

Under construction

John 2.13-22

A dramatic scene of Jesus creating chaos in the Temple by driving out the money changers and animal sellers. The Jewish authorities are not pleased and demand to know who he thinks he is, at which Jesus predicts his death and resurrection in a metaphor about rebuilding the Temple.

Now read **John 2.13-22** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

This passage offers three ways in which we can think about the Temple: the physical space to worship God, Jesus' body as God here on earth, our own bodies to honour God. Do you find a physical place is important in your relationship with God? What does Jesus' message about his own death and resurrection mean to you today? In what way do you see yourself as a temple, built to honour God?

STONE TOWER



On stony beaches, you often see pebble towers that others have built, like natural sculptures. Gather together some suitable pebbles or stones and take some quiet moments to build a tower yourself. You might like to write a letter on each to spell 'Jesus'. Take some time to build your tower several times over, reflecting on the passage and using the images of these pillars. In what ways are you 'under construction': being shaped and moulded into something special? What might be getting in the way? What do you need to add more of, to build yourself up?



Play a game of Jenga™, where you have to remove blocks from the tower without it falling down. Each time you remove a block, read the next verse of the Bible passage and come up with a question you have about that verse. If you are playing the game with others, see if anyone can answer your question, or offer their ideas about it. If you are playing on your own, write the questions down and share them with someone from your church, next time you catch up.



At the start of the week, cut up some paper into brick-shaped pieces and clear a board or space on a wall. Towards the end of each day, find a time to reflect on some things you did that day which showed something about God or what it is to be part of the Church – God's spiritual house. If you live with others, you could talk together about the things you're writing down on the brick-shaped paper. Each time, stick your bricks onto your board or wall, and build a structure over the course of the week.



Watch the market-place scene from *Beauty and the Beast* [PG] (www.youtube.com/watch?v=6tMoE8siNo8) and notice the busyness and an environment where people are keen to sell their wares.

How does that make you feel?

Can you imagine the Temple as Jesus found it, full of people doing business?

What are the things in this environment which distract us from God?

In the light of social distancing, is the busyness as part of this passage an uncomfortable thing to imagine?

Have you missed the busyness of being and worshipping together in a physical space, or have you enjoyed the new opportunities for quietness in the space – in church or at home?

LENT GARDEN OF RESPONSES

This week, choose something to give up – just for the week. It could be meat, or sugar, playing video games, or anything else. During the week, whenever you think about or want that thing, let it remind you that you too are 'under construction' and God is at work in you. Ask God to show you more about what you can be, and what the Church can be, too. Place a reminder of what you gave up in your garden tray or on your garden page (that you've been progressing throughout Lent). Try to place or draw the items so that you make the tray or page begin to look like a sculpture garden.

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

I remember that day really well. It was nearly **Passover.** The Temple courts were crowded. There were men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. The next thing we knew, Jesus was making a whip out of cords, and he began to drive the animals out of the Temple.



Cows and sheep were charging about, and doves were flying everywhere as he let them out of their cages. He scattered the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. He began shouting, 'Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a marketplace!'

'As I look back now, I remember that the ancient prophets had written, 'Zeal for God's house will overwhelm me.' We could see it with our own eyes. And then the Jews there demanded of him, 'What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?' And Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this Temple, and I will raise it in three days.' They laughed. 'It's taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?!' But after the resurrection, the "three days" began to make sense!

John 2.13-22

Did you know?

- Passover: a joyful festival for Jewish people which celebrates their escape from slavery in Egypt.
- The Temple was built by King Herod, started in 19 BC and not finished until AD 64.

John 2.13-22 (NRSV)

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!"

His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.