

TEACHERS' PERCEIVED PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED FOR FOSTERING EDUCATIONAL VALUES AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

By

¹OGUNDELE Omolara Bidemi & ²DR. J. Abdur-Rafiu

¹ PhD Students, Department of Arts Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

² Supervisor, Department of Arts Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

Abstract

Parables are rooted in everyday life but convey their message when social contexts are translated into the religious sphere. The parable of the Mustard Seed acts as an educational tool that can influence students' character development. Its impact largely depends on teachers' perceptions, including their awareness, interpretation, and teaching methods. This study aimed to explore how teachers in Osun State, Nigeria, perceive the parable of the Mustard Seed in promoting educational values among secondary students. A quantitative descriptive survey was conducted with 150 CRS teachers selected randomly. Data were collected using a questionnaire developed by the researcher, with a reliability coefficient of 0.73, and analysed through descriptive statistics of mean scores and standard deviations. Results indicated a moderate level of agreement among teachers regarding awareness, relevance, values, and behavioural influence linked to the parable. The study concluded that the effectiveness of the parable depends significantly on teachers' perceptions and teaching approaches. It is recommended that teachers demonstrate good character, as students learn more effectively through observation, and that they understand growth occurs gradually through consistent effort, patience, and dedication.

Keywords: Parable, Mustard Seed, Educational Values, Teachers' Perception and Character Formation

Introduction

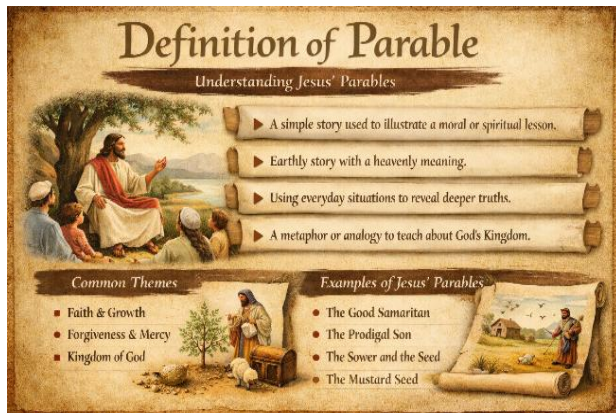
Education is crucial for developing human resources and is vital to many countries' developmental efforts. It acts as a process to acquire essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to succeed in a changing world. According to Adebayo (2021), education helps individuals develop skills, values, and knowledge to integrate into society and contribute to its growth. Ogundele (2026) notes that education extends beyond intellectual growth, also encompassing character development and value-based learning. Today, there is increasing concern about declining moral standards among secondary students. As a result, educators are exploring new approaches to instil values that promote responsible citizenship. Schools are expected to serve as moral training grounds, with teachers playing a key role in shaping students' behaviour and attitudes. Through effective teaching methods and moral guidance, teachers can help students adopt positive values that influence their actions both inside and outside school.

Christian Religious Studies (CRS) is a school subject focused on instilling educational values through biblical teachings and Christian ethics. As Akande (2020) notes, CRS uniquely emphasises developing desirable attitudes and values among students. Supporting this, Alabi (2020) highlights that the subject's main appeal lies in its focus on human behaviour and its impact on shaping the attitudes and values of young people. Therefore, the Christian Religious Knowledge curriculum seeks to motivate students to engage in activities that promote personal discipline, character development, tolerance, reconciliation, and peaceful coexistence (Victor-Akinyemi & Aiyedogbon, 2024).

Aligning with these insights, value education remains a core element of teaching Christian Religious Studies. A key instructional method in CRS involves teaching parables, which deliver profound moral lessons through straightforward stories. The parable of the Mustard Seed, among Jesus Christ's teachings, is particularly important because it illustrates that small, positive actions and values can lead to significant moral development and transformation. Jesus often used parables, understanding that storytelling is highly effective for learning, and he was a skilled storyteller (John, 2014). Employing the parable of the Mustard Seed as a vital tool can serve as a strategy for teachers to promote behavioural change in students. This article aims to highlight the significance of the Mustard Seed parable in cultivating educational values among students and to explore how CRS teachers view this parable within contemporary Nigerian society.

