

Session 17

Faith like a mustard seed

To understand that we must believe in God and not trust only ourselves.

Scripture: Matthew 13:31, 32; Mark 17:20; Luke 13:18, 19; 17:6

Supplies:

Paper and something to write with for every child

Coloured paper (brown, yellow, and green)

Scissors

Glue

One toothpick per child

Leaves, tree bark

1 Copy of the bookmark per child

1 Copy of the picture of the tree for each child

Mustard seeds (available at the grocery store or nursery)

Colouring crayons



WELCOME

Give each child a paper and something to write with. Let them write the numbers 1-10 underneath each other on their paper. Read the following list aloud and let them write down what they think about right away. Give them enough time between sentences to write down.

1. Smallest land animal
2. Smallest bird
3. Smallest animal in the water
4. Smallest pet
5. Smallest insect
6. Smallest plant
7. Smallest word
8. Smallest object in the room
9. Smallest food type you know of
10. Make a small dot of about 2mm with your pen/pencil next to the number 10.

Go through the answers with them for 1-9 and see who gives a unique answer.

For small children or for a large group you can take a few answers from the crowd.

I am so pleased with all the small things you've named! I wonder why we don't think about the small things very often. If a horse was walking into this room, we would see it immediately, but we wouldn't necessarily see (name the smallest thing that was named for number 8).



WORSHIP

Sing the **theme song** on which you decided for this term and do the **settle down prayer** as in session 15.



WORD

We don't usually see the small things, but one day the disciples asked Jesus a very important question and then He told them a parable about something that is only 1-2mm wide.

I wonder who can remember what a parable is (A parable is a story that Jesus told about a worldly

thing to later describe something about the kingdom.)

In Matthew 17:19-20 we read about a time when the disciples came to Jesus to ask a question. “Why couldn’t we expel him (the devil)?” They couldn’t understand why they couldn’t perform the same miracle as Jesus, even though they did exactly what Jesus did. “Because your faith is too small,” He said to them. “This I assure you: If you have faith the size of a mustard seed you will be able to say to the mountains ‘Go over there!’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

In Luke 17:5-6 we read about another time when the disciples asked Jesus: “Give us more faith.” But the Lord answered: “If your faith was as big as a mustard seed, you would be able to say to the tree: ‘Pull up your roots and plant yourself in the sea,’ and it would obey.”

Have another look at the dot you made at nr 10 – it’s about the size of a mustard seed. It’s really small, hey! In Jesus’ time it was the smallest seed that farmers and gardeners knew, and under the right circumstances the mustard tree could grow to about 3m high.

But that means that seeds don’t stay small. Once they are planted, they grow bigger and bigger and some seeds become massive trees. They can then give us food and refuge. There are trees so big that people can build their houses inside them!

Let’s look again at the dot on your paper, and here’s the cool part. Jesus says that our faith needs to be as big as a mustard seed! I wonder what the word “faith” means. (It means to believe, even if you can’t see or understand how it works.)

I wonder what the disciples had to believe in. Yes, in God! Is there something that God can’t do? No! So it was not the disciples who performed the miracle, but rather God. The miracles they wanted to do were too difficult if they wanted to do it by themselves. But for God everything is possible, so we must believe in what God can do! All we need is faith in God.

He knows our faith must grow just like a mustard seed; any plant must start somewhere – as a seed. When someone believes in Jesus and believes that Jesus is our Saviour (that He died for our sins) it’s like a seed of faith is being planted. What’s even more wonderful is that this seed is going to become a big plant that will make more mustard seeds that can be planted again.

But now I’m wondering, what helps our seeds of faith to grow? (*Give the children a chance to react and explain how it helps us grow.*)

⇒ Reading the Bible – when we read the Bible, we get to know God better.

⇒ Prayer – when we talk to God and let Him talk to us through prayer, we learn to trust Him with all the good and the bad things in life.

⇒ Go to church – at church, small groups and other spiritual gatherings we learn about God.

⇒ Talk to other believers – when we talk to our parents and other grownups and get to ask questions when we’re unsure, we can grow spiritually.

⇒ Obey what God has told us to do even though it isn’t always easy because obedience helps us to grow spiritually

⇒ Gratefulness – by looking for opportunities where we can thank God and we will see more often how He cares for us.

The children now get time to reflect on the story:

1. I wonder how the disciples felt when they saw that Jesus could do miracles and they couldn’t.
2. I wonder which things start small and then become big things (babies, snowstorms, tornadoes, gossip stories).
3. I wonder how it feels when someone trusts/doesn’t trust you.
4. I wonder what you can entrust to God every day.



WORKING AND PLAYING TIME

- ✍ Draw or glue a tree with the coloured paper you used for the opening activity. A big brown trunk of the tree in the middle of the page. Leaves in the shape of hearts. As the tree is being glued, fold a green paper in half and cut the hearts out like that. Write on each leaf one of the things we named when talking about things that help us grow. Glue them like leaves on top of the trunk. Glue a small, square piece of yellow paper to the left of the tree. Make a dot of about 2mm on the yellow paper and write, "a mustard seed". Draw a red arrow between the seed and the tree. Write on the trunk of the tree, "a big mustard tree". Write on the top of the page "Parable of the mustard seed". Write "Matthew 13:31 and 32" at the bottom of the page. For smaller children some of the writing can be written for them. The same activity can be illustrated with clay. Write the ways you can grow in faith with toothpicks on the clay. The same activity can be done with tree bark and leaves from nature. Use real mustard seeds. Write the words next to the trunk and leaves.
- ✍ Make a bookmark.
- ✍ Glue mustard seeds in the middle of the flower. Let the group or each child write something that can help them grow in faith in the flower. The verse can also be written on the picture.

Close with the **blessing** as in session 16.

FAITH LIKE A MUSTARD SEED

**MOVES MOUNTAINS
MATTHEW 17:20**



Parable of the mustard seed



