

Sunday between June 12 and 18 – year B

Preparation

Read the Gospel [Mark 4:26-34](#) over. Pay attention to the words or phrases that jump at you. Read over the lesson so that you are familiar with what is intended to happen. Gather the materials that you will need for each section of the lesson. For deeper thinking or for ways to extend the lesson take a look at the following websites:

<http://www.textweek.com/yearb/properb6.htm>

http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/lessonPlans/109452_115911_ENG_HTML.htm

http://www.sermons4kids.com/planting_seeds.htm

<http://www.sundayschoollessons.com/pent10amles.htm>

<http://www.efree.mb.ca/lectionarypuzzles/in-bwv.htm#p11>

<http://www.msscrafter.com/newtestament/mustard.htm>

Gathering

Materials needed

- Small table or end of one table
- Candle
- Candle lighter
- Bible and bookmark
- Green cloth
- Newsprint and markers
- Small votive candles
- Seeds and seed packets

Print up the prayer on the newsprint so that the readers can say the prayer with you. Gather around the small table or at the end of one table. With the children place the cloth on the table. Have them help you place the candle and the Bible on the cloth. Light the candle. Then have each child place a small votive candle by the large candle. As you light their candles say, *We are so happy that (name of child) is with us today.* Pray the following prayer together:

For a time to learn and grow, thank you God.

For friends to share and love, thank you Jesus.

For the time to pray and listen, thank you Holy Spirit. Amen.

Blow out the candle. Sprinkle out some seeds from the different packets without the children seeing what is on the front of the packets. Ask the children if they can tell you what will grow from the different seeds and wait for their responses. Then show them what will grow from the different seeds. Ask the children if they know what has to be done to get a seed to grow into a plant (needs sun, water, soil, place to grow). Tell the children that in today's story Jesus talks about seeds and what we can learn from them about God's way in the world.

Story Time

Materials needed

- A comfortable place to tell the story –around a table or on the floor with cushions
- Seeds and seed packets from the beginning of the lesson

Instructions

Teach the children the following chant:

**The Kingdom of God is like seeds growing.
The Kingdom of God is like flowers blooming.
The Kingdom of God is in each of us.**

Jesus was with his friends. They were travelling together through Galilee. As they were walking together Jesus, who loved to tell stories, would tell his friends and those who gathered with them, special stories called parables. These parables were stories that helped people to think about God and the kingdom of God in new ways.

**The Kingdom of God is like seeds growing.
The Kingdom of God is like flowers blooming.
The Kingdom of God is in each of us.**

Jesus told the people this story first.

“The Kingdom of God is like this my friends.

It is like a farmer who goes out into his fields and puts the seed into the ground.

Show the children the different seeds and let them look at the packets.

The farmer goes to sleep and the seed sprouts.

Then it gets bigger and bigger. As the season goes along the grain forms on the head.

The earth provides for the plants. When the grain is ready the farmer goes out and harvests what is there.”

**The Kingdom of God is like seeds growing.
The Kingdom of God is like flowers blooming.
The Kingdom of God is in each of us.**

Then Jesus told them this story.

“Look my friends at this small, small seed, it is a mustard seed. The kingdom of God is like this seed. It gets planted and it grows and grows. It becomes such a big plant that you wouldn’t believe it. The mustard plant provides protection for many small animals and birds. It is a wonder to see.”

**The Kingdom of God is like seeds growing.
The Kingdom of God is like flowers blooming.
The Kingdom of God is in each of us.**

Jesus continued to teach his friends and the people following them with these special stories, these parables. Not everyone understood what Jesus was saying about the kingdom of God. Those who did began to see how the kingdom of God could grow in them.

**The Kingdom of God is like seeds growing.
The Kingdom of God is like flowers blooming.
The Kingdom of God is in each of us.**

Response

Project Idea 1: Vegetable Planting

This response will give the children a chance to take care of plants over the summer season and see things grow from seed. You will need to make sure that the planter gets put in a place that it will get rain or that someone will make sure it gets watered regularly.

Materials needed

- large planter pots
- vegetable seeds (whatever will grow well in your part of the world) or small plants already started
- soil, water
- a sunny place by the church to put the planters
- large spoons or small garden trowels

Instructions

Set everything up outside ahead of time in the sunny place that you have chosen. With the children put the soil into the planters. Once they have the soil in help them to plant the seeds or small plants into the planters. Water as the instructions with the seeds or plants should be done. When all the planting is done say the following prayer with the children line by line:

**Almighty God, we thank you for making the fruitful earth
produce what is needed for life.
Bless those who work in the fields; give us favourable weather;
and grant that all may share the fruits of the earth,
rejoicing in your goodness; through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.** (p. 680, Book of Alternative Services, Anglican Church of Canada)

Over the summer keep checking the plants with the children and when harvest time comes enjoy the bounty that they have helped to nurture with God.

Project Idea 2: Kingdom of God Flower Pot

Being part of God's family is important for all of us who are part of the church. This response will be a way for the children to share their learning with others.

Materials needed

- small flower pots
- construction paper
- straws
- play dough or floral foam
- strong tape
- scissors
- glue
- markers
- flower stickers
- flower shape at end of lesson

Instructions

Make enough copies of the flower shape at the end of the lesson so that each child has one. With younger children draw and cut out enough flowers from the construction paper so that they each have four or five. With older children have them trace the flower shape onto the construction paper and then cut out four or five of them each. Let the children decorate their flowers with the markers, leaving the centres of them free. In the centre of the flowers have the children print up words that describe the kingdom of God – words like love, justice, peace, hope or whatever they and you come up with. When they are done decorating their flowers, tape a straw to the back with the strong tape. Put a piece of play dough or floral foam into the flower pots and then have the children stick their flowers into it. Use the flower stickers to decorate the outside of the pots. Encourage the children to take them home and use as a centre piece to talk about God's kingdom in the world.

Project Idea 3: Flower Seed Picture

Materials needed

- flower shape at end of lesson
- scissors
- card stock
- markers
- white glue
- flower seeds – you will need a lot of them

Instructions

Copy the flower shape at the end of the lesson so that each child has one and cut it out for them. Have them trace out the flower on to the card stock and cut the flower out. Inside the flower shape have the children trace a white glue design onto the flower shape and then add the seeds. Suggest that they try to leave a space between the seeds, as they will be planted later. Once the cards are done they may need to sit for a while to let the glue dry. Suggest to the children that they either plant the cards at home themselves in a garden or give them to someone as a gift to plant. You may want to send the children home with the planting instructions from the seed packets so their families know how to deal with them. Remind the children that the seeds are an image of how God wants the kingdom to grow in all of us and that as the flowers grow over the summer they can remember Jesus' stories about seeds.

Closing

Gather with the children around the worship table again. Relight the candles. Say the prayer line by line and encourage the children to repeat it after you:

**Loving God surround us with your care,
Friend Jesus be with us each day,
Holy Spirit move us to show your love,
Amen.**

Flower Shape

