

## Open the Word

Based on John 12.20-33  
Bible notes are on page 20.

### With very young children

Today's activity offers a chance to explore what is involved in planting seeds

**You will need:** gardening items, e.g. buckets and spades, kneelers, a watering can, a wheelbarrow; fabric flowers or vegetables; some tiny plant pots; some sand and some dried peas to use as seeds.

- Encourage the children to play with the gardening items in the sand.
- If you have someone to work with the toddlers, they could put some sand into a plant pot and then plant a pea 'seed' in it. If appropriate, you might talk about what might happen to the seed. An extension to this activity would be to sow some mustard seed on to damp cotton wool in an egg box lid, for the children to take home.

Guidance on exploring the Bible reading with young people is on the next page.

### With children

**You will need:** some gentle music (though not essential); some music and the means to play it.

- Invite the children to become seeds and to curl up as small as they can.
- Explain that they are buried in the ground.
- As you play the music, encourage the children to grow, to push through the soil and then to stretch as tall and as wide as they can. Ask them to stay where they are and listen to the story.

### Talk about

After reading the Bible story to your group, use these discussion points.

Think about how you felt when you were rolled up in a tight ball.

- Did you feel safe? Could you see? Could you hear? Could you do anything?
- If we stay wrapped up in a ball we might feel safe, but we can't grow.
- What do you need to help you to grow?

## Dying to grow

based on John 12.20-33

Jesus had arrived in Jerusalem. Lots of people wanted to meet Jesus. A group of people from a different country wanted to meet Jesus. They asked one of Jesus' friends, whose name was Philip, who passed the message on to another friend, whose name was Andrew and he passed the message on to Jesus.

However, before Jesus met anyone else, he wanted to try to make sure his close friends understood what was going to happen to him. He told them,

'When we plant seeds in the ground, it is as if they are dead to us. But then they begin to grow. They grow into food or flowers or trees and suddenly there is so much more than what was buried in the ground.'

It is the same for me. I must die and be buried so that more people can live. And it is the same for you. If you are prepared to let go of your life, your life will actually grow.

But I find all this so hard! Part of me wants to say "Father, get me out of this!" But no, I need to focus on what God wants me to do. This was what I came to do. Father God, make your name great!

And the people who were there heard a voice, which sounded like thunder, say,

'I have made my name great and I will make it great again!'

