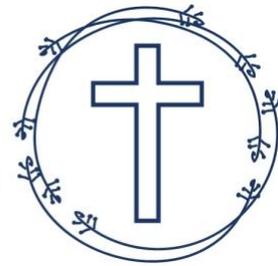


# LORDSBRIDGE TEAM OF CHURCHES



Third Sunday of Lent – 7<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Read John 2.13-22

*You may like to use this material as a basis for discussion in your family.*

This is a dramatic story from St John's gospel. Jesus is angry. Have you ever thought of Jesus as an angry person? Can you think of any other stories in the Bible when Jesus was angry? We usually think of Jesus as compassionate and kind and gentle.

Jesus visited the Temple in Jerusalem with his disciples. The Temple was a very important place for all Jews. It was the centre of worship, music, politics and national celebrations. Jews would travel great distances to visit the Temple but only priests were allowed to go into it. People would say prayers and offer sacrifices of animals outside the Temple (sacrificing animals was a form of prayer).

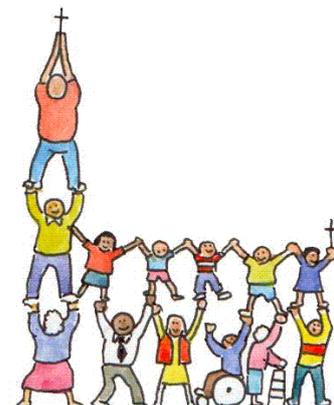
Some people travelled a long way to go to the Temple so they had to buy animals for sacrifice when they got there. It would have been noisy and smelly, with goats and sheep in pens and birds in cages, and there would have been blood from the sacrifices. The merchants would sit at tables with the money laid out in front of them, ready to change the coins that people brought along and to sell their animals. It was known that many of them over-charged the pilgrims who came to pray.



When Jesus saw this, he became angry. He made a whip out of cords, he rushed round letting the animals out of their pens and cages, turning over the tables of money and scaring people away with the whip in his hands. Jesus shouted "You have turned my Father's house into a marketplace!" Imagine what it was like. What would you do if you'd been there and seen it? What would you have thought?

Jesus wanted people to focus on God when they pray, rather than think about buying and selling animals. What helps you to focus on God when you go into church? Are there special things that you look for in church? What are the things that get in the way of seeing God more clearly?

Our church buildings are important places in our communities and we try to look after the buildings and treat them with respect and love. At the moment we can't have services in church because of the coronavirus and the lockdown situation, which makes many people feel sad. But we can pray to God anywhere – in the street, in the countryside, in our homes – and we are able to worship together using online zoom



# LORDSBRIDGE TEAM OF CHURCHES



services or by watching television or listening to the radio. The church is more than just a building; it is a group of people who all believe in God and follow Jesus in their lives.

## **Activity**

- Write an advert for an ideal church. What characteristics would it need? Would there be a building? If so, what sort of building would it be? What would you like to see inside it? How would you make it welcoming for people? How would you create a good atmosphere for prayer?

## **Prayer**

Jesus, we are sorry that we let things stop us from putting you first.

We are sorry that we get too busy and forget to pray.

Help us to be your church in the world,

so that other people can see God's love in our words and actions. **Amen.**