

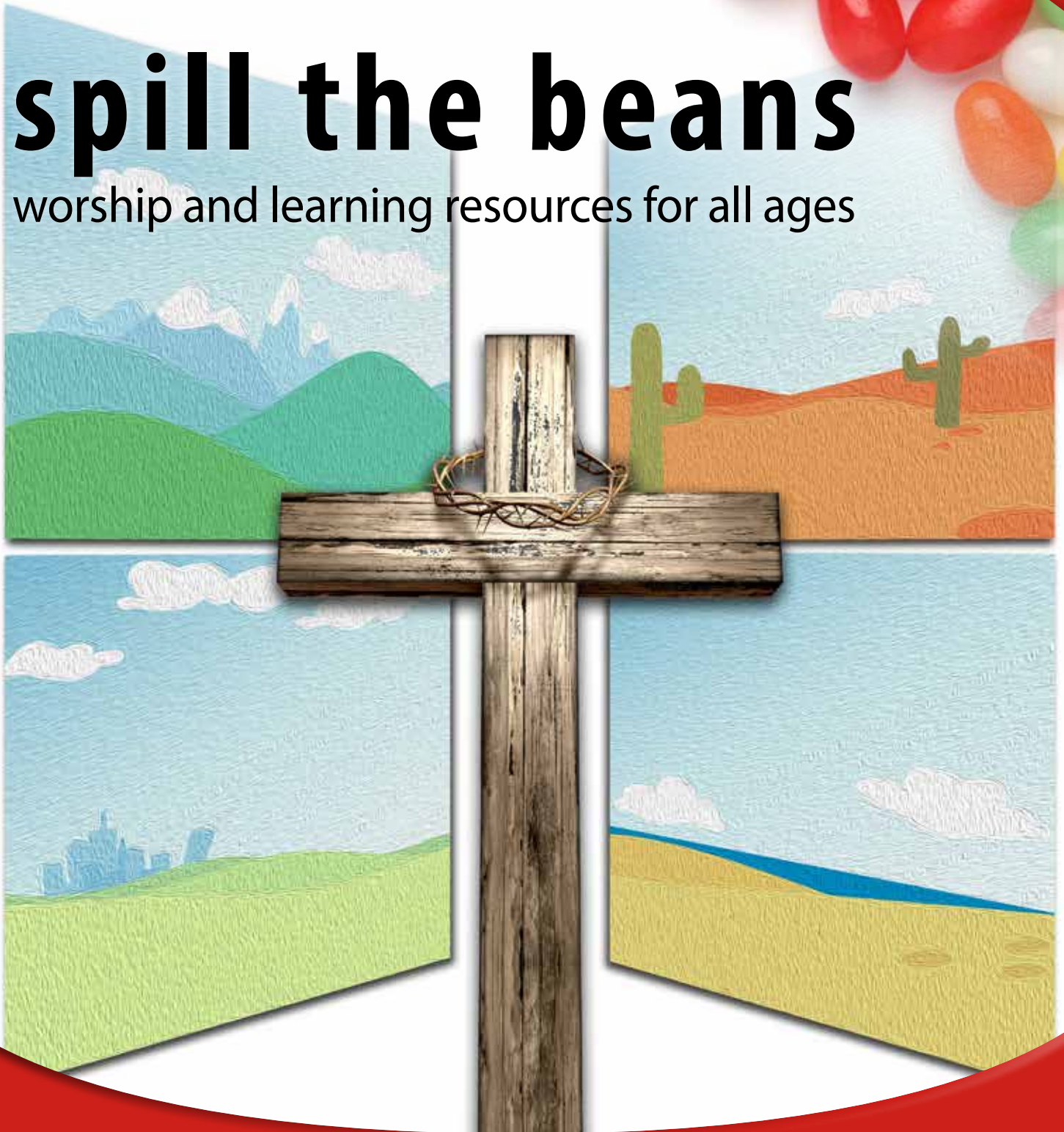
issue 11

lent, easter and pentecost
9 march 2014 to 8 june 2014

*With ideas for
Holy Week & Easter Labyrinth*

spill the beans

worship and learning resources for all ages



A lectionary-based
resource with a Scottish
flavour for Sunday
Schools, Junior Churches
and Worship Leaders

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ethos

There is a particular ethos behind this material: it's all about **story**. When we spill the beans about anything, we tell the story of what happened and we share the story of what that means for us.

We believe **story is the lifeblood of faith**. In story we can tell the truth and speak with honesty about things for which there are not yet words. Story contains mystery and is the poetry that forms faith. Stories grow as we grow and can reveal new truths at different times in our lives.

So we believe **giving stories** to people is one of the most important things we can do in sharing our faith. Children and adults hold stories in their being and keep coming back to them throughout life. Our culture is stored in story. The same is true for our faith.

We believe in telling story. This material is simply the **retelling of our faith stories**. It always starts with the story each week.

Then each activity is simply a way to engage the story and enable children and adults to imbed the story, capturing different aspects of it, highlighting different images that help us hold the story in our beings.

But we believe these faith stories ought to be able to **mingle with our own life stories**, our day-to-day experiences. So as activities are engaged, it is important to ask people to retell the faith story along with their own story of that week. It's the tangle of life stories with faith stories that perhaps make both real.

We believe **one story is the lens through which we hear other stories**. Faith narratives create a web: if we think about water, then what other stories involving water do we find in the Bible; if we are reflecting on forgiveness, what other stories of forgiveness can we hear. During activities the question ought to be asked: does this story remind you of other stories

in the Bible? Stories don't exist on their own but in a diverse web, each feeding the other.

We believe that **as we grow we reflect in different ways** on the faith stories we hold. Our idea is to invest these stories in people, offering each as a gift of faith. The story may be understood in a literal way during younger years, then with questions about their historical accuracy as people move into teenage years and then move into a third stage where we hear the story again for the first time, but this time holding the meaning, the deep down truth in the story that helps it shape our living and how we understand and engage with the world in justice and in grace. Story holds the faith more honestly and in a much deeper way than any creed and doctrine.