Definition of Parable

Parables originate in everyday experiences but convey their messages by translating social contexts into a religious framework. Many concepts in gospel parables derive from their social-historical backgrounds. Therefore, understanding the actual meanings of these concepts and the processes described is essential to grasping their transformative nature (Zimmermann 2015). A parable is a story that draws comparisons between two elements, often with multiple interpretations; it is an earthly story with a heavenly message. Onwuka (2020) explains that the term “parable” is the English version of the Greek word *parabolē* (παραβολή), meaning something thrown or placed beside something else.



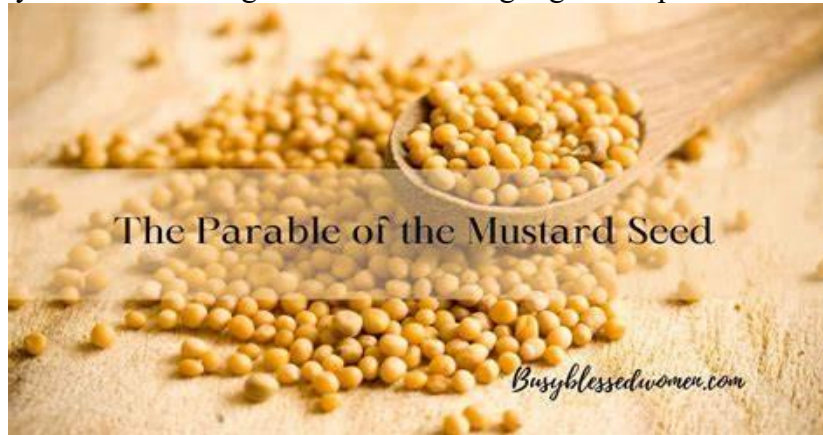
A Parable is an illustration or story that is familiar, used alongside another reality to clarify it. This is based on the principle of using the known and familiar to explain the unknown. It also refers to a figure of speech whose meaning is not obvious. Therefore, a parable is a simple narrative designed to convey a moral or spiritual lesson, as illustrated by Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels. John (2014) explained that Jesus' parables are brief narratives that teach moral or spiritual lessons through metaphor or analogy. This implies that much of Jesus' teaching was conveyed through parables, which

serve dual purposes: revealing truths to those seeking them while concealing them from those who do not. One of the most common methods Jesus used to communicate with his followers was through stories known as parables. In Scripture, parables are narratives drawn from nature or human situations to cultivate moral or spiritual truths, aimed at capturing and maintaining the audience's attention (Wole, 2021). In general, a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly

message, utilising earthly events to convey spiritual or moral lessons. Jesus' teachings were grounded in parables, which are story-based messages recorded in the New Testament.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt 13:31-32; Mk. 4:30-32 & LK. 13:18-21)

The parable of the mustard seed is among Jesus's shorter parables, found in the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew 13:31-32, Mark 4:30-32, and Luke 13:18-19. In this story, Jesus likens the kingdom of Heaven to a tiny mustard seed, one of the smallest seeds in nature. Despite its tiny size, when planted, it grows into a large tree capable of supporting birds among its branches. This powerful story symbolises the kingdom of God and highlights the potential for transformation.



Jesus compares the kingdom of God to a Mustard seed, which is small but grows into a large tree, providing shelter for birds. The parable of the mustard seed compares the kingdom of God to the smallest of all seeds on earth, which becomes the greatest of all shrubs. From the smallest to the greatest emphasises the great growth resulting from a small beginning. The listeners of Jesus understood this parable, telling how, by miraculous power, from the insignificant, from the poor little band of Jesus's disciples, out of a thing of naught, God was causing his kingdom to grow (Mark 4:30-32).

Symbolism and Meaning:

The mustard seed represents faith, small beginnings, and the kingdom of God

The tree stands for growth, shelter, and provision

The birds represent those who find refuge in God's kingdom.

God's kingdom starts small but grows speedily, impacting many lives.

