



Parent Resource

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

Theme: God invites us to be part of His kingdom, which starts small, but grows big over time.

Text: Matthew 13:31–32; Mark 4:30–32; Luke 13:18–19

Audience: Teens (12–18)

Time: 50–60 minutes

1. Icebreaker (5 minutes)

- **Ask:** “What’s something small that grew up into something bigger? (a meme, a TikTok trend, a small business, a new idea).”
 - **Transition:** “Jesus compared God’s kingdom to something like that—something tiny, but unstoppable.”
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2. Scripture Reading (5 minutes)

- Read all three versions aloud (Matthew, Mark, Luke).
 - **Observation Prompt:** “What’s repeated in each version? What’s different?”
 - Repeated: small seed → large plant/tree.
 - Luke: birds nesting = shelter for others.
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3. Background & Context (10 minutes)

- **Mustard Seed:** proverbially tiny in Jewish culture but grew into an invasive shrub (6–12 ft).
 - **Kingdom Language:** OT described empires as great trees (Ezekiel 17; Daniel 4). Jesus flips expectations—God’s kingdom begins with a *weed-seed*, not a cedar.
 - **Insights:** (from Klyne Snodgrass’s *Stories with Intent*)
 - God’s kingdom is **hidden yet unstoppable**.
 - It works through small beginnings (Jesus + 12 disciples).
 - The “birds” = nations, outsiders, unexpected people finding a home.
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4. Family Discussion (15 minutes)

- Why do you think Jesus used something small and ordinary (*mustard seed*) instead of something noble like a cedar tree?
 - How do we see God’s kingdom starting small in Jesus’ ministry? How about in church history? In our family?
 - Have you ever felt like your faith, or your influence, was “too small to matter”? What does this parable say to you?
 - If God’s kingdom is unstoppable, how should that affect your courage to live for Christ in school, sports, friendships, etc.?
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5. Interactive Activity (10–12 minutes)

“Seed Stories”

- Give each child a slip of paper with a modern example of a small beginning:
 - “A missionary sharing Jesus with one person in a village.”
 - “Someone starting a prayer group at school.”
 - “A Christian uploading a Bible verse on social media.”
- Have a discussion:

- How could this small act grow into something bigger?
- What challenges might they face?
- How does this reflect the mustard seed parable?

Share highlights as a family.

6. Personal Challenge & Application (7–8 minutes)

- **Faith:** Even “mustard-seed faith” matters (cf. Matthew 17:20).
 - **Mission:** Small acts of obedience—sharing your faith, kindness, prayer—can grow far beyond what you imagine.
 - **Courage:** The kingdom may look unimpressive, but it will cover the world. Stand boldly in small beginnings.
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7. Closing Reflection (5 minutes)

- Hand out a small mustard seed or picture of one.
 - *Ask: “What ‘small seed’ step can you take this week for God’s kingdom? A conversation? An invitation? A prayer?”*
 - **Prayer: “Lord, take our small seeds of faith and obedience, and grow them into something big for Your kingdom.”**
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