

## BIBLE TIME LINE ASSEMBLIES

### 35. THE SOWER

Bible Base: Matthew 13: 1-23

Key Christian Belief: The kingdom of heaven is like a seed.

Aim: To help children understand that the Good News of God's love is intended to make a difference our lives.

You will need

- a handful of seeds
- a Bible

#### Introduction

Show the children a handful of seeds and ask them to imagine what might grow from these - e.g. a garden full of vegetables or flowers, an orchard full of fruit or a field full of corn. Ask them now to imagine now that you have an apple seed in your hand. What could it grow into? An apple tree! What will grow on the apple tree? Apples! What will you find inside each apple? More apple seeds! And what could they grow into...?

Isn't it amazing how much can come from a tiny little seed? When he was on the earth, Jesus told a story once in which he said that the message He had come to bring, the Good News of God's love, was like a seed. Today we are going to hear this story and think about what it teaches us.

#### Story

You will need nine children to act out the story as you tell it.

Choose one child to be the farmer. His job will be to walk across the hall from one side to the other, pretending to scatter seed across his land. Ask him to wait at one side.

Choose four children to be the seeds in the story. Ask them to spread out across the front of the hall and kneel down facing away from the audience. Give them each a number from one to four and explain that when they each hear their number they are to turn round and act what happens to that seed in the story.

Choose two children to be birds. Show them their action - flapping their wings - and ask them to wait at the other side of the hall.

Choose two children to be thorns and weeds. Ask them to kneel down, facing the audience, behind seed number three. Explain that you will tell them what to do...

Now tell the story as follows, prompting the children to act it out as you go along.

Once there was a farmer who when spring time came thought it was time to plant some seeds across his land. He spent the whole day out in his fields scattering seeds far and wide. *(The farmer walks across the front of the hall, scattering seeds.)* At the end of the day when the seeds had all been planted he came back home, sat down and had a rest. *(The farmer goes back to where he started and sits down.)*

Some seed - number one - fell along the pathway. *(Seed number one turns round.)* It didn't even get into the soil. It just lay on the path for all to see. High overhead some

birds were flying. (*The birds begin to flap their wings.*) It was near lunchtime and they were feeling peckish - when what should they see but some nice juicy seed lying on the pathway below. 'Yum, yum!' they thought 'Just right for our lunch!' So down they swooped and carried off the seed that fell on the pathway, took it back to their nest and had it for lunch. (*The birds take seed number one by the arms back to where they came from.*) No lovely harvest of corn from this seed - it ended up as birds' dinner!

Some seed - number two - fell on rocky soil. (*Seed number two turns round.*) Here, it grew up very quickly. (*Seed number two jumps up quickly with arms and legs outstretched. If too slow the first time ask him / her to do it again - very quickly!*) It looked as if it was doing really well - but as the day went on, the sun rose high in the sky and by midday it was very hot. The plant was very thirsty. (*Seed number two wipes his / her brow.*) It tried to send its roots down into the soil to get some water to drink but there were too many rocks and stones in the way and the roots couldn't get down deep enough to where the water was. So, sadly, this plant just withered away and died. (*Seed number two withers and dies.*) No lovely harvest of corn from this seed either; it just withered away in the hot sunshine.

Some seed - number three - fell among thorns and weeds. (*Seed number three turns round.*) It grew up very nicely at first. (*Seed number three grows up slowly with arms and legs outstretched.*) But so too did the thorns and weeds. (*The thorns and weeds grow up slowly with arms and legs outstretched.*) Eventually, there were so many of them, and they were so strong, that they choked the plant the fell among them and it died. (*The thorns and weeds act this out - without physical contact - and seed number three dies.*) No lovely harvest of corn from this seed either - it had no room to grow among the thorns and weeds. (*The thorns and weeds each give a triumphant fist pump.*)

Some seed, however - number four - fell on good soil. (*Seed number four turns round.*) Here it grew up very nicely and became a beautiful harvest of corn. (*Seed number four grows up nicely with arms and legs outstretched.*) This, of course, is what the farmer had been hoping for all along. He will be able to take the corn and use it to make bread for hungry people to eat.

Invite the audience to give the actors a round of applause, but ask the actors to stay where they are for a few minutes more.

### Exploring Christian Belief

Remind the children that in the story, Jesus said the message He brought - the Good News of God's love that is now written down for us in the Bible (*hold up a Bible*) - is like a seed. We are now going to think for a few moments about what He meant by this.

Invite the farmer to walk with you back across his 'land'. Explain that the children have been watching and they will be able to tell him what has happened to the seeds he planted.

Stand with the farmer where seed number one was and ask the children in the audience to tell him what happened to it. Ask him how he feels about this.

This seed did not even get into the soil. Jesus is telling us that if the Good News of God's love that He came to bring us (*hold up a Bible*) is to make any difference in our lives, we need to take it in. We need to listen to what Jesus says and pay attention to it.

Stand with the farmer by seed number two and ask the children in the audience to tell him what happened to it. Ask him again how he feels about this.

This seed didn't get down deep enough. Jesus is telling us that if the Good News of God's love that He came to bring us (*hold up a Bible*) is to make any difference in our lives, it needs to sink down deep into our hearts. We need to think carefully about it and ask God to help us understand it and believe it so we are able to keep on following Jesus and not give up when things are tough.

Stand with the farmer by seed number three, along with the thorns and weeds. Ask the children in the audience to tell him what happened to this seed and ask him how he feels about this.

There was no room for this seed to grow. Our lives are full of many things but Jesus is telling us that if the Good News of God's love (*hold up a Bible*) is to make any difference in our lives we need to make room for God - taking time each day to talk to Him, and perhaps read the Bible for ourselves, and meeting with others in His family, in SU or in a kids club, to learn more about Him and what it means for us today to live as His friends.

Stand with the farmer by seed number four. Comment on the beautiful harvest of corn that is growing here and ask him how he feels about this.

This seed fell on good soil. Jesus is telling us that if we pay attention to the Good News of God's love that He came to bring us (*hold up a Bible*), ask God to help us understand and believe it and make room for Him in our lives - this is what will happen. Our hearts and lives will be full of God's love and it will show. And not only that but it will spread to others too as we learn to show God's love to them by the things we say and do.

Christians believe that God wants to make our lives beautiful and useful for Him. The seed that makes this possible is the Good News of God's love that Jesus came to bring us and that is now written down for us in the Bible. It is what we do with it that makes all the difference. What will you do with it? Which type of soil will you be like?

#### Song

'Seed You Sow' from the album 'Songs That Jesus Said' by Keith & Kirsten Getty would be a good song to use with this assembly.

#### Prayer

Finish with a prayer thanking God for the Good News of His love that Jesus brought. Ask Him to help the children to understand and believe it and to make room for God in their lives each day so that they will grow to be the people he created them to be.