



LITTLE MUSTARD

DISCUSSION PROMPTS
& ACTIVITY GUIDE

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Foreword

Dear parent, teacher or ministry leader,

The following questions and activities are designed to help you guide children into deeper reflection as they listen to and engage with *Little Mustard*. You are welcome to use these prompts just as they are, or to adapt them into simpler words that best fit the age and understanding of the children in your care.

Don't worry if concepts such as "dying to self" or "living for God's purpose" feel too big for children ages 5 to 8. These truths can be gently translated into the everyday choices and experiences children already face—like sharing, trusting, or choosing kindness when it's hard. As they grow, the Holy Spirit can remind them of these lessons and give them fresh meaning in each new season of their walk with God.

Above all, remember: Jesus Himself must always remain the center. This story is not about "doing more" or "working harder" for God, but about first knowing Him—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—in a personal relationship. As children learn to walk with Him daily, spend time in His presence, and trust His love, the natural response will be obedience and fruitfulness. *Little Mustard* highlights this truth: from a rooted relationship with the Great Farmer (God), we are led to surrender our own desires and follow His good plan for our lives.

It is my prayer that the Holy Spirit will use you, and this story, as His instruments to plant seeds of faith in the hearts of the children you serve. May they come to know Jesus' love more deeply and learn to trust Him with their whole lives.

With love in Christ,
Martie

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Introduction for Children

After reading the story to the children, you can introduce them to the questions and activities by reading the following introduction.

Hi friends, before we talk about Little Mustard's story, I want you to remember something important: this story is not just about a seed—it's about you and me, too!

God made each of us with a special purpose. Sometimes following Him means doing things that are hard or even a little scary, but just like Little Mustard, we can trust that the Great Farmer (who represents God in the story) knows exactly what He's doing.

The questions we're about to talk about will help us think about how God is working in our own hearts. There are no right or wrong answers—just share what you feel. Most of all, remember that Jesus loves you, He is with you, and He has a wonderful plan for your life.

Discussion Prompts with Biblical Principles

A guide for parents, teachers, and ministry leaders to lead thoughtful, faith-filled conversations with children ages 5–8.

Something is Missing (Pages 1–2)

Themes: Longing, Emptiness, Purpose, Feeling Insignificant

- Have you ever felt like something was missing, even when everything seemed okay?
- Why do you think Little Mustard had a hole in his heart?
He wanted his life to mean something. He longed to grow and do something special—like bear fruit and make a difference.
- What do you think it means to grow like a tree?
God doesn't want us to stay the same. He made each of us to grow strong in Him, to have deep roots, and to bless others with the "fruit" of our lives.

Biblical Truth:

Because we are made in the image of God and have His Holy Spirit living within us, we were created for purposes far greater than what this world alone can offer. God, who exists outside of

time and lives in eternity, designed us with heavenly purposes in mind. We are called to nurture and bring to maturity the things of heaven while we walk the earth.

That's why a life centered on earthly pleasures and pursuits will eventually feel empty and unfulfilling—especially as a believer grows deeper in their walk with God. The hole in Little Mustard's heart represents this longing: the desire to live with eternal purpose, to serve the God who created us, and to live a life that truly counts.

Only by walking with God and stepping into the unique purpose He has designed for each of us can this deep longing in our souls and spirits be satisfied. Nothing else will do. Only a life lived with God, for God, will ever truly fulfill us.

Bible References:

“For I know the plans *and* thoughts that I have for you,” says the LORD, “plans for peace *and* well-being and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11; Amplified Bible)

“For we are His workmanship [His own master work, a work of art], created in Christ Jesus [reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, ready to be used] for good works, which God prepared [for us] beforehand [taking paths which He set], so that we would walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us].” (Ephesians 2:10; Amplified Bible)

The Great Farmer's Invitation (Pages 3–4)

Themes: Trust, Fear, God's Call

- Why do you think Little Mustard was afraid to be planted?
Being planted meant entering the unknown. It was scary, dark, and unfamiliar—just like when God asks us to do hard things.
- What hard things do you think God might ask you to do—or has asked you before?
Maybe... helping someone who isn't always kind. Trusting God when you're nervous about a test. Giving away something special to someone who needs it more.
- What kinds of scary thoughts come into your mind when you have to do something hard?
“What if I can't do it?” “Will other kids laugh at me?” “What if I mess up?” “I don't want to disappoint my mom or dad.”
- What helps you trust someone, even when you're scared?
Spending time with them and learning their heart. The more we spend time with God, the more we know He is kind and trustworthy.

