



**WELCOMING  
CHILDREN  
in WORSHIP**

**THE CATHOLIC  
UNIVERSITY  
OF AMERICA**



# **Growing Faith in Ordinary Time**

## **September**

# **Adaptive Activities for Children**



**National Catholic  
Partnership on Disability**

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# Introduction

Welcome and thank you for your ministry that serves the liturgical formation of children for their participation in the Eucharist, the “source and summit of the Christian life.” This resource is provided by the Committee on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD). It aims to offer an adaptive catechetical opportunity for all who have a heart for disability ministry to reflect on the liturgical year. We welcome you to this virtual community and hope you find this resource beneficial.

Here you will find reflections to guide children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, or diverse learners, through the current liturgical season with adaptive catechesis to help them to participate fully. Each offering includes prayer, Scripture, activities and more that incorporate the senses and take into consideration the needs of all learners. We invite you to gather children around the table of the home or the table of the classroom as preparation for their participation at the sacred table of the Eucharist.

**Each monthly edition incorporates the following:**

- 1. Prayer**
- 2. Sacred Scripture**
- 3. Reflection**
- 4. Faith in Action**
- 5. Activities**
- 6. Saint**
- 7. Resources/Bibliography**

# Prayer

**Leader:** When we go to church we pray in several ways including out loud with others. One of the prayers that we say together is the Our Father. Prayer is talking to God, and this prayer starts by saying his name the same way you would say your friend's name to get their attention before talking to them. The words of the Our Father help us remember that God is a loving father who wants to help us. In this prayer we also ask God for our daily needs (daily bread) and we ask for forgiveness. Last, we ask that God protect us from evil. We are going to start off our time today by praying the Our Father. Praying is a really great way for us to GROW in our relationship with God! God loves us and wants us to spend time with him in prayer.

To help learn this prayer, I am going to say a line, and you repeat after me.

*Begin with the Sign of the Cross.*

Leader: Our Father, who art in Heaven

All: **Our Father, who art in Heaven**

Leader: Hallowed be thy name;

All: **Hallowed be thy name;**

Leader: Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

All: **Thy kingdom come, they will be done,**

Leader: On earth as it is in Heaven

All: **On earth as it is in Heaven.**

Leader: Give us this day our daily bread

All: **Give us this day our daily bread**

Leader: And forgive us our trespasses

All: **And forgive us our trespasses**

Leader: As we forgive those who trespass against us

All: **As we forgive those who trespass against us**

Leader: And lead us not into temptation

All: **And lead us not into temptation**

Leader: But deliver us from evil, Amen.

All: **But deliver us from evil, Amen.**



Benediction of God the Father by Luca Cambiaso, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons

*Close with the Sign of the Cross.*

Leader: Great job everyone! We pray this at Mass, but we can pray it at any time and ask God to watch over us and our friends and family.

Song suggestion: "The Lord's Prayer" Song – Our Father in Heaven – Brother Francis. <https://youtu.be/i70XoA2ZxYQ?feature=shared>



Engraving, Public Domain



## Reading of Sacred Scripture

Mark 4:30-32

He said, "To what shall we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable can we use for it? It is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth. But once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the largest of plants and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade."

With many such parables he spoke the word to them as they were able to understand it. Without parables he did not speak to them, but to his own disciples he explained everything in private.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**



James Tissot, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

## Gospel Reflection

In this passage Mark doesn't just capture Jesus' words about the mustard seed, he also explains why Jesus used so many parables or stories. Jesus told stories to take something complicated and make it easier to understand. About two thousand years have passed since Jesus told these parables and the world is different. That gives us a chance to reflect on what Jesus' words meant to the persons who stood in front of Jesus and listened, and then to think about what they mean to us today.



Jesus and the parable of the mustard seed, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Have you ever seen a mustard seed? It's very small, so small that you can barely see the seed itself. When Jesus started speaking to groups of people, not many believed what he was saying was true. But Jesus and his disciples spread the good news, and more and more people believed in God's Kingdom, believed in God's promise of heaven. Like the tiny mustard seed spreading into something much bigger, those first few followers grew into a huge, lasting group of believers that includes more than one billion Catholics in the world today!

The mustard seed can also be the seed of faith, of belief and knowledge about God, inside each of us. A mustard seed is tiny, but it grows to a size you cannot imagine looking at the small seed. Once we learn about God and all about Jesus we start to grow in our understanding about the Kingdom of God in heaven. This growth reminds us that we can grow in our faith. Every time we go to faith formation class, pray, listen to God's words, or talk about Bible stories with our family we are growing our faith larger and stronger like the mustard seed that becomes a tree.

