

Gather

This week we're going to make an Easter Garden. This can be done on any scale. You could make it in a clean yogurt pot, the sort that has a treat in the corner. You could make it in a take-away tub or on a tray. You might have a small corner of your own garden which you could transform. Each day of Holy Week will see our garden develop.

Today we simply gather together the things we will need. If you're unable to make a living garden, why not make one from lego or modelling clay, or draw on a paper plate? For a living garden you will need:

- a waterproof container for your garden (or a corner yoghurt pot)
- some compost or soil
- twigs
- moss
- small stones for a path
- something to form the tomb – the base of a milk bottle or juice carton, some plasticine, papier mache, or anything else that you can think of. It needs to form a mound / hill, and you need to be able to form a doorway or entrance. (If you are making a corner yogurt pot garden, this is already there for you).

For Wednesday

- some flowers and leaves (or things to make some).

For Thursday

- card and pens.

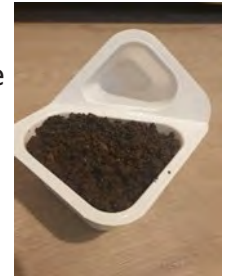
For Friday

- lollypop sticks or twigs to make the cross, and glue or twine to fasten them
- a stone, big enough to cover the entrance to the tomb.

Prepare

Having gathered your resources, it is time to prepare the ground. The parable of the sower reminds us of the importance of well-prepared soil.

- Break your compost up and use it to fill your container. Add some water to help it settle.
- Make your tomb at one edge of the garden. You may want to bury this slightly, or cover it with moss.
- Use moss to make the grass in the garden but leave some space for trees and flowers.
- Make a path to the tomb if you have room. If your garden is big enough, why not make a silver-foil pond too? You might even make a fence around your garden if you choose. We are made in the image of a creator God – use your creativity to design your garden.



Create and plant

“I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them” it says in Ecclesiastes 2:5.

Now you can fill your garden with beautiful things – flowers (or simply flower heads if your garden is small), trees made of twigs and leaves – if you have no flowers, make some with paper. Aim for a riot of colour.

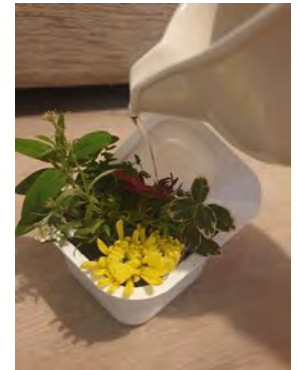


Feed and pray

1 Corinthians 5:7 reminds us that it is not important who does the planting or who does the watering, what's important is that God makes the seed grow.

The planting and watering has to be done, and today we will very gently water our garden, making sure that everything is damp. It is probably best to do this with a spray bottle or drops from fingers like rain as too much water can damage it just as much as letting it dry out.

We water it and remember that Jesus is the water of life. Using the card and some brightly coloured pens, design a sign to put with your garden, using the words *"The Lord will guide you always, he will satisfy your needs.... You will be like a well-watered garden"* Isaiah 58:11



Sorrow in the garden

Today is a day of sorrow. There are just two things our garden needs to change it from an ordinary garden to an Easter garden.

We think of the Jesus dying on a cross. Using two sticks, form them into a cross and stand it in a corner of the garden. Pause for a moment. After the crucifixion, Jesus' body was laid in the tomb and a stone was rolled in front of the entrance to seal it. Place your stone in front of the entrance to the tomb.



Wait and wonder

We wait and we wonder. This is the hardest day, a day of inaction. There is nothing we can do but wait.

I wonder how this day would have been for Jesus' followers? I wonder where God was in the waiting? I wonder where we see God in our experiences of waiting? I wonder what can be gained from these waiting times?



Rejoice

Remove the stone from in front of the tomb. Alleluia,
Jesus is risen!



As well as making an Easter garden with plants and soil, you could also make an Easter garden like this one.



You need a digestive biscuit for the ground, some icing coloured green with food colouring for the grass, a jam sandwich biscuit with a heart shape in the centre for the tomb (you will need to cut the bottom off this carefully), a mini-egg for the stone (again, you may need to cut the base off this for it to stand, depending on the depth of your icing) and some cake decorations.

Use the icing as a glue to fasten the different parts together.