

# Mustard Seed Series

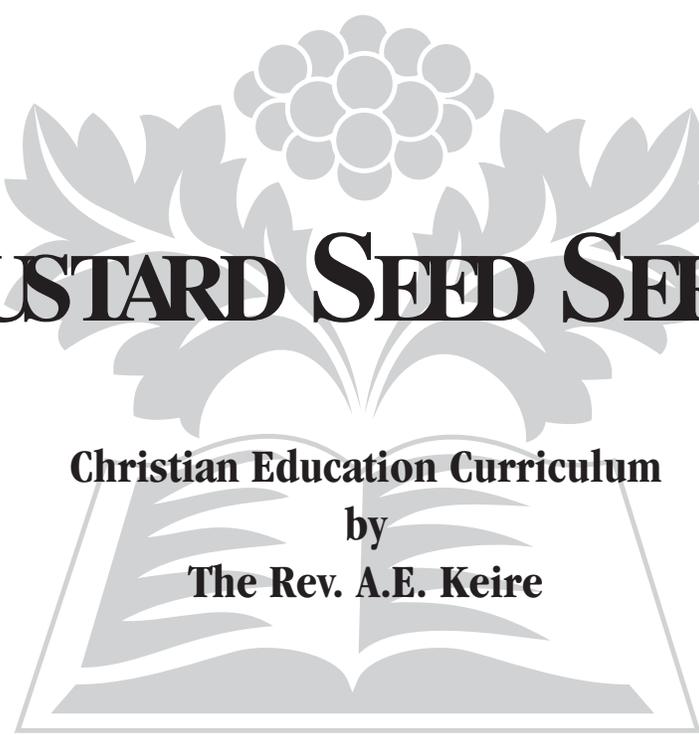
CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION



# Pre-Confirmation 1



**Pre-Confirmation 1**  
**Senior 1**  
**Teacher Book**



**MUSTARD SEED SERIES**

**Christian Education Curriculum**  
**by**  
**The Rev. A.E. Keire**

Curriculum Development  
Associates, Inc.

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**Cover Design: Tom Murphy**

**Curriculum Development Associates, Inc.**

**The Mustard Seed Series by  
Rev. Anita E. Keire**

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Hugo van der Goes, *The Fall of Man*

# PRE-CONFIRMATION 1

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# NEW TESTAMENT

## FOCUS

- The Raising of Lazarus from the Dead
- Passion/Palm Sunday
- Jesus Overturns the Money-Changers' Tables
- Jesus Teaches in the Temple
- The Lord's Prayer—"Thy Kingdom come..."



### Background Reading

Please study Chapter 6 of *A Parent's Guide to Prayer*.



### Attendance and Sharing



### Review

- What did Joseph of Arimathea proclaim as the heart of the Law of the Old Testament? (Hear O Israel...)
- Who proclaimed Jesus the Christ, the Messiah?
- What advice did Jesus give his 12 disciples when they went on their missionary work?
- What does *Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name* mean?



### Preparation for Today's Lesson

- Passover is the Jewish celebration of the Israelites' release from Pharaoh's bondage. On that night, the Jewish people prepared for flight. They took lamb's blood and smeared it over the doorposts and lintels of their houses (Ex. 12:1-13:16) so that the angel of death would "pass over" their homes on the night of death for the firstborn sons of Egypt.

■ Today's story opens with pilgrims on the roads leading to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover feast. Notice the reverence the people have for Jerusalem. Also notice their joy as they sing, dance, laugh, and play their simple instruments en route to Jerusalem.

■ Not shown in the movie is Jesus weeping over Jerusalem. \_\_\_\_\_, will you please read Luke 19:41-44? Jesus' heart is filled with sorrow because he knows the people will eventually reject him and that in another 40 years Jerusalem will be destroyed by the Romans because of the Zealots' rebellion against Rome.

■ What do you know about Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday?

