



## Imagine the Mustard Seed

### **An Ambleside Homeschool parent shares the power of an idea.**

A few weeks ago, on a Monday morning, my second graders' bodies were exceptionally wiggly. "Let's get our bodies ready to work carefully and beautifully on our handwriting! Emmaus, hop up and stretch! Ok, now let's sit back down with ready posture." It was a morning woven through with reminders, and nearing afternoon, I was beginning to feel peppery about their distractedness. After lunch, we opened William Bradford: Pilgrim Boy. While the children wiggled around sliding down to the floor or hung upside down on the couch, I reminded them that it was time to tell their bodies to give attention to our story.

William Bradford quickly captured Emmaus and Bea's attention. They enjoyed the sweet relationship that William had with his Grandfather. As I read, they grew with anticipation of the new little lamb that had been promised to William. The children connected further in their mutual admiration for Robin Hood!

As the story unfolded, Grandfather and William set off on their way to meet the new lamb in the pasture. Grandfather reminded William to be patient, "Not so fast, not so fast," Grandfather laughed. So, William walked more slowly. But his heart was beating fast. In his mind he was running- running to that first lamb of the new year."

When William reached the pasture, he began pulling at Grandfather's hand again.

"Then he remembered, and told his feet they must go slowly, slowly."

After reading about William's racing heart, remembering his loving Grandfather's words and the reminder he gave to his feet that they must go slowly, Bea, Emmaus, and I looked at each other in a knowing way. We shared with William an understanding about the struggle involved in growing up. The children found their kindred! And I remembered what childhood is like. We gained understanding. In this esteem, the children quickly followed William's lead. Without a word from me, they both wiggled up rather than down. Leaning in, with careful attention. I, too, found kindreds that afternoon, in Grandfather—a kindhearted guide who loved to give good gifts, and William—earnest and thoughtful in effort, while amid a passionate struggle!

Grandfather continued with more loving reminders for William to "make haste slowly" so that they would not scare the sheep. And we each tuned in to how growth was coming about through the loving relationship that Grandfather and William shared.

*... an idea is more than an image or picture; it is, so to speak, a spiritual germ endowed with vital force—with power, that is, to grow, and to produce after its kind. It is the very nature of an idea to grow: as the vegetable germ secretes that it lives by, so, fairly implant an idea in the child’s mind, and it will secrete its own food, grow, and bear fruit in the form of a succession of kindred ideas. We know from our own experience that, let our attention be forcibly drawn to some public character, some startling theory, and for days after we are continually hearing or reading matter which bears on this one subject, just as if all the world were thinking about what occupies our thoughts: the fact being, that the new idea we have received is in the act of growth, and is reaching out after its appropriate food.*

**— Home Education —**