- The Great Farmer said, “Trust Me.” What does trusting God mean to you?
Trust means believing that God is good and will take care of you, even when you don’t understand what’s happening.
- Do you think you can trust God when you have to do something hard, like Little Mustard?
- Will you give your life to Jesus for Him to lead you into the plans He has for you?

Biblical Truth:

God will never force anyone to fulfill the purpose He has lovingly designed for them. He invites us—but never pushes. Like Little Mustard, when we begin to feel that ache in our hearts—that sense that we were made for more—we are being gently drawn to our Creator. That “hole” is really a longing to grow, to live with purpose, and to bear fruit for God’s Kingdom. Even more than that, it is the longing to experience God more in close communion with Him every day.

But just as Little Mustard had to go to the Great Farmer and ask for help to become a big tree, we, too, must go to our Heavenly Father and ask Him to grow us into what He created us to be. God promises that if we ask, we will receive (Matthew 7:7). He does not turn away a seeking heart.

God doesn’t instantly turn us into “big trees” overnight. Growth takes time. Just like a seed must be planted, rooted, and nurtured to become fruitful, so must we. The process of growing with God deepens our roots in Him—our Rock—and produces lasting fruit in our lives.

To trust God to plant us means surrendering to His plans, His timing, and His ways. This can feel scary, especially because it often means letting go of control and stepping into the unknown. But this is exactly where we begin to learn trust. That first act of surrender—of saying “yes” to God’s plan—is often the hardest step, but it’s also the most freeing.

As we continue to trust Him, we begin to see His faithfulness again and again. Though doubts may come, our faith grows stronger each time we choose to believe. God doesn’t promise that the journey will be easy—but He promises to walk with us every step of the way.

Don’t settle for a life of comfort and mediocrity, like Mango and Sunflower, who stayed behind in the barn. Step out in faith like Little Mustard did. Take the risk with God. You’ll discover how truly wonderful life can be when you trust Him with the story He’s writing for you.

Bible References:

²⁴I assure you *and* most solemnly say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone [just one grain, never more]. But if it dies, it produces much grain *and* yields a harvest. ²⁵The one who loves his life [eventually] loses it [through death], but the one who hates his life in this world [and is concerned with pleasing God] will keep it for life eternal.” (John 12:24-25; Amplified Bible)

⁵“Trust in *and* rely confidently on the LORD with all your heart And do not rely on your own insight *or* understanding. ⁶In all your ways know *and* acknowledge *and* recognize Him, And He will make your paths straight *and* smooth [removing obstacles that block your way].” (Proverbs 3:5–6; Amplified Bible)

Choosing to Be Planted (Page 5)

Themes: Courage, Obedience, Listening to God’s Voice

- Have you ever had to be brave when others didn’t believe in you, like Hairy Mango and Sunflower did toward Little Mustard?
- Would you be willing to sacrifice friends and the way in which they do things for God’s way of living?
- What helped Little Mustard make the brave choice?
He trusted the Great Farmer’s love and remembered his dream of growing and bearing fruit.
- What does the Great Farmer’s love show us about God’s love?
God wants what’s best for us. His love never changes, even when He asks us to do hard things.

Biblical Truth:

Just like Little Mustard, you might find yourself being the only one choosing to follow God’s plan for your life. Sometimes other children—or even adults—might not understand your choices. They may tease you, make you feel left out, or try to fill your heart with fear or doubt. You may feel like the odd one out, foolish, alone, or just ... different.

But following Jesus often means doing things that seem strange or unpopular to the world. Jesus Himself said that those who follow Him might face rejection—but He also gave us a powerful promise: “If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him” (John 12:26, NKJV).

Choosing Jesus is always worth it. Life with Him brings peace, purpose, and blessing. Life without Him leads to emptiness and separation from the very One who made us. When you stay faithful to God’s plan—even when it’s hard—Jesus promises that His Father in heaven will see you, walk with you, and reward you in due time.

You are never truly alone when you walk with Him. He sees every brave choice you make, and He delights in your heart that wants to grow and bear fruit for His Kingdom.

Bible References:

“I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore, you shall choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants,” (Deuteronomy 30:19; Amplified Bible)

“Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies [dedicating all of yourselves, set apart] as a living sacrifice, holy and well-pleasing to God, *which is your rational (logical, intelligent) act of worship.* ² And do not be conformed to this world [any longer with its superficial values and customs], but be transformed *and* progressively changed [as you mature spiritually] by the renewing of your mind [focusing on godly values and ethical attitudes], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His plan and purpose for you].” (Romans 12:1–2; Amplified Bible)

The Underground Season (Pages 6–7)

Themes: Waiting, Feeling Unseen, Root-Building

- What do you think it felt like for Little Mustard in the dark?
Probably lonely, scary, and confusing. It can feel like nothing is happening.
- Why are roots important, even if we can't see them?
Roots help us stay strong in storms. In life, our “roots” are our trust in God, knowing His Word, and spending time with Him.
- Have you ever had to wait for something good? What helped you wait?
Praying, remembering what God has done before, and trusting that He knows the perfect time.

