

Children's liturgy – Fifth Sunday of Lent (Year B)

Preparing the worship space

Colour: purple

Props: seeds, potting soil, plant pots or yoghurt pots to plant the seeds in, coloured card.

Welcome: Jesus today uses the image of a grain of wheat to talk about what is in store for him – death and resurrection. He says that one single grain of wheat can produce a rich harvest. Let's think some more about this today.

Song suggestions: Unless a grain of wheat shall fall (748, Laudate),
The Servant King (749, Laudate)

Opening prayer: God of life, we pray that all the seeds that we plant may bear much fruit, so that none of your people go hungry. Amen.

First reading (optional): Jeremiah 31:31-34

Psalm: Psalm 50:3-4, 12-15 R. 12

Gospel acclamation: everyone stands and sings the acclamation together. For Lent we use an acclamation that doesn't use the word 'Alleluia'. We suggest 'Change your lives and believe in him' by Christopher Walker (OCP Publications).

Gospel: John 12:20-33

Gospel reflection: What do you remember from that reading?

Jesus is describing how wheat grows. Has anyone seen a field of wheat? We use wheat to make bread. He is using this story to explain to us that when he dies, it won't be the end of everything. He will rise from the dead. This is what we celebrate at Easter.

What happens to a seed when you plant it? The seed disappears as it grows into a plant. One single seed can grow lots of food. Think about how tiny an apple seed is inside your apple, yet you can plant it and grow it into an apple tree which will produce lots of other apples. Or the seed inside a tomato which will give you lots of tomatoes when it grows. Can you think of some other foods that can be grown from a single seed?

In a country called Zimbabwe in Africa, the Simatelele School has a vegetable garden. They started it with help from an organisation called CAFOD who help people who are very poor. CAFOD gives them seeds and tools and teaches them about how to eat a healthy diet.

The schoolchildren love the garden and all join in to help to grow the veggies: cabbage, spinach, tomatoes, carrots, sweet potato. Do you like any of those vegetables? What are your favourites?

The best thing is that now the children have more to eat, so their teacher, who is called Memory, says they are "full of life". They have more energy at school so they can study better and have more chances in the future. The seeds they have planted have grown into something very important.

Our actions, even if we do just one little thing, can also make a very big difference. What will you do this week to make a difference to someone who needs help?

Intercessions: We believe in Jesus the Son of God who died and rose again and so we pray together:

We pray for world leaders: that they may think about how their actions can make a difference to people who most need help in their countries. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may take steps to change our own lives and the lives of our brothers and sisters around the world. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for the poorest people in our world: that the seeds they plant may give a rich harvest so that they have enough to eat. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: Christ Jesus, fill us with your love and mercy and show us how to make a difference to the lives of our brothers and sisters around the world. Amen.

Activity suggestions

Ask the children to colour in the accompanying illustration and on the back to draw anything they have given up this Lent to raise money to help people living in poverty.

Plant seeds with the children for them to look after to watch how they grow.

Do a mime. Get them to curl up tightly into a ball and pretend to be seeds – as you talk about rain and sunshine they start to grow until they are tall trees bearing fruit.

On flower-shaped pieces of card, copy the prayer below, based on the life of Archbishop Oscar Romero. Say it with the children and encourage them to say it together with their family during the next week.

This is what we are about:
We plant seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted,
knowing that they hold future promise.

Ask the children to tell their family all that they have heard and thought about today. Ask them to count how many things they eat this week that started off as a seed and when doing so to think about the story that they have heard today.

Show the children the film about Zimbabwe online at cafod.org.uk/primary if you have a laptop, or encourage them to watch it at home.

Remind the children to keep using their Lent calendar. If you haven't already printed it and given it out, you can find it at cafod.org.uk/primary.