

Third Sunday of Lent – year C

Preparation

Read [Isaiah 55: 1-9](#) and [Luke 13: 1-9](#). Pay attention to the words or phrases that jump at you. Read over the lesson so that you are familiar with what is intended to happen. Gather the materials that you will need for each section of the lesson. For deeper thinking or for ways to extend the lesson take a look at the following websites:

<http://www.textweek.com/yearc/lentc3.htm>

http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/lessonPlans/109452_115778_ENG_HTM.htm:

scroll down to find the lesson for this Sunday

<http://www.sundayschoollessons.com/lent3les.htm>

<http://www.sundayschoollessons.com/lent3lart.htm>

http://www.sermons4kids.com/god_of_the_second_chance.htm

Gathering

Materials needed

- Small table or end of one table
- Candle
- Candle lighter
- Bible and bookmark
- Purple cloth
- Newsprint and markers
- Basket, star and heart shape (see shape at end of lesson)
- Pencils or pens

Copy the heart shape at the end of the lesson. Cut it out and make one for each child in the group. Print up the prayer on the newsprint so that the readers can say the prayer with you. With the children place the cloth on the table. Have them help you place the Bible on the cloth. Light the candle. Pray the following prayer together:

For a time to pray, we bless you God.

For a time to learn, we bless you Jesus.

For a time to grow, we bless you Holy Spirit. Amen.

Blow out the candle. Give each child a heart shape. Explain that again and again God called the people to live the way of love, peace and justice. For a time the people listened and came back to God and put God back in their hearts. During this season of Lent we are called to put God back in our hearts and turn ourselves to follow the right way. Ask the children to think of one thing they could do to show God's love to others. Ask them to draw or write that on to their hearts and then put their hearts into the basket along with the previous weeks symbols.

Story Time

Materials needed

- Fig cookies (like fig newtons)

Jesus was making his way to Jerusalem. He was going from town to town, from village to village with his friends. Every place that Jesus and his friends stopped at, Jesus took time and taught the people there about the way of God's kingdom. Jesus took time to reach out and heal the people that were brought to him.

People were always coming up to Jesus asking him questions. Sometimes those questions were about how to live more like God wants us to. Sometimes those questions were about how to pray to God. Sometimes those questions were trying to trick Jesus and to get him into trouble.

One day someone asked Jesus this question, "Do bad things happen to people, like being killed by when a building collapses, because they have sinned more than anyone else?"

(Explain to the children that sin is the word that we use to explain the bad things that we do that make God sad.)

Jesus looked at them and slowly shook his head. "Do you really think these people were worse sinners than yourself? They didn't die because they were sinners they died because accidents happen. But listen to this. I tell you unless you repent, say you are sorry to God and start living your life the way God wants you to, you may find yourself in a similar place at the end of time."

Take a moment and ask the children if they can tell you what happened in a recent event like the Japan earthquake of March 2011 or the Haiti earthquake of January 2010. Remind them that God didn't cause the earthquake – but that God was there with the people and continues to be there with the people as they begin to rebuild their lives. It is important for Christians to participate in the work of being there with the people of those devastated countries. Ask the children if they think it would be okay for us to ignore what has happened to those peoples? Move back into the story by telling the children that Jesus then told the people this story about repentance and how God will always forgive us.

Jesus told this story.

Once there was a man who had a fig tree planted in his garden. He really loved figs and wanted to be able to have them available to him. One day he came out into the garden looking for fresh figs. He did not find any. This made the man very angry.

He went and found the gardener and said, "Look here! I have waited three years for this fig tree to give me some figs! Today I thought I would go looking for figs and what did I find? No figs! Cut it down! I don't want you wasting the soil on a tree that doesn't give me figs!

The gardener said, "Sir, please leave it alone for one more year. I will dig around it. I will give it some manure to help it grow. Let's see what will happen. If it gives you fruit next year that will be a good thing. If it doesn't then I will cut it down for you."

Bring out the fig cookies and share them with the children. Explain that fig trees grow where it is very warm and the figs are dried and kept for a long time. Sometimes we get cookies like these ones to enjoy from the figs.

Response

Project Idea 1: Repentance Fig Planters

Lent is a time for all of us to think about our lives and repent if necessary and return to God. This response will help the children make it real with their families.

