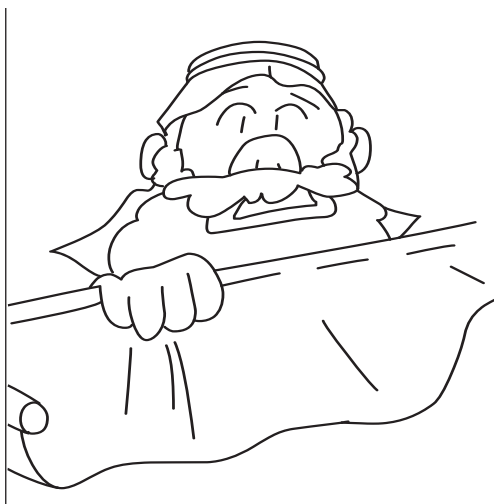


**Jesus cleans  
the temple**

## Colour me!



## John 2:13-22

Not long before the Jewish festival of Passover, Jesus went to Jerusalem. There he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves in the temple. He also saw moneychangers sitting at their tables. So he took some rope and made a whip. Then he chased everyone out of the temple, together with their sheep and cattle. He turned over the tables of the moneychangers and scattered their coins.

Jesus said to the people who had been selling doves, "Get those doves out of here! Don't make my Father's house a market place." The disciples then remembered that the Scriptures say, "My love for your house burns in me like a fire." The Jewish leaders asked Jesus, "What miracle will you perform to show us why you have done this?" "Destroy this temple," Jesus answered, "and in three days I will build it again!" The leaders replied, "It took forty-six years to build this temple. What makes you think you can rebuild it in three days?"

But Jesus was talking about his body as a temple. And when he was raised from death, his disciples remembered what he had told them. Then they believed the Scriptures and the words of Jesus.

## Commentary

To worship at the temple in Jerusalem for one of the great festivals was a high point for any Jewish believer. This was particularly true of the annual Passover celebrations, which commemorated the time when God rescued the nation from being slaves in Egypt. Thousands of pilgrims arrived and crowded into the outer courts, eager to buy the necessary animals – mainly sheep or doves – to use in the special ceremonies. The religious leaders set up market stalls and also, because the use of Roman coins was forbidden in the temple precincts, a place to change money into the right currency to spend. In fact, it had become a huge money making event – that is, until Jesus appeared.

When he visited the temple as a young boy, Jesus told Mary that this was his father's house, and it is these words that echo around the building again as he drives out all those who are buying and selling. When challenged by the authorities, he replies with what seems to them to be a riddle, claiming that, should the temple be destroyed, he will rebuild it in three days. Only much later did his disciples realize what he had been saying. He was predicting his resurrection; however, the Jewish leaders took his words literally and stored them up as evidence to use against him when they put him on trial for insulting the temple and their God.

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## Questions

- ▶ Does it surprise you that Jesus acted so violently in this story?
- ▶ What was it exactly that made Jesus so angry?
- ▶ What did Jesus mean about rebuilding the temple in three days?
- ▶ When, if ever, is it right to be really angry like this?



## Visual aid

Turn a small table upside down and use it as a focus for today's story. Jesus was always turning ideas upside down, and now even the furniture is being overturned!



## Activity idea

This is a story of great noise and confusion. Divide up the following sound effects among you as a family: the bleating of sheep, the lowing of cattle, the cooing of doves, the rattle of coins falling, the shouts of the stallholders and the angry voice of Jesus. Rehearse the sounds individually and then, on the count of three, all join together to recreate the noise in the temple on the day Jesus arrived. Make Jesus' words the last and loudest sound to be heard.



## Prayer idea

For each of the different things in the story, create a prayer that asks God to help you not to make the same mistakes, for example, "May we not be like sheep and wander from you"; "May we not be like foolish cattle and miss hearing your voice"; "May we be like doves, always knowing how to fly home back to you"; "May we not be like coins spent on things that take us away from you."

## Key verse

"Destroy this temple," Jesus answered, "and in three days I will build it again" (John 2:19).

## Old Testament story link

Hosea 6:1-6: Hosea warns God's people of the dangers of falling away from him, but also predicts God's willingness to put them right again.



Colour me!