The parable of the mustard seed highlights how God's kingdom progresses and illustrates how God uses seemingly minor things to achieve extraordinary results. It suggests that God can transform something or someone small and overlooked into a blessing that benefits many. Overall, this parable can motivate students to grasp the idea of starting modestly, cultivating their knowledge, and persevering through difficulties. It also encourages them to make a meaningful difference in their studies and to maintain faith comparable to a mustard seed throughout their

academic journey, reminding them that significant accomplishments can originate from humble beginnings.

Concept of Educational Values in Nigerian Secondary Schools

Values are complex and challenging to define precisely, yet they are fundamental to social behaviour. Ekeh (2019) describes values as higher-order norms shaped by psychological and physiological needs, while Elliot (2020) sees them as acceptable societal standards of conduct. Okobia, Okafor, and Osajie (2016) define values as beliefs and ideals that guide desirable or undesirable behaviour, with Florence (2010) citing examples like justice, honesty, diligence, and obedience. Values often originate from parental instruction or advice from elders, serving both individual and societal welfare. Yunita (2021) categorises values into the “value of being,” reflecting personal character, and the “value of giving,” emphasising respect and selflessness. Educational values, also called moral or positive values, are principles that influence students’ behaviour beyond academics. Olowookere (2015) explains that they give life meaning, guide actions, and promote moral decency in society. Yunita (2021) adds that educational values foster maturity and improve human life, while Oladosu (2010) describes them as processes that develop responsibility, attitudes toward others, and moral judgment. Religious education plays a critical role in revitalising Nigeria’s declining value system, demanding that educators possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and ethical courage to instil positive standards (Okobia et al., 2016). Karfi (2010) explain that educational values are core principles guiding daily decisions and moral judgments. They help young people discern right from wrong, develop good character, and foster ethical responsibility. However, scholars (Oladosu, 2010; Olowookere, 2015; Ekeh, 2019) agree that educational values are vital for moral growth, character development, and nurturing ethical behaviour among students. This emphasises the importance of integrating moral education into Nigerian schools to produce responsible citizens and promote societal harmony.

Educational Values on the Parable of the Mustard Seed and Its Implications

Educational values are essential elements of social action, promoting harmony and well-being within groups. Ekeh (2019) indicated that values are higher-level norms, a collection of principles guiding behaviour shaped by psychological and physiological needs. The purpose of parables is to promote educational awareness and influence the behaviour of both teachers and students. The researchers believe that most of Jesus’ parables are simple but hold deeper meanings. These parables effectively communicate moral lessons and encourage individuals toward virtuous conduct. According to Wole (2021), the primary goal of Jesus’ parables is to capture and sustain listeners’ attention. He further explains that Jesus uses parables to inspire personal growth by encouraging listeners to reflect on their lives and develop a close relationship with God and others. The educational values that both teachers and students can gain from the parable of the mustard seed, as discussed in this study, are examined below.

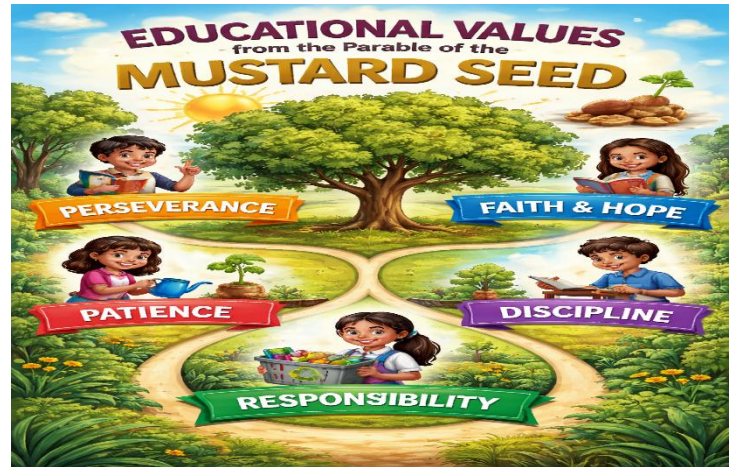
1. Faith and Hope: The parable emphasises the importance of faith in God’s power and plan. Just as the mustard seed grows into a large tree, our small acts of faith can lead to significant results.

