



Church of Ireland Children's Ministry

HARVEST NEWSLETTER



In the last century, archeologists found wheat and cotton seeds in some of the burial chambers that they excavated. Those seeds—which were probably anywhere from 2,000-4,000 years old—grew when put into the right soil. The spirit of life was still in them, even though they had lain dormant for thousands of years.

This is dramatic confirmation that, if a seed is sown, it will do something when it lands in the right kind of soil.

If the seed is God's Kingdom and the soil is our hearts, how can we prepare our hearts so it's the 'right kind of soil' for God's Kingdom to grow?

Any gardener will tell you that the smelliest compost makes the best fertilizer. Sometimes we look at the sin and dirt in



our lives and don't see anything good. God sees our dirty hearts and sees a good place to plant his Word. We don't have to "clean up" our lives in order to be fruitful for Christ. We simply have to let him use the dirt of our lives for his glory.

If we are open to Him, He brings transformation.





MUSTARD SEEDS

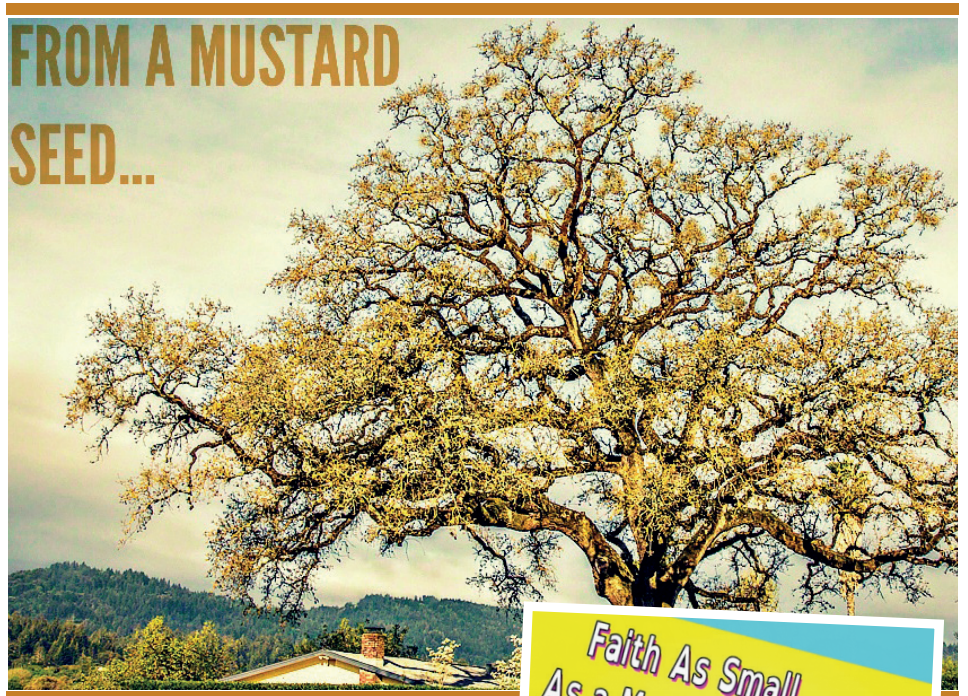
1. God's Kingdom 2. Faith

Jesus mentions this tiny seed on more than one occasion.

In Matthew 13 he talks about how a seed as teeny tiny as a mustard seed can grow into a huge tree where birds can come and perch on its branches. He says that the Kingdom of God is like that mustard seed. When it is planted, it grows from a tiny seed into a huge tree that sustains life.

In Matthew 17 Jesus likens the mustard seed to our faith and says that even if we only have faith as small as a mustard seed we can say to the mountain that is in our way 'Move', and it will move!

