

## Facilitators Guide

# The Abundant Life Garden Project®

offered by Episcopal Relief & Development

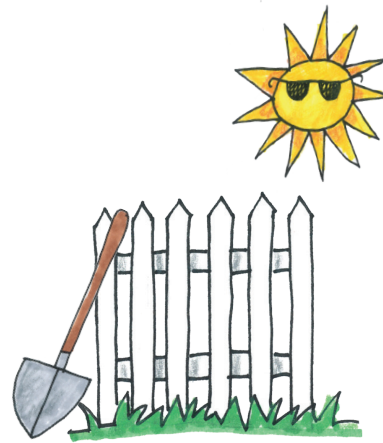
Dear Abundant Life Master Gardener:

Welcome to **The Abundant Life Garden Project®** offered by Episcopal Relief & Development. We are so honored that you have chosen this curriculum. In this packet you will find many tools to help you launch this project successfully. Our prayer is that this material will help you and the children you reach celebrate the many ways abundant life in God is possible.

*May you continue to grow in grace,  
Jerusalem Jackson Greer and  
the Episcopal Relief & Development team*

## In this guide you will find:

- **Before Class Checklist**
- **List of supplies needed**
- **Working with Children tips**
- **Working with Volunteers**
- **Communication Timeline**



## Before each Class:

Print out (or download digitally) the weeks Module Lesson

- **Gather supplies needed for chosen activities.**
- **If you are sharing digital *Stories from the Field*, make sure to set up all AV equipment and have story ready to show.**
- **Print out (or download digitally) *Stories from our Faith Booklet* and *Stories from the Field Booklet***
- **Prepare Songs**
- **If you are including a snack time, gather and prepare snack items.** (You can find detailed instructions on the *Snack* printout)
- **Print out any coloring sheets needed.**

# Supplies

Please make sure to review each activity in each module to assess which supplies you will need. Below is a list supplies that remain static.



SUPPLIES NEEDED



## For Children:

- Garden Journal (Either purchased or pre-made. You can use small notebooks from dollar stores, or make your own out of construction paper, copier paper and staples.)
- Writing utensils.

## For Greenhouse Space: (Classroom)

Each day you will need the following in the Greenhouse Space:

- Large bowl
- Tables for coloring
- Markers and Crayons
- Tape



## For Volunteers

- Nametags
- Optional: Garden Aprons (we suggest using inexpensive canvas work aprons and letting volunteers embellish them.)

# Schedule Quick Look

This is a quick overview of some of the more hands-on/supply heavy portions of each day. **Stories from Our Faith, Stories from the Field, and Contemplation Activities** are not included in this table. For those you will need the appropriate booklets and **Module Lesson Plans**.

Week	Garden Options	Snacks	Creative	Learning	Songs
Water	Watering Rain Barrel Irrigation	Apple Boats Ocean Water	Water Filter	Water Walk	Deep and Wide River of Life Peace Like a River
Soil	Soil Prep Soil Testing Worm Farm	Dirt Cake Cups	Erosion Experiment	Gardner/Farmer Interview	Thank You God for Water, Soil and Air This Pretty Planet For the Beauty of the Earth
Seeds	Seed Starting Garden markers	Nuts and Seeds Dippers	Bird Feeder	What Should I Do With Seeds?	For the Fruit of All Creation God's Got the Whole World in God's Hands* This Pretty Planet All Things Bright and Beautiful For the Beauty of the Earth
Animals	Animal Fertilizer Animal Visit Beekeeeeer Visit	Animal Cracker Safari	Making Butter	Gifts for Life Playing Cards	God's Got the Whole World in God's Hands** All Creatures Great and Small Old Saint Isidore Had a Farm (to the tune of Old MacDonald - St Isidore is one of the Patron Saints of Farmers Arky Arky
Harvest	Harvest Garden Commercial Taste Test	Veggie or Fruit Pizza	Produce Painting	Veggie Peeling	For the Fruit of All Creation God's Got the Whole World in God's Hands

\* Insert different Seeds for each verse

\*\* Insert different Animals for each verse

# Teachers and their Resources

## Tips for a Successful Project:

**Director:** The following information will be helpful for both you and members of your team. Please review thoroughly then make copies for your team members as needed.

## Planning Timeline

### 6-9 Months Ahead

- Begin praying for the launch of this program with your clergy and staff.
- Choose your dates and time for your project and put them on the church calendar.
- Choose a Master Gardener (aka lead teacher).
- Share the **The Abundant Life Garden Project**<sup>®</sup> offered by Episcopal Relief & Development materials with the Master Gardener.

### 3-6 Months Ahead

- Put together a list of supplies you'll need.
- Recruit additional volunteers to help with - Music, Snacks, Storytellers, Garden Guest.
- Plan publicity for your class.

### 2-3 Months Ahead

- Put together lists of supplies you'll need.
- Plan and schedule a training meeting for volunteers and teachers to be held 2-4 weeks prior to launch..
- Estimate your enrollment.

### 6 Weeks Ahead

- Order student supplies if you have not already done so.
- Begin publicizing.

### 4 Weeks

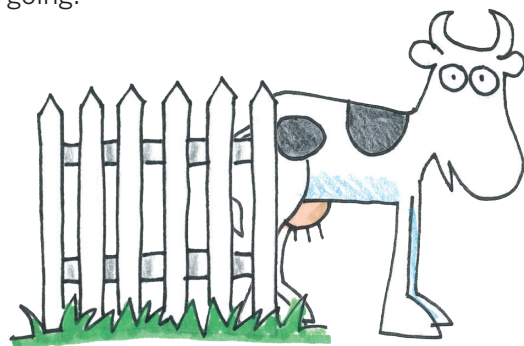
- Hold the scheduled volunteer meeting to review modules and expectations.
- Begin weekly online reminders to congregation.