Materials needed

- fig leaf shape at end of lesson
- small plastic containers
- play dough
- craft sticks or pipe cleaners
- green construction paper
- scissors
- markers
- tape

Instructions

Copy the fig leaf shape at the end of the lesson and trace onto green construction paper so that each child has 6 to 8 fig leaves. If you want to make the play dough then [go here](#) for an easy recipe that works well. Give each child a plastic container and have them cover it with green construction paper by taping a piece on. Let them print on the outside of the container “**Repentance Planter**”. Give them their fig leaf shapes on the construction paper and have them cut them out (younger children will need help with this). Have them put a lump of play dough into the bottom of the plastic container and then put in the same number of craft sticks or pipe cleaners as they have fig leaves. Have the children print on the fig leaves “**God Forgives**”. Tell the children that they are to take their containers and leaves home with them. Every time they see someone in their family forgiving another for something they did or when they forgive someone then they are to add a leaf to a craft stick or pipe cleaner. Hopefully they will fill it up quickly. Remind the children that as God forgives us we are to forgive others.

Project Idea 2: Forgiveness Bookmarks

Learning to forgive and to accept forgiveness, from God and from others, is something we all need to be reminded about regularly. These bookmarks will help to remind the children about this.

Materials needed

- card stock
- contact paper
- scissors
- markers
- hole punch
- yarn
- tissue paper
- glue sticks

Instructions

Cut the card stock along the horizontal so that it is 5 cm/2 inches in width and make one for each child. Give each child one and invite them to tear the tissue paper into small pieces and then glue them onto the card stock. Encourage them to overlap the pieces so that it looks like a mosaic or

collage of colours. When they are done help them to trim the edges so that everything is even with the shape of the card stock. Then have the children print with a marker the following on their bookmark **“God Forgives Us”**. Then cover the bookmark with contact paper and trim the edges again. Punch a hole in one end and tie a piece of yarn through the hole. Encourage the children to put the bookmark in a special place so that they will see it regularly.

Project Idea 3: Wall of Faith – Fig Leaf Regrets

This will be an ongoing activity that the children can do all together throughout the season. Each week they will put up a new symbol onto their wall.

Materials needed

- fig leaf shape from end of the lesson
- green construction paper
- scissors
- markers
- sticky tack or masking tape

Instructions

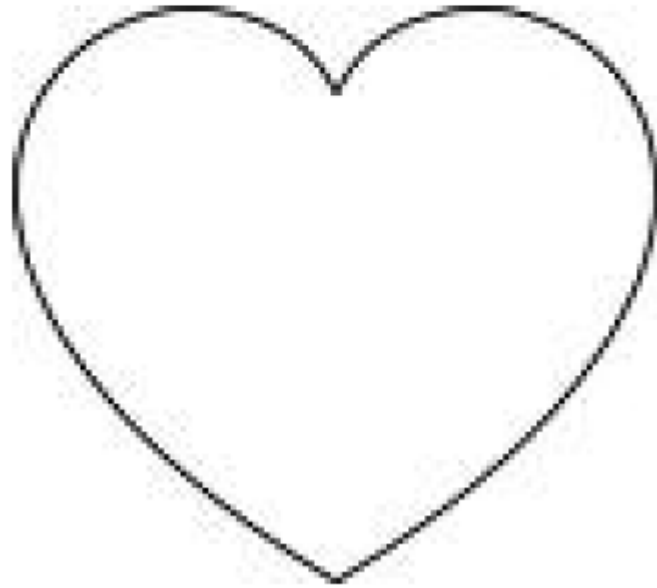
Copy the fig leaf shape, cut it out and trace it onto the construction paper. Make one for each child. Give one each to the children. Invite them to carefully cut out their fig leaf. While they are cutting them ask the children to think about one thing they would like to say sorry to God. Explain that you would like them to think of things we all need to say sorry to God about – things like the way we treat other people, how we treat the environment, or for not taking time to be with God enough. Ask them to write or draw one thing we should all say sorry to God for on their fig leaf. When they are finished have them put up on the wall of faith with the other symbols. If you have enough time go over the previous two symbols to remind the children where they have been so far in Lent.

Closing

Gather with the children around the worship table again. Relight the candle. Say the prayer line by line and encourage the children to repeat it after you:

**You hear our voice, loving God at all times,
You walk with us, Jesus at all times,
You urge us on, Holy Spirit at all times,
Loving Presence surround and keep us. Amen.**

A heart



A Fig Leaf

