

A NOTE TO PARENTS

Jesus's little parable about the grain of wheat comes just at the time of year when nature is beginning to stir into spring. All of last summer's rich and various and abundant life has lain dead and brown all winter—but out of that death comes new life. If you live in a part of the country with a cold winter that is now beginning to give way, try to take your child on a walk this week, and look for signs of spring. Remember together how the gardens, the park, the woods, looked last summer. That's a long time ago for a four- or five-year-old: you may have to help the memories along. Look for buds along the boughs, tips of bulbs pointing up through the soil, new damp green growth under piles of rotted leaves. Smell the moist spring smells, feel the air, note how the days are getting longer, look for returning birds. And talk about how Easter is coming—in just two weeks, we will be celebrating God's most wonderful gift to us: new life from the death of Jesus.

Under the ground where we do not see them are the seeds from last year's flowers. Jesus's image in today's Scripture takes the point of view of the seed: it is the seed that must dare to fall into the ground and give itself up, to become something new and undreamed of. If all we had ever seen of the plant world was hard dry seeds, we could have no idea of the color, shape, variety, freshness, fragrance and beauty of flowers, grasses and trees. Jesus suggests that the seed, in its ignorance, thinks of itself as normal: it does not know what it is to become. So it is with us. Let your child play with the idea that all of us are only seeds, on our way to be broken open into something we cannot even begin to imagine. Plant some seeds together and watch how they change. What might we be like when God has helped us to germinate and grow?

Jesus speaks of the grain of wheat. The wheat seed that dies in the ground grows to become bread; Jesus who died and was buried lives again for us, and comes to us in the Bread of Life. A hymn in the Episcopal Hymnal 1982, #204, richly expresses this mystery with a lovely, simple tune: try singing it together with your child as you look forward to the joy and wonder of Easter.

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Year B
5th SUNDAY
in LENT



Jesus said, "Unless a seed falls
into the ground and dies,
it cannot grow."

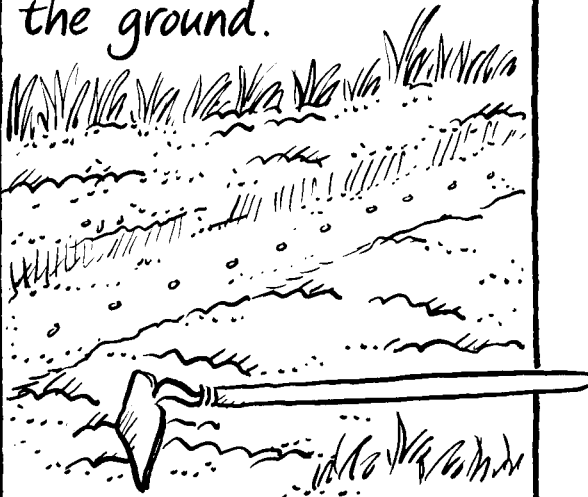
JOHN 12:24

JESUS TOLD THIS STORY:

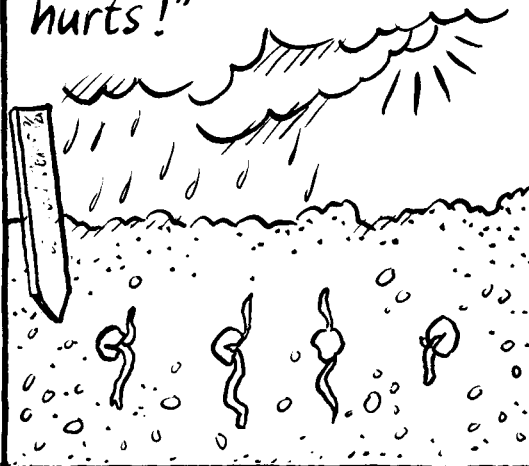
A seed has a new plant inside it. Nobody can see it. It has not grown yet.



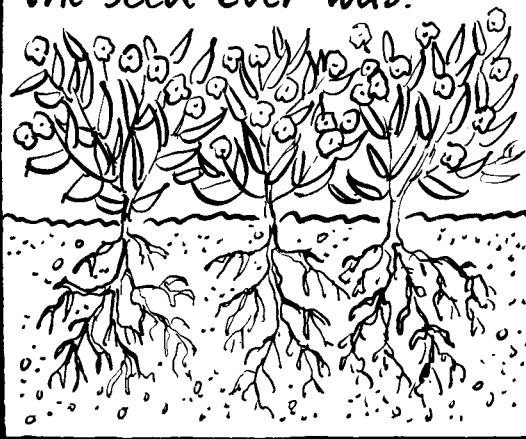
To make the seed grow, it has to be buried in the ground.



There, it breaks open. If the seed could talk, it might say, "This hurts!"



The seed is gone. Now there is a new plant, more beautiful than the seed ever was.



Jesus said that he was like that seed. His body would be broken on the cross and buried in the tomb, but then he would rise with new life to share with us.

Lent is a time to thank God for new life. Put these seeds in the ground, and make them grow, big and beautiful and new.