■ (Show the movie beginning with the pilgrims on the road to Jerusalem through to a discouraged Barabbas leaving Jesus. This viewing will be about 29 minutes. After Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, you will need to go to Tape #3. Have it preset to the beginning of the action so as not to lose class time.)



### Today's Lesson and Discussion Possibilities

- Jesus is intercepted on the road to

JOHN 11:1-44;  
LUKE 19:28-48  
MATTHEW  
11:28-30, 25:31-46

## Jerusalem, The Holy City



*I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.*



JOHN 11:25-26

## MATERIALS

- Bibles
- Student's Books
- TV, VCR, and video *Jesus of Nazareth*

Jerusalem by a messenger from Mary and Martha. Jesus goes to Bethany even though he knows that his life may be threatened there. Martha and then Mary meet him on the road. They state their belief that Jesus could have saved Lazarus if only he had come earlier. Lazarus has been dead four days. Hot climates cause the body to decay rapidly.

- Note the barrenness of the ground surrounding the grave. It is a place where no life is possible.
  - Men accept Jesus' command to remove the stone to the burial chamber.
  - Jesus raises Lazarus from the grave simply by voice command.
  - What do you think of this scene?
  - What is the reaction of the people?
  - What is the religious significance of this miracle? Write your answers in your Student's Book in Lesson 23.
  - Lazarus comes to life through voice command.
  - God created the world through voice command, too.
  - This event prefigures Jesus' own resurrection.
  - This miracle is a grave challenge to the Temple authorities.
  - Jesus' miracle is a sign of his compassion towards everyone and their problems and difficulties.
  - God's power is present in Jesus.
  - God's kingdom is actively present through Jesus' ministry.
- \_\_\_\_\_, please read John Pilch's statement and the information on the Jerusalem Temple and the Sanhedrin.
  - Notice how John quotes scripture to show how Jesus is fulfilling its prophecies.
  - \_\_\_\_\_, will you please read John 11:45-54? What do you think of religious leaders who actively plot Jesus' or anyone's death?
  - Director Zeffirelli introduces Master Zerah. He does not appear in the biblical texts. Zeffirelli characterizes him as a person with great influence and access to Temple officials, with members of the Sanhedrin, and with Roman officers.
  - Judas seeks out Master Zerah to ask for his assistance in arranging a meeting between Jesus and the Sanhedrin. Judas wants the Sanhedrin to proclaim Jesus King of the Jews so that he can order the Romans from Israel's soil. What is Zerah's reaction to Judas' ideas?
    - Zerah will make it possible for Jesus to meet with the Sanhedrin.
    - Zerah thinks Judas is not operating in the world of reality.
  - What is wrong with Judas' reasoning?
  - Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a colt or donkey. He is unlike victorious military figures who ride victoriously into a conquered city on a large horse which symbolizes their power and might. The palm leaves and the laying down of garments before Jesus show the pilgrims' joy and hope they have in Jesus.
  - Jerusalem watches Jesus. Romans, scribes, Pharisees, priests, and Master Zerah watch Jesus. Jesus gets off his donkey and enters the Court of Gentiles.
  - Normally we view Jesus as being a man of peace, a pacifist. In this movie and in the biblical text, we learn that his anger can be aroused and that he can take some physical action. Jesus overturns the money-changers' tables and drives out those who sell animals or birds for sacrifice.
  - Temple officials and most religious people believed it was necessary to exchange Roman money for money used exclusively in the Temple. \_\_\_\_\_, will you please read what is written in your

