

Notes

Today's teaching can be read in a picture story on the sheet, and there is a map to plot and colour in the gradual spreading of the kingdom from Jerusalem outwards across the Roman world.

Activities

(*Jesus, reign in me* can also be sung as a prayer today.)

Our Father in heaven,
 Let your kingdom come.
 Let it come in me and my family.
 Let it come in my school and my church.
 All over the world, Father,
 Let your kingdom come.

Praying

people die, about right and wrong, about what it costs to be a follower of Jesus.
 All this proves that the kingdom of God is growing in you, just as seeds grow in the earth. All that growing is God's doing.
 There's another thing about seeds. They start off so small and can end up a huge plant. Jesus noticed that the mustard seed is specially good at that - it's one of the tiniest seeds (show some) and yet it can grow to the size of a tree, with lots of big, spreading branches where the birds love to come and shelter. He said that the kingdom of heaven grows rather like a mustard seed. Explain that you're not going to tell them what that meant. What do they think he meant by that? (Talk over their ideas. The value of Jesus' parables was to get people thinking for themselves, rather than giving out the answers straightaway.)

Jesus says that the kingdom of heaven grows rather like that. Just as we can look back and remember that we've grown taller over the last few years, and our knowledge of maths has grown, we've also been growing spiritually. We understand a bit more about who Jesus is now; we are getting more used to talking things over with God in our prayers; we are able to ask some of the big questions about what God is like and how the miracles happened. We are starting to think about what happens when

and they still manage to grow.
 First, he looked at the way seeds grow. (As you speak get a flower pot, fill it with earth and plant a seed in it.) Gardeners will talk about growing vegetables and flowers, but what do they actually do? They get the seeds and they put them in the earth. Then what happens? They water them and put them in a suitable place. Then what? Do they have to sit and watch all the time? Is it no more TV until the vegetables are ready? No, the seeds just grow, more or less on their own! They don't need the gardener to be there fussing over them every minute of the day. Wild plants don't have gardeners and they still manage to grow.

Talk about what has been discovered in the opening activity, and how small seeds grow into huge plants. Jesus loved using the world around us to help us understand spiritual things, and today we're going to hear how Jesus used growing seeds to explain spiritual truths for us.

Teaching

Bring a variety of leaves and have some reference books available so that they can be identified, together with their 'seeds'.

Starter

To know the parables of the growing seed and the mustard seed.

Aim

1 Samuel 15:34-16:13 or Ezekiel 17:22-24
 Psalm 20 or Psalm 92:1-4, 12-15
 2 Corinthians 5:6-10 (11-13) 14-17
 Mark 4:26-34

Readings

From small beginnings, and by God's power, the kingdom of heaven grows.

Thought for the day

*Sunday between 12 and 18 June inclusive
 (if after Trinity Sunday)*

PROPER 6