

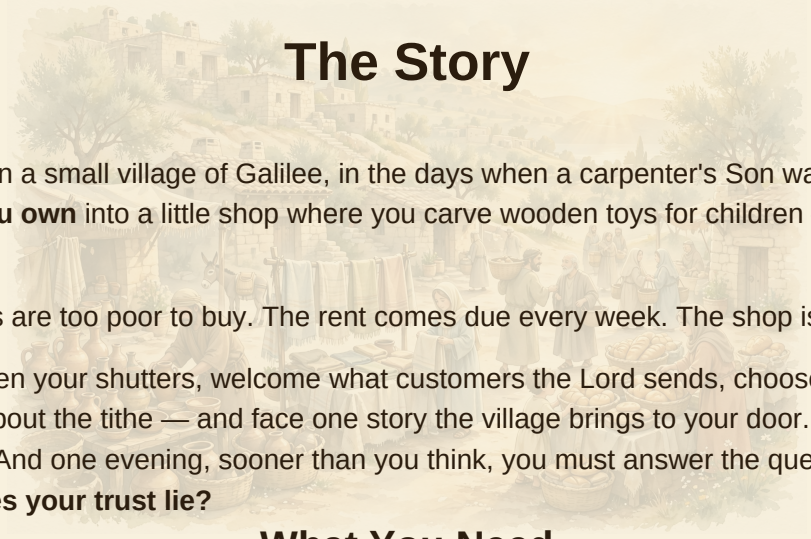
MUSTARD SEED MERCANTILE

A solo game of faith, wooden toys, and trust

“If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed…
nothing shall be impossible unto you.” — Matthew 17:20 (KJV)

Created by Marcus Draper

The Story



You are a new settler in a small village of Galilee, in the days when a carpenter's Son walks the hills. You have poured **everything you own** into a little shop where you carve wooden toys for children — dolls, donkeys, lambs, and little birds.

Most of your neighbors are too poor to buy. The rent comes due every week. The shop is near closing.

Each week you will open your shutters, welcome what customers the Lord sends, choose whether to rest on the Sabbath, decide about the tithe — and face one story the village brings to your door. Your **Faith** will rise or fall with your choices. And one evening, sooner than you think, you must answer the question at the heart of everything: **where does your trust lie?**

What You Need

- This kit: rulebook, 63 cards, shop ledger, Faith & Reputation tracker
- Two six-sided dice, a pencil, and a few small tokens (coins, beans, or buttons)
- About 30–45 minutes per game

Setup



1. **Choose your shopkeeper's age:**

   • **YOUNG** — energy and hope: **+1** to every customer roll. Starts with **0 Faith** and **25 denarii**.

   • **MIDDLE-AGED** — steady hands: no roll modifier. Starts with **2 Faith** and **40 denarii**.

   • **OLD** — a lifetime of wisdom: starts with **4 Faith**, but –**1** to every customer roll. Starts with **25 denarii**.

2. **Married or not?** If **MARRIED**, your spouse's warmth lets you **reroll one purchase die per week**, and –**2** weekly upkeep — but family needs add **+3** food cost.

3. Shuffle each deck separately: **Story** (22), **Scripture** (16), **Blessing** (12), **Trial** (12). Set **THE DECISION** card aside — it is resolved at the start of **Week 7**.

4. Set Faith and Reputation markers at your starting values (Reputation starts at 0; max 10 for both). Set denarii to your starting purse. Begin **Week 1 — Spring**.

The Weekly Round — 1



Play weeks in order. Each week follows these steps:

1 · Season

The season track moves with the weeks: **Weeks 1–3 Spring** · **Week 4 Passover** (+1 to each purchase die) · **Weeks 5–6 Summer** · **Weeks 7–9 Harvest** (+1 to each purchase die) · **Weeks 10–12 Winter** (–1 to each purchase die). Then the year turns and the cycle repeats.

2 · Customers

Roll **2d6 + Reputation + age modifier** (+1 Young, –1 Old):

- 6 or less → **1** customer · 7–8 → **2** · 9–10 → **3** · 11–12 → **4** · 13+ → **5**

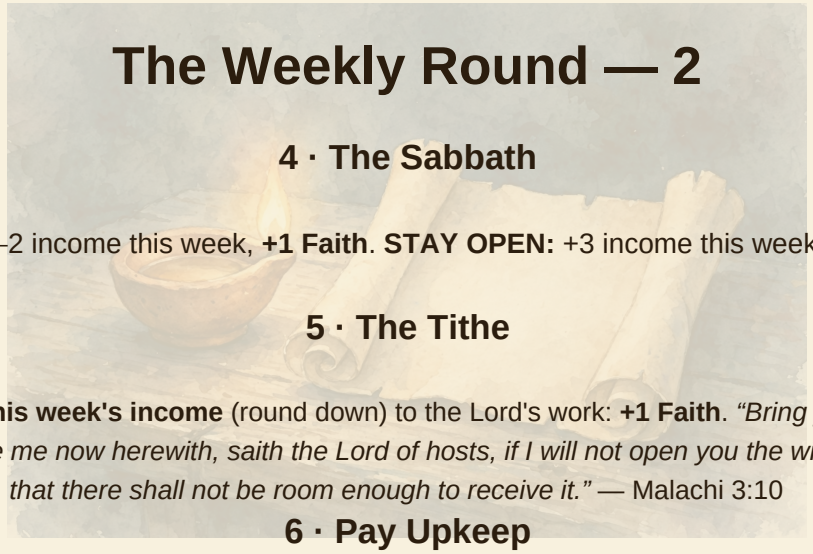
3 · Each Customer Buys

For each customer roll **1d6 + season modifier** (married: reroll one die per week, keep the new roll):

- 1–2 → cannot afford it (no sale) · 3–4 → buys a **small toy: 3D** · 5–6 → buys a **fine toy: 6D**

A **natural 6** (before modifiers) also earns a **goodwill token** — the customer tells the street. Every **3 goodwill = +1 Reputation**.

