

Intergenerational Worship

Integrating Story

Year A – Advent (any week)

What is this: Intergenerational Story and take home Postcards

Where it's used: In any intergenerational gathering, but specifically Lectionary based gatherings.

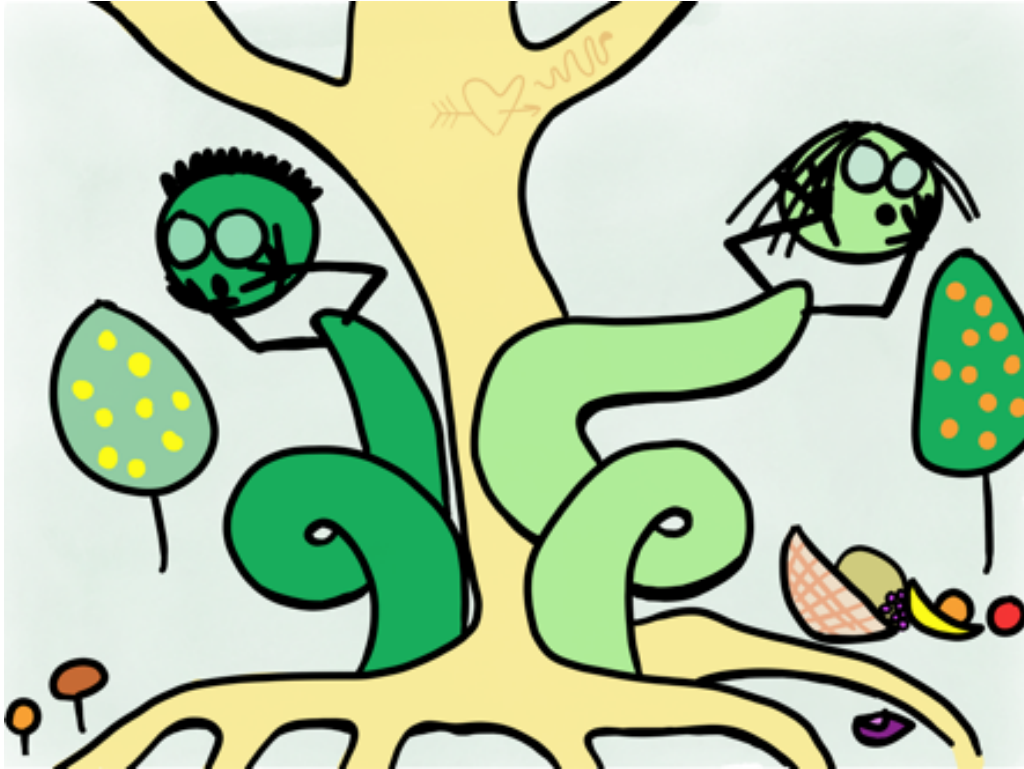
Time: 10 minutes

Bible Focus/theme: Genesis 3; integrating into all the advent texts

What's needed:

- a supply of lolly snakes
- Twisted story (may be told by a specific story teller)
- 2 Garden Images by Chris Booth displayed in large poster format or on screen
- Postcards of Chris Booth images and text (see separate files)





Introduction

(As you begin, have some helpers distribute lolly snakes among the gathering.)

Across this season of Advent we are reading lots of different parts of the Bible – We're hearing stories and songs and poems and pictures; arising from different groups and locations and times in the history of the people of God, the Northerners in the hills, the southern city dwellers, roaming rampaging tribes, passionately praising priests and peasants and conquered carried away captives.

These are important differences of context and style and culture for us to pay attention to...but at the same time, there are some sneaky threads, little references that keep popping up across the different writings, linking the texts together.

In lots of the advent readings there are some echoes of one particular story. It's one of the first stories to appear in our bibles – and it includes a snake, two trees, fruit, humans deciding between good and evil, and God's faithful presence in it all.

While you chew on your lolly snakes, we're going to hear a version of this ancient story. There are two pictures by Melbourne Artist, Chris Booth to help our imaginings.

