

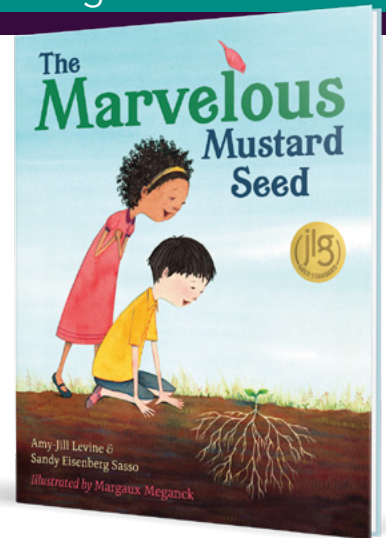
# READ★PRAY★WONDER★PLAY

## A GUIDE TO SHARING STORIES WITH CHILDREN

### The Marvelous Mustard Seed

By Amy-Jill Levine, Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, & Margaux Meganck

"Parables can open up our imagination, if we let them." In the "Note to Parents and Teachers" at the back of the book, the authors offer this wisdom, which is a wonderful starting point as you prepare to share this delightful story with your children. In reading this story, allow your imagination to be opened up. Bring the same curiosity to this story as if you have never heard this parable before (and notice your child's response to the story, especially if they have not heard the original parable). In addition to reading the informative note from the authors at the end of the book, consider looking at the group of stories about God's kingdom found in the Gospels (Matthew 13:31-32, Mark 4:30-32, and Luke 13:18-19). As you read, play with using your volume, pace, and tone to enhance the suspense, excitement, and joy contained in this marvelous story!



### ★ ★ WONDER TOGETHER ★ ★

- If you were telling someone about this story, what are three words you would use to describe it?
- In the story, the seed is imagined as both a "humongous tree" and also "ordinary bushes." Which description matches your imagination of how the seed will grow?
- *With Younger Children:* In this story, the characters have to have both patience and imagination while they wait for this tiny seed to grow. When have you had to be patient? How does having to wait make you use your imagination?
- *With Older Children:* This story is based on a parable, a story that Jesus used to teach a lesson. What lesson do you think Jesus wanted his hearers to learn from this particular parable?

### ★ ★ EXPLORE THE STORY ★ ★

- Many aspects of this story resonate with the lived experiences of children. One such theme is the idea that something big can grow from the tiniest thing. Look for examples of small but mighty things all around you, in nature, people, and technology.
- Gardening, particularly when done from seeds, is a test of patience and perseverance, another theme of *The Marvelous Mustard Seed*. Obtain seed packets, and read together the information on how long it takes to go from seed to plant to harvest. Plant the seeds if possible.
- If you haven't already done so, read the story in context in each of the three gospels (perhaps from different translations). Notice the stories that surround it and think about how this parable might be told today.

### PRAY

God who makes marvelous things, through your stories we can understand our world and your kingdom better, and for that we are grateful. Help us to be patient as our faith grows bigger and deeper, bringing us closer to you. Amen.



THE  
PC(USA)  
STORE

DISCOVER MORE

[www.pcusastore.com/FlyawayBooksGuides](http://www.pcusastore.com/FlyawayBooksGuides)

## ★ ★ DIG DEEPER ★ ★

There are multiple directions to follow as you explore this story and its themes more deeply. Follow your child's curiosity as you explore one or more together.

Some starting points include:

- In the Gospels, Jesus often used metaphors to describe what the kingdom of heaven is like. These included seeds, yeast, treasures, and pearls. As you consider not just this parable comparing God's kingdom to a mustard seed, but also the breadth of what Jesus said about the kingdom of heaven, think about connections and comparisons that are all around us. While younger children may not be developmentally able to comprehend the nuance of metaphors, they do still see and experience parallels and connections. Some ways to explore this more deeply include:
  - Talking together about metaphors that are used in your family, at school, or in activities they take part in.
  - Exploring an online Bible concordance (such as Bible Gateway or Oremus Bible Browser) to search for stories about the kingdom of heaven, or other stories about seeds in the Bible.
- Go on a mustard mission! Mustard seeds may be found in the spice aisle or international foods section of your grocery store, or can be ordered online. These tiny seeds not only add flavor in recipes, but can also be used in decorative crafts as a way to remember the story. Some ideas are:
  - Do a kitchen audit. Find mustard-related items in your fridge, pantry, or recipe box and create a mustard themed meal!
  - Craft a mustard seed keepsake to remember this parable. Visit a craft store or do an internet search for crafts that incorporate mustard seeds as a way to reinforce the message of this story.

## MORE TO READ & DO

CLICK THE LINKS BELOW TO LEARN MORE

### ADDITIONAL BOOKS BY AMY-JILL LEVINE & SANDY EISENBERG SASSO

- [\*Who Is My Neighbor?\*](#)
- *Who Counts? 100 Sheep, 10 Coins, and 2 Sons* - Available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Korean](#)
- [\*100 Sheep: A Counting Parable\*](#)
- [\*The Good For Nothing Tree\*](#)
- [\*A Very Big Problem\*](#)

### ADDITIONAL BOOKS ABOUT TENDING TO NATURE

- [\*Saving Delicia: A Story about Small Seeds and Big Dreams\*](#), by Laura Gehl and Patricia Metola
- [\*I Love You, Blue\*](#), by Barroux
- [\*Apple and Magnolia\*](#), by Laura Gehl and Patricia Metola

Guide written by Becky D'Angelo-Veitch and created in partnership with PC(USA)'s initiative "[Around the Table](http://pcusa.org/aroundthetable)" ([pcusa.org/aroundthetable](http://pcusa.org/aroundthetable)).



THE  
PC(USA)  
STORE

DISCOVER MORE

[www.pcusastore.com/FlyawayBooksGuides](http://www.pcusastore.com/FlyawayBooksGuides)