

Secrets of the kingdom 26 July – 1 Aug

Bible time  **Matthew 13.31-33,44-52**

Jesus gives his followers five examples of what the kingdom of God is like.

Life today

Have you ever tried to describe something that seems too amazing for words? We often have to create an image or tell a story, to try to give a sense of what it is like. Jesus tries to describe the kingdom of heaven and uses images and stories to help give us a sense of what it is like.

Read the story together then explore it using these questions.

Question time

- What do you normally imagine a 'kingdom' to look like? Do these images used by Jesus fit with that picture?
- Which of these five images of God's kingdom do you find most helpful? Why?
- How would you describe what the kingdom of heaven is like?

Activity time

• Postcard

Create a postcard with a picture on the front which shows something about God's kingdom. You could use one of the images Jesus gave, or come up with one of your own. Post it to someone you know, and ask them to tell you what they see in the picture.

• Pictures

It has been said, 'A picture paints a thousand words.' Look through albums of family photos and spend some time talking about all the stories that these pictures represent. As you look back over these things that have happened, can you see God at work in your life?

• Daily parables

For the next five days, choose one of these five images Jesus used and read about it in the morning. Think about what it says about the kingdom of heaven. Throughout the day, try to look for signs that remind you of this.

Here are some parables that Jesus told the crowd:

The parable of the mustard seed

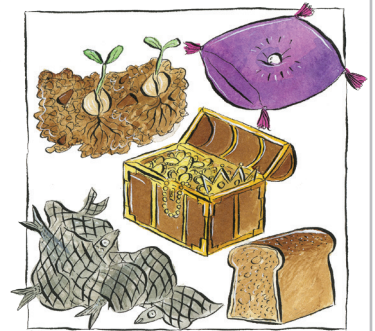
'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, sown in a field. It is the smallest of seeds but grows up into a huge bush, and the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.'

The parable of the leavened bread

'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman mixes with three lots of flour, until it is all leavened and ready to rise.'

The parable of the hidden treasure

'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. Someone finds it, hides it again, and then is so very, very happy, he goes and sells everything he has to buy the field.'



The parable of the fine pearl

'The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant who is looking for fine pearls. He finds one very special and valuable pearl, and goes and sells everything he has to buy it.'

The parable of the good and bad fish

'The kingdom of heaven is like a net. The net is full of fish, of all shapes and sizes. It is pulled ashore. The good fish are put in baskets while the bad fish are thrown away. And it will be like this at the end of time when the angels will separate the good people from the bad.'

leavened yeast is added to bread to help it rise; **merchant** a trader.

Prayer time

Crouch down into a small ball, and slowly stretch out until you are as tall as you can be as this prayer is read:

Like a tiny seed that's planted,
or yeast that's put in dough,
grow your kingdom in us, God.
Amen.