

The Abundant Life Garden Project®

Cynthia Coe and Jerusalem Jackson Greer - Curriculum Designers, The Rev. Jay Sidebotham - Illustrator



The Abundant Life Garden Project®

offered by Episcopal Relief & Development

ANIMALS

GARDEN GOALS

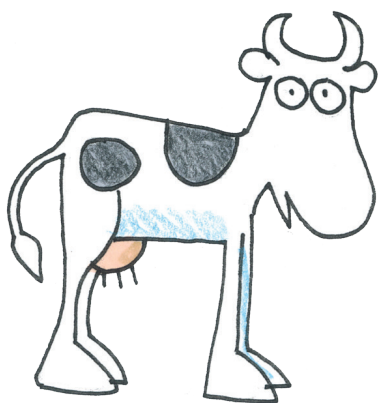
In this fourth lesson, children will recall or be introduced to images of animals in the Bible, in the Book of Common Prayer and on our farms and gardens. This lesson will provide children with experiential learning in receiving gifts of animals and in exploring the uses of animals in enabling families to better feed themselves and others, thereby helping to heal a hurting world. Motivate children to be a part of seeking and serving Christ in others through the gift of farm animals.

GARDEN FACILITATOR CHECKLIST

- ☐ Review lesson
- ☐ Choose options from each section
- ☐ Gather materials needed for each section
- ☐ Print Lessons, Printables and Home Life Handouts
- ☐ Set up classroom - *Will you be learning as a whole class or being using the Growing Station Rotation* set-up?*

*Growing Station Rotation

Some classes respond better to a learning center style of teaching, and some do better with whole-class learning, and some teachers feel more effective in one vs. the other. These lessons can easily be taught in either style and we hope that you will choose the one that best suits your instructors and children. The **Listen** and **Do** portions of each lesson can easily be set up as learning stations.



Understanding the Lesson | Teachers

This week's interactive, Scripture-based module will introduce you and your class to the work of Episcopal Relief & Development in the area of animals.

Talking about animals with children can be fun. Children's art and literature are filled with cute images of piglets, ducks, fuzzy yellow chicks, lambs, and goats. This module, based on the role of animals in human life, will likewise be fun. Images provided in Episcopal Relief & Development's Gifts for Life catalog will undoubtedly evoke smiles and exclamations of "How cute!" Discussion of the role of animals in fertilizing soil with manure will surely evoke smirks and giggles. The role of animals in contributing to human life is nonetheless a serious one. Animals play a vital role in transferring light from the sun into food consumed by humans. Plants, through the process of photosynthesis, use the sun's energy to convert inorganic compounds to rich organic material. Animals then eat these plants and "convert" them to nutrient-rich manure. This manure provides excellent organic fertilizer to the soil and enables the soil to retain more water and nutrients. Earthworms then play their part in the creation of fertile soil by mixing organic material into the soil, breaking down rocky material into new soil and opening the soil structure for aeration and drainage.

Many other animals also play vital roles in the human food supply. Bees and other insects play a vital role in human food production through pollination of flowering and seed-producing plants, such as the fruits and vegetables we eat. Animals such as horses, donkeys and oxen work very hard in many parts of the world to plow the earth, run machinery and haul supplies to farms and produce to market. Animals provide important sources of protein to humans through milk, cheese, and eggs. Meat is also an important contribution of animals, though this curriculum will focus on non-sacrificial elements of animal life.

Many young children may be disturbed by images of butchery involved in meat production, so we highly recommend focusing on dairy products and other "vegetarian" aspects of animals' gifts to us. Older children may bring up the topic of meat; we recommend acknowledging but not dwelling on this topic if it is brought up in your group. Adults using these materials might, however, consider the sacrificial element of farm animals as symbols of the sacrificial life of Christ. Images of Christ as a "sacrificial lamb" abound in the New Testament, as do the images of animals as symbols of sacrifice to God in the Old Testament. The idea of taking a valuable source of life and giving it wholeheartedly to God is an ancient and enduring image in Christian theology. In our sacrament of Holy Eucharist itself, we see the image of Jesus Christ offering himself as a sacrifice to God for our sake. As well, we seek through the Baptismal Covenant to serve Christ in all persons with love, often sacrificing our own needs and desires for the benefit of others.

