

Upper Elementary

WEEK 1 - STARTER



Activity Name: Mustard Seed Word Search

What You Need: Word Search and Answer Key Writing Supplies

- Give each kid a “Mustard Seed Word Search” Activity Page.
- Explain that hidden in the puzzle are words related to today’s Bible Story, like “GROW,” “FAITH,” “KINGDOM,” and “JESUS.”
- Challenge kids to see who can find all the words. (Share that some of the words might be backwards!)
- Talk about which word they think is most important and why.

What You Say:

Nice job finding all those words! It’s kind of interesting trying to find small words hidden inside a big puzzle. That’s a little like what Jesus did in our Bible Story today. Jesus used small, everyday things to help people find and understand a huge, important idea: what God’s kingdom is really like. Jesus knew that simply learning the right information is not enough. He wanted to engage our hearts and our imaginations so that we don’t just know about God’s love and His kingdom but learn to experience them for ourselves.

This is why, when Jesus taught, He often used parables. A parable is a short story using everyday objects and situations to help explain something about God and His kingdom. A parable makes you think and feel. It helps you to understand something true for yourself instead of just repeating what someone else has told you. Let’s go hear one of those parables Jesus taught!

Lead your group to the Large Group area.



Bible Story: What Is God's Kingdom? The Stories of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast • *Matthew 13:31-34*

Bottom Line: Jesus shows us God's kingdom.

Conversation Starter: What is God's kingdom?

Monthly Memory Verse: *"May your kingdom come. May what you want to happen be done on earth as it is done in heaven."* • Matthew 6:10 NIV

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is God's kingdom?
- Why do you think Jesus used ordinary things to explain God's kingdom?
- How does faith grow even when we don't see it?
- What's one small thing you can do that might have a big impact?

Activity Name: Memory Verse Activity

What You Need: Bibles Paper Writing Supplies

What You Do:

- Give every kid a Bible.
- Invite them to look up Matthew 6:10 using the Bible Navigation Tips below.
 - Ask kids if the Bible book they are looking for is in the Old Testament or New Testament. If it's in the Old Testament, have them start at the front of the Bible and slowly flip pages toward the back. If it's in the New Testament, have them start at the back and flip forward. Once they find the book, explain that the big numbers are chapter numbers and the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find the chapter first, then the verse.
- Read the Memory Verse out loud together several times.
- Review any words that might be unfamiliar to the kids.
- Invite the kids to set their Bibles aside.
- Explain that the kids will have a friendly competition: 'The Speed Verse Challenge'!
- Time each kid saying the Memory Verse as fast as they can while still saying every word clearly.
- Write each kid's name on the paper and record their time.
- After every kid has gone once, give them a chance to try and beat their own time. Cheer for each kid as they try the challenge.

What You Say:

Awesome job! Some of you are seriously fast talkers! Let's open the Bible to Matthew 6:10. (Open Bible.) That's where we can find our Memory Verse. Listen as I read: "May your kingdom come. May what you want to happen be done on earth as it is done in heaven" (Matthew 6:10 NIV). Our Memory Verse is a prayer that Jesus taught His followers. It's a Kingdom Quest prayer. What do you think it means? (Pause while kids answer.) We are asking God to bring more of His kingdom—His goodness, His love, and His justice—to our world, here on earth, right now.

When you follow Jesus, you get to be a part of God's kingdom! You're living in the kingdom of God every day. Ask the Holy Spirit to transform you to become more like Jesus so you can point to God's kingdom in the way Jesus shows us. As you begin to grow in your faith and your relationship with Jesus, the Holy Spirit can work through you to begin pointing to God and God's kingdom wherever you are: in your home, your neighborhood, your school, and your city. In fact, God calls us to partner with Him to point to His kingdom in the places where we live here on earth. I'm so glad we're going to memorize this verse so we can always remember our Kingdom Quest and calling to point to God's kingdom everywhere we go.

Close in prayer/Invite kids to pray.