1. If you are exploring a Mustard Seed as the Kingdom of God, Barnabas in Churches have an exceptional talk that could be used in a Sunday Club or as an All Age Service that really articulates the meaning of the Kingdom of God so well: <https://www.barnabasinchurches.org.uk/like-a-mustard-seed/> We love how it uses repetition and lots of examples from the Bible of tiny



actions that grow the Kingdom of God:

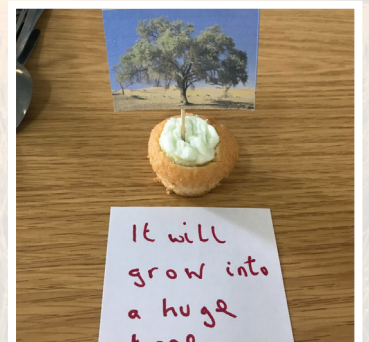
**Where God's in charge,
Small things grow large.
And in God's hand,
Small gifts expand.**

Mina Munns also has a great open ended session on this parable to allow children to be creative with their response to the story. She used smarties as seeds which always goes down well with the children! <http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/search/label/Mustard%20Seed>



2. If you are exploring a Mustard Seed as Faith there is a lovely guided reflection in this SPCK Assemblies piece: <http://www.assemblies.org.uk/pri/54/the-parable-of-the-mustard-seed>

There is also a wonderful simple children's song from Spring Harvest: Kid's Praise 200 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFEUjy42xNk>





SEED ACTIVITIES & MUSIC

Recycle yoghurt cartons, bottles or toilet/paper towel rolls and make seed shakers as musical instruments for thanksgiving at Harvest time. (If you stretch an old balloon over the opening, the children can also make twanging noises by plucking it!)

The act of recycling can be brought into a session about caring for God's Creation.

We love using www.lightlive.org for lots of free story ideas, activity sheets and prayers. We've picked our favourites and put them here:

YOUNGER CHILDREN'S SEED STORY:

These are the seeds the farmer sowed (mime sowing seeds) to grow into wheat (lift hands upwards), to grind into flour (rub one fist round and round on flat palm of other hand), to bake into bread (knead dough) for the farmer to eat for breakfast.

These are the seeds the farmer sowed that fell on the path (tap fingers of one hand on the palm of the other), where there was no soil (shake head), so the hungry birds swooped down (flap hands as wings) and ate them all for their breakfast. (Make a 'beak' with finger and thumb and peck.)

These are the seeds the farmer sowed that fell near some stones (make fists) where the ground was hard (gently knock fists together), so plants could not grow (shake head) to make bread for the

farmer's breakfast. These are the seeds the farmer sowed which grew near weeds (wiggle fingers) that were prickly and big (interlock fingers), so the plants could not grow to make bread for the farmer's breakfast. These are the seeds the farmer sowed which fell in good soil (smile) and grew strong and tall (reach up high), so there was plenty of flour (mime grinding flour again) to make bread for the farmer's breakfast. (Mime eating.)

Explain that Jesus had a special reason for telling the story. Some of the seeds in the story did not grow, but some did – and that made the farmer happy because he had bread for his breakfast. Jesus knew that some people would not learn to love God, but some people do – and that makes God happy because then he has friends. We can make God happy by being his friends!

SEED ART:

Using dyed seeds to either recreate the story or to give thanks at Harvest time is a very effective way for children to express what they have learned. Take time to chat to them as they create. You can learn how to dye pumpkin seeds from multiple websites and videos online.



SEED GAMES:

Danielle's Place has lots of seed ideas. One is a Seed Race -

Give each child a seed and a straw and have them line up across one side of the room. The child that blows his seed across the room to the other side first wins. You can use seeds from oranges, pumpkins, beans, etc www.daniellesplace.com





SEED ACTIVITY SHEETS: (SAMPLE)

This shows the kind of activity sheets you can print from lightlive or you can buy in age appropriate booklets from Scripture Union.

My name _____

Things to do with soil.



Dig it!



Sow seeds in it!

I never knew soil was such fun!
Remember to wash your hands after touching it!



Soil is brown, grey or red.
It's crumbly, muddy or dusty.
Soil is great for growing flowers and vegetables and trees and fruit.

