

The Parables of Jesus

Theme

Jesus used parables to teach about the Kingdom of God.

Object

Six oranges and a jar of mustard seeds.

Scripture

Jesus used many similar stories and illustrations to teach the people as much as they could understand. In fact, in his public ministry he never taught without using parables; but afterward, when he was alone with his disciples, he explained everything to them. Mark 4:33-34 (NLT)

Have you ever noticed that when we come together for the children's sermon, we almost always start by showing you an object? After showing you the object and talking about it for a few minutes, we usually say something like, "That reminds me of what Jesus said in our Bible lesson today." Why do we do that? It is to help you to better understand what the Bible lesson means.

Here is an example — suppose that a kindergarten teacher was teaching a lesson about subtraction. The teacher might stand up in front of the class and say, "Six minus two equals four." Of course, that is true, but to a class of young children that have never been taught about subtraction, they might not understand what the teacher meant.

Now, suppose that the teacher showed the class six oranges and said, "I have six oranges. (Count them.) If I take away two of those oranges, how many oranges are left? That's right!

There are four left." (Count them.) Now the class would understand that six minus two equals four.

That is the same way that Jesus taught his followers about the Kingdom of God. When he taught, he began by saying, "The Kingdom of God is like..." and then he would give an example. That method of teaching is called a parable. The Bible tells us that Jesus used parables to teach people in such a way that they would understand. In fact, the Bible says, "He never taught without using parables." (Mark 4:34)

In our Bible lesson today, we find one of the best-known parables of Jesus. It is called "The Parable of the Mustard Seed." Have you ever seen a mustard seed? I have some to show you this morning. Look how small they are!

Jesus began his mustard seed parable by asking, "How can I describe the Kingdom of God? What story should I use to illustrate it? It is like a mustard seed planted in the ground. It is the smallest of seeds, but it becomes the largest of all the plants in the garden; it grows long branches, and birds can make nests in its shade."

Jesus was teaching his followers that the Kingdom of God had a small beginning. How many disciples did Jesus start with? You are right, Jesus began his ministry on earth with a very small group of twelve followers, but as they followed Jesus and told others about him, the Kingdom grew and grew until it covered the whole earth. You might think that you are too small to be an important part of the Kingdom of God, but when we tell others about Jesus, we help the Kingdom to grow to spread over the whole earth. So, when you start to think that you are too small to be important in the Kingdom of God, remember the parable of the mustard seed.

Father, we sometimes think we are too small to be important in the Kingdom of God. Help us to remember the parable of the mustard seed we have learned this morning. If we will tell others about what Jesus has done for us and what he wants to do for them, we can have a part in growing the Kingdom. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Interactive Group Activities
by Carol Williams & Charles Kirkpatrick

Sermon Title: "The Parables of Jesus"

Scripture Reading: Mark 4:30-34

GROWING KINGDOM: Before class time, the teacher can hide some cut out shapes of people around a designated area of the classroom. When the teacher says, "Go", the children will search for the hidden cut outs (set a time limit of about 3 minutes). When a child finds a cut out, it will be brought to the front of the room and tacked to the bulletin board. When the time is up, the children can see how fast the KINGDOM grew as they gathered the people.

MUSTARD SEED HANGMAN GAME: Use a chalk board to play the hangman game using words from the parable of the mustard seed. (mustard, tree, small, large, plant, grow, etc.) Let the children take turns guessing letters.

MUSTARD SEED REFRIGERATOR MAGNET: Make a refrigerator magnet by gluing a small magnet strip to the back of cardboard. You can buy magnet strips at craft shops. Decorate the card with the words "Big things come from little things like mustard seeds" and glue a mustard seed to it.

GROWING THE KINGDOM: This game is played like hide and seek. As children are found they will connect by holding hands and growing their group of ones who have

been found. When all have been found let them form a circle and have a seat to have the story today told to them.

PARABLE BOOKMARK: Give the children a piece of card stock as well as stickers and a mustard seed to make a bookmark. Children can write PARABLE on the bookmark as well as placing several mustard seeds on the bookmark with glue. After the bookmark has been decorated, the children can cover it with clear contact paper and punch a hole at the top for a red ribbon.

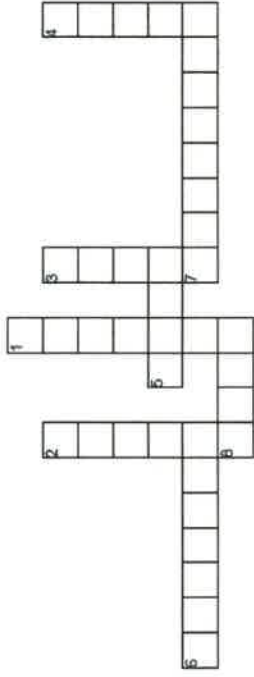
CHALKBOARD KINGDOM GROWING: Invite each child to come up to the chalkboard and draw a stick man or their choice of a person figure. And as each child comes to draw their stick man, make sure the hands are connected and see how many figures they can draw in 5 minutes.

PARABLE WALL BANNER: The teacher can have very large letters ready for children to cut out from card stock or colored paper. These should be large letters 10-12 inches tall. After the children cut them out, have them place them in order on a focal wall and decorate them with stickers. If the class is very large, this could be done more than one time for a different wall or a different location of the building to remind them that Jesus taught using parables.

MUSTARD SEED MUFFIN SNACKS: The teacher can use a favorite recipe to make miniature muffins. Sprinkle sesame seeds on top to symbolize mustard seeds.