2. Perseverance and Patience: The parable encourages us to persevere and be patient, just as the mustard seed takes time to grow and develop.

3. Potential for Growth: The mustard seed has the potential to grow into a large tree, illustrating that we all have the potential for growth and development, no matter how small or insignificant we may feel.

4. Care and Nurturing: The parable suggests that the mustard seed requires care and nurturing to grow, teaching us the importance of caring for and nurturing our relationships, talents, and spiritual growth.

5. God's Power and Providence: the parable highlights God's power and providence, reminding us that He is the one who gives growth and development, and that we are merely instruments of His will.



Implications of this parable are listed below.

a. The parable encourages us to start small and trust in God's power and plan.

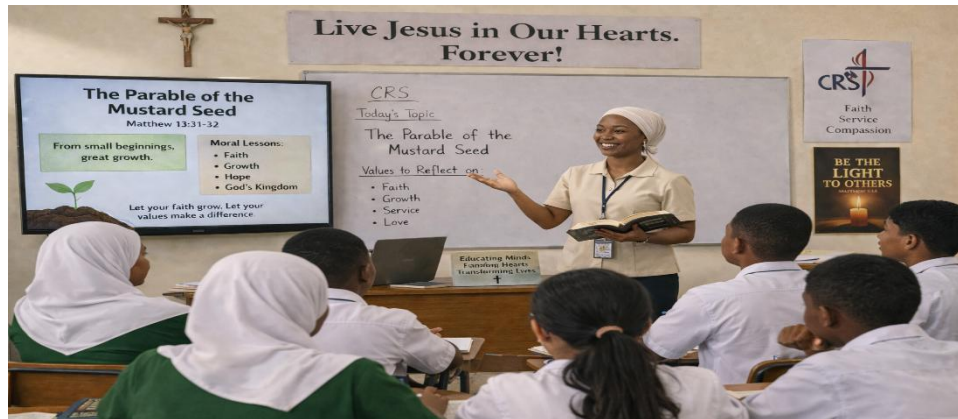
b. The growth of the mustard seed into a large tree requires trust in God's timing, teaching us to be patient and persevere.

c. Parable reminds us to recognise God's power and to rely on His ability to bring about growth and transformation

Looking at the educational values from the parable of the mustard seed, it can be seen as one of Jesus Christ's most timeless stories illustrating God's kingdom. The parable highlights that small efforts, when cultivated with faith and patience, can result in great outcomes. Teachers and students alike should appreciate gradual growth and not dismiss small starts, as the parable teaches us that meaningful development happens slowly and that steady effort can lead to significant achievements.

Teachers' Perception of Educational Values

Perception arises from the information individuals gather from their environment, which helps them make crucial decisions and act purposefully. Reitz (2021) describes perception as the processes through which people collect information about their surroundings, including sensory experiences such as seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling. Korb (2017) adds that perception involves selecting, organising, and interpreting environmental stimuli to ascribe meaning. Schools serve as moral training agents, with teachers playing a key role in shaping students' behaviour and attitudes. Through effective teaching methods and moral guidance, teachers help students internalise values that guide their actions both inside and outside school. Teachers are central to students' lives, as they are the main implementers of the curriculum and a major influence on learners' achievement (Almeida, 2017). Therefore, teachers' perceptions critically influence curriculum design, teaching methods, and the delivery of moral lessons at all educational levels.

