Children's sermon for March 21, 2021 (John 12:20-33)

I have a jar of water that holds 3 different stems of plants. These stems have never been in soil—I cut them off a bigger plant and stuck them in the water, and they've been growing there, without any dirt or fertilizer, for almost a year. That seems like sort of a miracle to me. (What does that make you think of faith-wise?)

If you want to grow potatoes in your garden, what do you have to do?

If you want flowers in your garden, what do you have to do?

There are some *VERY LARGE TREES* in northern California called sequoias. They're the *tallest* trees in the world, and also the *heaviest*. If all the members of St. John or St. Stephen held hands and tried to make a circle around one of these huge trees, I don't think there would be enough people.

Did you hear about the terrible forest fires in California last year? One reason California has so many wildfires is that the climate is so dry. What would they need to change that? (What does that make you think of faith-wise?) But even with all that fire, the sequoias will never die out. Because their little pine cones can only sprout after the heat of a forest fire, and after it burns away all the little plants at the bottom of the trees, and thins out the tops of these tree giants.

Here's a question for you: what's the only way we can get to heaven? (die) And the reason we'll get to heaven after we die here on earth is that *Jesus* died, and God raised him up to heaven!

In today's gospel, the story about Jesus, he tells his friends (his disciples) that a seed is "only a seed" until it gets into the ground. Then it dies, and *then* it can grow and become a plant of some kind.

Jesus tells this story because he knows that *he* will die and be buried, and then God will raise him from the dead. And he will become much more than a plant— he'll be the way we can get to heaven after we die! That's how much God loves you. He *died* for us so we can spend forever with him and Jesus after we die in this life! Pretty cool, isn't it?