Biblical Truth:

Many times when God asks us to die to ourselves and follow His purposes, we may feel afraid of losing people or things we hold dear. Yet in God's kingdom, those very things we cling to can leave us unfulfilled, unhappy, and empty. God is a jealous God—He longs for our whole heart, not divided affections. When we try to fill our deepest longings with the things of this world, trusting them to give us happiness, we miss the fullness of what Jesus died to give us.

Only when we surrender and let Him plant us—dying to selfish desires and giving Him first place—can He lead us into the true life He purchased for us. This truth of dying to self is often called “food for the mature.” But that doesn't mean younger or newer Christians shouldn't hear it. Every believer, whether young or old, needs to encounter this truth so that in time they may grow into the fullness of what it means. Don't underestimate children, either. They often grasp these spiritual truths more readily than adults weighed down by worldly baggage. So go ahead—

impart this knowledge to those tender hearts. You'll be amazed at how deeply they can understand.

Sometimes, when we allow God to plant us, we may walk through hard seasons—feeling stripped, empty, lonely, or unsettled. A flood of unfamiliar emotions can leave us confused, unsure of what's happening in the darkness. In those moments, cling to God's Word. He has promised never to leave you nor forsake you (Deut. 31:6). Even when He feels far away, He is watching over you with love, waiting for the moment you will break through and sprout into new life.

Bible References:

⁶ Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in [union with] Him [reflecting His character in the things you do and say—living lives that lead others away from sin], ⁷ **having been deeply rooted [in Him]** and now being *continually* built up in Him and [becoming increasingly more] established in your faith, just as you were taught, and overflowing in it with gratitude.” (Colossians 2:6–7; Amplified Bible) (Bold emphasis mine)

“It is the LORD who goes before you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or abandon you. Do not fear or be dismayed.” (Deuteronomy 31:8; Amplified Bible)

“... for He has said, “I WILL NEVER [under any circumstances] DESERT YOU [nor give you up nor leave you without support, nor will I in any degree leave you helpless], NOR WILL I FORSAKE *or* LET YOU DOWN *or* RELAX MY HOLD ON YOU [assuredly not]!”” (Hebrews 13:5; Amplified Bible)

Breaking Through and Growing (Pages 8–9)

Themes: Growth, Perseverance, Trusting God's Process

- What helped Little Mustard grow strong?
His roots, the sunshine, the rain, and time spent with the Great Farmer.
- What are some “storms” (hard things) you've gone through?
- How does God help us grow stronger through those storms?
Each time we go through something hard with God's help, we learn to trust Him more. That makes our “roots” stronger.

Biblical Truth:

Without God, we can do nothing—but with Him, all things are possible (John 15:5; Matthew 19:26). When God asks us to die to something or someone in this world, it is never to harm us or rob us of what is truly valuable. Instead, He is helping us release what is temporary and earthly,

so our hearts can be set fully on Him. God longs for our undivided devotion, because He knows that only in Him will we find the life that is truly life—the only life with eternal meaning.

As we grow in Christ, it is vital that we remain rooted in Him. Even a single day without communion with Jesus can leave us spiritually dry, weak, and restless. But in His presence, we are nourished with strength, peace, and joy. Only through a close, daily relationship with Him can we grow into all He has designed us to be. Especially when storms rage or in times that feel like drought—when God seems far away—we must cling to our Savior. He is our safe place, our source of true life, and the One who enables us to bear fruit that blesses others and glorifies His name.

It is often through persevering in hard times, with Jesus walking beside us, that the Holy Spirit forms Christlike character in us. Without this refining, we remain vulnerable to the enemy, to the world, and to the weight of our circumstances. But when we allow God to use suffering to strengthen our faith, we grow in endurance, character, and hope (Romans 5:3–4). Never underestimate the value of trials. In Christ, even suffering becomes a tool in God’s hands to shape us, root us deeply in Him, and prepare us for fruitfulness that will last forever.

