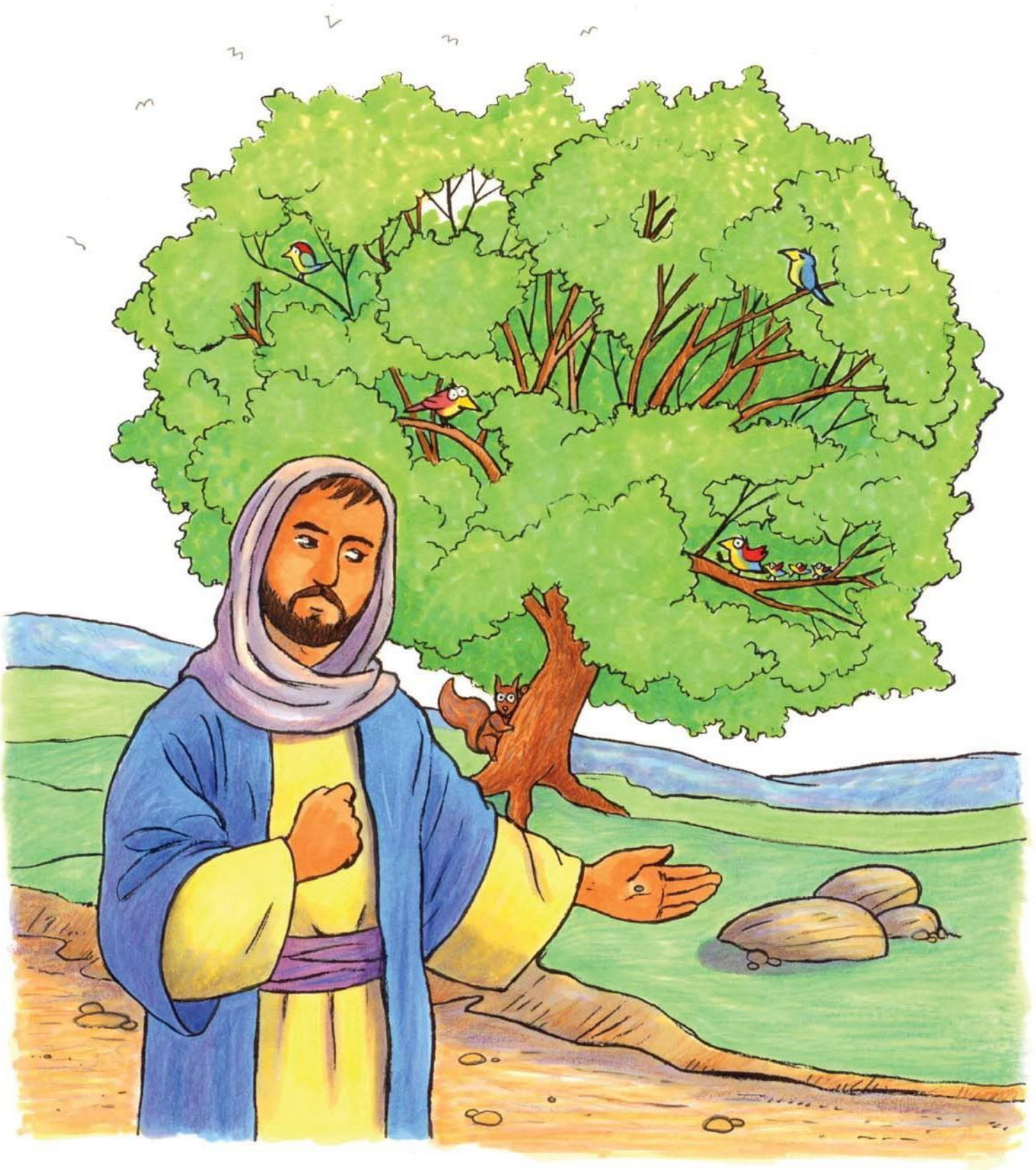


THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

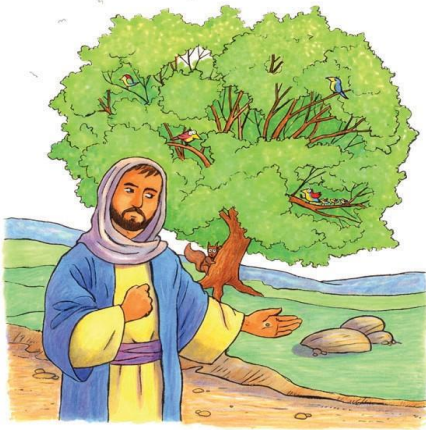
Matthew 13:31-32



Contents

Message	The kingdom of heaven will grow from small beginnings.
Learning Objectives	The children will learn: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven with the development of a mustard seed.■ Today the “kingdom of heaven” is present and perceptible in the Church of Christ (CNAC QA: 135).
Bible Text	Matthew 13:31–32

The Parable of the Mustard Seed



Manuel lived in a warm country. He sat on the steps in front of the house while peeling an orange. The segments tasted both sweet and sour. He chewed contentedly. Suddenly he bit into something hard. A seed! He spat it out. He grumbles to himself, “Seeds are a real nuisance!” Manuel did not notice his father was standing in the doorway.

His father replied, “Maybe we will soon have an orange tree growing in front of our house.”

Surprised, Manuel looked up and asked, “Why?” His father explained, “Although they may seem small, from the seed an orange tree will grow.” He then turned and went into the house. An orange tree was growing in front of the neighbour's house. Manuel did not think that it was a particularly beautiful tree.

Still, he got up and walked over to it and looked at the tree from its bottom all the way to the top of the tree. When he saw how great the tree was, he thought of the seed. He knew that trees grew from seeds, but he never gave it much thought before. He stood and marvelled at the miracle of what came from such a seed. While he walked back to the house, he picked up the seed he had spat out earlier.

He went into the kitchen and washed the seed, then asked his father, “Do you think this will grow into a tree?” His father replied, “Yes, but it requires much patience and care.” Manuel said, “I would like to plant it!”

Together Manuel and his father planted the seed in a flowerpot. The boy remarked, “It really is a miracle that from something so small a tree can grow.” His father nods and added, “It truly is fantastic. The dear Lord marvellously created everything. Just as a tree grows from this little seed, the kingdom of God also develops from small beginnings, thanks to His grace.”

