

# Family Page



For small children, Mass can be a difficult experience. The readings are often over their heads, the homily is seldom geared to their age level, and the language of many prayers is unfamiliar. To make Mass come alive for them, try these five simple steps.

**1** If your children are too young to read, buy them a child's illustrated book on the Mass. Show them in pictures what to watch for at Mass.

**2** Visit your parish church sometime when services are not in progress and point out items used at Mass: where Blessed Sacrament is reserved, what the sanctuary lamp is for, and so forth.

**3** Before you leave for Mass, look over the readings and discuss them with your children. Relate something from the readings to their own experiences.

**4** Get to Mass early and sit where the children can see what is going on.

**5** Later in the day, discuss the gospel again, fitting the message into their lives. Ask them to decide upon one thing they can do this week to act upon Jesus' words.

If you follow the preceding steps to introduce the children to the Mass, you will be preparing their hearts to accept the Word of God and act upon it.

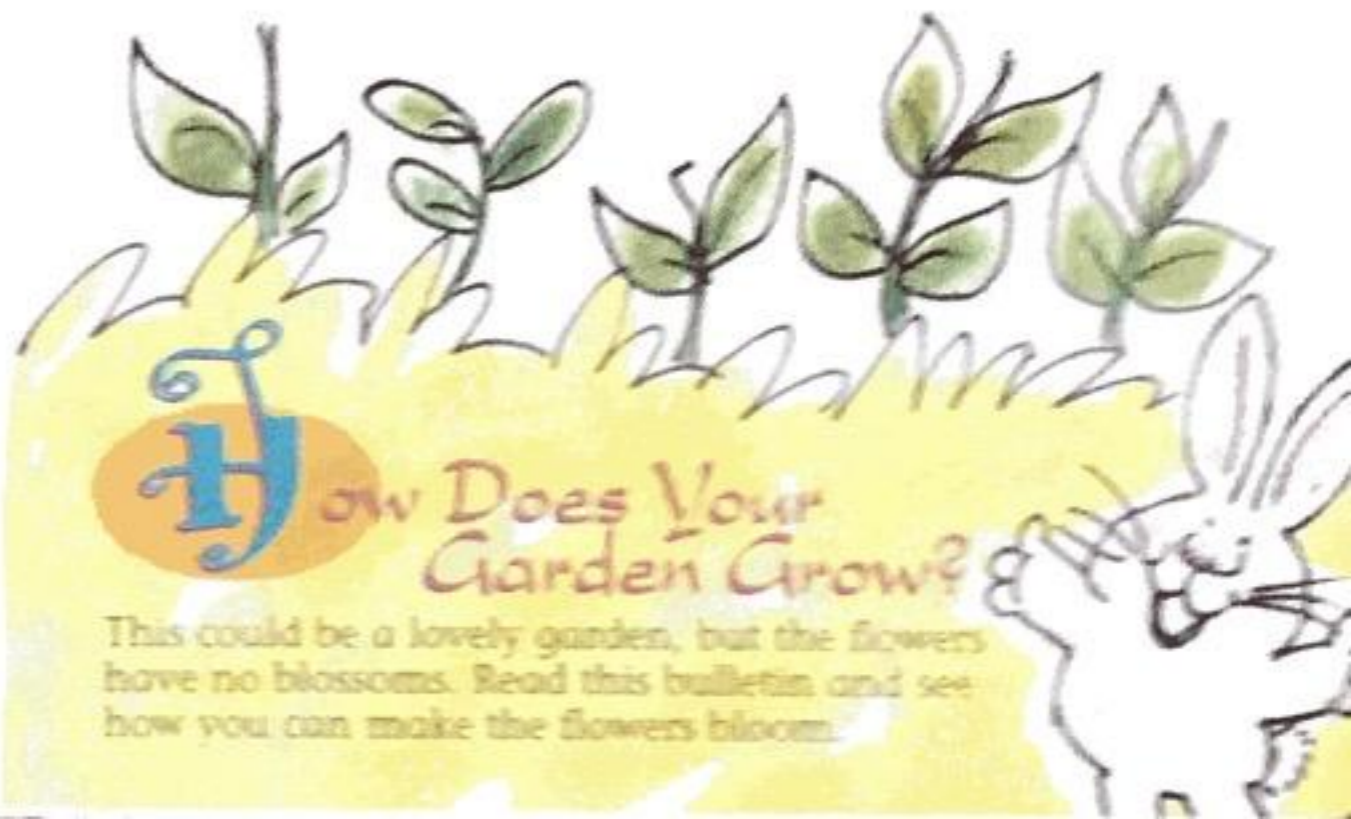


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## explaining GOD'S WORD

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) • Matthew 13:1-23 or 13:1-9 • July 12, 2009



**H**ow Does Your Garden Grow?  
This could be a lovely garden, but the flowers have no blossoms. Read this bulletin and see how you can make the flowers bloom.



# The Farmer and the Seed

Father Jim is reading this week's gospel story about a farmer who went out to plant his fields.

Tamara and Debbie are whispering and giggling in the back pew. They don't pay any attention to what Father Jim is reading. They don't understand it anyway.



*(Some of the seed landed on a footpath, where the birds came and ate it.)*

Lionel is standing in a pew with his parents. His hands are shoved in his pockets, and he looks very angry. Lionel thinks going to church is dumb.



*(Some of the seed fell on rocky ground, where it has little soil.)*

Two rows behind Lionel stands Carmen. Carmen has things on her mind. She isn't listening to the priest. She is going on a picnic after Mass and she can hardly wait. Carmen wishes Mass would be over.



*(Some of the seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked it.)*

Toward the front of church are Mark and Amanda. Their family always sits toward the front so they can see and hear everything. Mark and Amanda try to listen carefully because they want to know more about Jesus. Later, they'll ask their Dad or Mom to explain anything they didn't understand at Mass.



*(Some of the seed landed on good soil....)*

God is the farmer out planting the field, and the seed is Jesus' Word. Love grows from the seed that falls on good soil. When God plants the seed in your heart this week, how will your garden grow?



## Seeds of Love

Here are some questions about this week's gospel story. For every one you can answer, add a lovely blossom to the garden on the cover of this bulletin.

1. What was today's gospel story about?
2. Who was the farmer out planting his field?
3. What is the seed?
4. What grows from the seed that falls on good soil?
5. How can you make the seed of God's Word grow in your heart?