Join us and spill the beans.

spill the beans team

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For more information and extra materials, join us on the Spill the Beans blog:
<http://spillbeans.org.uk>

Key to Abbreviations

In the worship ideas section the following abbreviations are used:

CG	Common Ground
CH4	Church Hymnary, 4th Edition
CH3	Church Hymnary, 3rd Edition
JP	Junior Praise
MP	Mission Praise
SGP	Songs of God's People
WGRG	Wild Goose Resource Group



using spill the beans contents

Welcome to the eleventh issue of the ongoing experiment called 'Spill the Beans'. It was always meant to be a wee local idea but it has grown somewhat as a group of people from the Church of Scotland and other denominations have got together to explore Bible passages and write worship and learning resources for their own congregations discovering that this was good fun and triggered imagination and creativity.

There is quite a collection of things to use each week. Each piece is written with specific congregations in mind rather than some average congregation. We even know the names of people who were thought about when the material was put together, how it might sound when it was read or how it might work in a particular congregation. Thus there may be the

need to be a little creative yourselves in adapting and evolving some of the ideas to suit your own place and culture and congregation. That is a good thing.

Of course, if you are creative and you'd like to share what you have done, then we have a place for that on our Blog (<http://spillbeans.org.uk>). There you'll find PowerPoint backgrounds for most weeks, a live discussion of the passages for that week and how we might be able to adapt and recreate what has been suggested.

But you are not expected to do it all every week. Each piece stands on its own and you just choose which ones you want to do, work best for you and are easier for you to use. Either way, let us know what you think, how you get on and what we can do to help out. Enjoy!

worship ideas

These are a few ideas that possibly expand upon the story offering words, phrases, poetry and ideas that could be used in some way in worship. They are not to be used exactly as they are but ought to be edited and expanded to suit the culture of your own faith community.

Each week we provide a selection of words, ideas and creative moments to take the theme and the passage a little further. We do not provide a ready made service or perfect prayers but ideas and pointers that hopefully scratch at your own creativity and provoke heaven's imagination within you.

age group ideas

Here are some helpful tips to guide you in your use of the material in age groups:

1. It presumes some introduction to the story will have taken place in worship together or will play a part in the service when children join it later.
2. Depending on the make-up of your own groups of children you will need to remain flexible in how you use the material.
3. Each idea has been given a guide age range to help your planning, but this is only a guide and your own circumstances may make certain crafts or activities more or less successful.
4. Before the sit-down activities if you have a group of young children or lots of boys, you may want to add a run-around type game to expend some energy.

5. Use the gathering time exercise to get into the story. Begin with a circle where the whole Sunday School is together and do this activity together (gathering time).
6. Then retell the story together (it should have been told already in worship if you begin together there).
7. Follow that by choosing as many or as few activities your space and time allow. You could offer a number of activities each at different stations all at the same time for all ages to self-select with a teacher staffing each one, or have traditional classes.
8. During activities, ask children to retell the story to you and ask about their week, what was happy and what was sad and if this week's story reminds them of other biblical and personal stories.

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9. The intention is not to complete "the task" brilliantly, but rather to provide opportunities to begin conversations, build relationships, retell the story of the day, and talk about what it might have felt like then and what it means for us today.
10. There are numerous websites that will provide handout type sheets that will have images, crosswords and wordsearches for the themes of these weeks. While helpful in a pinch, try not to rely on these!

through the season

Introduction

In this section you will find some ideas for scene-setting activities and a weekly visual focus as you move through the season.

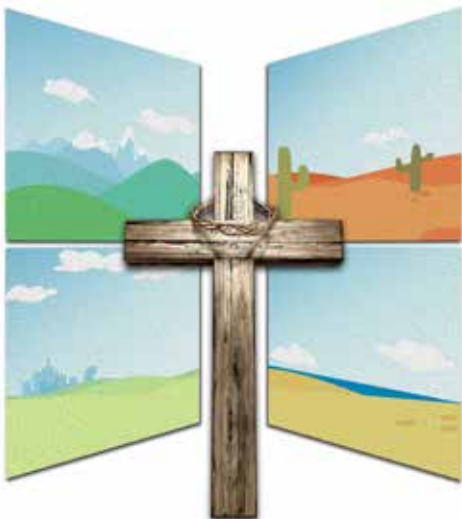
These ideas are provided for you to use and adapt depending on the size, shape and layout of your worship space and whether you have access to or expertise in using projected images and audiovisual elements.

These ideas provide possible ways of linking all the weeks together which can be a helpful reminder to people of the thread of the story and the key aspects being focused on during worship.

These ideas can be used independently or together, accumulating over the season, and can also be linked with other elements of the worship material. They can also be adapted to be used within age groups.

Note these visual actions could be done at the start of worship as people arrive or at another suitable point during the service.

These are only suggestions or starting off points and we would be delighted to see and hear where these ideas lead you. Please get in touch with us or send us some images of what you have been doing that we can place on the Spill the Beans blog for others to see.



Lent to Easter Day

Introduction

During Lent we will be focussing on some of the passages of the Christian Scriptures which have created the contours of the landscape of Christian Faith. We journey through the creation of humanity in all its wonder and non-glory, the formation of the nation of Israel as God calls his people out of slavery and into a vision of Eden restored and the prophetic vision of peace and justice that God gives for the building of the kingdom (the renewed Eden) in the world.

On Palm Sunday we leave the landscape of ordinary days behind and journey through the door/gateway into the adventure of Holy Week and the celebration of resurrection on Easter Day which fully opens the door of salvation and the promise of the kingdom come in the world.

Below are some suggestions for how you can build the theme through Lent and on into Holy Week and Easter depending upon the shape and context of your building and the local resources that you have available.

Lenten Landscapes

What does your building look like? Every church is different and will already have decoration of different sorts. The idea for Lent is to provide an open door / gateway to Holy Week reflection by creating a series of 'stations' based on landscapes in the worship space.

You might have plain windows that you could decorate with temporary 'stained glass' creations using black card and coloured plastic sheets or tissue paper. Perhaps you have pillars and could create banners. These could range from a collage of coloured paper or materials to banners which have been painted by someone artistic. Or, if you have a gifted landscape artist, you could create a living, growing 'station' each week as they create the landscape painting throughout the time of the service of worship.

Alternatively, others might want to create a visual representation of the 'landscape' using symbols placed in front of the Communion Table each week and then

moved to an appropriate place in your worship space when the next is created and so on. These become a set of stations that people can journey around during any day in Holy Week awaiting the door / gateway of the renewed kingdom opening fully on Easter Day. Be creative with your own space and resources.

