



## *Finding the Tools to Nurture our Children*

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Recently, I joined our Sunday school children under the branches of the shade tree on our playground. Together, we all saw the gold box that contained the parable of the mustard seed. I watched while our storyteller held the children in rapt attention as the tiny mustard seed grew and grew into a huge tree. When the tree grew big enough, we watched the birds flock to it and build their nests. And we wondered about what the sower's name could be. And what the birds could mean, and how something so tiny could grow into something so big.

When the story was over, some children stayed to interact with the felt trees and wooden birds used to tell the story. Others took sidewalk chalk to draw what they found most important, while one wandered around the playground and said, "This is our Nicene Creed." One of the children found a bird's egg that had hatched lying under our shade tree. "Look," she said. "It's just like in the story!" We all joined her to look for nests and birds in the spreading branches of our tree, then wondered how such a huge tree had grown from such a tiny seed.

The children love to hear our sacred stories, and they are fully capable of entering into them and connecting them to their own lives. Even adults are still figuring out these narratives. The stories and wonderings build the foundation of what will be a lifelong spiritual journey.

This fall, we will continue to share stories on the playground. We will be flexible with space as St. Andrew's continues to break new ground. We will work around construction, and weather, and family schedules while continuing to help our children build a strong foundation.

This is the gift and blessing St. Andrew's gives our children each Sunday morning. And it is a gift and a blessing for the adults who are privileged to participate in it. I welcome you to join us on the playground and see these stories from a different perspective. I guarantee it will change the way you think about them. And, if you're lucky, you might see a child grind up chalk, rub it together in her hands until little clumps form, and then sow them into the picture she drew, just like she saw in the story.

Please [contact me at education@standrewsepiscopal.org](mailto:contact_me_at_education@standrewsepiscopal.org) if you would like to arrange an opportunity to join us in our sacred play.

