

Vacation Bible School

# The Abundant Life Garden Project®

offered by Episcopal Relief & Development

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Episcopal Relief & Development would like to thank the following for their contribution to

**The Abundant Life Garden Project®**

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# Gifts for Life® Celebration

In this final group time of the **Abundant Life Garden Project® VBS** offered by Episcopal Relief & Development, your group is asked to both celebrate your time together and give **Gifts for Life®** to others in need. You are encouraged to plan a celebration that works best for your parish or group and that is supported enthusiastically by all the children. If possible, we encourage children's families to participate in this activity in some way so that they might help celebrate their children's growth during these five sessions.

Make sure to ask children and parents to bring the money they have collected in their water bottle banks and whatever other gifts they want give to Episcopal Relief and Development.

Here are three ideas for how to celebrate:

## Farm to Table Meal

Using locally sourced produce, dairy products, and meat, create a meal that is the direct result of the gifts of abundant life in your community. You could prepare this meal yourself with help from volunteers, or you could make the meal preparations part of the experience, asking children and families to help with everything from cooking the food as they arrive to setting the table. Set out bowls with the items from each of the five weeks in the center of the table(s) - the water, soil, seeds, feed, and fresh produce. During the meal have children share about each of the bowls and what they learned for that week. Set up a table near the entrance where families can lay their gifts. Include a prayer of thanksgiving for these gifts during your meal. their water bottle banks and whatever other gifts they want give to Episcopal Relief and Development.

## Church Potluck

Invite your congregation to participate in a potluck meal. Have a table set up with elements from your 5 weeks of lessons. This could include the completed tri-fold board, examples of garden journals, a slideshow of images taken over the previous four weeks. During the meal have children share their favorite experiences from each week. Set up a table near the entrance where families can lay their gifts. Include a prayer of thanksgiving for these gifts during your meal.

## Holy Eucharist

As Episcopalians, our primary form of celebration is the sacrament of Holy Eucharist. A fitting conclusion to this program would be a service of Holy Eucharist that includes the children, teachers or leaders who have participated in this program and preferably the children's families. Families should be assured that this will be a "child friendly" service, with small children and babies welcome.

We have included a Eucharist option, which includes Rogation Prayers and Eucharist service modeled after Christ Lord's Supper, in which the sharing of the bread and wine are separated by a meal. Feel free to use the service as it is, or to borrow elements that best fit your congregation.

# Intergenerational Harvest Family Feast and Eucharist

**Preparations:** Invite members to bring elements from their gardens, or soil from their yards to be blessed.

Print a service leaflet for each guest and include the Feast coloring sheet in the back. If you can set one long table or if space doesn't allow a series of tables close together. Cover them with brown kraft paper.

Scatter markers and crayons down the center of the table(s)

Place service leaflets at each place.

If you are sitting at one long table, set the elements for Eucharist in the middle.

Consider using a homemade loaf of bread or a bread brought for the meal.

Because not everyone will bring soil from their garden or fresh produce, consider having some potting soil and locally grown items on hand for the blessing.

Also, make sure to have small plastic or paper envelopes that people can take the soil home in.



## The Gathering

Everyone is invited to gather around the dinner table.

## Welcome

Where it says **"All"** everyone is invited to speak in unison.

Where it says **"One"** anyone may lead as the Spirit moves. If two or more people began reading at the same time, they are to continue together.

Children are encouraged to read.

**Song: *All Things Bright and Beautiful***

**Deacon or Lay Minister:**

**This is the Welcome Table of our Redeemer, and you are invited.**

Make no excuses, saying you cannot attend; simply come, for around this table you will find your family.

**One:** Come not because you have to, but because you need to. Come not to prove you are saved, but to seek the courage to follow wherever Christ leads.

**One:** Come not to speak but to listen, not to hear what's expected, but to be open to the ways the Spirit moves among you.

**All:** So be joyful, not somber, for this is the feast of the reign of God, where the broken are molded into a Beloved Community, and where the celebration over evil's defeat has already begun.



*Psalm:*

104:1, 13-15, 25-32

**One:** Let us read the Psalm in unison

**All:** Bless the Lord, O my soul.

O Lord my God, you are very great.

You are clothed with honor and majesty,

From your lofty abode you water the mountains;  
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.

You cause the grass to grow for the cattle,  
and plants for people to use,  
to bring forth food from the earth,  
and wine to gladden the human heart,  
oil to make the face shine,  
and bread to strengthen the human heart.