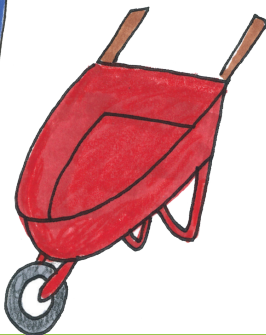
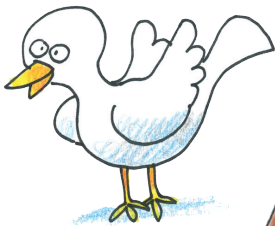
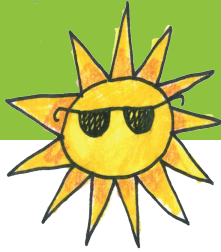
Many animals do give their lives to provide meat, protein and life to those of us who eat meat. As we drink milk, eat eggs, wear wool socks, snuggle under a down comforter or even eat a hamburger, we might consider the life-giving sacrifice of animals in our lives and see them as examples of energy, labor and life itself given for the benefit of others.

Though we might not be called upon to literally give our lives for others, we can nonetheless serve as vessels for the transfer of Christ's light to others, just as animals transfer sunlight to new plant growth and new life. Like these vessels, we might take the light of Jesus' teachings into our own lives, digest it, produce fertile soil in which the work of the Holy Spirit might flourish, seen or unseen... and ultimately produce new growth and new life, both literally and figuratively, in ourselves and others.

We hope this lesson will be enjoyable and enriching for those taking part in this program.

Rhythm of Learning

The rhythm of learning for these lessons is based upon the same structure as a Eucharist service, following a simple **Gather, Listen, Do, Go** format. You may do as much or as little from each section as you feel is best for your class.



Gather

This section includes welcoming activities and the lessons introduction.

Listen

This section includes multiple storytelling options. Please choose one **"Story from the Field"** and one **"Story from our Faith"** to share. If you have a large group and enough volunteer leaders you may want to split into small Learning Pods and assign each pod a separate story to reflect on, then have each pod share with the larger group what they discovered.

Do

This section includes three activities to help children respond to what they have heard in the stories, and dig deeper into the lessons topic. Depending on your time frame and class size you can choose to do one or all three. For larger groups you may want to set up each activity as a Growing Station and have children rotate through in their Learning Pods.

Go

This section prepares children for taking what they have learned back into their everyday lives through prayer and a charge to action.

Stocking the Tool Shed

These are the common items you will need each week:

- A large blank writing surface (paper, poster boards or fabric)
- Garden Journals
- Each participant (if possible) should have a simple journal to use throughout the program. We recommend something similar to these: https://www.amazon.com/Kraft-Notebook-Inches-Notebooks-Journals/dp/B06XS9WXWQ/ref=sr_1_12?ie=UTF8&qid=1510090284&sr=8-12&keywords=kraft+paper+notebook
- Or a supply of all-purpose blank white paper (enough for each child to have three to five sheets)
- A plentiful supply of crayons, washable markers or colored pencils (at least three to five writing instruments of various colors recommended for each child)
- At least one Bible (two or more copies preferable)
- At least one *Book of Common Prayer* or access to the BCP online
- Any printables needed for this lesson
- Television or screen if you will be watching the Digital Story options.





The Abundant Life Garden Project®

Gather

SUPPLIES NEEDED

Garden Tri Fold display board with the water, soil, and seed layers firmly glued in place. Construction paper in a variety of colors. Markers, crayons, or coloring pencils. Glue sticks. Large bowl of animal feed.



Welcome Activity:

What animals help us live and grow?

As children arrive, offer them their choice of writing utensils and a half sheet of construction paper. Ask them to draw pictures of their favorite farm animals. Encourage them to also create shelters, as well as feed and water containers, for their animals. Have them glue their animals and shelter items on the right and left sides of your tri-fold board (you will want to leave the middle section free for the final weeks HARVEST lesson.)

Early Finishers: Children who finish before the others and need their attention redirected may work on the Animals coloring sheet provided in the *Printables Packet*.



Place the large bowl of animal feed in the middle of your circle.

Opening Prayer:

Leader: As you may have guessed, today's lesson is going to be all about the gift of farm Animals! Let's begin our lesson for asking for God's presence to be with us as we learn and explore this gift.

