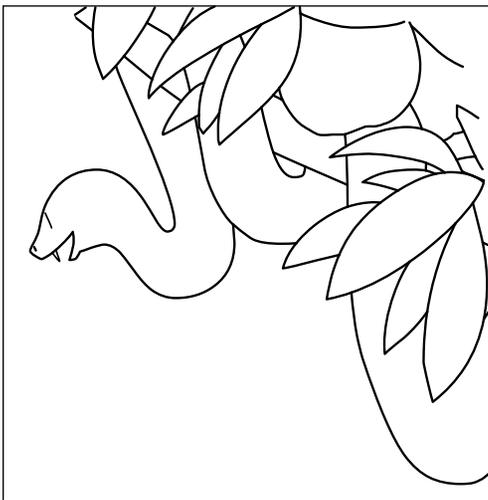




The first sin

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Genesis 3:1-13

Adam and Eve, the first humans, are in the Garden of Eden. They live peacefully among God's creation. They are naked but they are not ashamed.

The snake was more cunning than any of the other wild animals that the Lord God had made. One day it came to the woman and asked, "Did God tell you not to eat fruit from any tree in the garden?" The woman answered, "God said we could eat fruit from any tree in the garden, except the one in the middle. He told us not to eat fruit from that tree or even to touch it. If we do, we will die."

"No, you won't!" the snake replied. "God understands what will happen on the day you eat fruit from that tree. You will see what you have done, and you will know the difference between right and wrong, just as God does." The woman stared at the fruit. It looked beautiful and tasty. She wanted the wisdom that it would give her, and she ate some of the fruit. Her husband was there with her, so she gave some to him, and he ate it too. Straight away they saw what they had done, and they realized they were naked. Then they sewed fig leaves together to make something to cover themselves.

Late in the afternoon a breeze began to blow, and the man and woman heard the Lord God walking in the garden. They were frightened and hid behind some trees. The Lord called out to the man and asked, "Where are you?" The man answered, "I was naked, and when I heard you walking through the garden, I was frightened and hid!"

"How did you know you were naked?" God asked. "Did you eat any fruit from that tree in the middle of the garden?" "It was the woman you put here with me," the man said. "She gave me some of the fruit, and I ate it." The Lord God then asked the woman, "What have you done?" "The snake tricked me," she answered. "And I ate some of that fruit."

Commentary

If God made such a beautiful world, then why is there so much wrong with it now? This is the big question that this story begins to answer. However, it is too easy, like the woman, to blame the snake; or, like the man, to blame the woman. They both knew the warnings that God had given about the dangerous tree. It was their own choice to ignore God's words, and, of course, from then on things began to go wrong.

Suddenly they were more concerned about how they looked than about who God is. They felt ashamed of the bodies that God had given them, and were even so frightened of God, who loved them, that they hid behind the trees. Shame, fear, blame and lies now poisoned the atmosphere of Eden. It was as if a great, ugly crack had appeared in the masterpiece that was creation, and it was all the fault of human beings. God's world was spoiled, and there must have been great sadness in God's voice when he called out, "Where are you?" One of the Bible words for all this brokenness is 'sin'.

Questions

- ▶ Who do you blame for what happened in the story? The snake? Eve? Adam? God?
- ▶ What was it, do you think, that most tempted Eve to go against God's instructions?
- ▶ Do you think that God knew all this would happen? If so, why didn't he stop it?
- ▶ Adam and Eve did not die immediately. So what did God mean by saying that they would?



Visual aid

Find some pictures of road signs from the Highway Code or the internet, particularly those that give a warning. Talk about what these signs mean, why people sometimes break these rules, and what can happen if they do. Can you design your own warning sign to be placed in the Garden of Eden near to the tree of knowledge of good and evil?



Activity idea

The snake sowed doubts into Eve's mind about God's instructions. Perhaps it wouldn't matter if they ate the fruit? Play an 'excuses game' in which each of you comes up with a reason why you won't do something, such as going shopping for a neighbour who is not well, or giving some of your pocket money to a charity collector. Talk about why people make excuses to avoid doing the right thing. You could also try playing a game of 'Would I lie to you?' where one person gives a fact about themselves and the others have to decide whether it is true or false.



Prayer idea

The fruit from that tree looked 'beautiful and tasty'. Take a shiny piece of fruit. Would you still be tempted to eat it if you'd been told by someone you trusted that it was dangerous—possibly poisonous or rotten at its core? Among yourselves, name some of the tempting choices you might face each day and ask God to help you do the right thing—for example, the choice not to hand in some money that you have found, or to blame someone else for something you've done, or to break the rules when no one is looking.

Key verse

"The man and the woman heard the Lord God walking in the garden. They were frightened and hid behind some trees." (Genesis 3:8)

New Testament story link

Matthew 4:1-11: Jesus faces temptations but chooses to do things God's way.



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