A question is listed at the end of each week of Lent below and these could either be placed on the landscape at the end of each week or held back and put on after Palm Sunday to create a new activity for people to enjoy during Holy Week.

Weekly Suggestions

9 Mar Lent 1

Story: Genesis 2:15-17,3:1-7
Title: Did God say...?
Landscape: The Garden of Light and Darkness

Use your chosen medium to create a representation of the Garden of Eden where all is goodness, peace and joy in communion with God but where the challenge of the choice for good and evil is represented also.

You could do a traditional representation of the garden with Adam and Eve and the trees and the snake. Or you could do something more abstract or symbolic of light and darkness.

Holy Week Reflection Question: What choices do I make for 'life' or 'death' that help the Kingdom flourish or die in my life and community?

16 Mar Lent 2

Story: Genesis 12:1-9
Title: Should I Stay or Should I Go?
Landscape: Mountain Top

For this week's landscape you could create an illustration of the patriarch creating an altar to the Lord on the hilltop by the tree of Moreh. Or depict a vision of the kingdom of peace and representatives of all the peoples of the world looking up with hands of praise to the Mountain of God.

Holy Week Reflection Question:
How often do I hold in mind
the vision of renewal that God
has given and work toward the
kingdom of peace for all people?

23 Mar Lent 3

Story: Exodus 17:1-7
Title: What's In A Name?
Landscape: Rocky Desert

This week's traditional landscape is the desert rock with Moses and the staff of God nearby. Using the staff the rock was struck for the provision of water for the people. More abstract representations could range from a waterfall to a river to rocks and a jug of water.

Holy Week Reflection Question:
Reflecting on all that I have,
and not what I don't have in
comparison to other people, how
often do I remember to thank
God for the goodness in my life
and so live with an attitude of
gratitude?

30 Mar Lent 4

Story: Psalm 23
Title: Who Provides?
Landscape: Green Pastures

What are all the elements of Psalm 23? Would you associate this more with the Valley of the Shadow of Death, as we have become accustomed through countless funerals, or does it represent the beauty of green pastures with grazing sheep besides calm waters in the Spring. A symbolic representation could focus on the idea of the 'cornucopia' from which all the good things of life tumble out depicting goodness and plenty and teeming life.

Holy Week Reflection Question:
As I go through life do I focus on
my fears and concerns or have
I learned to give those up for
God's plan of peace and joy to
reign in me?

6 Apr Lent 5

Story: Ezekiel 37:1-14
Title: How Shall We Live?
Landscape: Valley

This week we have an image of the valley of dry bones and the bones rising as the Word of God is proclaimed. Traditionally this has been depicted just as it is stated ... skeletal bones coming to life as the prophet speaks over them. More abstract images that could be used are an image of death (skeleton, coffin) and that of the scriptures alongside it. Or if you are feeling courageous you could depict a church with one half of the congregation sitting with glum faces whilst the other is standing with musical notes rising from them depicting life and praise.

Holy Week Reflection Question:
Where have I become apathetic
in my Christian faith and life and
what door will I open in my life
(prayer, bible reading, different
area of service) to allow God to
revive me?

13 Apr Lent 6 (Palm Sunday)

Story: Matthew 21:1-11
Title: Who Is This?
Landscape: City Gateway

The traditional focus here is the gate of the ancient city of David with the city landscape beyond and Jesus approaching amidst singing and shouting. This is a vision of light leading to dark times which could be depicting in the tones of the outside and the inside of the city landscape. Another representation could be that of a collage of modern city skylines together with images of the good things of life such as family, leisure, caring and those of the dark things of life such as fear and drugs and over-consumerism etc.

Holy Week Reflection Question:
Where have those things that
bring light in my life become a
dark focus because I ignore them
or want too much of them?

Lenten Landscapes for Holy Week

Arrange all of your landscapes, in whatever form you have created them, in either a hall or as spaced stations around the church that could form the basis for a labyrinth-like journey.

Either place the Holy Week Reflection Questions in front of them or create a little leaflet that explains some of the journey of Lent and the questions for each station. Allow people to have access to reflect. This could be an installation that is opened to the public.

20 Apr Easter Sunday

Story: John 20:1-18
Title: Christ Is Risen
Landscape: Renewed Kingdom
Gateway

Today create a gateway to new life at the main entrance to the church using spring flowers (plastic or real daffodils for instance) and a new life gateway using a metal garden archway flanked on the left by a cross and on the right by a rock. A very cheap garden archway frame can be purchased (see Amazon: <http://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B0038EUHS0>). A rock can be made using a large beech ball covered in papier mache.

Then, enjoy the celebration of Easter, marking the doorway or gateway to new life.



through the season

Easter

Doorways

The link through the season of Easter is doorways. To illustrate this you could make a door or buy one from a local hardware supermarket. On the internet SMIdoors, B&Q and Doordeals all provide wooden internal doors for just under £30. Or ask around in the congregation, there may be someone who is doing some redecorating at home and has an old door that they no longer need that could be used.

The wooden door could simply stand resting on a wall or table. It is important that it can be moved.

To give the door more presence it could be painted a different colour each week. When chalk is used then a darker colour would be more suitable.

Weekly Suggestions

27 April Easter 2

Story: John 20:19-31
Title: Behind Closed Doors?

Have the door standing in the centre of the worship space by asking two volunteers to hold it, face on to the congregation. The side facing the congregation is blank, but the side facing away should have the outline of a person on it, or the outline of a cross. As the congregation arrive, invite them to come up to the door and with different coloured chalk write the word 'FAITH' in their own handwriting inside the cross.

This could be used throughout the service at the call to worship, someone coming up and knocking on the door and the door being turned round, or during prayers of intercession, using the phrase 'may we open doors for the poor, hungry, lonely...' turning the door round to see the word 'FAITH' each time.

4 May Easter 3

Story: Luke 24:13-35
Title: Open Doors

Lay the door on top of the communion table or turn it into the surface of a table. Place a loaf of bread on it as a focal point as people gather. Either use the door and bread as a table for communion during the service or invite people to break bread on the table before they leave, taking a piece to give to a 'stranger' on the way out of church.