The leader then dips their hands into the soil. Letting the dirt fall through their fingers, back into the bowl, and invites the children to do so as well.

Leader: The Lord be with you!

Children and helpers: And also with you!

Leader: Please repeat this prayer and these motions after me.

May God be in my mind (using your right hand, touch middle of forehead)

May Jesus be in my heart (using your right hand touch middle of chest))

May the Holy Spirit be by my side (using your right hand first touch the left shoulder, then the right shoulder.)

Amen!



The Abundant Life Garden Project®

Gather

Theme Introduction:

WEEK FOUR

Welcome to the Abundant Life Garden Project®

offered by Episcopal Relief & Development.

*Can someone remind
us all what it means to
have abundant life?*

*Who gives us the gifts
we need to live an
abundant life? (God!)*

*What is one thing you
remember from our
lesson on Water?*

*What are some examples
of how water helps us and
others to live abundantly?*

Baptism, Keeps us alive, Waters
crops.

What is something that you remember about how Soil helps us and others to live abundantly?

We can plant food in it, it helps the ecosystem and is a home to bugs and creepy crawlers, represents Growth.

What is the soil of our lives? (Our hearts!)

Okay, now what do you remember about Seeds?

Seeds turn into plants that we can eat, seeds are also food for birds and insects.

What is something that we need to plant and tend to in our lives?

God's love, participating in worship, following God's instructions etc.

Let's listen to some stories from people who depend on healthy farm animals!

INDEX CARDS:

Farm Animal Facts

If you have good readers hand out the **Seed Facts** cards from your **Printables Packet**. Ask the kids to read them one at a time, out loud. If you do not have good readers, you can share the following facts yourself:

- The Chinese were the first to raise wild pigs for food.
- There are three types of bees in the hive – Queen, Worker and Drone.
- Cows spend 8 hours per day eating, 8 hours chewing her cud (regurgitated, partially digested food), and 8 hours sleeping.
- Honey bees fly at 15 miles per hour.
- Honey bees' wings stroke 11,400 times per minute, thus making their distinctive buzz.
- To make a dozen eggs, a hen has to have about four pounds of feed.
- Goat meat is the most consumed meat per capita worldwide.
- Cows have a single stomach, but four different digestive compartments
- Pigs are extremely social animals. They form close bonds with other individuals and love close contact and lying down together.
- Goats, being mountain animals, are very good at climbing; they've been known to climb to the tops of trees, or even dams!
- Researchers have found that if you name a cow and treat her as an individual, she will produce almost 500 more pints of milk a year.
- With 25 billion chickens in the world, there are more of them than any other bird species.
- A freshly laid chicken egg is 105 degrees Fahrenheit.
- A pig's snout is an important tool for finding food in the ground and sensing the world around them.
- Goats were one of the first animals to be tamed by humans and were being herded 9,000 years ago.



FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- **Which of these facts most surprise you?**
- **What do you think it is about Farm Animals that has to do with having or sharing abundant life?**



The Abundant Life Garden Project®

Listen

SUPPLIES NEEDED

Stories from the Field Booklet or a way to show the digital options, pens, coloring pencils, crayons, and Garden Journals



Stories from the Field

After children have had a few minutes to share any thoughts about seeds, share one of the Stories from the Field options, **Choose one** from either Hard Copy or Digital.



Hard Copy Option 1: *Hatching a Better Profit*

You might have older children or youth who are good readers take turns reading the paragraphs of this brief true story.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- *What gifts were Rhada and Rupchard given?*
- *How did this gift provide a gift to others, too?*
- *What could you do to help others through the gift of animals?*

Dig Deeper: Using your *Garden Journal*, Draw a picture, write or cut images from the *Gifts for Life*® catalog to respond to these questions.

Hard Copy Option 2: *Raising Buffalo, Growing Wealth*

The Church of the Province of Myanmar (recommended for older children only).

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- *After suffering a loss in her family, how did Nam hope to rebuild her life?*
- *What did she need to help her?*
- *How could others be helped as Nam was helped?*

Dig Deeper: Using your *Garden Journal*, Draw a picture, write or cut images from the *Gifts for Life*® catalog to respond to these questions.