May the glory of the Lord endure forever;  
may the Lord rejoice in his works—  
who looks on the earth and it trembles,  
who touches the mountains and they smoke.

**Amen.**

## The Meal

**Celebrant:** The Lord be with you.

**All:** And also with you.

**Celebrant:** Lift up your hearts.

**All:** We lift them to the Lord.

**Celebrant:** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All:** It is right to give God thanks and praise.

**Celebrant:** We praise you and we bless you, holy and gracious God, source of life abundant. From before time you made ready the creation. Your Spirit moved over the deep and brought all things into being: sun, moon, and stars; earth, winds, and waters; and every living thing. You made us in your image, and taught us to walk in your ways. But we rebelled against you, and wandered far away; and yet, as a mother cares for her children, you would not forget us. Time and again you called us to live in the fullness of your love.

And so this day we join with Saints and Angels in the chorus of praise that rings through eternity, lifting our voices to magnify you as we sing (say).

**All:** Sanctus (may be sung)

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,***

***heaven and earth are full of your glory.***

***Hosanna in the highest.***

***Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.***

***Hosanna in the highest.***

**Celebrant:** Glory and honor and praise to you, holy and living God. To deliver us from the power of sin and death and to reveal the riches of your grace, you looked with favor upon Mary, your willing servant, that she might conceive and bear a son, Jesus the holy child of God. Living among us, Jesus loved us. He broke bread with outcasts and sinners, healed the sick, and proclaimed good news to the poor. He yearned to draw all the world to himself yet we were heedless of his call to walk in love. Then, the time came for him to complete upon the cross the sacrifice of his life, and to be glorified by you.

**Celebrant:** On the night before he died for us, Jesus was at table with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to them, and said:

***"Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."***

**All:** Glory to you for ever and ever.

**Celebrant:** Now gathered at your table, O God of all creation, and remembering Christ, crucified and risen, who was and is and is to come, we offer to you our gifts of bread and wine, and ourselves, a living sacrifice. Pour out your Spirit upon this bread that it may be the Body and Christ. Breathe your Spirit over the whole earth and make us your new creation, the Body of Christ given for the world you have made.

**All:** Amen!

ALL SING:

## *The Lord's Prayer*

***Our Father, Who art in Heaven***

***Hallowed be thy name***

***Thy kingdom come***

***Thy will be done***

***On Earth, As in heaven***

***Please give us All that we need***

***And forgive us All our sins***

***As we forgive Those who harm us***

***And lead us not Away from you***

***But deliver us From all evil***

***Hallowed be thy name***

***For thine is The kingdom And the Power And the Glory***

***Forever***

***Alleluia***

***Hallowed be thy name***

***Hallowed be thy name***

**Celebrant:** Holy food for Holy people. Share in the meal.

Tonight we will be serving each other. After you receive the bread, pass it to your neighbor, tearing off a piece for them saying, "***The Body of Christ.***"

ALL SING:

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## Let Us Break Bread Together

*Let us break bread together on our knees.*

*Let us break bread together on our knees.*

*When I fall on my knees*

*With my face to the rising sun*

*O Lord, have mercy on me.*

*Let us drink wine together on our knees.*

*Let us drink wine together on our knees.*

*When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun*

*O Lord, have mercy on me.*

*Let us praise God together on our knees.*

*Let us praise God together on our knees.*

*When I fall on my knees*

*With my face to the rising sun*

*O Lord, have mercy on me.*



# The Peace

**Celebrant:** The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**All:** And also with you.


*After you have passed the peace, please feel free to fix your plates from the potluck. We will spend the first part of our meal in conversation. As the meal ends, we'll hear a reading from Scripture and a meditation.*

# The Word

Luke 16:1-13

**Celebrant or Deacon:** The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

**All:** Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. So he summoned him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.' Then the manager said to himself, 'What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I ve decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.' So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' He answered, 'A hundred jugs of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.' Then he asked another, 'And how much do you owe?' He replied, 'A hundred containers of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill and make it eighty.' And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

"Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

**Deacon or Celebrant:** The Gospel of the Lord

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Christ

A Reflection on

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*This could be done by the Celebrant, Leader of the Program, or a child or two who participated.*

