Theme

Great things grow from small beginnings.

Have you ever seen a mustard seed? The mustard seed is one of the smallest of all seeds.

. Have you ever seen a mustard seed? Look. See how tiny these seeds are? They are the smallest seeds I have ever seen. A mustard seed is so small that if you were holding one in your hand and dropped it on the ground, you might not be able to find it. Even though the mustard seed is one of the smallest of all seeds, when it is planted in the ground, it grows into a plant so large that birds can perch on its branches and can even build their nests in it. I have read that these tiny seeds can produce a plant that grows ten feet high or more!

Jesus told a parable comparing the mustard seed to the kingdom of God. Jesus said, "How can I describe the Kingdom of God? What story should I use to illustrate it? It is like a mustard seed planted in the ground. It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of all garden plants; it grows long branches, and birds can make nests in its shade" (Mark 4:30-32).

How is that a picture of the kingdom of God? Well, when Jesus first began his earthly ministry, he had no followers. The Bible tells us that Jesus was walking along the shore of the sea of Galilee when he saw two fishermen, Peter and his brother Andrew, casting their nets. "Come, follow me," Jesus said to them. They immediately followed Jesus. As they continued on their way, they saw two other brothers, James and John, mending their nets. Jesus called them and they immediately left their nets and followed him. One by one, Jesus called his disciples until there were twelve of them. That is still a pretty small beginning, isn't it? Jesus sent out the twelve and they brought others to Jesus and the kingdom of

God grew. From a very small beginning, the kingdom of God has grown and grown until it has spread over the entire earth.

To get a better understanding of what this story teaches, I took an apple, cut it open, and took out the seeds. There were five seeds in my apple. Now, imagine that we planted these seeds and each grew into an apple tree. How many apples do you think each tree might produce? Fifty? A hundred? Two hundred? I read that an apple tree can produce from 150 to 300 apples each year and that an apple tree will produce apples for about fifty years. Just think how many apples that is! It isn't hard to see how we have enough apples to feed the entire world, is it?

Jesus started growing the kingdom of God with a handful of disciples. Every follower of Jesus is a part of the kingdom and that means that you and I are a part of God's kingdom. Each time we tell someone about Jesus, we are helping to grow the kingdom. Isn't it great to know that we can have a part in growing God's kingdom?

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

RUBBER BAND BALL: MANY colorful rubber bands are needed for this object lesson. Each child will have a pile of rubber bands to begin making a rubber band BALL! As the children wrap the bands around each other, the ball will grow. Let the children continue to wrap the bands as time allows and soon a bouncing ball will be enjoyed by the children as they learn from today's lesson that "great things grow from small beginnings."

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