	S	U	S	W	E	R	T
T	Y	U	T	I	O	H	F	P	T
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E	R	T	Y	P	L	A	N	T	S

JESUS	PARABLE	KINGDOM
HEAVEN	FIELD	SMALL
LARGE	MUSTARD	SEED
PLANT	GARDEN	TREE
BIRDS	PERCH	MATTHEW

Instructions: Use some of the words in the box above to fill in the blanks below:

_____ told them another
 _____: "The _____ of
 _____ is like a _____
 _____, which a man took and planted
 in his _____. Though it is the
 smallest of all your seeds, yet when it
 grows, it is the largest of garden plants
 and becomes a _____, so that the birds
 of the air come and _____ in its
 branches." Matthew 13:31-32

Parable Play Parable Play Parable Play Parable Play Parable Play Parable Play Parable Play Parable Play Parable



Supplement/Life Application

1 copy for each child

How Do You Grow?



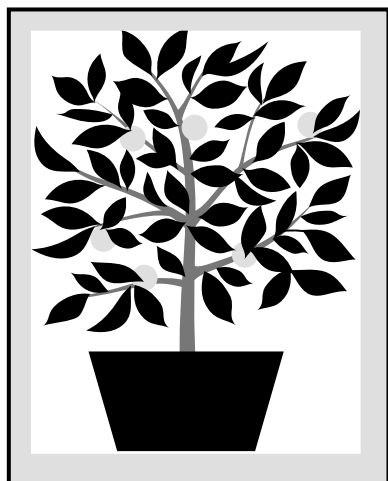
Read the Bible.



Pray.



Learn from another disciple.



Change to be more like Jesus.



Teach someone about Jesus.



Baptize a friend.

R
E
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Supplement/Game
1 copy for each child (optional)

Tic, Tac, Tell

Say this week's Scripture Memory Verse five times fast: Jesus spoke all these things to the crowds in parables. Matthew 13:34	Act out a baptism.	Name one person in the church who can teach the Bible.
Name one person in the church that you can pray for.	Tell the parable of the mustard seed in your own words.	Name one way that the church grows today.
Name one place in the world (outside of your city) where there are disciples.	Tell one reason why Jesus spoke to the people in parables.	Look up Matthew 13:31-32 in your Bible.

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Supplement/Bible Skills

1 copy for each child

Parables
Lesson 1

Put It There Put It There Put It There Put It There Put It There Put It There Put It There Put It There Put It There

Put It There

Name _____

He told them another _____:

"The _____ of _____ is like a

_____, which a man took and planted

in his _____. Though it is the smallest of all your

_____, yet when it grows, it is the largest of

garden _____ and becomes a _____, so that the

birds of the air come and _____ in its branches."

_____ 13:31-32

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