The Weekly Round — 2



4 · The Sabbath

CLOSE for worship: –2 income this week, **+1 Faith**. **STAY OPEN:** +3 income this week, –**1 Faith**. Write your choice on the ledger.

5 · The Tithe

You may give **10% of this week's income** (round down) to the Lord's work: **+1 Faith**. *"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse… and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."* — Malachi 3:10

6 · Pay Upkeep

Pay **7 denarii** (single) or **8 denarii** (married: 3 rent + 5 food – 2 spouse's help + 2 materials). **Despair:** if your Faith is **0**, the household frays and upkeep rises by **+2** this week. If you cannot pay in full, mark a **MISSED** week. **Three MISSED weeks in a row → the shop closes: the Ruin ending.**

7 · Draw One Card

At the start of **Week 7**, resolve **THE DECISION** instead of drawing (see page 7). Otherwise: if Faith is **7+**, draw from the **Blessing** deck. If Faith is **2 or less**, draw from the **Trial** deck. Otherwise draw a **Story** card and resolve its choice. Reshuffle a deck when it runs out.

Record everything on the Shop Ledger, then begin the next week.

Faith & Reputation

FAITH (0–10) is the measure of your trust. It rises when you worship, tithe, give freely, and choose honestly; it falls when you work every Sabbath, overcharge, or cut corners. At **7+** the Lord's blessings find you (draw Blessings). At **2 or below** the hard weeks come (draw Trials).

REPUTATION (0–10) is your name in the village. It grows through kindness, honest work, and goodwill tokens. High Reputation brings more customers — and opens the road to the far kingdoms.

Scripture Cards

When a Story card offers you a choice, you may first draw a **Scripture** card and read it aloud. Every verse is King James, quoted exactly. If you **follow its counsel** in your choice, gain the blessing written on the card — usually **+1 Faith**, sometimes more. Then return the card to the bottom of the Scripture deck.

Blessings, Trials & The Decision

Blessings

Drawn when Faith is 7+. Gifts of wood, merchants from afar, a child's laughter filling the street. Among them is a card unlike any other: **THE BLESSING OF JESUS** — the young Jesus Himself visits your shop with Mary, receives a little lamb, and blesses you. Handle this card with reverence; it is the heart of the game. (+3 Faith, +2 Reputation.)

Trials

Drawn when Faith is 2 or less, or after shady choices. Tax collectors, spoiled timber, fever, gossip. Two hard rules: **taking a SHADY option always draws a Trial next week**, and **once you have taken any SHADY option, Trial denarii losses are doubled** — *"...they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."* (1 Timothy 6:10). Endure trials honestly and your Faith will climb again.

The Decision

At the start of **Week 7**, set the decks aside and resolve **THE DECISION: "Where does your trust lie?"** Declare **TRUST THE LORD** (+2 Faith — blessings flow, and the road to *Citizen of the Kingdom* stays open) or **TRUST MYSELF** (–2 Faith — shady choices pay +2D extra, but Trials find you sooner: from now on you draw Trials at Faith **3 or less** — and the Far Kingdoms arc can only end in *Rich but Empty*). *"No man can serve two masters… Ye cannot serve God and mammon."* — Matthew 6:24

The Far Kingdoms

Three Blessing cards tell one story: **A Merchant from Damascus**, **The Caravan of Tyre**, and **An Invitation to the King's Court**. Draw all three, and when the Invitation comes with **Reputation 8+**, the arc is complete — the road to the greatest ending stands open.

Winning, Losing & The Four Endings

The game ends when the **Far Kingdoms arc completes with Reputation 10**, at the end of **Week 20**, or in **Ruin**. Read only the ending you earned:

Citizen of the Kingdom *(Faith 7+, Reputation 10, Far Kingdoms arc complete.)*
The summons was real. You pack your tools, your faithful spouse beside you, and journey to the far kingdom — where the king himself commissions toys for his grandchildren, and your little shop becomes a house of joy known across the nations. Your riches came the long way: through the narrow gate of trust. Every denarius testifies: the Lord did this.

The Quiet Faithful *(Any other ending to a completed game.)*
Your shop never becomes famous. But it never closes, either. Children grow up and bring their children to the little shop with the kind toymaker, and your name is spoken with love in every house on the street. You are rich in the only coin that does not rust.

Rich but Empty *(100+ denarii with your trust in yourself (you chose TRUST MYSELF), or the Far Kingdoms arc completed after choosing TRUST MYSELF — or 100+ denarii with Faith 3 or less.)*
You did it — wealth, a grand shop, customers from every city. And yet, on quiet nights, the fine house echoes. The toys are perfect and joyless. You gained the whole street and cannot remember why you wanted it. “For the love of money is the root of all evil...” (1 Timothy 6:10)

Ruin *(Three consecutive weeks unable to pay full upkeep.)*
Three weeks the rent went unpaid. On the fourth morning the landlord's seal is on your door, and your tools are sold to cover the debt. You walk out of the village with empty hands — but the children line the road, holding their wooden animals, and not one of them will ever forget you. Perhaps the shop was never the point.

Credits

Created by Marcus Draper. All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version, verified word-for-word. Card art generated in a warm storybook watercolor style. Solo play, 30–45 minutes.

Assembling the kit: print the Cards PDF **double-sided** (flip on the long edge) — every card page is already followed by its matching back page, so each card's back lands on its reverse. Cut along the dashed guides. Print the Ledger and Tracker as needed.