

You will need some tubes/bottles that can be squeezed, such as toothpaste, tomato purée, shampoo, etc.

You will need to be familiar with the coins trick that you can find at www.professorwonder.com/magic6.htm. But here we do it with larger discs, such as frisbees, which are easier to see.

You will need someone to bring in a transparent jug with freshly boiled water, into which you'll drop a few teabags and then a few effervescent tablets (e.g. the kind used for cleaning dentures). It's a good idea to practice this part in advance so that you know how many teabags/tablets you need to produce a good effect in your size/shape of jug.

Who's planted a seed to take home today?

Do you know what kind of plant will grow from your seed?

It's important to know what kind of seed we're planting, isn't it? It's no good planting an apple seed if we want to grow an orange, or a pumpkin seed if we want to grow sunflowers. We need to plant the right kind of seed for the plant or fruit that we want to grow.

In our crafts today, we've been thinking about a different kind of fruit. St Paul wrote: "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." Paul was a man who knew very well how hard we can find it to be loving, kind and good. He knew that we can't manage it on our own. But he also knew what happens when we invite God's Holy Spirit to live in us. He said that it's like planting a God seed in us - a seed that grows good, loving people.

Ok, here's something different to think about for a minute. Can I have a volunteer to help me?

Thank you. In a minute, I'm going to give you this toothpaste tube and ask you to squeeze it for me. But first, I've got a question for everyone else. What do you think will come out when the tube is squeezed?

Right, let's see what happens. Can you squeeze the tube for me?

You were right - toothpaste did come out.

Can I have another volunteer?

When I give him/her this tomato purée tube to squeeze, what do you think will come out?

Ok, let's see what happens. Can you squeeze the tube for me?

You were right - tomato purée did come out.

Can I have one more helper?

When I give him/her this shampoo bottle to squeeze, what do you think will come out?

Ok, let's see what happens. Can you squeeze the tube for me?

You were right - shampoo did come out.

We wouldn't expect to get shampoo out of a toothpaste tube, or tomato purée out of a shampoo bottle. We know what to expect when we squeeze them, because we know what's hidden inside.

St Paul knew that we're a bit like these tubes and bottles. When we're squeezed by all the pressures of life, it's what's hidden inside us that comes out. It's fairly easy to be kind and good when life's going well. But when things go wrong, and we're under pressure, that's when the world gets to see what's really inside us. And sometimes, that's not very nice.

But how can we change what we're like inside? It seems impossible, doesn't it?

Well, let's have a look at something else that seems impossible. Can I have another volunteer?

What I've got here is 3 discs. The rules are simple:

you mustn't *move* this disc;

you mustn't *touch* this disc;

you need to put this disc in between those 2. How will you do it?

[Let a few others have a go too.]

So - this disc can't be moved: that's you.

And this disc can't be touched: that's the problem.

And this disc here is God. We need to let him into the situation: to get him between you and the problem. How can we do it?

[Demonstrate the solution.]

Nothing is impossible with God. He can even change what's inside us.

Let's look at what happens to the water in this jug if I put a teabag into it. It will change, won't it? It'll turn into tea. And the longer I leave the teabag in it, the more it will change.

When we invite God's Holy Spirit to live in us, he changes what we're like, too. And the longer we let him stay, the more we become like him.

And then, the next time life gives us a nasty squeeze, we won't be ashamed of what comes out. Instead, we - and everyone else - will see the fruit of God's Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

And if we really want to ask God to send his Holy Spirit to live in us, then amazing things will happen.

Can I have one last volunteer? Will you drop this tablet into the tea for me?

It's great, isn't it? And that's what it's like in us, too, when we invite God's Holy Spirit into our lives. When we're truly filled with the Holy Spirit, we can't keep him in. Other people can't help but notice that we're different, because the Holy Spirit overflows from us. He doesn't just clean and change *us*. He comes bubbling out of us, and starts to change other people and their lives too.

Let us pray.

Come, Holy Spirit:

fill the hearts of your faithful people,
and kindle in us the fire of your love.

Change us, transform us and grow your fruit in us,
so that we can show other people your love.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.