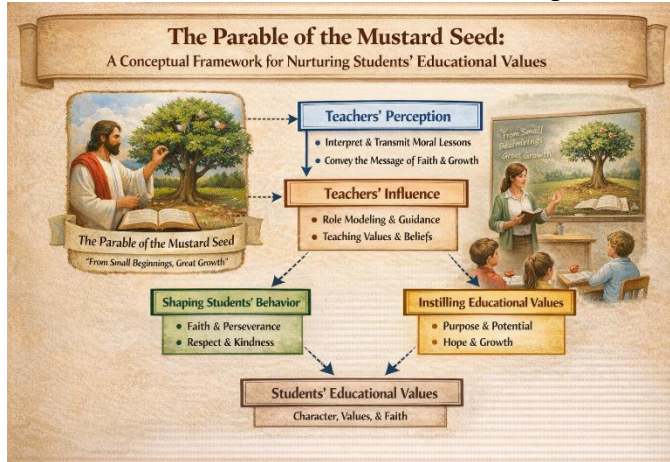


Teachers' perception of educational values encompasses their cognitive, emotional, and attitudinal beliefs about these values (Elliot, 2020). When it comes to moral values, perception involves interpreting sensory information and understanding stimuli from both inside and outside the school environment, influenced by students' physiological and psychological traits (Adebayo, 2020). Ibrahim (2022) found that teachers' views on instructional content significantly impact how values are conveyed to students. Teachers who emphasise moral education tend to be more effective in fostering character development. The study also explains the importance of parables as powerful teaching tools, especially for religious educators like Christian Religious Studies (CRS) teachers, in addressing moral decline and promoting educational values. Furthermore, Bosar (2025) showed that parables such as the Sower, Weeds, Mustard Seed, and Hidden Treasure effectively nurture values like perseverance, discernment, patience, faith, humility, and commitment to God's kingdom and humanity. His research also indicates that the effectiveness of this method relies heavily on teachers' pedagogical skills, with their own example playing a key role in helping students internalize biblical values meaningfully.

Theoretical Framework Link with Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on two relevant educational and psychological theories that explain how moral instruction, such as the parable of the Mustard Seed, can influence students' value formation and behaviour. The first theory is **Moral Development Theory**. Lawrence Kohlberg proposed this theory, which illustrates that moral development is a gradual process influenced by social interaction and critical thinking. He noted that moral reasoning develops through a sequence of stages, namely: pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional levels. At the secondary school level, students are typically within the conventional stage, where they begin to value social norms, rules and expectations. Kohlberg explained that these stages represented the transformations that occur in a person's structure of thought regarding morality and moral thinking (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). The parable of the Mustard Seed contributes to moral reasoning by illustrating the importance of patience and gradual growth, the value of persistence, faith and the consequences of nurturing positive behaviours. The second theory is **Social Learning Theory**, which was developed by Albert Bandura. This theory emphasised that learning occurs through observation, imitation and modelling. According to Bandura (1977), students cannot learn without focusing on the task. If they see something such as a model, imagery or symbols, this may likely capture their attention and help them learn better. This implies that students learn behaviours through storytelling, by observing teachers as their significant role models. In this study, teachers'

interpretation and presentation of the parable of the Mustard Seed influence how students understand educational values and imitate positive behaviours.



The Conceptual framework illustrates that the parable of the Mustard Seed (Independent variable) serves as an educational and instructional tool capable of shaping students' character. However, its effectiveness depends largely on teachers' perception (Dependent variable), which includes their level of awareness, interpretation and instructional delivery. Teachers act as interpreters and transmitters of the parable's meaning. Their perception determines how well the values embedded in the parable are communicated

to students. Also, the outcome of this process is reflected in students' educational values and behaviour. Thus, the theoretical and conceptual frameworks provide a strong foundation for this study by explaining how moral teachings included in the parable can influence students positively through structured teaching and interpretation.

Statement of the Problem

Immorality has become pervasive in Nigerian society, with schools increasingly reflecting these societal vices. Students engage in acts such as examination malpractice, cultism, dishonesty, drug abuse, corruption, and internet fraud, which erode respect for authority and diminish values like honesty, patriotism, and integrity (Ezediuno, 2024). This moral decline shows that the educational sector is not exempt from the wider societal menace. Although the Nigerian National Policy on Education (NPE, 2007; FRN, 2013) identifies Christian Religious Studies (CRS) as a subject capable of instilling moral and spiritual values, many teachers struggle to integrate the moral lessons embedded in Jesus' parables into classroom practice. Reports reveal that while most teachers acknowledge the importance of these parables, only a minority incorporate them into lesson delivery (Rasaki, 2021), limiting CRS's potential to foster character development among students.

