

The Mustard Seed and the Yeast

Bible Verse

Everybody who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise builder who built a house on bedrock. Matthew 7:24

Did You Know?

As we continue to hear stories that Jesus told, this week we hear two stories about God's kingdom. Jesus often spoke of God's kingdom. Sometimes we imagine the kingdom of God as being a place and time in the future. Jesus spoke of God's kingdom as being present on earth right now. Moreover, Jesus encouraged his followers (that's us) to bring about God's kingdom here on earth. The kingdom of God is present anytime and anywhere God's followers are doing God's work and living as God wants them to live.

Jesus compared God's kingdom to a mustard seed. Mustard seeds are very tiny. Yet when planted, a mustard seed can grow into a large tree-like bush. Some mustard trees are taller than people, yet they start from a seed so small it easily could be lost.

Next, Jesus compared the kingdom of God to yeast. Bakers know the power of yeast. Although yeast is small, it causes bread dough to rise. If left unchecked, the dough will continue to rise and grow many times its original size.

God's kingdom is present all around us. As we learn from the parables of the mustard seed and the yeast, even small things can have a large effect. These parables remind us that God's kingdom is ordinary. God's kingdom is abundant. God's kingdom is surprising. When we follow Jesus' teachings and live the way God wants us to live, great and amazing things can happen. God can turn our efforts into magnificent results. God's kingdom is here and now.

This week, your children will be introduced to a mission project that will last the rest of this quarter. Children will be encouraged to bring offerings over the next several weeks that will support the work of UMCOR Armenia. Children will take home a letter today about the mission project. Supporting mission projects such as UMCOR Armenia is one way we can do God's work and show people what God's kingdom looks like.

Bible Story

Luke 13:18-21

Anchor Point

We can learn from the stories Jesus told.

Your Lesson

JUMP IN:

- Welcome
 - Kids Stuff: Growing Tree
 - Exploration Station: Lavash Bread
- ### DIVE DEEPER:
- Bible Story Time
 - Experience the Story: The Mustard Seed and the Yeast

Look It Up!

My Thoughts

GROW STRONGER:

- Life Connection: Mustard
- Learn & Serve with the Deep Blue Kids: Meet Armen
- Craft Activity: What Does God's Kingdom Look Like?
- Spiritual Practice: Rise Up!

WORSHIP:

- Gather, Sing, and Sign
- Praise and Reflect





JUMP IN!

The following activities may be done in learning centers as the children arrive or may be done with the entire group.

WELCOME

Supplies: Class Stuff—pp. 16-17, CD, DVD (optional), CD player, DVD player (optional), television (optional), markers, offering basket, tape



Continue to display Attendance Chart and obtain offering basket.

- Play “My Stories for You” and greet each child as they arrive.
- Let children mark their attendance and place their offerings in the basket.

KIDS STUFF: GROWING TREE

Supplies: Kids Stuff—pp. 17-18, glue sticks, scissors

- Distribute the Growing Tree.
- Let children cut out and assemble the tree and attach leaves.

SAY: The Bible story for today teaches us that God’s love and God’s kingdom are like a tiny mustard seed that grows into a big tree! Sometimes the smallest thing God can use in big ways!

EXPLORATION STATION: LAVASH BREAD

Supplies: Lavash bread

SAY: The Bible story for today also says God’s kingdom is like yeast.

ASK: What is yeast?

SAY: Yeast is an important ingredient in bread. It helps the bread rise. We are going to enjoy some traditional Armenian bread together to remember the Bible story and our travels with the Deep Blue Kids to Armenia.

- Invite children to eat the Lavash bread.

DIVE DEEPER

BIBLE STORY TIME

Supplies: DVD, DVD player, television

- Place DVD in the player and cue Session 7, then watch video.

ASK: What did Jesus say God’s kingdom was like?



TIPS

Lavash bread can be found at most grocery stores such as Trader Joe’s.

Lavash bread can be served with things like honey or jam. You might look up traditional Armenian foods to serve with the bread.

Lavash bread does not rise but is connected to the Deep Blue Kids’ travels to Armenia.



EXPERIENCE THE STORY: THE MUSTARD SEED AND THE YEAST

Supplies: Deep Blue Kids Bibles; Bible Stories & Stuff—Session 7, p. 2

- Direct children to locate in their Bibles Luke 13:18-21, then read the Scripture aloud.
- Assign the four parts and present the story.

LOOK IT UP!

Supplies: Deep Blue Kids Bibles, Bible Stories & Stuff—p. 3 (top), pencils

SAY: The Bible story speaks about yeast and bread. Jesus also says he is the bread of life.

- Invite children to locate in their Bibles John 6:35, then answer the questions.

ASK: What did Jesus mean when he said, “I am the bread of life”?

MY THOUGHTS

Supplies: Deep Blue Kids Bibles, Bible Stories & Stuff—p. 3 (bottom), pencils

SAY: In today’s Bible story, God used small things to make a BIG difference.

ASK: What small thing can you do to make a difference? How can you spread God’s love?

- Invite children to journal their responses.

GROW STRONGER

LIFE CONNECTION: MUSTARD

Supplies: Bible Stories & Stuff—p. 4

SAY: A mustard seed is an important part of the Bible story.

ASK: Do you like mustard?

- Invite children to read Life Connection: Mustard.

