God said, ‘See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food.’ Genesis 1:29

Introduction
‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.’ Matthew 13:31-32

Our world is filled with myriad varieties of beautiful plants, vegetables and fruits that nourish our bodies every day. Each fruit and vegetable is a little bit different from the other, and inside of each one is the key to the next. We are a part of the spreading of seeds, the planting of new fruit, even when we do not realize it. Every time we blow on a dandelion, spit out seeds from watermelon in the grass at a picnic, or walk through woods, we pick up and put down seeds all over this earth which God gave us. Though we encounter seeds in so many ways each day, we also need to set intentions about sowing seeds in order to make sure we have enough food for everyone in our communities. When we plant seeds we are not just planting food but also growing hope and change for what our world, with God’s grace, can look like.

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Prayer

We are God's Mustard Seeds

Oh Lord, we are your mustard seeds, Oh so small and simple!

Help us to be generous in giving to others by community.

We are your children.

Help us to grow strongly, that in giving to others, we may show others God's perfect charity.

The mustard seed is the smallest of seeds, but the tiniest seed grows into the largest of plants, giving shelter to all.

Just like the mustard seed, we are all your children, humble and simple, that can grow to be the noblest and purest of souls, giving love to all!

Adapted with permission from Mustard Seed Communities USA: www.mustardseed.com
Song

Oats, Peas, Beans, and Barley

Oats, peas, beans, and barley grow
Oats, peas, beans, and barley grow
Do you or I or anyone know
How oats, peas, beans, and barley grow?

First the farmer sows the seeds
Then he stands and takes his ease
He stamps his foot and claps his hands
And turns around to view the land!

To hear the melody for this song, visit MySpace free music.

This is a game song. The game and song were known in 14th century France and in many other European countries.
Seed Mosaic Art (5 – 7 year olds)

Seeds come in all sorts of interesting shapes, colors, sizes and smells. Create a marvelous mosaic with these wonderful gifts from nature.

**Time Needed:** 45 minutes

**Materials:**
- Seeds (beans, rice, sunflower seeds, nut shells, etc.)
- Clear liquid glue or white glue
- Illustration board, paper board, sand paper, or cardboard
- Small spoon

**Instructions:**
1. Collect seeds of all sorts of shapes, sizes and color. Rice, beans, bird seed, corn kernels, and sunflower seeds are examples of seeds that you can use.
2. Cut illustration board or any sturdy paper board into the desired size.
3. Think about a design for your mosaic and make a sketch on the board.
4. Squeeze some glue on one portion of the image.
5. Put seeds on the glue.
6. Work on an area at a time. You may use a spoon to transfer the smaller seeds onto the glue.
7. Continue until you’ve covered the entire image with seeds. Allow the glue to dry completely before using your mosaic.

*If working with young students, handouts or pre-designed sketches can work well. Then the students can fill in the design themselves without worrying about drawing a picture at the beginning.

Used with permission from FirstPalette.com
Seed Shakers/Maracas (8 – 11 year olds)

Time Needed: 45 minutes

Materials:
- 2 paper cups per student
  (Alternatively, collect old toilet paper rolls instead of using cups. The ends can be flattened and stapled together).
- Aluminum foil
- Masking tape (or stapler if using toilet paper rolls)
- Dried beans or seeds
- Scissors
- Tissue paper or other decorations such as sequins
- White craft glue
- Markers

Instructions:
1. Fill one cup halfway with beans or seeds. Tape the other cup so that the beans and seeds are enclosed in the maraca.
2. Cover the maraca with foil.
3. Glue on the decorations.
4. Make music together! Pick your own favorite song to sing!

Photo used with permission from www.busybeekidscrafts.com
Blind Grabs (5 - 7 year olds)

Time needed: 15 minutes

Materials:
- 10 apples
- 10 oranges
- 10 lemons
- Blindfold (use men’s ties, scarves, pieces of cloth, bandanas, etc.)

Instructions:
1. Divide children into three teams of at least four children each, and name one “Apples,” one “Oranges,” and one “Lemons.”
2. Blindfold one child from each team and walk her him to a table where the apples, oranges, and lemons have been placed. Each child can only take the fruit of their team and place it in their basket.
3. Teammates can call out and direct their player to take the right fruit.
4. The winning team is the one who collected the most of their own fruit and the least of anyone else’s fruit.
5. If time allows, new children can be blindfolded and the game can be played again.

From Games for Youth Groups.com
Blind Walk (8 - 11 year olds)

Purpose: To use other senses besides just sight to appreciate the world around us and to build a sense of teamwork and trust among the children.

