Wonder Box Curriculum #2 ALL THE BIRDS OF THE AIR
Pentecost 4 B, Pentecost 12 A, Easter 5 C, Earth Day, days with other bird-related texts

Mark 4:30-32, Matt 13:31-32, Ezekiel 17:22-24,

Salal + Cedar Wonder Box Curricula are designed for multi-age groups with the intention of growing children’s love of God’s creation. They bring together inspiration and wisdom from Messy Church, Godly Play and Forest Schools. The materials are organized for a 90 minute session and small parts can be used for a 30 minute Sunday School lesson or a 5 minute Children’s Talk.

Before the children arrive
One adult or youth leader should have reviewed the materials and be prepared to tell the story.
Convene the circle or class as is your usual custom. If at all possible we encourage you to meet outside.
Prior to the participants’ arrival set up as many exploration stations as you are able to manage with the time, equipment and helpers that you have. Some can be messy.

Focus Time with Words and Actions
(you will need a brown or green cloth to represent the earth, a cedar bough, a small bird’s nest, a small number of different kinds of feathers, mustard seeds,)

Words and Actions
A long, long, long time ago the prophet Ezekiel told a story.
Ezekiel said this is what God’s people are like:
(lay out scarf)
I will go to the lofty top of a cedar tree
And take a tender young twig from the very top (stretch up)
I will plant that twig on a high mountain
And it will grow tall, and sprout branches and become a giant cedar tree
(hold up the cedar branch with it’s base on the scarf—if appropriate have one or two children hold it steady otherwise lay it down)
And every kind of bird will come and live in it
And all the winged creatures will build their nests in the shade of its branches (place the nest gently on the cloth)

Not quite as long ago, Jesus told a story.
Jesus said, what God’s kingdom is like?

It is like a tiny mustard seed, the smallest, little seed (shake a single mustard seed into your hand)
That a farmer took and planted in a field (place the seed on the cloth)
And it grew up bigger than the plants
Into a great big bush (make a round bushy gesture)
And all the birds of the sky came to live its branches (hand a feather to each child)
**Wonder questions**

I wonder what you notice?
What is the same about the two stories?
What is different?
I wonder if Jesus knew Ezekiel’s story? I wonder why he told a different one?

I wonder who has ever seen a cedar tree?
Coast Salish people call the cedar tree—long life giver.
Did you know that the trunk of a cedar tree is as big around as our circle and as taller than a house?

I wonder who has seen a mustard seed?
Did you know some people think mustard is a weed?

I wonder how many birds there were? I wonder what different kinds of birds where there? I wonder what kinds of birds you know? What kind of bird would you be? Where do you see birds? Do you see them in church?

I wonder how the birds felt when they found a safe place for their nests?
I wonder how the cedar tree and the mustard bush felt?

**Work**

The “work” in this curriculum is a wonder-based, messy church style engagement where adults or teens at different stations help children to learn through questions and explorations. Very few answers are given and exploration is prompted with questions like: what do you think would happen if... I wonder why... did anything surprise you... and what do you notice?

In a Sunday School or Children’s Church setting it may work best to have the exploration time follow the words and actions. For Messy Church exploration first works best. For a children's focus during worship you may only have time for some of the words and actions above. At a summer camp or church picnic you may have more time to spend with each station.

Salal + Cedar bring our Wonder Boxes to the churches we visit.
Churches in the lower Fraser watershed can borrow Wonder Boxes.
If you are using this resource outside of the lower Fraser watershed you will need to assemble your own materials from the lists below. All materials and activities are suggestions, feel free to add materials, questions and stations that work for your setting.

**Build a Nest**

Straw
Sticks
String
Toothpicks
Grass or Raffia
Mud or Clay
Tweezers
Tongs

Use these materials and tools to make nests. This is a messy activity at a table and best outside or with a floor covering.
Museum Station
Bird Nests
Bird Skulls
Various kinds of Feathers
Magnifiers
Binoculars
Carefully and gently with adult supervision explore the materials. This is a quiet station at a table. What do you see? What do you notice? What kinds of birds made these nests? What kind of feathers are these? From what bird? From where on the body? How can you tell?

Exploration Station
Field Guides to birds
Bird recordings
Bird Calls
Photographs
Make noises? What bird calls do you know? Have you seen any of these birds? This can be at a table, on the floor, or in a comfortable reading area.

Scavenger Hunt
Indoors
Walk around the church
Find all the birds that you can
Can you name them?
What are they doing?
Do they mean something?
Outdoors
Find a feather
Find bird poop
Are there any birds in the sky? In the trees? On the ground? –what kinds?
Close your eyes, can you hear any birds?

Flight
Cardboard wings
Small kite
Paper airplanes
How are wing size and shape related to flight
This station needs lots of room for large body movements, it can be indoors or outdoors and does not need a table.