Preschool–Grade 6

The Mustard Seed

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: A tiny mustard seed grows into a tree. Even a little faith in our great God matters, because with God nothing is impossible.
Bible passage: Matthew 13:31–32 and Matthew 17:14–20. Read them before class.
Memory verse: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, … nothing shall be impossible unto you." *Matthew 17:20 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible, a few real mustard seeds taped to an index card, 6 index cards, a marker, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: tape a few mustard seeds to a card. Write the memory verse on the 6 cards (see part 4). Put bookmarks in your Bible at Matthew 13 and Matthew 17.

1. Opening game: Seed, Sprout, Tree (5–10 minutes)

Teach four moves. **Seed:** curl up small on the floor. **Sprout:** kneel up with your hands together over your head. **Tree:** stand tall with your arms spread out wide like branches. **Birds:** flap your arms. Call out the words in order, slowly, then faster, then mixed up. Then pass around the card of mustard seeds. Ask: *How small are they? What do you think a seed this small grows into?* Say: "Jesus told a story about a seed just like this one."

2. Bible story: The Littlest Seed (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Matthew 13, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

One day Jesus sat by the sea. So many people came to hear Him that He got into a ship and sat down, and all the people stood on the shore (Matthew 13:1–2). Jesus taught them with **parables**. A parable is a story Jesus told to teach a lesson (13:3, 13:34). This is one of His parables.

Jesus said: "The **kingdom of heaven** is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and **sowed** in his field" (13:31). The kingdom of heaven means God's kingdom, where God is King. A **grain** of mustard seed is one little seed. **Sowed** means planted.

Jesus said the mustard seed "indeed is the **least** of all seeds" (13:32). Least means the smallest. *(Hold up the seed card again.)* But when it is grown, it is "the greatest among **herbs**." Herbs are garden plants, and this one gets bigger than all of them. It "**becometh** a tree" (it becomes a tree), "so that the birds of the air come and **lodge** in the branches **thereof**." Lodge means come and stay, and thereof means of it. The birds stay in the tree's branches!

Ask the kids: *Was the seed big or little? What did it grow into? Who came to stay in the branches?*

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Another day, Jesus talked about a mustard seed again. Turn to Matthew 17. A man came to Jesus and knelt down. He said, "Lord, have mercy on my son" (17:14–15). His son was very sick and in trouble: he often fell into the fire and into the water (17:15). The man had brought his son to Jesus' **disciples**, Jesus' helpers, but they could not make him well (17:16).

Jesus said, "Bring him hither to me." **Hither** means here (17:17). Jesus commanded the devil that troubled the boy to go, and it went out of him. The boy was well from that very hour (17:18)!

Later the disciples came to Jesus by themselves. They asked, "Why could not we cast him out?" (17:19). Jesus said, "Because of your **unbelief**." Unbelief means not trusting God. Then He said, "If ye have **faith** as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (17:20). **Faith** means trusting God. Even faith as small as a mustard seed matters, because it is faith in our great God, and nothing is too hard for Him.

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. What did the man in Jesus' story plant in his field? *(A grain of mustard seed, Matthew 13:31)*
2. Was the mustard seed big or small? *(It is the least of all seeds, the smallest, 13:32)*
3. What did the seed grow into? *(A tree, 13:32)*
4. Who came to stay in the branches? *(The birds of the air, 13:32)*
5. What did Jesus say faith as a grain of mustard seed can do? *("Nothing shall be impossible unto you," 17:20)*

4. Memory verse: Grow the Verse (5 minutes)

Write the verse on 6 cards: *If ye have faith / as a grain / of mustard seed, / nothing shall be / impossible unto you. / Matthew 17:20.* Explain the old words: **ye** means you, **faith** means trusting God, **a grain of mustard seed** is one tiny seed, **impossible** means it can't be done, and **unto** means to. Lay the cards in order and read the verse together. Then say it four times and grow: whisper it curled up like a seed, say it softly kneeling like a sprout, say it standing, and say it loudly with your arms spread wide like a tree.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Faith means trusting God. Here is the best thing we can trust God for. God loves you very much. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (Acts 2:4)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.
This week: when something feels too big for you, stop and pray, and trust God with it. You might feel small, but God is great.

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Mustard Seed word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/mustard-seed-word-search), crossword (vbshq.com/puzzles/mustard-seed-crossword), maze (vbshq.com/puzzles/mustard-seed-maze) or worksheet (vbshq.com/worksheets/mustard-seed-worksheet), the coloring page or craft (vbshq.com/bible-stories/mustard-seed), or **Birds in the Branches:** choose three or four kids to be trees, standing with their arms spread out. Everyone else is a bird. When you say, "The birds of the air come and lodge!", the birds fly to a tree and stand beside it, no more than three birds to a tree. Each tree asks one of its birds a question from part 3. Then switch: birds become trees.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You are great, and nothing is too hard for You. Help us trust You, even when we feel small. Thank You for Jesus, who died for us and rose again. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks, "Can I really move a mountain?": answer simply. Jesus used a mountain to show that nothing is too hard for God. We pray and trust God, and He answers the way He knows is best: "if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us" (1 John 5:14). Faith is trusting God, not a way to get wishes.

A note on the boy in Matthew 17: keep it gentle. The Bible says the boy was very sick and fell into the fire and the water, and Jesus made him well right away (17:15, 17:18). There's no need to say more for this age.

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