The sneaky snake
Made up its mind
To twist its tail around the branch
And twist the good words of God
And see just what would happen

The sneaky snake
Made up its mind
And twisted it's tail
And spoke to the garden girl

"Did God say 'no fruit'?"

"No, we can eat any fruit"
Bananas,
Pears,
Apples,
Grapes,
Cantaloupes,
Strawberries,
Even take a twist of lemon if we like....
Just not fruit from that 'middle of the garden' tree.
Which was exactly what God has said...

Hmmmmm

Ssssssssss

Really?

And the sneaky snake twisted his tail around the branch and the branch looked like his tail and his tail looked like the branch...

And the garden girl thinks about God's good words and the snake's sneaky speaking...but she finds that God's good words and the snake's sneaky speaking have gotten all twisted in her mind, and now she can't quite remember what God's good words were and what the snake's sneaky speaking was, so twisted they were becoming.

The sneaky snake made its sound so sensible.

"God's fruits are good – so go on:

Take a chance, take a chomp, take a chew...

And see if what you are thinking is true

See whether this fruit will make you clever

Perhaps it will make you live forever"

She looks at the bananas, so delicious

She looks at the pears, so juicy

She looks at the apples, crisp and crunchy

She looks at the plump purple grapes and the ripe round cantaloupe

She looks at the sweet, succulent strawberries

Every fruit that she had ever tasted in God's good garden tasted so good.

And then she looked at the tree-in-the-middle fruit.
What would happen if she ate that fruit?
All of the other fruit was good....

The sneaky snake went out on a limb
“God’s fruits are good – go on:
Take a chance, take a chomp, take chew...
And see if what you are thinking is true
And whether this fruit will make you clever
Perhaps it will make you live forever”

The garden girl made up her mind
to forget the good words of God
and to trust the twisted tale of the sneaky snake.
And the garden girl reached out and grasped the tree in the middle fruit
and gave it a gentle twist, and pulled it off the tree.
She ate a bit and shared a bit with her garden friend, the boy.
He ate a bit and stared a bit at the garden girl.
And he felt a twist in his tummy, an embarrassed twist.
And she felt the same twist in her tummy too.
And they turned and ran away to hide. And they twisted vines and leaves together to try
to cover themselves. They felt odd, and they felt old.

God came walking in the garden, as God often did. God was never far away, always close
to the beautiful place he had made and the people he loved.
“Where are you?” God called
And the knot in the man’s tummy twisted tighter and tighter.
And when he tried to answer, his words twisted and turned, with shame and blame,
back on the girl and she twisted and turned her story back on the sneaky snake who had
turned on his tail and slithered away.

But God’s words of love
Came straight and true,
My children see – this will not do
This fruit has made you sickly clever,
And you will not want to live forever
For the man, Adam and the woman, Eve, things had changed. Good things, like
gardening and being families turned to hard work.
The man never lost that twisted tummy and neither did the woman. Something was
always a bit wrong between them, even when they tried to be best friends.

But one thing did not change.
One thing cannot be twisted out of shape.
God’s love.
God’s no exceptions, no conditions, no twists or catches love.
God stayed close to them, cared for them, gave them what they needed, protected
them, and he stays close to us now.
God kept calling them, and their children, and their children – and all of us – “give up the
twisted tale of the sneaky snake. Take the next turn back to me.”

Reflection questions for Art images

- Why do you think the artist chose the colour green for the people?
- How does the picture show that the tree holds knowledge of both good and evil?
- In the second image – something has happened to the two people? What is it? Describe how they are now? What do you think the artist is wanting to suggest?
- Why is the heart and the snake carved on the tree that gives knowledge of good and evil?

Postcards

The way that our advent readings twist together with each other, and twist into the whole story of the Bible can take some careful looking to see. We don't always notice the first time.

To help us keep looking and noticing how the advent readings twist together and how the story of the snake and the trees and the choices is twisted into the advent readings too, we have made some postcards of the art and the stories for you take home to your households, to keep looking and reading through the week.

In particular, look out for that sneaky snake slithering into the picture, and appearing in the readings.

(see separate Postcard files for printing)