Several studies have examined the transformative role of parables such as the Sower, the Weeds, and the Hidden Treasure in promoting moral values and spiritual growth. However, despite the rich moral teachings of the Mustard Seed parable, many CRS teachers appear to underutilise it in their teaching, thereby missing opportunities to strengthen students' resilience, faith, and moral character. While existing scholars such as David (2016), Bosar (2025), and Lisha (2026), among others, highlight the theological meaning and transformative potential of parables, empirical research on the Mustard Seed parable and its pedagogical application in Nigerian classrooms remains limited. Previous studies emphasise outcomes of moral instruction but pay insufficient attention to how teachers' perceptions and pedagogical competence influence the practical integration of this parable into CRS teaching. This gap underscores the need to investigate how CRS teachers can effectively employ the Mustard Seed parable as a transformative tool for educational values and spiritual development among students.

Purpose of the Study

The study was designed to achieve the following objectives:

- a. Examine CRS teachers' awareness of the parable of the Mustard Seed among secondary school students in Osun State
- b. Determine CRS teachers' perceptions of its relevance in teaching educational values among secondary school students in Osun State
- c. Identify the educational values derived from the parable of the Mustard Seed.
- d. Assess the influence of the parable of the Mustard Seed in fostering students' behaviour in Osun State Secondary School.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the level of CRS teachers' awareness of the parable of the Mustard Seed among secondary school students in Osun State?
2. How do CRS teachers perceive their relevance to education among secondary school students in Osun State?
3. What are the values can CRS teachers derive from the parable for fostering students' character among secondary school students in Osun State?
4. To what extent does the parable of the Mustard Seed influence students' behaviour in Osun State Secondary School

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative descriptive survey design. The population comprised all CRS teachers in Osun State secondary schools (N=400), from which 150 were selected using simple random sampling to ensure equal representation and minimise bias. The research instrument was face-validated by two experts from the Department of Social Science Education, University of Ilorin, and trial-tested on 20 CRS teachers outside the study area. Reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.73, which was considered adequately reliable for the study. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section A collected demographic data such as age and educational qualification, while Section B contained 20 closed-ended items divided into four sub-sections: teachers' awareness of the parable of the Mustard Seed (Bi), perceptions of its relevance in teaching values (Bii), identification of values derived from the parable (Biii), and its influence on students' behavior (Biv). Items were structured on a four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree). Data were analysed using descriptive statistics: percentages for demographic data, and means with rank order for research questions.

Data Analysis and Results

This phase deals with the collation, analysis and interpretation of data collected from the respondents based on the purpose of the study and research questions postulated. Demographic characteristics of the respondents are described using percentages, as shown in Table 1

Table 1: Demographic Data of CRS Teachers

Variables	Frequency	Percentages (%)
a. Age		
25-34	20	13.33
35-44	37	24.67
45-54	52	34.67
55 and above	41	27.33
Total	150	100.00
b. Qualification		
NCE	32	21.33
B. A. (Ed.)	57	38
B. A. with PGDE	19	12.67
B. A. without PGDE	17	11.33
M. Ed.	15	10
PhD	10	6.67
Total	150	100.00

Table 1 presents the demographic data of CRS teachers, which indicates a workforce dominated by middle-aged and older educators, with over 62% aged 45 years and above, suggesting a strong base of experience but limited generational renewal. In terms of qualifications, the majority hold a B.A. (Ed.) degree (38%), while a significant proportion possess NCE (21.33%), reflecting diverse entry pathways into the profession. Advanced qualifications such as M.Ed. (10%) and PhD (6.67%) are present but relatively few, highlighting limited engagement with postgraduate scholarship. Overall, the data portrays a profession rich in experience and pedagogical diversity, yet facing challenges of attracting younger entrants and fostering higher.

Research Question 1: What is the level of CRS teachers' awareness of the parable of the Mustard Seed among secondary school students in Osun State?

