



a Kendall Hunt Company

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B, Junior High - RCLB Lectionary



Junior High Session

Ezekiel 17:22-24

Mark 4:26-34

Opening Prayer

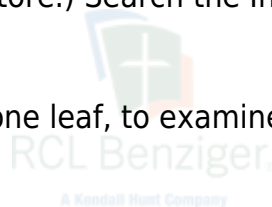
Let us pray.

Creator God,
open our hearts to receive the seed of the your Word today.
May its message take root in our lives for the good of your Church
and for the good of your kingdom.
Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

Gather leaves from different trees, enough for one for each young person. Also prepare a bowl of mustard seeds. (If you cannot find a packet of mustard seeds, look for mustard seeds in the spice section of your grocery store.) Search the Internet for an image of a mustard plant or bush.

Invite each young person to choose one leaf, to examine his or her leaf, and to hold it as the First Reading is proclaimed.



Listening to the Word of God

The prophet Ezekiel paints a word picture using the images of planting: the high tree, the lowly tree, the green tree, and the withered tree. The images illustrate how God, in his power and in his goodness, will help his people prosper.

Proclaim Ezekiel 17:22-24.

Invite the young people to consider whether they are the high tree, the lowly tree, the green tree, or the withered tree today. Why? What is God's promise to them?

Invite each young person to next take a mustard seed from the bowl of seeds, and explain that in today's Gospel reading, Jesus, too, uses the images of plants to tell a story about smallness, greatness, and the Kingdom of God.

Proclaim the Gospel: Mark 4:26-34.
Allow for silent reflection.

Scripture Discussion Starters

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- What did Jesus say about the mustard seed?
 - To what was Jesus comparing the mustard seed?

Scripture Background

The early Church community, for whom Mark was writing, was very small. The parable of the mustard seed told by Jesus is meant to encourage the Church community that even though they are small, their efforts will grow and bear fruit for the Kingdom of God.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- In the past week, what small seeds have you planted—what small efforts have you made—for the Kingdom of God?
- What happened because you planted those seeds or made those efforts?

Doctrinal Discussion Starters

The Parables of Jesus

The special name for the type of story Jesus tells in today's Gospel is *parable*. A parable is a simple story told to teach a lesson. In the parables Jesus told he used everyday objects known to all, such as salt, light, coins, yeast, and even a father and his sons. Jesus wanted people to be able to relate to the stories he told, and to understand his teachings about God, and about how children of God are to live.

- What is the everyday object Jesus used in today's parable? Is it a good choice of object for this parable? Why? What other objects would you suggest?
- What is the message, or the lesson of today's parable for each of us?

Sacrament Connection

For many people, one of the hardest seeds to plant for the growth of the Kingdom of God is the seed of forgiveness. But, when planted, that small seed of forgiveness—saying, "I'm sorry"; saying, "I forgive you"; working for peace in your family, among friends, in your community, and in the world—grows to create an environment of peace and unity. The Church offers the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation to help us live in peace with ourselves, our neighbor, and with God.

The Gospel in Life

Every day we have the opportunity to plant small seeds of kindness, helpfulness, and love in the lives of others. In doing so, we are living as disciples of Jesus. What one seed will you plant at home this week? Take a moment of quiet to ask God to help you plant this seed, and to help this seed grow.