## The Prayers of the People

**One:** Let us pray

Eternally Gracious Creator,

As we thank you for our food we remember all those who do not have enough for even one proper meal each day. Bless all those, Lord, who suffer because of the greed of others. Help us to share the harvests of the world more fairly so everyone can be fed and there will be no more starvation. Lord of all creation:

**All:** Hear our prayer

**One:** At this harvest time we thank you for the hard work of all those who grow, protect and prepare our food; for the shopkeepers, the transport delivery drivers, the processors and the farmers. Bless all those, Lord, who do not earn a fair day's pay for their hard work both at home and in other countries. Place in us a greater desire to buy local produce and fairly traded goods wherever we are able, so that everyone can work with dignity and there will be no more poverty. Lord of all creation:

**All:** Hear our prayer

**One:** At this harvest time we thank you for the world we see around us; for the flowers, the trees and the animals. Bless all those who care for them, Lord. Help us to protect your creation by being careful about how we use your resources so that there will be clean water, clean air and plenty of wild birds, mammals and insects to maintain the ecological balance of the earth. Lord of all creation:

**All:** Hear our prayer

**One:** As we give thanks for all that is good in your creation and all who bring in the Harvest of the sea and the land, we are conscious of so much that we get wrong. So we give thanks too for your grace and patience with us when we fail to look after your world as we should. Help us to change so that we too become a new creation walking in the light of your Gospel. Lord of all creation:

**All:** Hear our prayer

**One:** At this harvest time we ask for your blessing on our families, friends and neighbors, on those who are sick and those who have died. Help us to recognize the interdependence of all of life and the importance of just relations and responsible stewardship of all you continue to give us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Lord of all creation:

**All:** Hear our prayer

**One:** Let us now name before God those for whom we offer our personal prayers, either silently or aloud.

**Deacon or Lay Minister:** Lord, you have called us to serve you.

**All:** Grant that we may walk in your presence: your love in our hearts, your truth in our minds, your strength in our wills, until, at the end of our journey, we know the joy of our homecoming and the welcome of your embrace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Blessing the Cup

*We bless our cup at the end of our meal, just as Jesus did when he was at table with the disciples.*

**Celebrant:** As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine. Again, he gave thanks to you and said: "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me."

**All:** Glory to you forever and ever.

**Celebrant:** Pour out your Spirit upon this wine that it may be the Blood of Christ. In the fullness of time bring us, with all your saints, from every tribe and language and people and nation, to feast at the banquet prepared from the foundation of the world. Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever.

**All:** Amen!

After you receive the cup, wipe the side, and pass it to your neighbor, saying, "***The Blood of Christ.***" Make sure to wipe the cup after each sip.

**Communion Hymn:** *This Pretty Planet*

## Blessing the Harvest

*At this time you are invited to bring any seeds, produce, or home canned items forward to be blessed as we are lead in song. Children are welcome to sit at the foot of the table so they can see the blessings up close.*

**Song:** *For the Beauty of the Earth*

### Prayer for Seeds

**Celebrant:** Creating God, you have given seed for the sower and bread to the people. Nourish, protect, and bless the seeds which your people have sown in hope. By your loving and bountiful giving, may they bring forth their fruit in due season, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

### Prayer for the Soil

**Celebrant:** Giver of life, we give you thanks that in the richness of the soil, nature awakens your call to spring. We praise you for the smell of freshly tilled earth, the beauty of a cleanly cut furrow, and a well-plowed field. We ask that you help us to be good stewards of the land. In the name of the one who gives us new life, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

## Prayer for Water and Rain

**Celebrant:** Sustaining God, we receive the fruits of the earth from you. We give you thanks for the smell of the earth after rain, for its welcome cooling, and its necessary hydration for the land. We ask that the rain come as often as it is needed so that crops may flourish and the coming harvest be indeed bountiful.

**All: Amen.**

## Prayer for the Harvest

**Celebrant:** Almighty and everlasting God, Creator of all things and giver of all life, let your blessing be upon this harvest and grant that its bounty may serve your glory and nourish your people; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

## Thanksgiving Prayer

**Deacon or Lay Minister:** Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us.

**One:** We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love.

We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side.

We thank you for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight us.

We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone.

**Celebrant:** Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he overcame death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom. Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know him and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things.

**All: Amen.**

**Song: Doxology**

*Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;*

*Praise Him, all creatures here below;*

*Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;*

*Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

**Deacon:** Live in peace, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and always.

**All: Amen.**

*Everyone is welcome to take a small sample of the blessed soil or seeds home.*