

Text: Mark 4:30-32  
Catechetical Sunday  
16 September 2018  
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Jesus says, “The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth. *[Show seeds]* But once it is sown, the mustard seed springs up and becomes the largest of plants.” (Mark 4:30-32)

I remember Sunday School when I was a kid. In Sunday School Opening Assembly we would sing the song “I Love to Tell the Story”. It goes like this:

I love to tell the story  
Of unseen things above,  
Of Jesus and his glory,  
Of Jesus and his love.  
I love to tell the story,  
Because I know it's true;  
It satisfies my longings  
As nothing else would do.

I first heard that song when I was four years old. I'm now 64 years old, and I have never forgotten “I Love to Tell the Story”. *That's* the power of Religious Education. Our kids and youth in Religious Education today will have their own songs and memories to remember. Those are the *mustard seeds of faith* we are giving them now, to grow in the mustard tree of a lifetime friendship with Jesus.

Some parents say they don't send their kids to Religious Education because they want their kids to choose for themselves when they're older. Let me tell you: the mustard seed of faith we plant in our kids today might *not* grow into a tree of living faith. Jesus tells lots of stories of seeds that get snatched up, and plants that wither away. But if we give our kids nothing, they *have* nothing - no basis - on which to make a decision, and when they get older, that's what they will choose: *nothing*.

So - God bless you, students, who are in Religious Education. There is a lifetime of joys ahead with Jesus as your friend, even during the hard times.

God bless you, parents and families, for caring enough about your children's faith to share your

faith with them and to bring your kids to Religious Education even when it's inconvenient.

God bless you, volunteers, who give yourselves and your time to hand on our faith by being teachers and assistants and helpers in Religious Education.

Parents and volunteers, remember: God has no grandchildren. In every generation, new children of God have to be raised up. God bless you for taking part in that work. We do what we can to plant the mustard seeds of faith and cultivate them, and it is in God's hand to grant the growth. As Martin Luther said,

“I have held many things in *my* hands, and I have lost them all;  
but whatever I have placed in *God's* hands, *that* I still possess.”

In Religious Education, we place our kids in God's hands, knowing nothing will be lost. Religious Education really is a preparation for a lifetime – as I can testify to, 60 years after first hearing “I Love to Tell the Story”. And Religious Education is a preparation for what lies beyond this life: heaven! My favorite verse of “I Love to Tell the Story” always has been the last verse, because it talks about the “scenes of glory” we'll see in heaven as we sing a new song. It goes:

And when in scenes of glory,  
I sing the new, new song,  
I'll sing the old, old story  
That I have loved so long.  
I love to tell the story;  
I'll sing this theme in glory  
And tell the old, old story,  
Of Jesus and his love.

I call forward Ms. Rowena Harless, our Pastoral Assistant for Faith Formation and Youth Ministry.