



preparing

Seeds take time to grow – as do the little people God gives us to care for from the moment we first fell in love with them. Seeds flourish with time and attention and care. How are you attending to the seeds (children, relationships, dreams, etc.) that the Lord has given you? How are you inviting him to show you the ways he wants you to cultivate these very good things?

settling and listening

You might want to have this conversation while at home or in the car or any time that you hear that still small voice cheering you on.

If at home and if you make it a practice at home to set aside a special time and place, consider laying out a cloth and lighting a candle as you say

LEADER: Come, let us draw near to God.

PEOPLE: And God will draw near to us.

Prayer leader can pray. ***“Come, Holy Spirit. As we make space for you, open our ears to hear. Open our mind to understand. Stir our heart. Help us to know and love you more. Amen.”***

[pause]

If the nudge to speak comes at a time when you are out and about, just go for it!

"I wonder what you know about seeds?" Wait to listen and gather their thoughts.

You might want to do an exploratory investigation of seeds at this point. See what you can gather from the ground to dissect and examine, making observations and conclusions together.

OR if you have a copy of A Seed is Sleepy by Diana Hurts Aston read that together.

"I have a book that I want to share with you that is all about seeds. There are some fascinating pictures and interesting facts. I want to share it with you today before we read some stories from the Bible that may help us understand God's Word a little better."

Read A Seed is Sleepy by Diana Hutts Aston and illustrated by Sylvia Long.

"What is something you learned about seeds from this book that was new to you or which you had forgotten you once knew?" Pause and wait for responses.

"When Jesus was on earth – when he came to be with us to show us what God is like – he did a lot of teaching to help people understand. Sometimes he taught in parables. Does anyone know what a parable is?" A parable can be very basically defined as 'a simple story that teaches a lesson'. ***"Today we are going to read a couple of Jesus' parables about seeds. He told these stories to help his friends understand what God's kingdom was like. As we read today, I wonder what you'll come to understand about God's kingdom?"***

"As we read from the gospel of Matthew and the gospel of Mark today, I invite you to draw in your journal what you are hearing and what God is stirring in you."

Invite two kids or grownups to read the story from the gospels stopping in between to wonder together.

A reading from Matthew 13:31-32.

31 Jesus told the crowd another story. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed. Someone took the seed and planted it in a field. 32 It is the smallest of all seeds. But when it grows, it is the largest of all garden plants. It becomes a tree. Birds come and rest in its branches."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

***I wonder what you notice about this story?
I wonder what questions you have?
I wonder what connections you are making?***

Now. Let's read another of Jesus' parables. I wonder what you'll notice the Holy Spirit showing you?

A reading from Mark 4:26-29.

26 Jesus also said, "Here is what God's kingdom is like. A farmer scatters seed on the ground. 27 Night and day the seed comes up and grows. It happens whether the farmer sleeps or gets up. He doesn't know how it happens. 28 All by itself the soil produces grain. First the stalk comes up. Then the head appears. Finally, the full grain appears in the head. 29 Before long the grain ripens. So the farmer cuts it down, because the harvest is ready."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

"I wonder why Jesus used seeds to help explain what God's kingdom was like?"

Recall together any seeds of various sizes that they have planted. ***"With proper soil, sun, and water, seeds grow. But they don't simply grow later; they change, transforming into a vegetable or a tree or a flower. A small seed contains everything it needs to grow into these bigger things! Where does that strength come from?"***

"As you think about the parables, how does God use each character in the story – the farmer, the seed, the soil, etc. What do the images of seeds and farmers and growing, along with birds resting in branches, the grain, the stalk, the head, and the harvest help you to imagine and think about?"

praying

Seal your time and conversation by giving thanks to God by saying together the Lord's Prayer or singing the Doxology.