

Mustard Seeds and Matryoshka Dolls



Teaching Jesus' parables to three and four year olds is challenging. [Pre-schoolers](#) struggle understanding abstract concepts. The figurative nature of the parables will largely pass them by because they usually think in more literal terms.

This morning the class I was teaching tackled the [Parable of the Mustard Seed](#). Jesus told a story about a farmer planting a tiny little seed. The seed sprouted and grew into the tallest of trees.

We began the class by sorting seeds. The children pulled the tiny mustard seeds from the pile and we marveled that such a tiny seed could grow into a large tree.

The three little boys I was teaching are also very small. They dream of the day when they can be big and strong like their dads. Great men begin as little boys.

Sometimes hands-on activities are helpful in helping pre-schoolers understand concepts. I chose a couple of these to stress the point about growth.

- First, I placed a tiny little paper circle on the table. Then, one at a time, I revealed a set of circles of ever increasing size. The children loved stretching their vocabulary to describe the sizes. Tiny, little, small, medium, bigger, enormous, giant and finally, super super huge.
- Secondly, I was able to make use of some Matryoshka (nesting) dolls that I had on hand. Seeing the sizes displayed in doll form helped the children relate to how they themselves are in the process of growing.

All in all it was a great class.

Sometimes my efforts in teaching seem extremely small. What difference will my teaching make in the bigger picture? This parable reminds me that God does great things from small beginnings.

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