

## Children's liturgy for Third Sunday of Lent (Year C)

### Preparation of the worship space

Colour: purple

Props: seeds, pots and soil to plant them in, figs

### Song suggestions:

Blest are you Lord God of all creation (603, Laudate)

Morning has broken (671, Laudate)

**Welcome:** Today Jesus tells a story about a tree that did not bear any fruit and all the things that the gardener planned to try to make it grow better. People are like trees, they need certain things to grow and be healthy too. Let's think a bit more about this today.

**Opening prayer:** Forgiving God, we thank you for the love and care that you show for us all. Help us to grow in that love, and to do all that we can to help each other to live free from poverty and hunger. Amen.

**First reading (optional):** Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15

**Psalm:** Psalm 102:1-4, 6-8, 11 r. 8

**Gospel acclamation:** *everyone stands and sings the acclamation together. For Lent we use an acclamation that doesn't use the word 'Alleluia'.*

**Gospel:** Luke 13:1-9

At that time some people were there who told Jesus about the Galileans whom Pilate had killed while they were offering sacrifices to God. Jesus answered them, "Because those Galileans were killed in that way, do you think it proves that they were worse sinners than all the other Galileans? No indeed! And I tell you that if you do not turn from your sins, you will all die as they did. What about those eighteen people in Siloam who were killed when the tower fell on them? Do you suppose this proves that they were worse than all the other people living in Jerusalem? No indeed! And I tell you that if you do not turn from your sins, you will all die as they did."

Then Jesus told them this parable: "There was once a man who had a fig tree growing in his vineyard. He went looking for figs on it but found none. So he said to his gardener, 'Look, for three years I have been coming here looking for figs on this fig tree, and I haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it go on using up the soil?' But the gardener answered, 'Leave it alone, sir, just one more year; I will dig round it and put in some manure. Then if the tree bears figs next year, so much the better; if not, then you can have it cut down.'"

*(Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation® and used with permission, see details below\*)*

**Gospel reflection:** What do you remember from today's reading?

Jesus told a parable. Does anyone know what a parable is? A parable is a story which teaches us something. Jesus liked to use stories to explain things that were complicated.

The parable Jesus tells us today is about a fig tree. Has anyone tasted figs? What are they like? *You could show the children some figs so that they know what they are. You could also let the children taste the figs (check about any allergies etc).*

The man who had planted the fig tree came out to pick some fruit, but there wasn't any. How do you think the man felt? What did he decide to do?

The man had been waiting for three years for the tree to give him some fruit. He was angry and disappointed. He asked his gardener to cut down the tree.

But what did the gardener say?

The gardener asks for one more year to look after the tree – to dig round it and give it some manure to help it grow. Plants and trees need the right conditions to grow and the gardener hopes that by doing this, the tree will grow fruit.

People need the right conditions to live their lives well too. Everyone needs enough food and water to stay healthy and strong. What else do we need to live? *(e.g. love, shelter, clean air to breathe, peace)*

How we treat other people can help them to grow and develop or stop them from doing so. We all have a responsibility to look after each other: our friends, our family and even people that we haven't met around the world.

Even though there is enough food for everyone in the world, not everyone has enough to eat. Some of us don't have clean running water. Some of us don't have anywhere safe to live. Some of us don't have the chance to go to school. Some of us are treated badly because of what we look like, where we come from or because we are disabled.

When the good things that God has given us are not shared fairly with everyone, those who do not have enough cannot grow and build a better future.

The fig tree in Jesus' story is supposed to share its fruit with the man who planted it, but it is not doing what it is supposed to. Sometimes we are a bit like the fig tree. We do not share as well as we could.

So, if the fig tree in Jesus' story is a bit like us, who do you think the gardener is?

The gardener is like Jesus. The gardener gives the fig tree another chance and gives it all the things it needs to live. Jesus is always ready to forgive us when we have done something wrong. And Jesus shows us how we should live our lives.

God gives us the chance to change, to share what we have and to do all that we can to make sure that all people have the things that they need to live.

How does it make you feel to know this?

What will you do this Lent, to help make a change to our world and the way food systems work so that everyone has their fair share of food?

**Intercessions:** *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or you can use the suggestions below.*

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For more children's liturgy resources and illustrations see [cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy](http://cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy)

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As we try to share with others, we pray together:

We pray for world leaders: that they may make real changes so that we may all have enough food to eat. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for all people throughout the world who are hungry: that together we may make a change so everyone has their fair share of God's gifts. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may share what we have with others, and help make sure that all people have the chance to grow and live well. Lord, in your mercy...

**Closing prayer:** Creator God, you gave us a world full of wonderful things. May we share these fairly with each other so all people have the chance to grow and live happy lives. Amen.

### **Activity suggestions**

Share the activity sheet with the children and invite them to write or draw on the leaves what they will do this Lent so all people may have enough to eat. Encourage them to take the sheet home and try the other activities during the next week.

Give the children leaf-shaped pieces of paper and invite them to write on the leaf what they will do this Lent to make sure all people have enough to eat.

Plant seeds with the children. Talk them through what a seed needs to grow. Encourage them to take it home and keep a diary of how much light and water that they give it and see how long until it starts to grow.

Remind the children to share all that they have heard and thought about today with the people at home. Encourage them to think about all the food that they eat during the coming week – how much of it is grown? Where does it come from? What does it need to grow?

For more activities and resources to share with the children this Lent, visit **[cafod.org.uk/primary](http://cafod.org.uk/primary)**

\*Gospel passage taken from:

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