



Audrey's flowers

For years Audrey has been helping her church decorate and prepare for special services. For this year's Easter service she carefully prepared a beautiful display of potted lilies, arranged within fabric and canvas so that the flowers seemed to be growing right out of the floor and dais steps.

When she arrived at her church on the morning of Easter Sunday, she was shocked to find her display in tatters. Many of the pots were knocked over, the fabric was torn and dirty, flower stems were bent and petals were bruised and spoiled. The display looked terrible. Audrey tried to quickly tidy up and arrange the surviving flowers before service began, but display looked weak and dishevelled.

Throughout the Easter service, Audrey had a hard time concentrating. Who had wrecked her flowers? Was it deliberate? Was someone upset with her? She felt angry and hurt. She also felt embarrassed; everyone knew she was responsible for decorating the church and this display was pathetic. Then she felt guilty that she was unable to concentrate on the service, so distracted by her thoughts about the broken flowers.

After the service, the youth minister approached Audrey. He told her that last night the youth group had met in the church. There had been an argument between two young men. One had left the room and the minister assumed he'd gone outside to cool off. Only later did he see the over-turned flower pots.

"That young man has always been trouble," he told Audrey. "And I told him in no uncertain terms what he did was unacceptable and he will not be welcome back until he can learn to behave."

In the coming months, though she tried to let it go, Audrey was still saddened by what happened to her display and she still didn't understand. Who was this young man who wrecked her flowers? Why take out his anger on them? She thought of all the time and energy she had invested in the display and how quickly it was destroyed. When it came time to plan for Advent, Audrey did not volunteer again to help decorate her church. Those who continued with decorating have asked that the chapel door be locked prior to special events.

As for the young man, when he was at church he imagined accusatory looks from the ladies in the front and felt the disdain of others in the youth group who talked about him as if he were a criminal. It wasn't long before he stopped coming to church or attending youth events.

Questions for Discussion

Break into groups and discuss the following questions. After 5-10 minutes, return to the group and use a flip chart to record some of the responses.

- 1) Who has been hurt in this scenario?
- 2) What are do they need?
- 3) What was done to address this situation? What this enough? Did it satisfy the needs of those hurt?