Bible References:

“³ And not only *this*, but [with joy] let us exult in our sufferings *and* rejoice in our hardships, knowing that hardship (distress, pressure, trouble) produces patient endurance; ⁴ and endurance, proven character (spiritual maturity); and proven character, hope *and* confident assurance [of eternal salvation]. ⁵ Such hope [in God’s promises] never disappoints *us*, because God’s love has been abundantly poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” (Romans 5:3–5: Amplified Bible)

“² Consider it nothing but joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you fall into various trials. ³ Be assured that the testing of your faith [through experience] produces endurance [leading to spiritual maturity, and inner peace]. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect result *and* do a thorough work, so that you may be perfect and completely developed [in your faith], lacking in nothing.” (James 1:2–4; Amplified Bible)

Pruning and Fruit (Pages 9–10)

Themes: Spiritual Growth, Letting Go, Becoming Like Jesus

- Why did the Great Farmer need to prune Little Mustard?
To remove the parts that weren’t helpful so the good branches could grow strong and bear fruit.
- Have you ever had to let go of something so something better could grow?

- What kind of fruit does God want us to grow?
The fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, as well as the things we do for His kingdom (spreading the news about what Jesus did for us on the cross and helping people in need).

Biblical Truth:

Dying to ourselves and pruning go hand in hand. When we allow the Holy Spirit to cut away everything that distracts us from Jesus, we make room to grow good fruit and become stronger, healthier, and more alive in God's purpose for us.

Pruning is never easy—it can feel painful, uncomfortable, and hard. But it is always necessary if we are to grow into sturdy, fruitful trees for the Lord. We must not resist God's hand when He prunes us. Instead, we should welcome His work in our lives and, like David prayed in the Psalms, invite Him to search our hearts, reveal what is not from Him, and remove anything that hinders our walk with Christ.

Every time God prunes us, it always—always—leads to growth, freedom, and true life in Him.

Bible References:

“I am the true Vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that continues to bear fruit, He [repeatedly] prunes, so that it will bear more fruit [even richer and finer fruit].” (John 15:1–2; Amplified Bible)

“And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature together with its passions and appetites.” (Galatians 5:24; Amplified Bible)

Harvest and Purpose (Pages 11–12)

Themes: Fulfillment, Purpose, Gratitude

- How did Little Mustard feel when he saw his fruit?
Joyful! Excited! Fulfilled!
- What do you think his fruit was used for?
To bless others, to plant more seeds, and to help grow even more trees.
- How did trusting the Great Farmer lead to good things for Little Mustard?
Because Little Mustard trusted, he became everything God meant for him to be—a strong, fruitful tree!

Biblical Truth:

When you have gone through the process of being planted, dying to yourself, and living for God, you begin to grow into the true life He designed for all who follow Him—a life filled with purpose, joy, and peace. And with this new life, God calls you to bless others: by sharing Jesus with them, by living as His example, and by letting His Spirit work in you to make you more like Christ.

Remember, God is a giver, not a taker. If it ever feels like He is taking something from you, it is only because He is preparing to give you something better. His heart is always for your good. Jesus died so you could have the very best life—not only here on earth, but also forever with Him in heaven.

So whenever you feel the sting of letting go—whether through surrender, sacrifice, or pruning—trust that God’s plans are perfect. He is shaping you, preparing you, and leading you into something greater than you could imagine. Don’t shy away from giving things up for Jesus. Just like Little Mustard, you will grow into a life of abundance, bearing fruit that blesses many and delights the heart of God.

Bible References:

“¹Blessed [fortunate, prosperous, and favored by God] is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked [following their advice and example], Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit [down to rest] in the seat of scoffers (ridiculers). ²But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And on His law [His precepts and teachings] he [habitually] meditates day and night. ³And he will be like a tree *firmly* planted [and fed] by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season; Its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers [and comes to maturity].” (Psalm 1:1–3; Amplified Bible)

“Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good deeds *and* moral excellence, and [recognize and honor and] glorify your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16; Amplified Bible)

General Reflection Questions (Use anytime)

- Who is someone in your life you trust like Little Mustard trusted the Great Farmer?
- What part of Little Mustard’s story reminds you of something in your own life?
- What do you think this story teaches us about God?
- If you were a seed, what kind of tree would you like to grow into? Why?
- If you could be any kind of seed, what would you choose and why?

Activity Guide

For ages 5–8

Themes: Trust in God • Spiritual Growth • Patience • Purpose • God's Love

1. Let's Talk: Story Reflection Time

Materials: None

Goal: Help children connect personally to the story

- What was your favorite part of Little Mustard's story?
- What do you think the "hole in his heart" means?
- How did Little Mustard show courage?
- When is it hard for you to trust God?
- How do you think God helps us grow like Little Mustard?

Faith Connection: Read Philippians 1:6

"God began doing a good work in you. And he will continue it until it is finished when Jesus Christ comes again. I am sure of that." (International Children's Bible (ICB))

Ask: What "good work" is God doing in you right now?

