



Read Genesis 4.1-9

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

Today we begin a special 4 week set of readings about people and situations from the Old Testament. The Bible is full of stories of ordinary people who became heroes by trusting and following God. But, the Bible also has stories of people who failed to trust and follow God, from those who were eaten by jealousy to those who betrayed and deceived, or lied and led others astray.



Today's reading from the book of Genesis is about Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve. It's a sad and disturbing story because it finishes with a murder – Cain kills Abel, his own brother. Read the story and then think about why Cain killed Abel. How was he feeling? What drove him to such terrible actions?

The Bible tells us that each person is made in the image of God. What does this mean?

Cain was born in the image of God, and yet he chose a different path and walked away from God. One of the reasons why Cain rejected God was that he became jealous of his brother. He felt that God had favoured Abel; he felt rejected by God. Have you ever felt jealous of someone? You may have felt jealous of a friend who had a certain possession that you would have liked to own. Or perhaps you felt jealous of a member of your family when they seemed to receive more attention than you. What other characteristics or emotions can cause people to turn away from God and behave badly or wickedly?

The Bible has stories about people like Cain so that we can learn from them. We learn about the situations that caused them to turn away from God. We learn about the emotions that drove them to behave in a certain way. We learn what happens when they reject God. Such stories make us think about our own lives and how we respond to difficult situations. We may still feel angry or jealous, like Cain did, but we have to learn to control our emotions and turn to God who will love us and support us.

Activities

- You will need: vinegar and baking soda; a glass and a bowl on a tray along with other items that you don't mind getting wet.

Set out the glass and bowl on the tray with the other items surrounding it.

This activity shows that anger and jealousy hurt not only us but others too. Fill the glass with baking soda and begin adding vinegar. Foam will form. What happens to it? What happens to the other things set out on the tray?

Prayer

For the times when we have been angry or jealous,
Lord, we are sorry.

For the times we have turned away from you,
Lord, we are sorry.

Give us the courage to be generous, and celebrate the gifts of others.

Encourage us to live in your image, as Jesus taught us. Amen