

## One more year

### Luke 13.1-9

People tell Jesus about a group killed by the collapse of a tower, questioning the meaning of the event. Jesus tells them not to speculate but to consider their own behaviour, looking forward, and he tells them a story to help.

Now read **Luke 13.1-9** see p.2 for text.

### A note on the passage

Jesus firmly knocks on the head the idea that suffering is the result of sin. And he warns his hearers not to judge other people. The parable of the fig tree stresses that there is always another chance, if we choose to take it.



How might you look at your life from a different perspective?

## Hands-on Lent



This week's Gospel theme explores allowing time for things to change. Plants take time to grow. Why not put some seeds into your Hands-on Lent bowl this week? For example, wildflower seeds (you can buy really good mixes of these – search online). Once the seeds are shared out, you can all scatter them in your garden or an appropriate place local to you. As you give them time to grow, think about how you are changing and growing in your relationship with God.

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# SPRING SOWING

Spring is a good time to do some plant growing. Jesus told a story about a fig tree that was not growing very well. The gardener said he would look after it carefully and see if things improve.

Try sowing some seeds in different conditions and work out what helps them to grow best. Use something like lettuce seeds or marigolds that grow quickly. Use three flowerpots or used yoghurt pots, with a few holes in the bottom. Fill one with proper seed compost, one with some soil from somewhere outside, and one with a mixture of damp kitchen roll and old coffee grounds or tea leaves squished up together. Sow a few seeds in each of the pots, water them and then put them on a warm windowsill. Look at them each day until they are strong enough to go in larger pots or a garden. Which seeds grew best?

## Sorry stories



Cut out two people outlines for each person present. Invite everyone to make up a little story about why one of the 'people' needs to say 'Sorry' to the other. Tell the little stories to each other.

# CHANGES

Think back over the last year and write down together some changes that have happened. There have been so many! Jesus said to the people he was talking to that instead of talking about other people, they needed to repent, to change for the better. Select one way that you can each try to change for the better in the coming weeks.

Build a tower. Babies and toddlers love knocking down towers made of wooden bricks; a family might work out a design and build the highest tower possible out of Lego™; a couple of adults might try a game of Jenga™ or Tumbling Towers™.

People have built towers from earliest times and they still do. You could research the tallest tower in the world today. The Bible has plenty to say about towers, in addition to the story in this week's reading. Look in a Bible at Genesis 11.1-9; 2 Chronicles 14.2-12; Proverbs 18.10; Isaiah 5.1-2; Luke 14.23-33. Why do people build towers?



Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

**P**eople came to Jesus. 'Do you know what Pilate has done?' they asked. 'People from Galilee were worshipping and they were killed.'

'Why do you think this happened?' Jesus asked. 'Do you think they were more sinful than you? And what about when the tower of Siloam collapsed, killing 18 people?' he said. 'Were those people any worse than you? No!'

Everyone looked surprised. What did Jesus mean? Jesus explained, 'Those people were not killed because they were worse sinners than others. Everyone needs to repent and turn to God. You need to repent and turn to God. Because if you do not, you will die unprepared, just like the people you have told me about.'

Then Jesus went on to tell a parable. A man planted a fig tree in his vineyard. Each year the man came to the tree, hoping to find fruit growing there. But each year there was none. After three years with no fruit, the man said to his gardener, 'Chop down the tree. I have been looking



for figs for three years, but none have grown. I am not wasting the soil any more. Cut it down!'

But the gardener disagreed, and he said, 'Let's leave it for one more year. I will dig round it and put manure on it. If the tree produces fruit next year, that will be good. If it doesn't, then you can cut the tree down.'

Luke 13.1-9

## Did you know?

- Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea.
- To repent means to be sorry for what you have done and turn back to God.
- A parable is a story that helps us understand more about God and his values, often told by Jesus.

## Luke 13.1-9 (NRSV)

At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, 'Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them – do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.'

Then he told this parable: 'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, "See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?" He replied, "Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"