

Children's liturgy – Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B)

Preparing for worship

Colour: green

Props: mustard seeds

Song suggestions: Bring forth the kingdom (854, Laudate)

Welcome: Today we hear about a tiny little seed. But when it is planted it grows into a big bush with branches big enough for all the birds to come and sit in. Let's think a bit more about what Jesus was trying to say with this story.

Opening prayer: Loving God, you show us that the littlest actions can have huge results, and that the smallest of people can do great things. Inspire us to play our part in making the world a fairer place for everyone. Amen.

First reading (optional): Ezekiel 17:22-24

Psalm: Psalm 91:2-3. 13-16 r.2

Gospel acclamation: *everyone stands and sings the acclamation together.*

Gospel: Mark 4:26-34

Jesus went on to say, "The Kingdom of God is like this. A man scatters seed in his field. He sleeps at night, is up and about during the day, and all the while the seeds are sprouting and growing. Yet he does not know how it happens. The soil itself makes the plants grow and bear fruit; first the tender stalk appears, then the ear, and finally the ear full of corn. When the corn is ripe, the man starts cutting it with his sickle, because harvest time has come.

"What shall we say the Kingdom of God is like?" asked Jesus. "What parable shall we use to explain it? It is like this. A man takes a mustard seed, the smallest seed in the world, and plants it in the ground. After a while it grows up and becomes the biggest of all plants. It puts out such large branches that the birds come and make their nests in its shade."

Jesus preached his message to the people, using many other parables like these; he told them as much as they could understand. He would not speak to them without using parables, but when he was alone with his disciples, he would explain everything to them.

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Gospel reflection: In today's gospel, Jesus is trying to show what God's Kingdom is like. It's not easy to describe, so instead he tells stories so that we can try to imagine it.

Both the stories he tells are about seeds, which grow and change from small beginnings. We're going to think about the story of the mustard seed. What do you remember about this story?

The mustard seed is a tiny little seed. *You could show the children mustard seeds so that they can see just how small they are.*

But it grows into a very big bush with big branches. Big enough for birds to be able to come and sit in to get out of the sun. So, what do you think Jesus is trying to tell us?

Perhaps it's that the Kingdom of heaven is also always growing, just like the seed, so that there's room for everyone who wants to be there.

The mustard seed also shows us how size doesn't matter – even a tiny seed can produce a great big tree. The same is true for us – even the smallest person can do great things. And even the smallest action can have big results.

For example, being kind in the playground and inviting someone to play with you if they look lonely, is just one little thing you can do – it hardly takes any time at all. But to the person who is lonely, it can make a really big difference.

Can you think of any examples of small things that you have done that have made a big difference to other people?

What do you think happens when lots of people join their actions together?

If lots of people do something small, it can make a really, really big difference. A bit like how a drop of water isn't very much on its own, but join it together with millions of other drops, and you get the great big sea!

One way to do this is to join together with other people to call for a fairer world. A world where all people have the things that they need to live healthy and peaceful lives.

Last year, 70,000 people in this country asked the World Bank to make sure that farmers across the world can swap, store and share their own seeds to grow food. And the World Bank has begun to listen!

We hope that this is the first step in making sure that everyone around the world can get the food that they need to live.

Together, small actions add up to make a big difference. The smallest seed can grow into the biggest bush.

What will you do this week to make a difference to other people locally and around the world?

Intercessions *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or you can use the suggestions below.*

We join our voices together now in prayer:

We pray for world leaders: that they may have the courage to make decisions for the good of all people, and to protect the earth our common home. Lord, in your mercy...

For more children's liturgy resources and illustrations see cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy

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We pray for all people who are poor: that together we may work together to build a brighter future. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that God may inspire us to make a difference, knowing that even the smallest among us can do great things. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: God of all, help us to make a change so all people can live free from poverty and so we may glimpse your kingdom here on earth. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Activity suggestions

Encourage the children to colour in the accompanying illustration and on the back to draw the small actions that they will take to make a real difference to others.

Plant mustard seeds with the children and invite them to look after them at home, watching them grow, so that they can see how the smallest of seeds can become something much bigger.

Invite the children to go home and share all that they have heard and thought about today. Can they do at least one thing this week to make a difference to others, even if it is only something very small? How can they care for our world and the people in it, by themselves and with others?

*Gospel passage taken from:
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