



Introduction

The following assembly outline with classroom follow-up is part of a series that explores the theme of breaking and restoring relationships using stories from the Old and New Testaments. In each one we meet groups and individuals whose relationship with God and each other is damaged for a variety of reasons, but we also read about how God then works to mend what has been broken.

This session focuses on how Christians believe that people became disconnected with each other and God in the first place. It explores the story of Adam and Eve, who ran away from God to hide among the trees of Eden.

Preparation

Use a child-friendly account of the story found in Genesis 3:1-24.

You will need to hide around the hall a series of items linked to the story (see below in 'Development').

Development

1. The pain of losing something and the joy of finding it again is one experience that all of us share, young and old.

Start your assembly with a 'lost and found' game, in which you have hidden some vital visual aids for today's story around the hall. Ask a few children to help you find them. The suggested items are:

your own Bible, two 'Lego' or similar model trees, a plastic snake, some artificial leaves, gardening gloves, a baby's blanket, a plastic sword

Be excited and pleased when each item is found again.

Put the visuals to one side and ask the children about things that they have lost and found and what they felt about it.

2. The more precious the item you lose, the more anxious you will be. We know from Genesis 1 that people (you and me) were God's most precious part of creation. He made them 'in his likeness' and gave them the job of looking after his world.

Suddenly, in chapter 3, these people have run away to lose themselves in the trees of the garden.

Imagine how God felt when he couldn't find them.

God's cry, 'Where are you?' is full of sadness, longing and even fear.



3. Now tell the story using the visual aids that the children found earlier:

Your own Bible: this story comes right at the beginning of the Christian's special book and explains how people's relationship with God was spoiled.

Two model trees: in the beautiful garden called Eden there were two trees: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God made it clear that the two trees should be left untouched.

The plastic snake: but then, in the shape of a snake, came the temptation to doubt and disobey God. The snake planted in Adam and Eve's minds doubts about God's instructions.

An apple: the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil looked good and they were tempted to eat it.

(Take a bite of the apple.) They decided to go their own way and not God's.

Artificial leaves: suddenly they felt ashamed. They knew they had broken God's rules and they also became fearful of each other and covered themselves up with the leaves.

(Call out 'Where are you?') But God came looking for them, even though they had run to hide among the trees.

Baby blanket: because they had chosen to disobey God's loving rules, everything else began to go wrong. The woman will have a tough time when it comes to having babies.

Gardening glove: the man would have a hard time pulling up the weeds and thorns that would now spoil the world.

A plastic sword: and the beautiful garden, especially the other tree, would now be out of bounds to them.

This is how our relationship with God broke down, according to the Bible. But the rest of the book (thumb through its pages briefly) shows, Christians believe, that God worked at mending that relationship because God didn't stop loving them.

Read Genesis 3:21, which shows us that God still cared deeply for those he has created. He made them clothes to wear.

4. Have a moment of quiet to reflect on this story using the following questions:

I wonder why God gave Adam and Eve a simple rule about the two trees?

I wonder why Adam and Eve decided that God's rules could be broken?

I wonder why God was so angry and sad?



I wonder what would have happened if they had kept to God's rules?

I wonder why God had to send them out of the garden?

I wonder what would have happened if they had eaten the fruit from the other tree?

5. So often we spoil our relationships with others by not respecting what they have asked us to do. Whenever we do this there are consequences and it is always hard work to put things right again. In the classroom follow-up to this assembly there will be an opportunity to explore all this further.

Ideas for classroom follow-up in a circle time

1. Reintroduce the theme by sharing more stories with each other of experiences they have had of losing and finding things that were precious to them.
2. This story of getting lost and being looked for starts with making a wrong choice. Try playing a [Choice Circus](#) game with your group, in which half attempt to persuade someone who is Eve not to eat from the tree, while the other half try and persuade her to eat it.

Do this again, this time with Adam in the middle. Are there different arguments for and against this time?

3. The one wrong choice leads to lots of other bad things happening; just as one small lie tends to lead to more and more, and often worse, lies.

First they blame each other; then they blame the snake; then come fear, problems, dangers, difficulties and pain. All this comes in to spoil God's world. No wonder God did not want them to eat of the fruit of the tree.

Cut out of two sheets of paper two large cross-section apple outlines. Ask the class first to suggest some of the bad things that are spoiling God's world because this first important relationship broke down, and write these up on one of the apple outlines. On the second outline ask for suggestions for some of the good things that were being lost from God's world.

Now give out some smaller outline apples for the children (in groups) and also some newspapers and magazines (though take care what articles are in them), so they can cut out pictures or headlines for each apple half to correspond to the bad things that happen because relationships get broken and the good things are lost.

When their two apples are filled, talk about how the world is now a mixture of all these things, good and bad.

I wonder how we can sort all this out? I wonder what they would do, if they were God?

Christians believe that God did not give up on the world. He already had a plan in mind and there is



possibly a tiny clue in Genesis 3:15. Can they find it?

(Hint: it is said that the heel is badly bruised when someone is nailed to a cross.)

4. For a time of reflection, put a globe in the middle of your circle to represent the world that God had created.

Now hand out some Post-it notes shaped like speech bubbles but which could also be seen as apple shapes (with a stalk).

Invite the children to think about the choices they will be making in the coming week because of the many relationships they are in at home and at school.

As a sign of making a choice for good, they could put down one of those Post-it shapes around the globe. Suggest choices like:

I choose kindness not revenge.

I choose friendship not hatred.

I choose to smile and not to frown.

What other suggestions can the children make for good choices?

5. *Key thought:* Christians believe that, though the world has in so many ways turned its back on God, God does not give up on the world. He comes looking for people because he loves them, regardless of the bad choices they make.

I wonder, do we give up too quickly when our relationships with others break down?