Table 2: CRS Teachers' Awareness of the Parable

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. D	Remark
	Level of CRS Teachers' Awareness of the Mustard Seed							
1.	I am familiar with the parable of the Mustard Seed.	50	45	35	20	2.82	0.99	Agree
2.	I understand the key message conveyed in the parable of the Mustard Seed.	48	42	40	20	2.79	1.01	Agree

3.	I have taught the parable of the Mustard Seed with the students before	45	40	45	20	2.73	1.03	Agree
4.	I am aware of the biblical context in which the parable of the Mustard Seed was presented.	52	43	35	20	2.85	0.98	Agree
5.	I can confidently explain the meaning of the parable of the Mustard Seed to students.	50	44	36	20	2.83	0.99	Agree

Keys: Yes = 2.50 - 5.00

No = 0.00 - 2.49

Cluster Mean = 2.81'n Agree (Moderate Awareness)

Table 2 findings reveal analysis of CRS teachers' awareness of the parable of the Mustard Seed shows a moderate level of familiarity and understanding, with mean scores ranging from 2.73 to 2.85, all within the "Agree" category. Teachers demonstrated stronger awareness of the parable's biblical context and meaning, yet slightly lower engagement in actual classroom teaching of the text. The cluster mean of 2.81 confirms that while teachers possess commendable theoretical knowledge, practical application remains less emphasised. Overall, the findings highlight a profession that is knowledgeable but requires greater pedagogical integration of biblical parables to enrich students' learning experiences.

Research Question 2: *How do CRS teachers perceive their relevance to education among secondary school students in Osun State?*

Table 3: CRS Teachers' Perception of Relevance of the Parable

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. D	Remarks
Teachers' Perceptions of Relevance of the Parable of the Mustard Seed to Education								
11.	The parable of the Mustard Seed is relevant to modern educational practices.	55	45	30	20	2.90	0.98	Agree
12.	The lesson from the parable can be applied to students' academic development.	53	47	30	20	2.89	0.98	Agree
13.	The parable promotes values that are important in the school environment.	50	45	35	120	2.83	0.99	Agree

14.	Teaching the parable enhances students' understanding of personal growth.	52	46	32	20	2.87	0.98	Agree
15.	The parable supports character-building among secondary school students.	56	44	30	20	2.91	0.97	Agree

Keys: Yes = 2.50 - 5.00

No = 0.00 - 2.49

Cluster Mean = 2.88 'n Agree (Moderate Perception)

The findings from Table 3 indicate that CRS teachers hold a moderately positive perception of the parable of the Mustard Seed as relevant to education, with mean scores ranging from 2.83 to 2.91 and a cluster mean of 2.88. Teachers particularly emphasised its role in character-building, academic development, and modern educational practices, while also recognising its contribution to values and personal growth within the school environment. This implies that the results suggest that teachers view the parable not merely as a biblical text but as a pedagogical resource capable of enriching holistic education, bridging moral instruction with contemporary classroom goals.

Research Question 3: *What are the values can CRS teachers derive from the parable for fostering students' character among secondary school students in Osun State?*

Table 4: CRS Teachers' Views on Values Derived from the Parable

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. D	Remark
Values Derived from the Parable of the Mustard Seed								
1.	The parable teaches the value of patience in personal development.	58	45	27	20	2.94	0.96	Agree
2.	The parable emphasises the importance of a small beginning.	55	47	28	20	2.91	0.97	Agree
3.	The parable encourages faith and perseverance among students.	52	45	33	20	2.86	0.98	Agree
4.	The parable promotes responsibility and self-discipline.	50	46	34	20	2.84	0.99	Agree
5.	The parable helps students develop positive attitudes toward growth and success.	48	44	38	20	2.80	1.00	Agree

Keys: Yes = 2.50 - 5.00

No = 0.00 - 2.49

Cluster Mean = 2.87 ‘n Agree (Moderate Value Derived)

The findings from Table 4 show that CRS teachers perceive the parable of the Mustard Seed as a moderately valuable source of moral and educational lessons, with mean scores ranging from 2.80 to 2.94 and a cluster mean of 2.87. Patience in personal development and the importance of small beginnings were rated most highly, while values such as perseverance, responsibility, self-discipline, and positive attitudes toward growth also received strong agreement. Thus, the results suggest that teachers recognise the parable as a pedagogical tool that fosters resilience, discipline, and character formation, making it relevant for nurturing students’ holistic development in contemporary education.