Student's Book under *Nuggets?*

- These business people set up their business in the Court of the Gentiles. Gentiles are non-Jewish people, who were barred from worshipping with Jewish people.
- The Court of Gentiles was meant to be a place where Gentiles could worship.
- If this place is like a bazaar, prayer and communion with God are difficult to achieve because of the noise and distractions they create.
- Temple officials were growing rich from exchanging money from everyday currency to Temple money and from the sale of unblemished animals and birds upon which they gave their approval.
- These Temple practices extorted money from those who worshiped and made their sacrifices in the Temple.
- Jesus believed this commerce should occur in a competitive marketplace away from the Temple rather than in the Temple.
- Jesus accuses Temple officials for misusing the Temple. He quotes the prophet Isaiah in Mark 11:17. He says, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers."
- Isaiah believed that the Jewish people were to be a beacon light to all the nations of the world. They were not to keep God just to themselves. God belongs to everyone. Do you remember how Jesus stressed the *our* in the Lord's Prayer?
- By excluding Gentiles from the inner sanctuaries and places of worship, the Temple authorities were practicing a form of religious discrimination that Jesus found unacceptable.
- Jesus also is angered because of the secret, or covert, activities of the Zealots'

use of the Temple as a safe meeting place and as a hideout to plot their next wave of terrorist activities against the Romans.

- Jesus' disciples, except for Judas, approve of Jesus' action against the Temple merchants. Have you ever wondered why Jesus was not arrested?
  - The people probably agreed with Jesus.
  - An arrest would create a terrible riot.
- Jesus enters the inner part of the Temple. Again he pauses as he did as a child when he sees the smoke which represents the presence of God. He focuses only on God at that moment.
- But Master Zerah approaches Jesus and waves off the Temple guards. Zerah introduces himself and asks Jesus if he wishes to destroy the Temple. Remember, Zerah is a fictional character created by Zeffirelli. A character similar to Zerah may have existed, but we do not have any biblical record of him.
  - Jesus answers, "The Temple is not of stone, it is the house of God. It cannot be destroyed as long as God lives here." What does Jesus mean?
    - A place of worship is a place set aside for the worship of God. It can be a plot of ground in a field or it can be a special building so long as God's presence is there.
    - God cannot be contained within walls.
- Then Jesus refers to his body as the Temple which will be destroyed and will rise again. Zerah understands Jesus' meaning.
- Judas reprimands Jesus for confronting Zerah.
  - Judas tells Jesus that Zerah is one of the most open-minded of the scribes.
  - Jesus says, "Open your eyes and your heart and not your mind, Judas." In other words, do not play mind games

and try to rationalize actions. What you see is what you get.

- Zerach says to Judas, “Your master is an extraordinary man with little political sense. We will watch his mission with great interest.”
- Jesus teaches in the Temple throughout the week. He attracts large crowds, and tensions between Jesus and Temple officials mount.
- When Jesus is washing himself, Barabbas approaches him. This event probably never happened. What did Barabbas want Jesus to do? (He wanted Jesus to lead the revolution.)
- Jesus says to Barabbas, “The day of forgiveness is at hand...All who take up the sword will perish by the sword. Barabbas, your zeal blinds you to the truth. The new Jerusalem will not be built by murder and uprisings. Barabbas, I’ve come to take on my shoulders the sins of the world. He who would follow me must do the same.” This exchange between Barabbas and Jesus raises some interesting questions about evil and forgiveness.
  - In the New Testament context when Jesus talks about the sword, he utters these thoughts in the Garden of Gethsemane. The early church used his words as justification against self-defense and military service. Do we need armies to protect ourselves and others?
  - Has this country, the Jewish people, the Germans, the Italians, and the Japanese been able to forgive each other for past atrocities, deaths, and murders that occurred during World War II?
- The parable of the two sons to the children by Jesus is an indirect attack on the posturing of the Pharisees who say they are living according to God’s will but who do not do the will of God.



## Student Books

- Last week we learned the meaning of the first verse in the Lord’s Prayer.
- \_\_\_\_\_, will you read what *Thy kingdom come* means in your Student’s Book?
  - What do we mean by spheres of influence?
  - What is your, your parents’, and my sphere of influence?
  - Whose will dominates these spheres?
  - Does God’s will dominate or come into play at all in these different spheres?
  - What rights are you willing to grant others even though it means you may lose some rights or privileges in order to do God’s will?
  - How does bringing in God’s kingdom challenge our very way of relating to the world?
- \_\_\_\_\_, will you please read what is written for *Thy will be done*?
- \_\_\_\_\_, will you please read the last paragraph?



