

A seed has to be planted to grow into something great. In **John 12.20-33** Jesus shows us how we should follow his example.

This is the fifth of six Bible studies in which we observe Jesus taking up the mission of the Old Testament writers. The sessions are linked by their common theme, but each session stands alone.

Bible notes

The feast of Passover is a major Jewish festival for which thousands came to Jerusalem in Jesus' time. Jesus had already openly been in the city. It seems surprising then that some people found one of the disciples, Philip, and asked him to take them to Jesus. It may have been their custom to be introduced in this fashion, or they may have been fearful of a direct approach to a man developing the reputation Jesus had. Indeed, Philip seems to have mustered the support of Andrew.

The Gospel does not actually confirm that they got to meet and speak with Jesus, however, because in response to the disciples' approach, Jesus revisits a theme he had previously developed about dying and rising; giving up life to save it and being lifted up. Now he emphasises that he will follow God's will to the last and, when he is lifted up, people will be called to respond by following his example of service.

Make connections

One of the prizes frequently offered by local and national music radio stations is a backstage visit to meet a celebrity performer or band at a concert. These celebrities are heavily guarded and getting access to them is not easy. Jesus had become a celebrity in his own time, yet he rarely made himself difficult to contact even though he knew various groups wanted nothing better than to see him dead and buried.

In a few sentences Jesus makes clear his life and death has a purpose and that it's now beginning to unsettle him. We all get nervous at major life events. Whether it's an exam, an operation, the first day in a new job or a stage performance, the butterfly feeling begins and everything from sleep to appetite can be disturbed. It was the same and more so for Jesus as he knew what was going to happen to him.

Explore

- Look at some celebrity interviews and see what insights they give into the lives of these well-known people. What can you find that amuses, surprises or shocks you?
- Work in threes or fours to design a magazine profile of Jesus. Allow space for a picture and a paragraph that you write as the magazine editor, introducing Jesus to your readers.
- Then complete the feature by selecting six of these questions and write Jesus' imaginary answers.
 - When and where was your most vivid childhood memory?
 - The most important thing you've learned from your parents is...?
 - Where's your favourite place to eat?
 - What's the most important thing to achieve in life?
 - What do people think of you?
 - What would you most like to do for your friends?
 - How would you like to be remembered?
 - What are the best and worst things that anyone has ever said about you?