Research Question 4: *To what extent does the parable of the Mustard Seed influence students’ behaviour in Osun State Secondary School?*

Table 5: The Influence on Students’ Behaviour

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. D	Remark
Influence of the Parable of the Mustard Seed on Students’ Behaviour								
16.	Teaching the Parable positively influences student behaviour.	60	45	25	20	2.97	0.95	Agree
17.	Students who understand the parable demonstrate improved moral conduct.	58	45	27	20	2.94	0.96	Agree
18.	The parable encourages students to be more persistent in their studies.	55	47	28	20	2.91	0.97	Agree
19.	The parable contributes to better interpersonal relationships among students.	52	45	33	20	2.86	0.98	Agree
20.	The parable reduces negative behaviours such as discouragement and lack of motivation.	50	44	36	20	2.83	0.99	Agree

Keys: Yes = 2.50 - 5.00

No = 0.00 - 2.49

Cluster Mean = 2.90 ‘n Agree (Moderate Influence)

The findings from Table 5 indicate that CRS teachers perceive the parable of the Mustard Seed as having a moderately positive influence on students’ behaviour, with mean scores ranging

from 2.83 to 2.97 and a cluster mean of 2.90. Teachers strongly agreed that teaching the parable enhances moral conduct, persistence in studies, and overall behavioural improvement, while also fostering better interpersonal relationships and reducing discouragement. Collectively, these results suggest that the parable serves as a valuable pedagogical tool for shaping students' character, motivation, and social interactions, thereby contributing meaningfully to holistic educational development.

Discussion

The study revealed a consistent pattern of moderate agreement among CRS teachers regarding their awareness, relevance, and perception of the parable of the Mustard Seed. Teachers acknowledged its biblical meaning, recognised its relevance to modern educational practices, and affirmed its role in character-building. These findings align with earlier studies that values derived from the parable serve as universal values that are embedded in the Nigerian secondary school curriculum's objectives for promoting civic responsibility, moral conduct, and social harmony (Ogundele & Abdur-Rafiu, 2026). Similarly, the result shows that teachers noted its positive influence on student behaviour, by improved discipline and persistence in studies, suggesting that the parable functions not merely as a religious text but as a pedagogical resource bridging faith-based lessons with contemporary educational goals. Recent studies corroborate these insights, David (2016), Bosar (2025), and Lisha (2026) they comments that parables are effective instructional strategies because they convey moral truths in relatable ways, addressing challenges such as dishonesty and indiscipline. Ibrahim (2024) highlights that parables like the Mustard Seed encourage resilience and growth, aligning with educational theories that stress holistic development and character formation. More contemporary perspectives (Adebayo & Yusuf, 2025; Victor-Akinyemi & Aiyedogbon, 2024) reinforce the idea that integrating parables into CRS teaching strengthens moral education, positioning them as transformative tools for nurturing responsible citizenship in Nigerian schools. Therefore, the emphasis on patience and small beginnings resonates with modern pedagogical approaches that value incremental progress and a growth mindset. This aligns with recent educational psychology perspectives, which stress that fostering perseverance and positive attitudes significantly enhances academic achievement and behavioural outcomes. T

Conclusion

The study concludes that the parable of the Mustard Seed is a powerful instructional tool for fostering educational values among secondary school students when effectively interpreted by teachers. Teacher perception significantly determines how the parable is taught and applied in the classroom. When the teachers possess a deep understanding of the parable and apply appropriate pedagogical strategies, they are able to translate its message into practical life lessons that shape students' character and behaviour. However, the study affirms that teachers are central to value formation, acting as the bridge between biblical teachings and students' real-life experiences.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should exemplify good character, as students learn more effectively through observation. Regular workshops and seminars should be organised to equip teachers with effective strategies for teaching CRS and interpreting biblical parables.

2. Students are encouraged to cultivate faith in their abilities and confidence in their future because believing in small beginnings can motivate them to overcome academic and personal challenges.
3. Parents should reinforce the values taught in schools to ensure consistency in students' moral development.
4. Government and educational policies should provide funding and policy support for CRS and the moral education programme.

Implications of the Study

This research contributes to the existing body of literature on the intersection of biblical parables in the synoptic gospels for educational values. The study affirms that teachers are central to value formation, acting as the bridge between biblical teachings and students' real-life experiences.

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