Time needed: 30 minutes

Materials:
- Blind folds (use old scarves, men’s ties, or pieces of cloth)

Instructions:
1. Explain how children will be guiding one another through the blind walk. One child will be blindfolded and the other will be the leader and guide them by telling them where to walk without touching them. The leader guides her/his partner along any route that looks attractive, being very careful to watch for logs, low branches and so on. The leader also guides her/his blind partner’s hands to interesting objects, and brings her/him within range of interesting sounds and smells. Remember to demonstrate how to lead your partner safely, and to remind the leaders that they are the eyes for their blindfolded partners.
2. Demonstrate by blindfolding one teacher while the other teacher gives directions on how to walk around an obstacle.
3. Divide children into pairs and assign a role for the first round. Guide them as they walk and be sure that everyone is following directions at all times to keep her/his partner safe.
4. Switch roles half way.
5. Gather together in a group and explain what each child saw and felt, and what different experiences they had
6. For an additional challenge, set up a simple obstacle course for partners to guide their blind partners through. Be sure that the obstacles are not likely to cause injury if partners give bad directions!

Tips:
When people try something new, they’re often nervous and cover it up by joking and laughing. Since covering one’s eyes is a new experience for many kids, it’s helpful to play the following game before a blind walk. Ask everyone to sit in a circle and each person is to use his sense of smell, touch, and possibly hearing to discover something new about an object. Have each player share her/his discovery before passing the object to the next player.

Trail Mix

Makes 10 servings.

**Time Needed:** 10 minutes

**Ingredients:**
- 1 cup peanuts
- 1 cup cashews
- 1 cup dried cranberries or raisins
- 1 cup sunflower seeds
- 1 cup banana chips
- 1 cup whole grain cereal

**Instructions:**
Mix the ingredients together in a big bowl.

As the students add the ingredients, discuss which part of the plant each item represents:
- Peanuts - seeds from the legume family
- Cashews - seeds from the legume family
- Dried Cranberries or Raisins - fruit
- Sunflower Seeds - regular seeds
- Banana Chips - fruit
- Whole Grain Cereal - seeds from the grain family

* Find out whether any participants have nut allergies before making this snack. Pumpkin seeds, dried figs or cherries, or granola could act as extra ingredients for a nut-free trail mix recipe.
Seed Walk

**Time Needed:** 1 hour

**Materials:**
- Adult socks (one per student)
- Ziploc bags (one per student)
- Magnifying glass
- Paper and colored pencils

**Instructions:**

1. Read the parable of the mustard seed:

   ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.’ - Matthew 13:31-32

2. Take the students for a nature walk. Each student should wear an adult sock over one of their shoes to accumulate seeds as they walk. They can also collect seeds in Ziploc baggies as they see them in the garden or on the walk.

3. After the walk, students may remove seeds from their sock and add them to their Ziploc baggies. Ask the students to draw two different types of seeds and ask if anyone is able to identify their seeds. Allow the students to pass around the magnifying glass to examine their seeds.

4. If there is more time, students can classify their seeds according to characteristics such as round, hard, soft, black, etc.

5. Discussion questions:
   - How do seeds get from place to place? (dispersal)
   - How does God show us that seeds are an important part of creation?

**Extension:** Try growing some of the seeds collected by the students.
Sticky Stackers

Makes 10 servings.

Everything is more fun to eat when it comes on a stick! This recipe gives kids the chance to play with their food by cutting out shapes and then stacking them up on a wooden skewer to make this non-traditional sandwich. Experiment with other vegetables like cucumber or bell peppers.

Time Needed: 30 minutes

Ingredients:
- 10 pieces of 100% whole wheat bread
- 10 pieces of cheese, thick slices (4 oz total)
- 5 cups of lettuce
- 5 cups of tomatoes (cherry tomatoes work very well)
- Additional vegetables according to seasonal availability and preferences

Utensils:
- Cookie cutters
- Knife
- Wooden skewers (make sure that you trim the sharp ends of the sticks with scissors, especially if you are serving children)

Instructions:
1. Cut the bread, cheese, lettuce, tomatoes and any other ingredient you would like in your sandwich with the cookie cutters or with a knife, if necessary.
2. Stack the pieces onto the wooden skewers. Enjoy!

COMPLETE THE MEAL:
Serve with another fruit such as ½ cup of grapes or half a banana and 1 cup of milk or milk alternative.