11 May Easter 4

Story: John 10:1-10
Title: Gateway To Life

One side of the door should still be blank. Again have a couple of volunteers holding the door. The blank side should be facing the congregation. Invite people to write their name on the door in chalk. People may wish to draw sheep instead of their name.

18 May Easter 5

Story: John 14:1-14
Title: On The Other Side

This week it might take a little more thought and sensitivity. Use the other side of the door from last week leaving people's names written on the door. Paste the following images on the other side of the door.

Depending on the theology of your community you could paste ideas of what Jesus means when he says there are many mansions. Perhaps you wish to offer images of 'stairways to heaven' where the sun breaks through the clouds in a shaft of light or a starburst of light. Alternatively you could paste onto the door images of different nations and cultures feasting together, playing sport together. You could also offer images of different religious symbols, the cross being one of them. Invite people to wander up to the door and have a look.



your notes

25 May Easter 6

Story: John 14:15-21
Title: No More Doors

From two weeks ago, one side of the door should still have people's names written across it.

As people arrive, or just before the service begins, have someone slowly and simply wipe away the chalk in the shape of a heart. You will need someone to hold the door or rest it against a wall or table while doing this.

1 June Easter 7

Story: John 17:1-11
Title: Listening At The Door

Two volunteers are needed to hold the door once more. Offer people a coloured post-it note and invite them to write a prayer on it. Stick it to the door.

If it is left in the same way as last week there should be a heart in the middle of the door where prayers can be stuck.

Alternatively the whole door could be cleaned and repainted with hearts and people can stick their post-its across both sides of the door.

8 June Pentecost

Story: 1 Corinthians 12:
3b-13
Title: Gifts of the Spirit

Perhaps another chance to wipe clean the door or repaint in a red colour (a good liturgical colour for Pentecost). Then add some large wispy yellow flame shapes to represent the coming of the Spirit, and around those flames write some of the gifts of the Spirit that are mentioned in today's story.

Other people could be asked to add their own ideas to the door.

If this is prepared before the service, then you could wrap the door like a giant present with a large tied ribbon so that it can be opened during the service.



lent 1

did god say...?

sunday 9 march 2014

genesis 2:15-17,3:1-7

bible notes

Choose Life

It was always a strange strap-line—the product was a germ-killer—and this product, we were told, “kills all known germs dead”. Very strange indeed! Is there any other way? Killing them alive? So was that original strap-line just a rhetorical flourish? Perhaps not.

The poetry of the Garden of Eden is more complex than childlike renderings sometimes allow. And it is a tale of two trees and different deaths. The tree giving the fruit that precipitated the Fall is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God said death would follow if that fruit was eaten. The serpent said death would *not* follow. We must presume God would not lie and we might presume that the serpent in the story would lie as a natural default. But it just might be a case of both telling the truth. There would both be a death and there would not be a death in this Garden tale.

“Who wants to live forever?” sang Freddie Mercury of the rock band Queen at a time when he may well have already known that his own life expectancy was seriously limited. The answer is that no one would want to live forever in an earthly sense if such endless living merely means a continual diminution of abilities and capacities.

And yet the Garden poetry shows

God’s intention for us is life. The Tree of Life—the second tree in the Garden tale—was not a forbidden fruit. We are outside of Eden but life is still God’s intention.

There *is* a death, however, when the forbidden fruit is eaten. But it is not earthly life’s expiring. We may wonder that surely a knowledge of good and evil is a welcome thing, but the poetry of the story intends to suggest that to eat of that fruit is to look to seize for oneself the right to make the judgment of good and evil: presuming our own superiority and rendering God inferior. And that is a death within us: we become dead to God and alive to a diminished understanding. God was right. There is a death. The serpent was right, however, because life continues, but not the life of God’s intention. Not the germ-killer’s advert strap-line “killing dead” but instead a “killing alive”.

The character Renton in the film *Trainspotting*, deeply immersed in the



Genesis 2:15-17,3:1-7

Psalm 32

Romans 5:12-19

Matthew 4:1-11

Edinburgh heroin scene yet trying to get clean, gives a speech—more a rant—about choices. The long list of choices he lists are bracketed, beginning and end, with “Choose life!” The character is an addict. Maybe he was addressing whoever might listen, or perhaps it was more a note to self. The chaos and the anguish were no garden picnic. The pain was real. The fall from grace grim. And death—premature death—was a distinct possibility. Yet, despite that, “Choose life!” rings out from his very own lips.

It is notable that the strategy and action plan to prevent suicide in Scotland is called “Choose Life”.

Moses would offer the Hebrew people wandering through the wilderness a stark choice, “I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life!” Choose life, as God intends. To do otherwise is a death.

Later, Jesus would bring the Garden poetry and the Moses challenge together in his challenging call that we are to lose our life in order to find it. Here is death, too, a reversal of the Garden error: a choosing of death in self-denial in order to find full life as God intends: finding the good as God judges and living it heart and soul.

the story

The Snake's Take

Probably best spoken by a voice off-stage, but if you want a visual focus, you could drape a stuffed snake over a branch in the centre of the worship space. To be used before the Scripture reading.

Hello.

Let me introduce myself.

I am long and very sssslithery.

I appear in many guissssses and in lots of storiessssss.

Nobody seems to like me and I always get a very bad pressss.

Have you guessssed which animal I am?

Yesssss thatssss right—I'm a ssssnake.

And if you're really clever you've guessssed which bible sssstory we're going to think about this morning.

Its in the book of Genesisss.

Yesssss, right again, it's the story about Adam and Eve and me in the garden, the ssssumptuous Garden of Eden.

You remember the story? God had planted a garden in Eden, a beautiful garden with a huge orchard in the middle full of fruit treessss.

And God had formed a man out of the dust. And God had formed birds and animals that the man had named.

The man named me ssssnake and the teller of this story paid me a great compliment. He said I was the most devioussss, cunning creature that God had ever made, impressssive, eh?

God had told the man he was to look after the garden; that he could eat the fruit of nearly every tree in the garden. God showed the man two sssspecial treessss in the middle of the garden. They were beautiful treessss: ssssuperb sssspecimensss.

God called one tree the tree that givesss life. The other tree God called the tree that givesss knowledge of good and evil. God told the man not to eat fruit from the tree that givesss knowledge of good and evil, for if he did eat that fruit he would die.



