

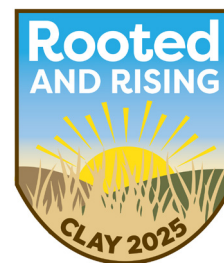
CLAY 2025 PRE-GATHERING BIBLE STUDY



This **Pre-Gathering Bible Study** was written by the CLAY 2025: Rooted & Rising National Planning Committee, in partnership with keynote speaker Jordan Cantwell. This resource is intended for Home Teams to make use of as they prepare for, travel to, and participate in this summer's gathering.

Consider gathering outdoors as you share this Bible Study as a Home Team. How does God speak to, and through, your home team? Perhaps your group enjoys preparing, serving, and eating meals together. Maybe you would enjoy roasting hotdogs and/or marshmallows while you do this Bible Study. Maybe music, song and dance are what brings your group to life. Feel free to adapt and adjust how you use this resource to your group's size, setting and personality!

CLAY 2025: PRE-GATHERING BIBLE STUDY



Invite your group to relax in a comfortable position, close their eyes (if comfortable), and calm their minds.... After a moment of silence, invite them to notice how their bodies are physically connected to the earth where they are seated or standing.

When the group feel calm, read the following passage out loud 2 times (at a slow pace):

Jesus put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in a field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

(Matthew 13:31–32, NRSV)

Invite everyone to return their attention to the group and discuss the following questions:

1. How many times do you think Jesus talks about seeds or plants in his stories?
 - Quick guesses — there are lots! He talks about wheat, weeds, vines, trees, mustard seeds, and more.
2. What do you notice about what he says about them?
 - Encourage them to notice how growth starts small, can take time, and may face challenges — just like planting crops on the Prairies.
 - Passage examples: Luke 13:6–9, Luke 17:5–6, Mark 4:2–9, Matthew 13:24–30, John 15:1–11, John 12:24
3. Why do you think Jesus talks about seeds so much?
 - Help them connect it — seeds are everyday miracles. They remind us that real growth is slow, steady, and powerful — just like the seasons.

WE ARE ROOTED & RISING

In Saskatoon, we will be gathering in a place known for wide open skies, deep roots, and strong growth. Our theme at CLAY this year is Rooted & Rising. Do you see the connection?

Roots feed us. Roots steady us. Roots remind us where we come from. Just like plants need deep roots to survive, we also need deep roots — in God, in our faith, in our families and communities.

Though often unseen below the surface, our roots below are essential for growth above. God calls us to rise — like a tree stretching up into the wide Saskatchewan sky. Every day is a chance to grow taller, stronger, and bolder.

And here is the coolest part: We rise together. One tree by itself can fall in a storm — but a whole forest of trees protects and strengthens each other. Our friends, families, churches — even all of us who will be gathered from all across Canada in Saskatoon this summer — we are a forest growing together.



Your journey might sometimes feel tiny, like a mustard seed. But it's packed with so much possibility. Your roots matter. Your rising matters. How deep will your roots go? And how high will you rise? What nourishes your roots to grow strong? What is the beautiful thing you feel God is calling you to grow into?

CLOSING RESPONSIVE PRAYER

Leader:

Let us pray, Almighty God who creates, sows, and harvests, who knows how every seed will rise...

All:

Root us in your love.

Leader:

When growth feels slow or the winds of life blow hard, remind us that good growth is often slow, steady, and not without challenges. Help us to remember that we are not alone and that together we root deeper and rise stronger.

All:

Let us rise in your promises.

Leader:

As we prepare for CLAY 2025, as individuals, as a home team, and as church, help us reflect on what we have been and are rooted in. Help us see where we have grown and are growing now. Remind us that we have the power to choose and change these things.

All:

Root us in your love and let us rise in your promises. Amen.