Adapted with permission from Super Healthy Kids: http://blog.superhealthykids.com/2011/01/sticky-stacky-sandwiches/
Types of Seeds (5 – 7 year olds)

Time Needed: 30 minutes

Materials:
- Various types of seeds (for example, dried black beans, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, popcorn kernels)
- Cups
- Worksheet (see next page)
- Writing utensils

Instructions:
1. Give each child a cup of mixed seeds. Ask the children to separate the different types of seeds into groups.
2. Hand out the worksheet and have the participants glue their seeds on according to the different patterns. If there is time, the participants can also label their seeds.
Types of Seeds Activity Sheet
Can you glue seeds in the circles below by following the patterns?

Smallest to Largest

Lightest to Darkest

1 Seed    2 Seeds    3 Seeds    4 Seeds
Design A Seed (8 – 11 year olds)

Time Needed: 1 hour

Materials:
- Paper clips
- Feathers
- Pom-Poms
- Molding clay rolled into balls
- Popsicle sticks
- Paper
- Fabric
- Pipe cleaners
- Felt
- Pencils and crayons
- Scissors and glue

Seed Dispersal Vocabulary:
Anemochory: When seeds are carried by the wind
  For example, dandelion seeds fly away because they are so light.
Barochory: When seeds use gravity (fall to the ground)
  For example, apple seeds are dispersed when fruit falls to the ground.
Zoochory: When seeds are carried by humans or animals
  For example, burs can hook onto fur or clothing.
Hydrochory: When seeds are carried by water
  For example, seeds of water lilies float on top of the water.

Instructions:
1. Form four small groups. Assign each group the role of “anemochory,” “barochory,” “zoochory,” or “hydrochory.” The task of each group is to design a seed for their particular function. The group must first come up with a design, and then execute their design together.
2. When each group has created its seed, have the students hypothesize how their seeds will hold up to testing. Have the students write down their hypotheses and explain their reasoning out loud to the other groups. The model seeds can then be tested in front of the whole group. For example, the hydrochory group can test their seed by dropping it into a bucket of water. The anemochory group can use a fan or simply blow their seed to see how far it can fly. The zoochory group can hook the seed onto clothing and see if it stays, and the barochory group can drop their seed from different heights to see if it is damaged as it falls.

Discussion Questions:
- Which seeds worked? Which seeds didn’t work? Why?
- Does nature “design” seeds like we did today?
- How do seeds fulfill different roles in nature?
Storytime

The Carrot Seed
by Ruth Krauss

When a little boy plants a carrot seed, everyone tells him it won’t grow. But when you are very young, there are some things that you just know, and the little boy knows that one day a carrot will come up. So he waters his seed, and pulls the weeds, and he waits.

to be like the SUN
by Susan Marie Swanson and Margaret Chodos-Irvine

Within every tiny seed lies the secret of what’s to come. First a shoot, then a stem, a leaf, a bud—and finally a brilliant sunflower reaching high for the sun. Join a young girl as she waters and watches, celebrating the everyday miracles of growth and life.
Rainy Day Option: Indoor Scavenger Hunt

Some scavenger hunts help us see things we've never noticed before. This scavenger hunt will help children see common things in a new light. This scavenger hunt will have children searching for items inside that came from plants and animals.

**Time needed:** 30 minutes

**Materials:**
- Paper or copies of the worksheet on the next two pages
- Writing utensils
- Crayons, markers and/or colored pencils if the child wants to draw the items and/or the original item (walls/wood/trees)
- Optional: clipboards

**Preparation:**
1. Make copies of the worksheet.

**Instructions:**
1. Assign children to teams of two or three.
2. Explain to them that many of the things we use every day in our houses actually come from nature. Today we are going to find them! Give an example. The wood used to make our pencils comes from trees. Can someone tell me one other thing here that comes from trees?
3. Now have children find items around the room. Walk around to make sure everyone is finding items that came from plants and animals. The children can be more creative and even draw the item and its original form.
4. After 20-30 minutes of searching, gather everyone together in a large group and have everyone share one of their items. Be sure that everyone gets a chance to share.
5. Point out any other interesting items that the children might have missed. For example, T-shirts are often made with cotton, which grows on plants.
6. Encourage the children to discuss how we get the things from nature. For example, someone cuts down the trees, someone chops the logs up, and someone else builds it into a desk. What happens if we don't plant more trees?

**Tips:**
1. If the room does not offer much in the way of products from nature, feel free to "cheat" and bring in items for the children to find. Straw baskets, wool items, wooden toys, or shelves.
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