You remember that God had made a woman out of one of the manssss ribssss and they both now lived in the garden, naked like all the rest of ussss.

I loved living in the garden. I could move ssssilently from tree to tree and I could eavessssdrop on what everyone was sssaying. There wasss a lot of talk about food. There was so much of it. Every fruit had a different taste and they were all delicioussss.

The woman interessssted me. Like me, she asked quesssstionssss. She was curioussss. I teasssed her one day.

I said, "Woman, did God really tell you that you ssshouldn't eat any fruit in thissss garden?"

She smiled, and replied, "We can eat all the fruit we like in this garden—and the fruit is delicious—but God has told us that we mustn't eat the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden—the tree that gives knowledge of good and evil—God said if we eat fruit from that tree we shall die."

I said, "That'ssss not true you know, you won't die, but if you eat that fruit you will know things that you never knew before—you will be like God—you will know what issss good and what issss evil."

The woman walked to the middle of the garden and she looked at the two trees. I had made her more curioussss. The tree of life was beautiful, God had said she could eat from that one. And the tree that

gave knowledge of good and evil looked even more beautiful. Itssss fruit looked ssssuperb. The woman thought that it would be would be wonderful to be wise. She stood at the foot of the tree and I ssslithered up the tree trunk and looped my body around a branch full of fruit. The woman hovered—was the snake right?—was God right? The fruit looked delicious.

The woman stretched out her hand, and picked some of the fruit and she ate it. And then she called her hussssband and gave him some of the fruit and he ate some too. They were sssstill alive. I wasss right. They didn't die.

But then ssssomething strange happened. The man and the woman went and gathered leaves and fastened them together and hung them around themselves. The woman refused to talk to me again so I have no idea what that wasss all about.

I think about the other tree sometimes—the tree of life—and I often wonder what would have happened if the woman had not listened to me. But she did, she made her choice; and choicesss alwayssss have consequencesss. You probably remember the rest of the story...

Enough to say that I'll always ssslither around on my belly, and my children and I will always keep out of the way of humanssss. They don't like us very much—curioussss—I wonder why?

the story

Retelling For Young People

The Tree of What is Good and What is Bad

Once upon a time, a long long time ago, God made a beautiful garden and he called the garden the Garden of Eden. The garden was huge.

- What do you think God grew in the garden? *[gather suggestions]*

Now God was very fond of fruit and in the middle of the garden God planted lots of fruit trees. There were lemon trees and grapefruit trees and banana trees and pineapple bushes and... *[let the children suggest fruit]*. All the fruit from God's trees tasted very good.

There were lots of creatures that lived in God's garden. There were ants and hedgehogs and sparrows and wriggly worms and jackdaws and squirrels and...

And there was also a very crafty snake.

- The bible doesn't give him a name but I think we could. What shall we call him?

[Let the children pick a name and then use that name throughout the rest of the story.]

There were two people who live in God's garden. The bible calls one of them, who was a man, Adam and the other one, who was a woman, Eve.

So all the creatures and Eve and Adam and *Name* the snake lived in God's garden.

God sometimes came into the garden and talked to Eve and Adam.

God showed them two special trees that were planted in the garden. One of these trees was called the tree of life. It was a beautiful tall tree with delicious looking fruit.

"This is a great tree," said God, "you'll love the fruit from this one. Eat lots of it."

The other tree had a longer name. It was called the tree that let you know what is good and what is bad.

"Leave this tree alone," said God. "If you eat from this tree something inside you will die."

Now *Name* the snake was always

listening to what was going on and he heard God tell Adam and Eve about the two trees.

A tree that lets you know what is good and what is evil, that sounds interesting thought *Name*. I'd like to know more about that. But God said if you eat fruit from that tree part of you might die. I don't fancy that.

Name was very crafty. He thought, I could get one of the humans to eat the fruit and I could watch them and see if they die, that would be interesting to watch.

So *Name* the snake slithered up to the woman who was called Eve.

"Did God say you could eat the fruit in the garden?" asked *Name*.

"God said we can eat nearly all the fruit in the garden," said Eve, "we can eat melons and apples and fruit from the tree of life and plums and tangerines and melons and coconuts and loads more and it's all delicious."

"Nearly all the fruit," said *Name*, "why nearly?"

"Well," said Eve, "you see that tree over there, the tree next to the tree of life, it's called the tree that lets you know what is good and what is bad and God said that we mustn't touch that one."

"Why?" asked *Name*.

"Because God said if we eat fruit from that tree something inside of us will die," said Eve.

"Well," said *Name*, "that sounds very strange. Why would God plant a tree with beautiful fruit on it, and then tell you not to eat it? Perhaps that's God's favourite fruit and God doesn't want to share it..."

"Why don't you try it?" said *Name*, "I bet it tastes good."

Eve wasn't sure what to do.

"Go on," said *Name*. "Try it!"

Eve reached up and gently touched the fruit... and then she picked it from the tree.

Name watched her carefully, she looked fine.

Eve smelt the fruit. It smelt good.

Name kept watching.

Eve opened her mouth and she took a bite, and she chewed the fruit and swallowed it.

"Told you," said *Name*. "God must have been teasing. You're not dead are you?"

Eve looked puzzled. "I'm not dead," she said, "but something inside me doesn't feel right, and I don't know what it is."

"Very interesting..." said *Name* and he slithered away into the orchard.

Eve felt very strange.

I need to go and talk to Adam about this, she thought, I'll get him to try this fruit and see how he feels. And then maybe we need to go and talk to God.



worship ideas



Through the Season

Remember to visit pages 4 and 5 where you will find ideas that can be used to help set the scene throughout this season introducing symbolism for the theme being explored this week and encouraging a sense that each week is thematically tied together.

Gathering Activity

Offer everyone an apple shaped piece of paper as they come in. Have pens available and encourage them to write something on the their apple that they wished they had not said or done in the last week. Have baskets available for people to then place these apples in. Apple templates are available from a simple internet search.

Call to Worship

Buy one get one free,
three for a pound,
50% free,
so often the banners
hanging in the cathedrals of commerce.

And yet your special offers,
are so much better than this.

And so we come
to worship you,
to make our choice
between good and evil,
open our eyes
and help us to see
the wonder of your grace.

Responses

Leader: Good or bad,
All: all are welcome.