Song: "Little Is Much when God Is in It"

Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

- A small grain of a plant placed in the ground for growing another plant
- A story told by Jesus to help explain his teachings
- Not as big as any of the others
- The place where birds lay eggs or give birth to their young

DOWN

- Bigger than any of the others
- An area where plants are grown
- Animals that have wings and are covered with feathers
- A living thing that grows in the ground, usually with leaves or flowers

SEED SMALLEST PARABLE NEST
 PLANT BIRDS LARGEST GARDEN



Copyright © Sermons4Kids, Inc.
 May be reproduced for Ministry Use

Children's Worship Bulletin

The Parables of Jesus

Mark 4:30-34

Word Search Puzzle

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

GROUND SEED GARDEN LARGEST PLANTED
 JESUS KINGDOM SHADE NEST MUSTARD
 SMALLEST BIRDS PLANTS STORY BRANCHES

Your Church Name
 Any Town, Anywhere

Coloring Page

Fill in the Blanks

A word has been removed from each sentence and listed below the sentences. Use the listed words to fill the blanks.



Jesus said, "How can I describe the _____ of God?"

Jesus asked, "What _____ should I use to illustrate it?"

"It is like a mustard seed _____ in the ground."

"It is the _____ of all seeds."

"It grows to become the _____ of the plants in the garden."

"It grows long branches and _____ can make nests in its shade."

Jesus used many similar stories to _____ people so they could understand.

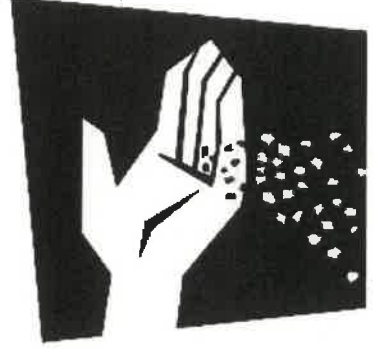
In fact, Jesus never taught without using _____.

birds
Kingdom

planted
parables

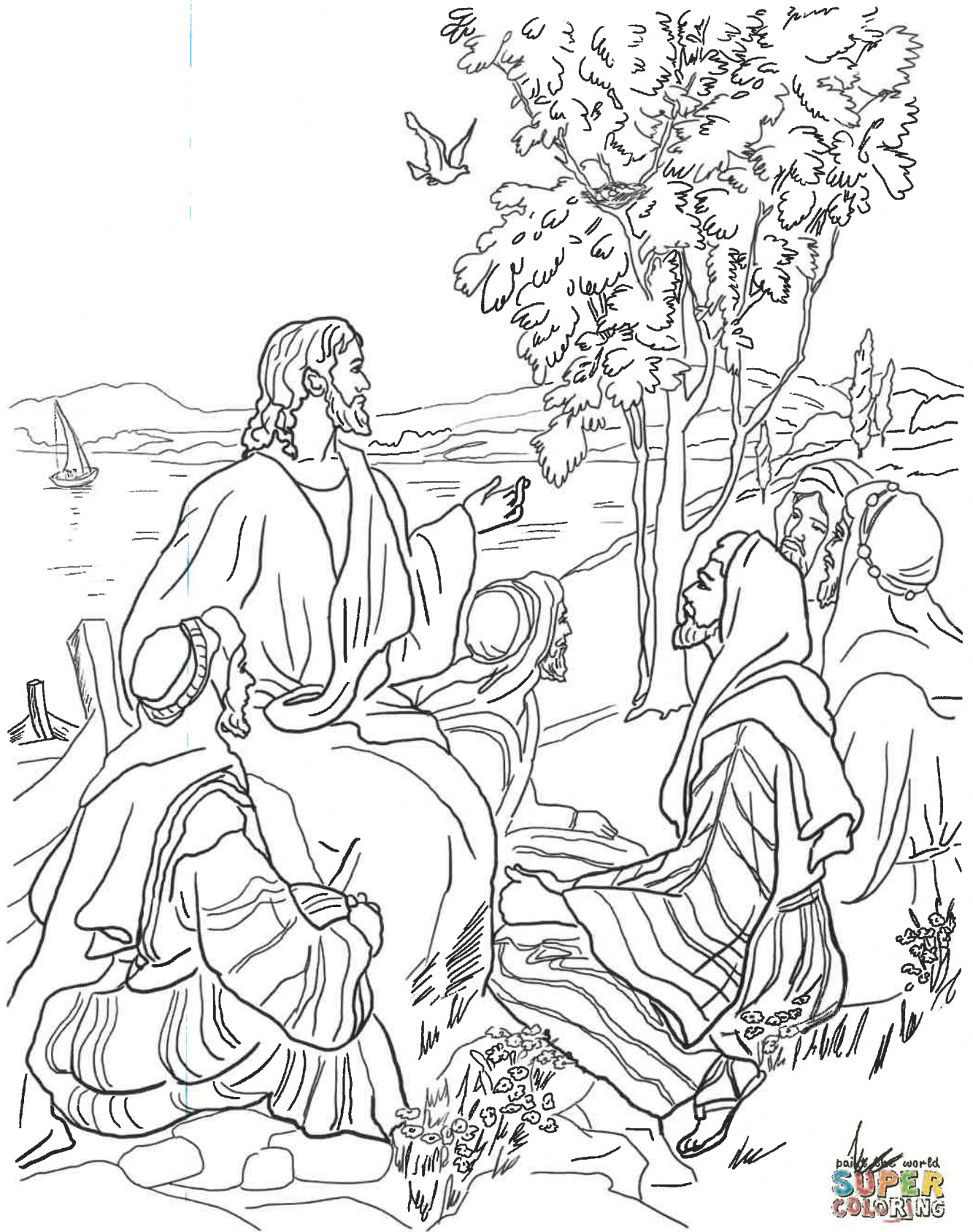
largest
story

smallest
teach



Mustard Seed

The Parable of the Mustard Seed
Mark 4:30-34



The Parable of the Mustard Seed
Mark 4:30-32