## Faith in Action

### *Growing Faith in Ordinary Time- Faith the Size of a Mustard Seed!*

Have you ever planted a tiny seed and waited for it to grow? At first, it might look like nothing is happening, but deep down, something amazing is going on. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says:

“If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.” (Matthew 17:20)

A mustard seed is one of the smallest seeds, but it grows into a big plant! Jesus reminds us that even the tiniest bit of faith can grow and do big things when we trust in him.



Miansari66, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

That means:

- ◆ Faith starts small, but it can grow strong when we care for it.
- ◆ God can do amazing things through us, even if our faith feels tiny.
- ◆ We can help our faith grow by praying, loving others, and trusting Jesus.

Green is the color for Ordinary Time. You will see green cloth on the altar and the priest will wear green vestments at Mass. What do you see outside that is green? Plants, trees, and grass are green when they are growing. During Ordinary Time, we are called to grow in our faith just like a plant grows!



**Mustard Seed Prayer Jar:** Watch your faith grow with this simple activity. Do this to remember that we do things to grow in our faith during Ordinary Time.

- ♦ Find a small jar or clear container.
- ♦ Add dry mustard seeds (or any small seeds) to represent your faith.
- ♦ Each time you pray, do something kind, or trust God in a hard moment, add another seed.
- ♦ Watch how the jar fills up over time.

Adaptations: Use large beads, buttons, or textured objects for easy handling. Let children pour or scoop seeds for a sensory experience.



### **Faith Garden Family**

**Project:** Plant seeds to see God's work.

- ♦ Plant mustard seeds (or any fast-growing plant) in a small pot or garden bed.
- ♦ Water and care for them.
- ♦ Talk about how your faith needs prayer, love, and trust just like seeds need water, sunlight, and care.

Adaptations: Use large pots at table height, tactile soil, or artificial plants with removable leaves that children can “grow” by adding them each day.



**Parish Garden:** Plant faith at church and contribute to the environment of your parish!

- ♦ Work with your parish to plant flowers, herbs, or vegetables in a church garden or an unused flower bed.
- ♦ As you plant, talk about how faith, like plants, needs good soil, water, sunlight, and care to grow strong.
- ♦ Choose plants that are easy to care for so the whole parish can enjoy them.
- ♦ Make a small sign for the garden that says, “Faith Grows Here - Matthew 17:20.”



Image by Rommel Diaz from Pixabay

**Adaptations:** Use raised garden beds for wheelchair accessibility, large-handled tools for easier grip, or sensory-friendly plants (like lavender for smell or lamb’s ear for touch). Children who cannot dig can water plants or help make the garden sign.

**Faith Rocks:** Share God’s love outdoors by placing inspirational rocks around a local park area.

- ♦ Find smooth rocks and paint or decorate them with hearts, crosses, or a short phrase like “God Loves You” or “Have Faith.”
- ♦ As a family, take a walk and place the rocks in safe, visible places like a church garden, a park path, or near your home where others can find them.
- ♦ Pray for the persons who will see the rocks. Pray that their faith will grow.

**Adaptations:** Use large rocks for easier handling. Provide pre-painted or textured rocks for sensory interest. Children who cannot paint can help choose colors or decide where to place the rocks.

## Activities with Children

**Let's talk:** Talk with your child about the wonderful parable of the mustard seed.

- ♦ **What happened:** The mustard seed is small enough you can hardly see it. When the mustard seed is planted it grows to be bigger than you would imagine looking at the seed.
- ♦ **Why is this important:** Jesus speaks of faith the size of a mustard seed, suggesting that even a small amount of genuine faith can accomplish great things.
- ♦ **Talking points:**
  - ◇ How does this make you feel?
  - ◇ Why do you think this is important?
  - ◇ Do you think this can make your faith stronger? Why?

**Let's Read:** This month we read the parable of the mustard seed which we can use to remind us that even a little bit of faith can grow. Read other Scripture about growing strong in our faith.

- ♦ Matthew 17:20
- ♦ John 15:5
- ♦ Romans 4:20-21
- ♦ 2 Peter 3:18



Image by Irina from Pixabay

**Let's Plant a Mustard Seed:** While you can plant actual mustard seeds this month, that would take up a lot of space! Instead do one small action each day this month that God can turn into something big! Here are some ideas to grow your faith and God's Kingdom.

- ◆ Pray for someone.
- ◆ Talk about each family member's favorite parable.
- ◆ Invite someone to come to Mass or a parish activity with you.
- ◆ Do a small act of kindness (opening the door).
- ◆ Write a thank you note to a person who is a blessing to your family.
- ◆ Search your local library for picture books that include stories from the Bible and read them as a family.



