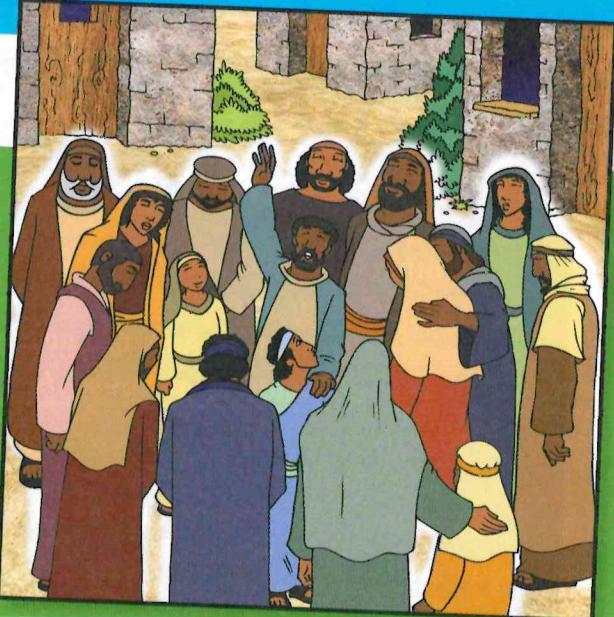




**KEY VERSES:** Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. (Romans 12:4-5)



## Together We Stand

**Lesson Scriptures: Mark 4:26-32; Ephesians 4:4-6**

### God's Word

**26** He also said, “This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. **27** Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. **28** All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. **29** As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.” **30** Again he said, “What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? **31** It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. **32** Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.”

• • • •

**4** There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6** one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.



# Bible Story

## Together We Stand

**Mark 4:26-32;  
Ephesians 4:4-6**

In Mark's passage, Jesus uses two *parables* (simple stories with a special heavenly message) to explain what God's kingdom is like. God's kingdom is where God reigns. In the first parable, the parable of the growing seed, the seed scattered on the ground took root and grew to become a plant with little to no help from the planter. The seed sprouted all by itself, the soil produced a stalk, and then heads of grain with kernels appeared. When the grain ripened, it was harvesting time, and the planter cut down the plants. Like the seed that grew mysteriously with little help from the planter, the kingdom will grow by God's majestic power.

In the second parable—the parable of the mustard seed—the mustard seed, which is the smallest seed on the earth, yields the largest plant. When planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all the plants in the garden. Its branches are so big that birds can sit on them and receive shade on hot, sunny days. Like the tiny mustard seed, the kingdom of God will begin small but grow large and mighty, providing protection to all who enter.

Ephesians 4:4-6 teaches that every person, regardless of age or spiritual gifts, can play important roles in God's kingdom. Our unity, oneness, and hope in Jesus Christ allow us to achieve great things together and advance God's kingdom.

## Together Again

(Part 1)

Julian's school marching band was invited to perform for the holiday parade in New York City. On the day they left, Julian said, "I'm so excited to perform with our entire band!"

"So are we," his friends said as they stood in line to board bus #1.

Mr. Thomas, the band director, yelled for everyone to board the four buses and start their long drive to New York. During the trip, bus #4 took the wrong turn. And bus #2 broke down. When buses #1 and #3 arrived in New York City, everyone wondered if they could perform!

"Oh, no! How can our routine and music work with only half the band?" Julian asked.

## Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius

Hello! Nicholas and Cornelius here! Our research has taken us to Mark's gospel of events from AD 26 to AD 30. In today's passage, Jesus was teaching His disciples and other followers using parables or stories that were familiar but had a spiritual lesson. Mark was not an eyewitness to Jesus' teaching, but these teachings were passed down orally and recorded by Mark. Mark's writings help us to understand what God's kingdom is like and how it grows.



## Together Again (Part 2)

Mr. Thomas said, “Everyone, remain calm. We don’t perform until tomorrow morning. We are sure the rest of our band family will arrive later today.” And just as Mr. Thomas promised, later that day, they got word that the delayed buses were back on track and the other band members were on their way. Everyone was very happy to be reunited.

When the buses arrived, Julian was there to greet them. He told them, “We couldn’t have performed without you all. It takes all of us playing our parts and working together to have a great performance!”

The next day, the band presented a great drill, and their participation in the parade was a success.

## Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius

Julian and his fellow band members were excited to perform together in the holiday parade in New York City. So, when everyone did not arrive together, Julian became concerned. However, everything ended up working out, and the entire band performed beautifully, each band member played their instrument in harmony with the entire band. A band is like God’s kingdom. Every believer has a unique role to play. Believers in Christ are expected to live and work together in harmony.



## True or False?

Read each of the sentences below (which is related to the lesson). Write T if the statement is true, or F if it is false.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. In the parable of the growing seed, the man scattered the seed on the ground.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The man worked hard, and the seed grew into a stalk and head of grain.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The mustard seed is the smallest seed on earth, but it produces the largest plant in the garden.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Like the mustard seed, the kingdom of God begins large and then gets small.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Our unity, oneness, and hope in Jesus allow us to accomplish great things for God’s kingdom.