## Conclusion

- Let us form a prayer circle. Please bring your Student’s Book with you.
- Sometimes we say we want to follow Jesus Christ. But when we are faced with decisions that we must make that are not in accord with Jesus’ teachings, we hesitate because we do not want to renounce our past, give up our spheres of influence and have a new beginning in Jesus Christ. We want to cling to the old hatreds and the wrongs that have been done to us or to our people.
- Let us pray Thomas à Kempis’ prayer followed by the Lord’s Prayer.

End of Teacher Book Preview.

Student Book Preview Follows.

## The Raising of Lazarus

Jesus raised Lazarus from the grave simply by voice command. What is the religious significance of this miracle? Write your answers below.

John J. Pilch in “Towards Understanding Miracles in the Bible” says:

For biblical man, miracles were signs of the immediate activity of God in his creation. He didn't ask, “How did it happen?” so much as “Who is responsible?”

The Jerusalem Temple was the central focus of Jewish life. It symbolized God's relationship with the people. It was the religious, cultural, and political center of Jewish life.

The *Sanhedrin* is the name given the Court in Jerusalem that governs Jewish religious and political life during and before the New Testament era. The Sanhedrin was under Roman domination. It had 71 members and was presided over by a high priest selected by the Romans.

### Nugget

Temple officials and most religious people believed it was necessary to exchange Roman money for money used exclusively in the Temple. There were two reasons for this exchange of one kind of money for another. They are:

- Roman coinage had a picture of Caesar on it. This picture violated the



Duccio, *The Entry into Jerusalem*

JOHN 11:1–44;  
LUKE 19:28–48;  
MATTHEW  
11:28–30, 25:31–46

## Jerusalem, the Holy City

“  
*I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.*

”

JOHN 11:25–26

second of the Ten Commandments, which said, “You shall not make any graven images.” A *graven image* is something that is sculpted or an image that is affixed to something.

- Money used and handled in everyday life was considered ritually unclean.

The exchange of money may have started as an innocent public service which turned into a profitable, full-scale banking business. Jesus objected not only to the surcharges for exchanging money but also to the conducting of business on sacred ground.



El Greco, *Christ Driving the Money-Changers from the Temple*

## The Lord's Prayer

The Kingdom of God is not a retreat from the concrete world. When we pray *Thy kingdom come*, we are praying that our little kingdoms and spheres of influence may perish so God's Kingdom and rule can be established.

*God's will* is unity, peace, wholeness, joy, goodness, righteousness, purity, fidelity, love, hope, and faithfulness. What do these words mean to you in relation to the phrase *Thy kingdom come*?

*Thy will be done* means we respond to Jesus' call for conversion. Jesus challenges us to turn away from all that rules our lives—be it money, power, technology, or ideology—and to turn to God and stand in God's presence. Jesus' call to faith liberates us and frees us from our private agenda.

When we pray *Thy will be done*, we know that we should not try to impose our will on God.

- How do we try to impose our will on God?
- What sacrifices are we willing to make in order that God's Kingdom can flourish?

God's will is to be done *On earth as it is in heaven*. God has entrusted the earth to us. God wishes us to bring our will into conformity with God's will where God's will is lived out and not forced on people. If we live by God's will, we will live in faith, hope and love. Beginning with ourselves, we will begin to live out the content of heaven.

## A Prayer by Thomas à Kempis

Almighty God, you who have made all things for us, and for your glory, sanctify our body and soul, our thoughts and our intentions, our words and actions, that whatsoever we shall think, or speak, or do, may by us be designed to the glorification of your name...and let no pride or self seeking, no impure motive or unworthy purpose, no little ends or low imagination stain our spirit, or profane any of our words and actions. But let our body be a servant to our spirit, and both body and spirit servants of Jesus Christ.