Leader: To stay the same
or choose again,
All: all are welcome.

Leader: Empty or full to bursting,
**All: all are welcome,
to choose life,
to worship you, Lord God,
of our conscience.**

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

God of counsel and companionship,
we gather to embark
on yet another journey.
A journey through another season
filled with choices.

A journey with many forks on the road
where decisions both right and wrong
will be made.

And yet you travel alongside us.
Even when we ignore the compass
and take the prettier route;
even when we leave the map folded up
and go where the terrain is smoother,
you are there.

Lord, you share in our every experience.
You have known us
since before we knew ourselves
and you know us now...
You know that we each have a different
lesson to learn
and a different route to tread.

Compassionate companion,
forgive us when we let our desires
and cravings overpower our prudence;
when we have blamed our downfall
on others'
when we have no one else to blame
but ourselves,
forgive us...

We are on another journey,
a journey we have been on before.
Be with us once more as we set off
and help us not to make the same
mistakes again...
So be it.
Amen.

Prayer for Others and Ourselves

Parent God,
you call us to tend and watch
over this beautiful planet;
to love and serve those around us;
to guide and support those who seek
to know you more.

On this, the first Sunday of Lent,
we pray that you will inspire us
to deepen our decision-making.
Be with all who have life-changing,
life-making
or even life-ending choices to make.
Comfort those whose decisions
have been influenced by some
at the cost of others.

Whether we crave control or seek success,
help us instead to hunger
for justice and peace,
for vision and focus,
for grace and love.

Heavenly Father, you know us.
You know we have slipped up,
we slip up and we will slip up again
and yet you forgive us.

Sometimes this forgiveness
is beyond our comprehension.
Be with those who are weighed down
with guilt for events of the past;
those who continue to seek forgiveness
for what you have already forgiven.
Lift the millstone from around their necks.
Help them to hold their heads up high
to see the road ahead clearly
forgiven,
loved
and free.

May it be so.
Amen.

worship ideas

Prayer of Dedication

God of grace,
accept these gifts
of ourselves and our offerings.
May we be sensible stewards
of our church and our communities
as we seek to offer
a house of acceptance,
forgiveness and unconditional support.
Support us as we strive to support others
both this day and every day.
Amen.

Reflection

Provide a bowl of apples from which one apple is removed at the beginning of each stanza and placed by the cross at the end of the stanza.

Lord, help us say no
when the voices speak
of building up investments
in the things of the world,
when you want us to invest our selves
in the ways of heaven.

**Lord, help us say no to the world
and yes to you.**

Lord, help us say no
to what the world tells us we need
in the accumulation of stuff
when you want us to let go the stuff
and rely on you instead.

**Lord, help us say no to the world
and yes to you.**

Lord, help us say no
to the quick fix and ready made answer
that patches the cracks
when you long for us
to take a lifetime
to live and explore the questions.

**Lord, help us say no to the world
and yes to you.**

Lord help us say no
to throwing money at every problem,
to feeding the hungry with direct debts
when you wish we would live
in a more equal relationship
with those who are hungry in the world.

**Lord, help us say no to the world
and yes to you.**

Lord help us say no
to the easy way the world wants,
that involves no pain or hardship,
when you call us to carry crosses
and trust the love that bears all.

**Lord, help us say no to the world
and yes to you.**

Lord help us say no
to conflicts that show humanity
at it's worst
in blitz and repression,
when you know we can live
your way that shows the magnificence
of humanity.

**Lord, help us say no to the world
and yes to you.**

Lord help us say no
to a faith that speaks empty words
and is borne by hollow actions
when we know of a word
that brings the fullness of life
and is carried by actions shaped by justice.

**Lord, help us say no to the world
and yes to you.**

Sending

God send us out:
out to the gardens of the world;
out to be with the people of the world;
out to live and love and breathe;
out into your world
resisting that which will do us ill,
accepting that which will nurture us
and always to be your people,
this day and always.

Praise/Hymns

Come, let us to the Lord our God	CH4 482
Dear Lord and Father of mankind	CH4 485 MP 111
Down to earth	from CD <i>Down to Earth</i> by Fischy Music
For your generous providing	CH4 655
Forgiveness is your gift	CH4 361
Forty days and forty nights	CH4 337 MP 160
O God be gracious to me	CH4 40
One person's sin changed every life	see below
Our Lord, you were sent	see right
Seek ye first	CH4 641 MP 590
Speak Lord, in the stillness	MP 608
Tree of life and awesome mystery	CH4 401
What a friend we have in Jesus	CH4 547 MP 746

One person's sin changed every life

1. One person's sin changed every life;
when Adam strayed, we too were lost.
The world soon filled
with death and strife
and every person bears the cost.
2. Not satisfied with what you gave,
your people sought to be like you.
Those early humans disobeyed —
their story is our story, too.
3. Then, God, in love you sent your Son,
for as in Adam we did fall,
so through the faithfulness of One,
salvation was your gift to all.
4. O God, we've seen what death can do,
and now with joy we know rebirth.
In Jesus Christ, you make us new
And give your life for all the earth.

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Gillette. Used with permission.

Email: bcgillette@comcast.net

New Hymns: [http://www.
carolynshymns.com/](http://www.carolynshymns.com/)

Tune: Woodworth (8.8.8.8)



your notes

Our Lord, you were sent

1. Our Lord, you were sent
to a place wild and vast
to ponder your mission,
to pray and to fast;
then hungry and weary,
you faced night and day
the subtle temptations
to turn from God's way.
2. How could it be wrong
to want bread on the shelf?
To seek, in one's serving,
to first serve one's self?
But by God's own word #
you remained ever sure:
it's only in God that
our lives are secure.
3. How could it be wrong
to step out and to dare,
to prove with great drama
the depths of God's care?
But you knew God's word,
true since all time began:
it's wrong to expect God
to work by our plan.
4. How could it be wrong
to just once bow the knee,
to shake hands with sin
to achieve victory?
Yet you made it clear
that no matter the cost:
your path was obedience,
your way was the cross.
5. Our Lord, in your struggle
you chose to obey;
God's word filled your heart
and you trusted God's way.
Now risen, you save us
from sins that destroy;
you give us your Spirit,
your peace and your joy.