Thank God for it!

Who made the soil?
God did!
Thank you, God!



Plant flowers in it!



Find mini-beasts in it!

Bubbles 11

Try out some of these ideas in a clean, safe place.
Think about the way in which God makes plants grow when we provide the right conditions.

Use Cara and Kris's prayer together.

Help children take their first steps into Bible reading with Tiddlywinks: My Little Green Book, which includes this story that Jesus told.
www.scriptureunion.org.uk/light

SEED PRAYERS JUDGES 6:11-16,33-40

1 Give each child a seed. Ask the children to close their eyes and imagine what their seed might grow into.

2 While their eyes are still closed, say that they might be a bit like Gideon, and might think that because they are small, they can't do much. But God, who makes seeds grow into big plants, can do big things through them, no matter how old they are. Ask them

to imagine something they would like God to help them do. Now encourage them to talk to God silently and ask him for help. At the end you might like to close with a prayer.

3 The children may like to tape their seed to some paper to help them keep it safe. Older children might like to write what they said to God on the paper next to the seed.





PLANT SEEDS OF KINDNESS TODAY:

1. Non messy craft: Blessing Sticks.
Decorate a lolly pop stick. Pray a blessing on everyone who lives on your street. Plant the lollypop stick somewhere you pass regularly as a reminder to pray blessings on your neighbours.

2. Messy Craft: Seed Balls.

Seed Ball Recipe

2 parts potting soil

5 parts pottery clay mix from your local art store

1-2 parts water

1-2 parts seeds of your choice

Large tub to mix ingredients

Large box to store seed balls

Directions:

Mix the soil, clay and 1 part water thoroughly. There should be no lumps. Slowly add more water until the mixture is the consistency of the toy store molding clay that comes in a can.

Add seeds. Keep kneading the dough until the seeds are well mixed in. Add more water if necessary.

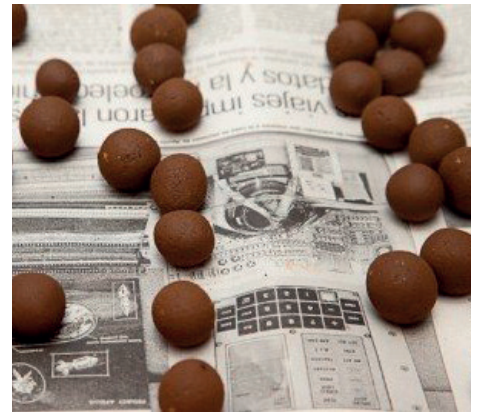
Take small bits of the clay mixture and roll into ball about one inch in diameter. The balls should hold together easily. If they're crumbly, add more water.

Dry seed balls for 24-48 hours in a shady place before sowing or storing. They store best in a cardboard box. Do not use plastic bags.

The last step in how to make flower seed balls is sowing them. Yes, you

can place them carefully over the area to be planted or you can gently toss them one at a time, which is a lot more fun. Don't bury them and don't water them.

Taken from <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/special/children/making-seed-balls.htm>



BUILDING BLOCKS 2018

We have a fantastic programme for you this year including Victoria Beech from GodVenture who will not only be our keynote speaker but will also be running two seminars, one focusing on encouraging families and faith in the home and the other on Advent and Christmas ideas for small children. Added to that we have Martyn Payne delivering our Bible Story Telling Workshops, Julie Currie facilitating Messy Science and how to use it to explore faith, Nicky Blair running our Music and Memory Verse seminar, Helen Groves exploring the topic of mental health and children and Elke Koker delving into lots of ideas to explore themes of Justice with children. How lucky are we to have such an amazing team of facilitators for the day?!

And there's more! Stalls, Top Tips, Giveaways, Lunch time activities. The programme is jam packed and full of wisdom, fun and resources for you and your children's ministry.



<http://www.cm.ireland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/BB-Save-the-Date-2018.pdf>