

St. Joseph's Family Activities

Week 11 of Ordinary Time

13th – 19th June 2021

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“The kingdom of God is a mustard seed growing into the biggest shrub of all.”

This is our first “green” Sunday since 14th February. It may be worth pointing out to the children if they have not been to weekday Mass, that the vestments are green now and ask them if they know why. (It's now “Ordinary Time” and the liturgical colour is green).

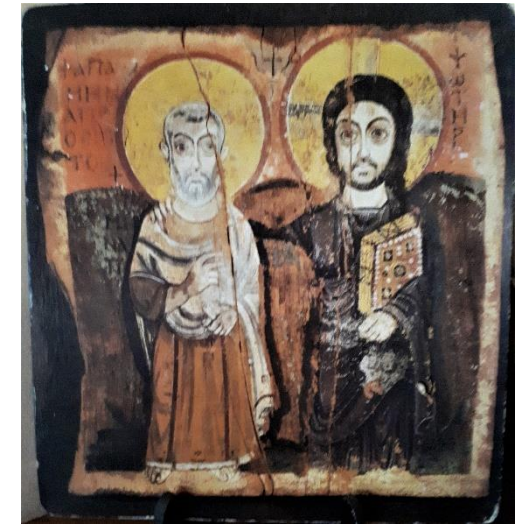
The parable of the mustard seed is a beautiful parable showing us the almost limitless growth of the Church and more personally, of our faith. To help our little ones grasp this idea of growing, there are various suggestions this week – to compare a sapling to a full-grown tree and to grow mustard on a paper towel!

On Wednesday we celebrate the memorial of St. Richard of Chichester, also known as St. Richard of Wyche (as Droitwich was once known). He only became a priest very late in his life, and this shows us that it's never too late to respond to God's call to us.

As ever, if you wish to see past copies of these sheets, please go to <https://www.stjosephsmalvern.org/j/> and then click on the dropdown box for past editions.

There are Four Dimensions of our Faith, and the activities all reflect one or more of each of these dimensions.

This icon of Jesus and friend” reminds us that all our life, He is right beside us, with His “arm around us” as depicted here. As we grow in faith, we grow in awareness of the presence of Jesus.



The family is the “domestic Church” and if we are not able to gather in person with the parish, it's a good idea to set aside special times to pray with the family, even if it is just 10 minutes two or three times a week. These are graced moments. Light a candle and have a few moments' silence and remind everyone that they are in the presence of God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These times are very precious and even if it is just a few minutes after a meal, it can be a fruitful time. Don't bite off more than you can chew! Start with just a few moments and build up the scope and variety of prayers slowly. Give everyone the opportunity to voice their own prayers as well as reciting traditional prayers.

**Speaking/Learning the faith
(which the Church calls
“professing the faith”)**

**Living it (in Christ) – i.e. the
choices we make in
everyday life**

**Celebrating it in the Liturgy
and the Sacraments**

**Christian
prayer.**

Gospel for Sunday

Gospel

Mark 4:26-34

Jesus said to the crowds: "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man throws seed on the land. Night and day, while he sleeps, when he is awake, the seed is sprouting and growing; how, he does not know. Of its own accord the land produces first the shoot, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. And when the crop is ready, he loses no time: he starts to reap because the harvest has come."

He also said, "What can we say the kingdom of God is like? What parable can we find for it? It is like a mustard seed which at the time of its sowing in the soil is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet once it is sown it grows into the biggest shrub of them all and puts out big branches so that the birds of the air can shelter in its shade."

Using many parables like these, he spoke the word to them, so far as they were capable of understanding it. He would not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything to his disciples when they were alone.

The Gospel of the Lord

R/: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Discussion on the Gospel

- † Light a candle
- † Make the Sign of the Cross
- † Someone read the Gospel slowly

Q: Jesus gives us two pictures of what the God's Kingdom is like.

What are they? (A: Seed growing by itself and a tiny mustard seed growing into the biggest of trees.)

Q: What happens to seeds when they are planted? (A: They grow [hopefully!].)

Q: What do seeds need to grow big and strong? (A: Soil, water, sun, food..)