Peter Merholz from Berkeley, CA, United States, CC BY-SA 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

**Let's Make it:** Make this mustard seed necklace and keep it with you as a physical reminder of your faith.

How to:

- ◆ Give each child a cardstock circle with the word FAITH written at the bottom edge of the circle.
- ◆ Punch a hole near the top of the circle.
- ◆ Let the kids decorate the edge of the paper with markers as they choose.

- ◆ Next help them to spread glue in the center of the circle with a brush.
- ◆ Sprinkle the mustard seeds over the glue until it is completely covered.
- ◆ Lace a length of yarn through the hole and tie it to wear as a necklace or hang it in your room.

What you will need:

- ◆ Mustard Seeds or other seeds
- ◆ Circles of Cardstock
- ◆ Glue
- ◆ Small Paintbrush
- ◆ Markers
- ◆ Hole Punch
- ◆ Yarn or ribbon



**Sensory Bin:** Sensory bins can help

children with hands on learning. This month use a sensory bin focused on the parable of the mustard seed.

Items can include colored rice, pasta, seeds, dolls or figures, toy trees or small branches from real trees, toy birds and small animals.



# Saint for September

## Saint Joseph of Cupertino

Feast Day September 18

St. Joseph of Cupertino lived from June 17, 1603 to September 18, 1663. He was born in a stable in Cupertino, Italy. His father had died before Joseph was born and the family home was taken to pay the father's debts. Joseph had a hard time getting along with people because he was often sick, awkward to interact with, and forgetful to the point of not being able to finish telling a story. However, he loved to pray and was so enthusiastic about his prayerful experiences that others made fun of him and treated him poorly.

Joseph had trouble fitting in with his family and with the first group of religious he tried to join but he still felt called to religious life. Joseph worked in the stables of an order near his home and impressed them with his devotion to God and simplicity of life so much that they welcomed him and allowed him to work towards priesthood. Joseph struggled with his studies and found it very difficult to learn. Joseph would learn small pieces of the information well and then he would pray that he would be asked the part he did know on the test. With God's help, he passed his exams and entered the priesthood in 1628. Although he struggled with his studies of becoming a priest, he overcame those struggles by turning to Jesus and praying.



Etienne5962, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Joseph was known for being patient and kind, but also for levitating when he prayed. This means that he would rise from the ground while deep in prayer. He was known as the flying priest and this made some people treat him even more poorly than when he was young. They believed that rising into the air was connected with witchcraft. Joseph continued to pray and be God's faithful servant even while being moved around the country with different groups of priests watching over him at all times.

We can call upon St. Joseph of Cupertino to pray for us as we study and do homework or take tests, or even as we work to learn something new. We can ask him to pray for us as we also try our best to study before an exam. Next time you or someone you know is struggling with studying, remember you know a saint who went through the same struggles and used prayer. We can ask St. Joseph of Cupertino to pray for us.

We can also think of St. Joseph of Cupertino if we have trouble fitting in with a group or if other people make us feel like we cannot do anything right or well. When Joseph let his love for God and for God's glorious creations show, others began to see him as valuable. During times of struggle, take a breath and look around. Let yourself be impressed by what God has done. Maybe it is a flower that raises to the sun even when the grass around it is dead, or maybe it is the shape of a cloud. Don't wait until you are struggling, practice seeing the beauty of God's creation around you now!



"A Miracle of Saint Joseph of Cupertino (1603-1663)" by Costanzi.

## September Resources

Ascension Podcast: The Jeff Cavins Show. *The Liturgical Calendar: Ordinary Time is Extraordinary Time*. <https://media.ascensionpress.com/podcast/the-liturgical-calendar-ordinary-time-is-extraordinary-time/>

Catholic Icing. *Teaching Liturgical Colors to Kids - Catholic Craft*. <https://www.catholicicing.com/teaching-liturgical-colors-to-kids-catholic-craft/>

National Catholic Education Commission. *The Parable of the Mustard Seed - Matthew 13:31–32*. <https://ncec.catholic.edu.au/faith/scripture-resources/commentaries/the-gospel-of-matthew/the-parable-of-the-mustard-seed-matthew-1331-32/>

Sadlier Religion Blog. *Ideas for Making Catholic Ordinary Time Extraordinary*. <https://www.sadlier.com/religion/blog/ideas-for-making-catholic-ordinary-time-extraordinary>

St. Joseph's Corner. *The Parable of the Mustard Seed*. [https://youtu.be/0EgdOcgH\\_y8?si=kIEfpTNvEFZlQkhk](https://youtu.be/0EgdOcgH_y8?si=kIEfpTNvEFZlQkhk)

TeachingCatholicKids.com. *Ordinary Time ... extraordinary time for your family*. <https://www.teachingcatholickids.com/ordinary-time-extraordinary-time-for-your-family/>