

St. James Episcopal Church
A Moment for Kids—of All Ages!
FEBRUARY 28, 2016—THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT
SECOND CHANCES



Jesus told this story—"A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; but it didn't have any fruit on it. So he said to the gardener, 'For three years I have come looking for figs on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' The gardener replied, 'Give it one more year. I'll dig around it and put manure on it.' If it bears figs next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down."

BRINGING THE GOSPEL HOME: THOUGHTS FOR PARENTS

This parable of the fig tree can, at first glance, seem very harsh. It is important to guide your children through this story, to understand that it is story of love, not one of retribution or punishment. A fig tree in an orchard is only valuable if it bears good figs. Otherwise, it is taking up space that could be used by other—fruitful—trees. We are sort of like fig trees, but infinitely more complicated. We all have a purpose in our life, and we are called by God to use each and every day as an opportunity to bear fruit—to give love, to help others, to be the hands and feet of God’s love in the world.

God wants us to be the best we can be, but God knows that we are not perfect and sometimes we need extra help and second chances. Just like the fig tree, we have new opportunities to grow in God’s love, to seek guidance and to rethink our decisions and priorities. The fig tree has the gardener for help, and like the tree, we are not left alone. God will always be there to help us, to guide us, and to give us another chance. We also have other people to help us. Who do you think God sends to you to guide you and help you?

FAMILY ACTIVITY IDEA –MAKE FIG BARS

1 lb. dried **FIGS** (stems removed)
2 cups **ALMONDS**,
SESAME SEEDS (blanched or unblanched) or **SHREDDED COCONUT**

Put the figs and almonds through the fine blade of a meat grinder or food processor. Roll the fruit and nut mixture out on wax paper to about 1/2" thickness. Cut into 1"x 3" bars. Press the bars in sesame seeds or shredded coconut. Keep in wax paper to maintain freshness. Makes about one and a half pounds of fig bars.

As you make and enjoy these healthy and delicious treats, talk about why it is important for a fig tree to have good fruit (otherwise we wouldn’t have this wonderful treat.) Then talk about why it is important for all of us to “bear good fruit”. What fruit do you bring to the world?

Adapted from Morehouse Education Resources www.livingthegoodnews.com

Dinner Table Conversation:

The parable in this week’s Gospel is about getting second chances.

Tell about a time that you received a second chance.

Tell about a time in which you gave another person a second chance. How did you feel?

If you had a plant that was wilting and not growing, what would you do for it?

How can you help another person who is “drooping”?