

One day, Jesus was in the synagogue talking to a large crowd of people. They wanted to know more about the kingdom of God. They knew all about the great kingdom of the Romans with powerful armies and huge palaces. But the people found it hard to understand God's kingdom. Where was it? What did it look like? Who could be part of it? So, Jesus told them parables – stories to help them understand.

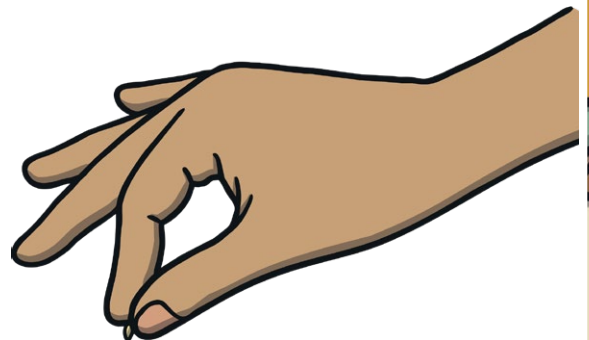
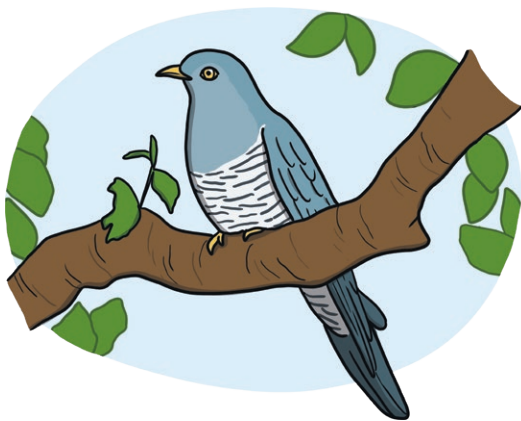
Jesus said, "What is God's kingdom like? What could I use to describe it?"

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

"God's kingdom is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all the seeds on earth. When this tiny seed is planted, it grows and becomes a huge tree. It grows so big that the wild birds come and build nests in its branches."

The people thought about this. It sounded very different from the Roman Kingdom. Perhaps God's kingdom could be planted anywhere, by anyone, by the smallest of acts. Maybe God's kingdom could grow so big that, like the wild birds, anyone could come and join.

Then Jesus told them another parable.



The Parable of the Yeast

“What else can I compare God’s kingdom with?” Jesus said. “It is like yeast.”

The people knew about yeast, a tiny fungus that they often used in baking.

Jesus said, “When you mix yeast into a big bowl of flour, it makes all the dough rise.”

Again, the people thought about the stories Jesus had told them. Perhaps the kingdom of God wasn’t like any kingdom they knew. Maybe God’s kingdom didn’t need huge armies or palaces. Perhaps God’s kingdom could start from something tiny – a small act of kindness, forgiveness or love – and make a big change. Maybe, in God’s kingdom, no one was too small to make a big difference.