Q: What do we need to grow big and strong? (A: Food, etc.)

Q: What is our "food" to grow strong in our faith in Jesus? (A: Open ended – e.g. reading the Bible, going to Mass/communion/confession, learning to obey Jesus [through obeying parents and guardians] and prayer.)

Q: Show an acorn (or a picture of one) and then show a great big oak tree (or a picture). Explain that the great big tree grew from this tiny acorn. In Jesus' parable, what comes to shelter in the branches of the mustard tree? (A: All the birds.)

Q: The big tree represents the Church united (joined with) Jesus; who do the birds represent? (A: Us.)

Q: The birds shelter in the tree, what does "shelter" mean? (A: Protection.)

Q: If the tree is Jesus and His Church, the birds seeking shelter are us, what does this tell us about Jesus and His Church? (A: That Jesus gives us shelter/protection in His Church.)

Q: Which prayer do we regularly pray asking that the Father's kingdom may come? (A: The *Our Father*.)

Finish by praying the Our Father together as a thank you to Jesus for His protection and care for us.

Colour in the tree and the tiny acorn at the foot of the tree. Write/dictate all the ways in which Jesus helps us to grow in our faith from a tiny seed (acorn) to a huge, big tree.



Jesus, help me to grow in faith
and protect me in your Church

Planting/growing suggestions:



Grow some mustard on some kitchen paper:

- a. Fold 2 layers of sheets of kitchen paper into quarters
- b. Place on a waterproof tray or plate
- c. Wet the kitchen paper Sprinkle



some seeds on it.

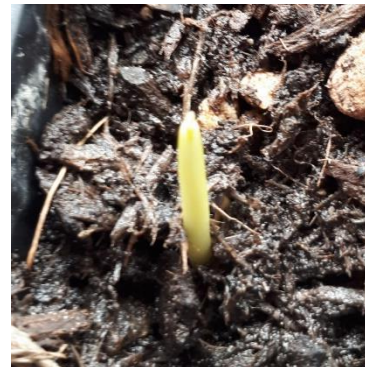
- d. Make sure that the kitchen paper does not dry out and watch the seeds germinate and grow.

QUESTION; See how quickly the seeds sprout and grow if we keep the paper damp (watered). Who waters us so that our faith can grow? (A: The Holy Spirit)

2. **Go for a walk in a wooded area and have a look for tiny, small trees. Then compare them to their "grown up" trees. Listen and look out for birds in the trees. Talk about how our faith can grow big and strong, just like the biggest trees. Say a prayer of thanks to God for His beautiful creation.**

QUESTION; how can we take care of God's beautiful creation? (A: Open ended....)

Look out for any young plants pushing through the earth and talk about what they need to grow.



16th July, St. Richard of Wyche/Chichester

St. Richard was born in Droitwich (then known as Wyche) in about 1197. Despite his parents dying when he was young and nearly becoming destitute, he was able to go to Oxford and afterwards to study in Paris and Bologna. He returned to England and worked as a lay administrator in the Archdiocese of Canterbury. Eventually, in his forties, he realised that God was calling him to be a priest and was at first a parish priest in Kent before being made Bishop of Chichester. He had a lot of work to do as the diocese had not been run properly and so St. Richard organised the proper celebration of Mass and the sacraments. He also did a lot of fundraising for the Cathedral which had only just been rebuilt after a fire and needed funds. St. Richard died on 3rd April 1253 aged only 56. He was buried in his cathedral which became a place of pilgrimage until his tomb and shrine were destroyed at the Reformation. A candle now marks the spot where his shrine was, and it is once more a place of prayer. One of St. Richard's legacies is this beautiful prayer which is worth learning by heart:

St Richard's Prayer

Thanks be to you, O Lord Jesus Christ
for all the benefits which you have given me,
for all the pains and insults
which you have borne for me:
O most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother,
may we know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly. Amen.

Chichester Cathedral as it is today. Inside, the main part (nave) is Norman, and would be recognised by St. Richard, but there have been many alterations since. If you are near Chichester this summer, it's worth visiting (and entry is free).