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Email: bcgillette@comcast.net

New Hymns: [http://www.
carolynshymns.com/](http://www.carolynshymns.com/)

Tune: Montgomery (11.11.11.11)

age group ideas

gathering crafts

Thumbs Up / Thumbs Down

all age

You will need: a large poster-sized picture of a pathway with 24 footprints (outline only) drawn onto the pathway, colouring pens/crayons.

Thumbs up means you like or agree. Thumbs down means you don't like or don't agree.

Explain this idea to the children and get them to practice with a few simple examples.

Then ask the children to show what they think about things by giving a thumbs up or a thumbs down.

Examples could be:

- It is good to be with friends.
- I think apples taste better than pears.
- It is right to help others.
- Singing is fun.

Vary the statements to suit your own children. Use this to introduce the idea of making choices and that making choices is not always easy.

Finger Fruit Paintings

age 3-5

You will need: sugar paper (one sheet per child), poster paints in a variety of colours, paper plates, aprons or old shirts, baby wipes (to clean up fingers afterwards).

Give each child an apron/shirt to wear. Give each child a sheet of sugar paper. Squeeze a little of each colour of paint onto a paper plate and give each child a paper plate paint palette. Get the children to finger paint a selection of fruit onto their sheet of paper.

Talk about choosing fruit to eat and how the children like different fruits. Talk about making choices about the things we do and how we all need help to make good choices.

Apple Talk

age 6-8

You will need: large sheet of corrugated card (one per every 3/4 children), pencils, chubby crayons, scissors, old long socks or tights, scraps of felt, PVA glue, marker pens.

Have the children work in small groups. For example, two children working on apple, two children working on puppets.

Ask the children to draw an outline of a large apple onto corrugated cardboard. Cut out the apple and then cut out two holes in the apple (big enough for a child's arm to go through, these will be holes for puppets).

Note that adult help will be required for cutting corrugated card which can be quite tough.

Let the children colour the apple with chubby crayons.

For the puppets, use socks or the toe end of legs of tights to make worm puppets. Draw features with marker pens and decorate with scraps of material.

Use the puppets and apple to allow children to have a conversation about choices. The children who made the apple could ask children working the worm puppets questions similar to thumbs up, thumbs down questions in the Gathering Activity.

Swap over and give children the opportunity to work puppets and ask questions. Talk about making choices about the things we do and say. Talk about how we need others to help us make good choices. Talk about the example Jesus gives us.



activities

Lent Calendar age 9-12

You will need: A3 sized sheets of card in pale colours or white (one sheet per child if you want them to take the calendars home with them and use them each day). Alternatively, one sheet per 3/4 children, if you want them to work on the calendar as a group and talk about what they have been doing each week at the group, thin purple ribbon, scissors, rulers, felt tip pens, double sided tape, stickers.

Mark out 40 equal sized boxes on card, using rulers and pencils. It might be helpful if you were able to do this in advance. Get children to stick double sided tape along the lines and then to place thin purple ribbon on to the tape. The children should number the boxes 1 - 40, one for each day of Lent.

Discuss the children's ideas of things they could write or draw in the boxes which would help them to make choices each day of Lent that made a difference to themselves, others or the world around them.

Examples could be:

- a simple drawing of tree = use both sides of paper to help protect the environment
- smiley face = smile at someone to cheer them up
- candle = pray for someone
- hand shape = help someone

Children should fill in as many boxes as possible. Decorate the calendar with stickers. (Love Life, Live Lent booklets have ideas for each day. These are produced by Church House Publishing.)

Talk about how we can help each other to make good choices each day.

Fruit Kebabs all age

You will need: a variety of fruits cut into bite sized pieces, paper plates, wooden kebab skewers.

Get the children to wash their hands. Check for any food allergies.

Give each child a skewer and paper plate. Have the children take turns in choosing one piece of fruit at a time to put onto their skewer. Go round a few times until all the children have six or seven pieces of fruit in their kebab.

Eat and enjoy the kebabs.



You could provide fudge chunks or chocolate sauce to make it an even sweeter experience!

Talk about making choices of which fruits to put on kebab. That's quite an easy choice. Sometimes we have to make more difficult choices and choices about what we do and say. Talk about how we need others to help us make good choices. Talk about the example Jesus gives us.



Fruit Trees age 6-12

You will need: copies of the sheet available on page 136, pens.

See if the children can work out which of the fruit and veg grow on trees, marking a T for True or F for False next to each one.

Apple	T
Banana	T
Carrot	F
Cherry	T
Grapes	F
Lemon	T
Orange	T
Peach	T
Pear	T
Pineapple	F
Potato	F
Pumpkin	F
Raspberry	F
Strawberry	F
Tomato	F
Watermelon	F

Match The Tree age 6-12

You will need: colour copies of the sheet available on page 137, pens.

Encourage the children to match the trees to the correct titles.

From top right, clockwise they are:

Mango
Pawpaw
Plum
Lemon
Lychee
Pomegranate
Jujube
Apple

age group ideas

games

Taste And Try age 6-12

You will need: a range of fruit that grow on trees (see previous activity for some examples), check allergies.

Without labelling the fruit, let the children try out the different flavours of the exotic fruit you offer. With older children, see if they can name what fruit they are eating.

Seven Day Challenge age 6-12

At the start of Lent challenge them with a week long plan (which could be repeated throughout the season). Some ideas are given below, or the children could come up with their own ideas. They could design their own planner with paper, and colouring pens.

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Monday | Smile at someone |
| Tuesday | Say please and thank you to someone |
| Wednesday | Do something nice for a friend today |
| Thursday | Tidy away some toys |
| Friday | Ask your parents if there is anything you could do to help in the house today |
| Saturday | Tell someone how nice they look today |
| Sunday | Make someone a cup of tea |

Fruit Glorious Fruit age 3-5

You will need: the facility to show Fruit Glorious Fruit, available on YouTube at <http://youtu.be/XkxiBcLFMU0>

Show the children the video and song for this brilliant student project film about fruit eating and the benefits of five-a-day. Encourage some singing along.

God Says... age 6-12

You can start with the traditional game Simon says do this / do that. Then change to God says this, God says that and instead of the verbal cues to know whether they should do the action or not, make it so that the children have to think about whether it is something they think God would want them to do.