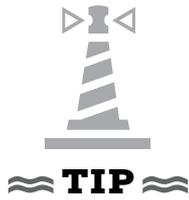
LEARN & SERVE WITH THE DEEP BLUE KIDS: MEET ARMEN

Supplies: Class Stuff—pp. 2-3, 31; Leader Guide—p. 48; world map or globe

 Display Poster: Armenia InfoGraphics, Poster: Armenia Missions, and Poster: Meet Armen.

SAY: Today the Deep Blue Kids met a new friend, Armen, in Armenia.

ASK: Who can find Armenia on the map?



Sometimes we need to make sure everyone is included in our congregations.

Use the Accessibility Audit found on p. 89, to evaluate your church spaces so all can feel welcomed.

SAY: Armen is hearing impaired, which means he has difficulty hearing. He also goes to a special school in Armenia. The school he attends is committed to providing a great, well-rounded education to Armenian children with special needs. Teachers at the Special Schools teach all the typical school subjects such as math, history, science, and literature, with accommodations for kids with hearing loss, vision impairments, and/or intellectual disabilities. But they don't end there. They also provide classes in dance, singing, pottery, painting, computers, beekeeping, and farming. They want to help kids with disabilities thrive in all parts of life. Many of the students come from poor families. They live at the schools during the week while their parents work. Sometimes their parents must travel far away from home to find work. UMCOR Armenia helps make sure the children get good, nutritious food while they are staying at school. The money you raise this month will help UMCOR Armenia provide healthy food for the children at Special Boarding Schools in Armenia.

- Photocopy and distribute the mission letter.
- Encourage children to take home the mission letter and share it with their families.

CRAFT ACTIVITY: WHAT DOES GOD'S KINGDOM LOOK LIKE?



Supplies: colored pencils, crayons or markers, paper, other coloring utensils

SAY: We have been learning about God's kingdom.

ASK: What does *kingdom* mean? What is God's kingdom? What do you think God's kingdom looks like?

- Distribute paper and coloring utensils.
- Encourage children to draw a picture of God's kingdom.
- Invite willing volunteers to share.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: RISE UP!

SAY: In our story, a small amount of yeast helped a large loaf of bread rise. God takes small things and makes a big difference! Sometimes we might get told we are too small. But with God, big things are possible!

ASK: What can you do to make a big difference?

SAY: This week, remember that with God's help, you can rise up and make a big difference. You can share God's love and make God's kingdom possible!

WORSHIP

GATHER, SING, AND SIGN

Supplies: Deep Blue Kids Bibles, Bible Stories & Stuff—Songbooks, Leader Guide—pp. 86 & 87, CD, DVD (optional), CD player, DVD player (optional), tape, television (optional)

- Write on the board Matthew 7:24. Review the Unit 2 Bible verse American Sign Language, using pages 86 & 87 as a guide. Photocopy those pages for children.
- Distribute songbooks. Play the song “My Stories for You” one time, letting children follow along. Then sing the song together. Set aside songbooks to collect later.
- Teach children the Unit 2 Bible verse sign language, then say and sign the verse.

PRAISE AND REFLECT

Supplies: Deep Blue Kids Bible; Class Stuff—pp. 12 & 21, 5-6, 8 & 25; glue stick; model pieces; tape

- Continue to display Poster: Unit 2 Bible Verse. Obtain Fact Book: Animals of Armenia. Display Poster: Animals of Armenia.

SAY: Let’s learn more about God’s wonderful creation and the animals you might find in Armenia.

- Invite a child to choose an animal on Poster: Animals of Armenia. Then read about the animal in Fact Book: Animals of Armenia.

SAY: This unit’s Bible verse says, “Everybody who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise builder who built a house on bedrock” (Matthew 7:24).

- Invite children to say the Bible verse with you.

SAY: Let’s find the next piece to build our house.

- Display on the table the model house on its base. Display model pieces. Invite volunteers to locate pieces numbers 1 and 2 (*house front and back*). Glue the pieces to the assembled house and return house model to base.

SAY: Great job! Next week we will continue building our house.

- Invite children to name people or situations they’d like to pray for in the closing prayer. Lift up those joys and concerns at the end of the prayer.

PRAY: Dear God, you are so big! Help us to remember you are with us and can help us create your Kingdom and share your love. Amen.



Mission Project Letter

GEORGIA

Dear Parents or Guardians,

The Deep Blue Kids arrived in Armenia! They landed in Gyumri City where they met Armen, and he is excited to show the crew around his school and teach them about his culture.

During our time with Armen in Armenia, we will learn about the ministry project UMCOR (United Methodist Committee On Relief) Armenia is involved in. UMCOR Armenia has many ongoing projects, one of which is a partnership with a group of special schools for socially vulnerable children with developmental delays, speech and hearing impairments, and differing intellectual abilities.

The special needs schools have many students they love and support—they had 86 students in 2014! During the week, these children live at their school and participate in classes, including math, science, dancing, chess, and Armenian. UMCOR programs provide food security and sustainability by giving the schools beehives and cows.

Learn more about UMCOR Armenia here: <https://www.umcor.org/umcor/resources/news-stories/2016/may/0510armeniabeginning>.

During the next several weeks, your family will have an opportunity to support these children and their schools. You can donate online, send a check, or send a donation with your child to contribute to her or his Sunday school offering.

Donations can be made online by credit card at <http://www.umcor.org/Search-for-Projects/Projects/250225>.

To donate by check, please make your check payable to Advance GCFA and the Advance number on the memo line and mail to:

**Advance GCFA #250225
PO Box 9068 GPO
New York, NY 10087-9068**

To donate by phone, please call
1-888-252-6174.