Manuel asked, “How do you know that?”

His father replied, “Because the Lord Jesus told his disciples about this. He said to them that the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that is sown in the soil. It is the smallest of all the grains of seed, yet when it is fully grown, it is a tree big enough for the birds to come and roost among its branches.” Manuel replied, “Mustard? I only know mustard which comes out of a tube.”

His father explained, “From a very tiny seed, a mustard tree develops up to three metres high in twelve months! Just imagine! When you think of the seed we just planted, it is difficult to believe that from such a small seed a tree can also grow. God's Son came to the earth in a very humble way as a man. Although He walked the earth long ago, Jesus' teachings spread across the lands through the work of the first Apostles. Today, throughout the world, many Christians live their lives according to what Jesus taught the disciples.”

Manuel smiled and put his flowerpot on the windowsill.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

Suggestions for the Teacher

Lead-In

Show the picture to the children. Discuss with them what they see. Ask what she/he may feel...

Sing with the children an appropriate song of Jesus. (E.g. "Little drops of water")

Show them seeds of big trees. (Mango, palm, orange, ...)

Lesson Instructions

Begin telling the story...

Discuss with the children...

- What happens if you put a mango or an orange seed in the soil? (A big tree grows)
- What does Jesus mean when he compares the kingdom of God to a mustard seed?
(Jesus begins to teach a small group of people. Today there are millions of Christians.)

Have the children repeat...

- Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven with the development of a mustard seed.
- Today, the "kingdom of heaven" is present in the Church of Christ.

Real-Life Application (explain the following)

- Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed which contains enormous strength and from which grows a plant that is bigger than other plants.
- The church too grew from small beginnings in Israel at Jesus' time.
- Today there are many believers all over the world.

Repeat the Message

The kingdom of heaven will grow from small beginnings.