Some examples: God says to love one another (cross hands over front of body), God says make friends (shake hands), God says fight others (raise fists). The latter the children should choose not to do. Carry on in that vein so the children get the idea. Then ask the children to make up more actions for what they think God says we should do and what we should not do.

Fruit Cocktail age 6-12

This game is normally known as soup but here we have changed the ingredients and the name.

Split the children into four corners and name each corner a fruit: oranges, apples, pineapples and bananas.

One person, IT, stands in the middle of the room and shouts out one fruit name at a time. When the fruit name is called the children from that corner run around IT in the middle until all the children from the four corners are running. At this point IT shouts 'Fruit Cocktail' and then tries to catch at least one person before they make it back to their corners.

Start again with whoever was caught as the additional ITs calling out the fruits.

Roll The Fruit all age

You will need: lemons and limes, a target marked on the floor.

Lemons and limes are notoriously difficult to roll in the direction you want them to go. Give the children a target to aim for and a choice of three lemons or limes.

Let them roll the lemon and limes and give them points for how close they get to the centre of the target.



discussion starters for teens

daddy or chips?



Preparation

You will need a Bible and a list of choices for the Opening Activity.

Opening Activity

An advert once posed the question "Daddy or chips?" Sometimes choosing between things you like is hard!

If you have the facilities, you could watch the advert: <http://youtu.be/aHA4-5N5AzA>.

Make a list of 20 either / or choices. It could be fast food chains, drinks, products, brands, TV shows, sports teams, music or whatever you think your group might have different opinions on.

The Word

You will need: bibles.

Read Genesis 2:15-17 then Genesis 3:1-7.

Activity/Discussion

- When are choices easy?
- When are they hard?
- Do you always know how things will turn out?
- How do you make decisions when you don't know what will happen?
- Are there choices you have made that you wish you could change? Why?
- Adam and Eve were told not to do something. Does being told not to do something make the thing more appealing?
- How do you know when you're doing the right thing, or the wrong thing?
- Do we listen to God when we make choices?

Living It Out

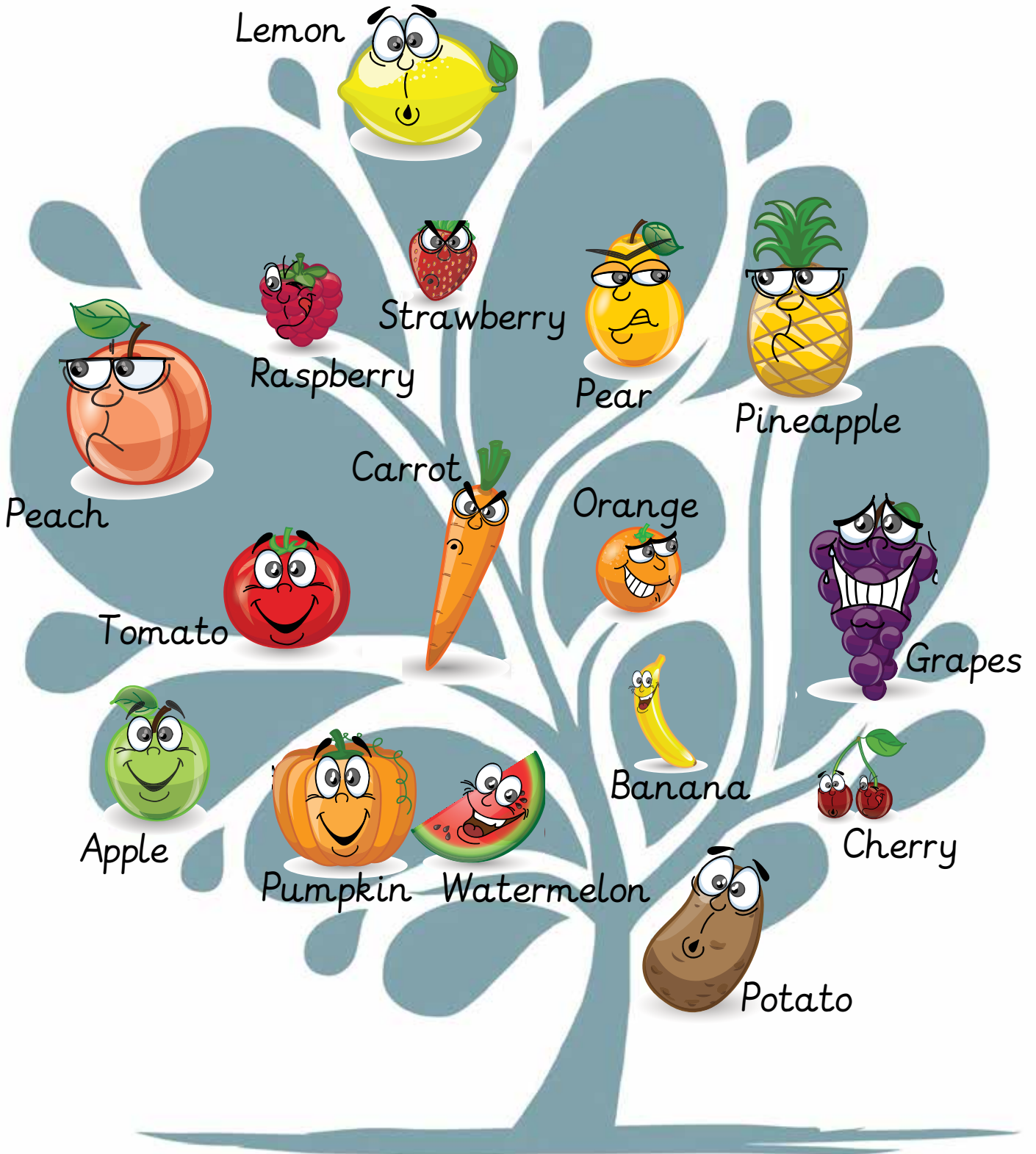
Lent is sometimes a time when people give up things.

- This year, rather than giving something you like up, what positive choices could you make for Lent?
- What kinds of things could you take up, do or practice until Easter?

Fruit Trees

Which of these grows on trees?

Next to each picture write a T if you think it is True and a F if you think it is False.



Match the Fruit Trees



Apple Tree



Lemon Tree



Lychee Tree



Pomegranate Tree



Mango Tree



Jujube Tree



Pawpaw Tree



Plum Tree