2. Craft: My Faith Seed Planter

Materials:

- Paper or plastic cup
- Soil
- A real seed (like a bean or sunflower seed)
- Markers/stickers to decorate
- Water

Instructions:

1. Decorate your cup with drawings of trees, hearts, or a favorite verse.
2. Fill it with soil, plant the seed, and label it: "I am dying to myself and growing in God!"
3. Water it and place it in sunlight.
4. Each day, talk about how God is helping you grow on the inside—just like the seed.

Faith Connection: Just like Little Mustard couldn't see what was happening underground, sometimes we don't see how God is working—but He is.

3. Activity: Root Strong or Leaf Light?

Materials: Printable or chalkboard/whiteboard

Goal: Help kids learn to build “spiritual roots”

Draw a simple tree with roots, trunk, branches, and leaves. Ask kids to help list examples:

- Roots (things that help us grow strong in God): prayer, studying the Bible, trusting God, obeying, worship, asking questions, waiting patiently.
- Leaves (good things we enjoy): friends, fun, blessings, games, sunny days.
- Fruit (ways we bless others): kindness, sharing, helping, forgiving. Draw 9 different fruits on the tree and name them according to Galatians 5.

Faith Connection: Read Galatians 5:22–23 — the Fruit of the Spirit

Memorize the 9 “fruits” that God wants to grow in you - love [unselfish concern for others], joy, [inner] peace, patience [not the ability to wait, but how we act while waiting], kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Use mimes with the words to remember the fruits. For example, fold your hands over your heart for love, put your arms in the air for joy, hold out your hand for a handshake or shake someone else's hand to show peace, fold your arms in a waiting gesture to symbolize patience, smile at someone to show kindness, hold out open hands in a gesture of giving a present to someone to show goodness, walk around purposefully to symbolize faithfulness, stroke someone's arm or shoulder to show gentleness, hold up a finger wiggling it from side to side to show you're saying no to something which resembles self-control. With each gesture, let the children say: I have ... (name the fruit)” and let them couple their words with the action. You, as the teacher or parent, can change the mimes/gestures/actions to fit the fruit as you wish. They only serve to help the children remember the fruit better.

Also discuss how you could spread the gospel by telling friends/other people in the children's lives about what Jesus did on the cross for us and how much He loves us. Couple this with acts of love that would be easy and appropriate for the children to do in their communities.

4. Game: “Trust Me!” Blindfold Walk

Materials: Blindfold, simple obstacles (like chairs or pillows)

Goal: Teach listening and trust

1. One child wears a blindfold.
2. Another (the “Farmer” who represents God) gently guides them using only voice instructions: “Step left... take 3 steps forward...”
3. Swap roles.

Debrief:

- How did it feel to trust the voice?
- What helped you feel safe?
- How is that like trusting God?

Faith Connection: Read Proverbs 3:5–6

⁵ Trust the Lord with all your heart. Don't depend on your own understanding. ⁶ Remember the Lord in everything you do. And he will give you success." (International Children's Bible (ICB))

5. Creative Writing or Drawing: My God-Grown Tree

Materials: Paper, crayons/markers

Prompt:

Draw yourself as a tree planted by God. What do your roots, branches, leaves, and fruit look like?

Then write or dictate a short sentence:

"God is growing me to be _____."

6. Memory Verse Flower Craft

Verse: "Keep your roots deep in him and have your lives built on him. Be strong in the faith, just as you were taught. And always be thankful." (Colossians 2:7 (ICB))

Craft Idea:

Draw a big flower. Write the memory verse on the petals or things that you think God needs to prune or develop more in you. In the center write: "I trust God to grow me!" Decorate with colors and glitter!

7. Prayer Prompt: Talking to Jesus / God

Encourage children to pray like Little Mustard might have:

"Dear God / Lord Jesus / Holy Spirit / Heavenly Father,

Sometimes I feel small and scared. But I want to grow strong and full of fruit. Please help me trust You, even when it's hard. I know You love me and You're always with me. Amen."

Also, let the children write down their own prayers, more specifically directed at what they want the Holy Spirit to prune or help grow in them.

Closing Blessing / Prayer

You, as the parent, teacher, or ministry leader, can pray the following prayer over the children, if you so wish.

Lord Jesus, thank You for loving us so much and for having a special plan for each of our lives. Just like Little Mustard, we want to grow strong in You, with deep roots and good fruit.

Bless these children with courage when they feel afraid, with joy when they feel small, and with peace when they have to wait. Help them to always remember that You are with them and that they are never too little for You to use in big ways.

May their lives shine for You, and may they grow into everything You created them to be.

In Jesus' name, Amen.