### 2 Weeks

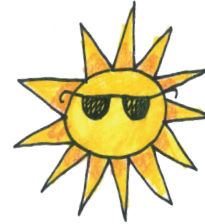
- Order any additional items needed.
- Send personal invitations to children and parents.
- Final prep meeting of volunteers.

### After Launch:

- Pray weekly for God to move in the hearts of your children and for the work of Episcopal Relief and Development.
- Check with key leaders each day to see how things are going.
- Have FUN!



# Working with Children



Here are some simple tips for working with kids that you can share with your volunteers.

**1. Always interact with children from a place of love.** All children, regardless of age or appearance, need to feel wanted and accepted. Make sure to welcome kids warmly each day, and always be ready with smiles, giggles, encouraging words.

**2. Work hard to learn names.** When you call a child by his or her name, you are validating their identity as beloved. Make sure easy-to-read nametags are always on you and each child so that this is easy to practice.

**3. Use active learning.** The more children can actively be involved in their learning, the more connected they will feel.

**4. Be present!** Do your best to leave your phone off or in your bag during your teaching times. If time management is a concern, consider wearing a watch. Also, do not discuss your personal life in front of children, or group up with other leaders or volunteers. Kids deserve your full attention while in your presence.

**5. Be prepared for down time.** Find activities to do when you have a few free minutes so all time is being used in a fun and productive way. Keep trivia or "Would you Rather" or Red Light/Green Light type of games in mind.

**6. Dress the part.** Make sure that you are in comfortable clothes that are made for active movement and you can get dirty. If you are a storyteller, consider dressing in character. All other leaders and helpers should consider dressing in "gardening duds" - Overalls, garden aprons, straw hats etc.

**7. Be rooted in your Baptism.** Make sure to interact with all adults and children in a way that follows the apostles' teachings, humbly repents of mistakes, proclaims by word and example the Good News of God in Christ, strives for justice and peace among all people, respects the dignity of everyone, and seeks and serves Christ in all persons, all with God's help.

**8. Pray.** Before and after each session, leaders and volunteers should gather for prayer. (You may want to use Prayer 46, pg 829 for your opening prayer and a prayer of Thanksgiving after your closing.) You may also want to divide up the names of your children and pray for them individually.

**9. Be aware of age level needs.** With younger children, activities need to be hands-on, concrete, short, and simple. Older children love to talk and are processing and questioning information.

**10. Call out the good!** Children generally rise to the level expected of them, so call out to their better natures. Verbalize that you believe that they are capable of learning, listening, and engaging.

**14. Be prepared.** Read through your lessons, any training information, ask questions if you are unclear, and prepare materials for which you are responsible ahead of time.

**15. Work together.** Do not speak negatively around children regarding other leaders, the programs, or other children or church members. At all times try and keep a positive attitude.

**16. Remember to take bathroom breaks.** The younger the child, the more important this is!

# Communication Strategies

Clearly communicating the fun that children and volunteers will have at **The Abundant Life Garden Project**® offered by Episcopal Relief & Development should be an essential part of your planning strategy. Here are a few tips to help you get started.

- **Early and Often:** Begin communicating registration for children and volunteers early - at least 8 weeks out. Repeat your communication efforts weekly until the last four weeks, then go to twice weekly. This can be via Social Media, Church Newsletter, Email Blast etc.
- **Tell the kids:** Make sure to message the kids as well as adults. Talk about the class with kids during Sunday School, Children's Chapel, Youth Groups and one on one.
- **Avoid too much paper passing:** When possible use digital reminder options. BUT make sure to include the announcement in your church bulletin or other weekly information update.
- **Group texts:** Send parents and volunteers starting date reminders.
- **Word of mouth is key:** Ask everyone who is participating to tell five people about ALG!
- **Go Local:** Local papers, online groups, and boosted Facebook posts are helpful when inviting the larger community.
- **Tag, Your It!** Invite members to promote activities on their own social media accounts, making sure to tag the Church.
- **#AbundantLifeGarden:** Establish social media tags that your members can use and share.
- **Online Registration:** Google Forms or other programs are available to create easy to use online registrations. If possible, set up a computer or iPad station in the church lobby or outside Sunday School classrooms to help register kids on Sundays.
- **Your Website!** Remember to use church website to clearly and cohesively post registration, information, forms, contact numbers.

Thanks to experts Emily Slitcher Given and Lisa Brown for the use of these great tips. More of their tips can be found on their webinar at <https://www.buildfaith.org/webinar-vbs-2017/>

## Safe Church

Please follow your churches Safe Church plan when hosting your class. If you need additional information on how to create a Safe Church plan we recommend beginning with this article <https://www.buildfaith.org/how-to-practice-safe-church-for-vbs-and-summer-programs/> and following through with the Safeguarding Online courses.

## Volunteers

Finding and training volunteers can feel like a full-time task if you are not prepared. We have gathered a list of wonderful articles that can help you prepare for both recruiting and training your staff.



### **Recruiting Volunteers by Building Faith**

<https://www.buildfaith.org/how-to-get-church-volunteers-stop-recruiting-them/>

**Training Teens to Help** by Lisa Brown <https://www.buildfaith.org/training-teens-vbs/>