

Mission Together



Lent/Easter
Growing in Love

2017
Liturgy

Introduction for Teachers

The theme of this Lent Liturgy from Mission Together is *Growing in Love*. Here you will find a Bible reading, reflection, and story, which can be used in an assembly or RE lesson. An accompanying activity is available to download on our website missiontogether.org.uk

This liturgy is produced as part of our campaign *Together in Kenya*. Further resources for this campaign – correlating with *Come and See* topics – can also be found on the Mission Together website.

Introduction for Children

Ask the children if they know what special event will happen in a few weeks' time (Easter). Ask if they know the name we give to the weeks leading up to Easter (Lent). Lent happens around the same time every year as the dark and cold days of winter slowly give way to the lighter and warmer days of spring.

Just like in spring when increased light and warmth cause new plants to grow, for Christians Lent is also a time of new beginnings. Christians are encouraged to prepare for Easter by thinking about how they could be more like Jesus. For example, if we are being mean to someone, in Lent we try to **change our behaviour** and be kind instead. If we've fallen out with someone, in Lent we try hard to **change the situation** through forgiving or asking for forgiveness. By trying to be more like Jesus, we help ourselves and others grow in love.

In Lent we don't just try to change ourselves for the better, we have to try to make life better for others too. We may feel too small for this, but one of Jesus' stories helps us to think differently.

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Bible Reading: Matthew 13:31-32

'Jesus told another story: "The Kingdom of heaven is like a tiny mustard seed. A man plants the seed in his field. That seed is the smallest of all seeds. But when it grows it is one of the largest plants. It becomes as big as a tree, big enough for all the birds of the air to make a home in its branches.'"

Reflection

In the reading Jesus talks about God's loving Kingdom being a place where all are welcome. What things do you think God would want the people living in his Kingdom to have? Food, shelter? How do you think God would like the people living in his Kingdom to act? By caring, sharing, forgiving? Explain that Jesus instructed all those he met to do their best to build God's Kingdom. Do you think Jesus was talking about using bricks and cement to do this, or using actions and words?

Sometimes it may seem that the loving words or actions we use, for example to welcome a new classmate, don't make a big difference. Jesus reassures us that these little things cause goodness to grow and help build God's Kingdom on Earth.

Mission Together Story

We'd now like to tell you a true story about Eunice, a 12-year-old girl who lives in a small village in Kenya, a country in Africa. Like most people in her village, Eunice and her family used to struggle to have enough food to eat. This is because there is very little land available for the villagers to plant crops. The land is owned by one rich man who uses it to grow coffee beans to sell across the world. Many of the adults in the village – including Eunice's mum – work hard on the coffee plantation. They earn very little money. Sometimes Eunice, like other poor children, had to work on the plantation rather than go to school. If she didn't, her family wouldn't have had money to buy food or to keep their home. Eunice found the work difficult and tiring. She missed going to school and learning new things. Then a group of nuns who lived near the village had an idea. At first it was a small idea – like a mustard seed – to provide free school meals for children like Eunice. The nuns knew that by having access to healthy meals at school the children would grow well and attend class. Through our prayers and with the help of the charity Mission Together, the nuns' little idea became a big success. To continue to support children like Eunice, the nuns need our help. Today, let's think about how we can help them, help Eunice, and help love grow in other ways too.

Activity

The *Growing in Love* activity sheet and other related resources can be found at missiontogether.org.uk

Plenary

Today we learnt that out of small acts of love great things can grow. Our challenge this Lent, and beyond, is to learn that we are not too small to make a big difference. Through prayer and action, all of us can help others grow in God's love.

Mission Together Prayer

May all children
In the World
Share love
Share friendship and live
In the peace
Of God's love
Now and forever
Amen



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