Digital Option 1: *Raising Goats in the Philippines*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEz8iro1O-A&lr=1&uid=9H4DbjpjmVd3l-le--txDg>

Digital Option 2: *Beekeeping in Kenya*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBIWT7tok7M&lr=1&uid=9H4DbjpjmVd3l-le--txDg>

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- *What would people need to know before they cared for the animals shown in the film?*
- *What other materials or equipment would they need to effectively care for the animals?*
- *How did the gift of these animals benefit the whole community?*





The Abundant Life Garden Project®

Listen

SUPPLIES NEEDED

Bible, Book of Common Prayer, Blank Paper or Garden Journals, Markers



Stories from our Faith

Leader: We are now going to make the connection between what we have seen through the work of Episcopal Relief and Development, and our faith. Pick **one** of the following to share:

Old Testament Study:

Moses the Shepherd

Read Exodus 3:1-10. Younger children might read Exodus 3:1-2, 7 and 10 only, with the help of an adult. Older children also might read Exodus 2:15-25 for the story of how Moses became a shepherd.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- **What did Moses do to support himself after he fled Egypt?**
- **What would he have to know to do this job?**
- **How was Moses later a shepherd of people?**
- **How are we part of a “flock”? Who are our “shepherds”?**

New Testament Study:

Finding Lost Sheep

Read Luke 15:4-6

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- **In our world today, who might Jesus see as the “lost sheep”?**
- **Who do you see as “lost sheep”?**
- **How could you rejoice with your friends and neighbors for “lost sheep” who are found?**

Draw a picture or write about your responses to these questions in your Garden Journal.

Book of Common Prayer Study

Lamb of God

Using a **Book of Common Prayer**, find “Holy Eucharist: Rite Two” (page 355). Turning to the second page of this liturgy (page 356), find the words “**Lamb of God.**”

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- **Who is the “Lamb of God”?**
- **How might the sins of the world be taken away?**
- **In what ways does this Lamb of God receive our prayers?**

Draw a picture or write about your responses to these questions in your Garden Journal.



The Abundant Life Garden Project®

Do

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- Several copies of *Gift for Life*® catalogs,
- 10-20 sheets of cardstock, (any color),
- Scissors, glue sticks



Learning Activity:

Gifts for Life®

The group work for this unit is an experiential exercise in using “gifts for life”—gifts of animals that help people live better lives. Using photos from Episcopal Relief & Development *Gifts for Life*® catalog (print copy preferred; online photos are also available for printing and use with this curriculum), children will be asked to think about what they might do with these living gifts.

How did it feel to receive your gift?

*What will you feed it,
and where will you keep it?*

*How could you make money or produce food
to support your family with this gift?*

*What additional supplies, tools or equipment
might you need to make wise use of this gift?*

How could you obtain these additional supplies?

If you received more than one animal, how do you feel?

If you received only one animal, tell us about how you feel?

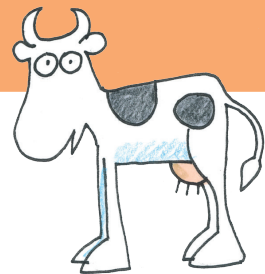
Does this help you understand the experiences of the people from our stories today?

Why do you think it is important to God to help others be successful in raising animals?

In what ways could you help to do something that seems small but could grow into something huge?

Directions:

1. Have children cut- out photos of animals featured in the current *Gifts for Life*® catalog (if you cannot get the hard copies, you can print them online at www.episcopalrelief.org/GiftsforLife or in print copies using this link: www.episcopalmarketplace.org/Products/Episcopal-Relief-Development)
2. Have children glue each individual animal onto a piece of cardstock.
3. Once everyone is finished, collect all the animal cards and mix them up.
4. Next hand out the animal cards back to the children, randomly giving some more than others.



This discussion might proceed as long as enthusiasm, energy and time constraints allow. Older children might list plans or respond to the questions on blank paper or chalk/dry erase boards. As in the previous group exercises, there are no particular “right” and “wrong” answers. The point of this exercise is to ask children to step into the roles of those who raise farm animals for their livelihood and sustenance, and to appreciate the real-world challenges of this vital work.



The Abundant Life Garden Project®

Do

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- 16 Ounces of Heavy Cream warmed to room temperature (this is an important detail)
- 14 Marbles
- 13 Pint size Mason Jars
- Several cold stainless bowls (plastic bowls are okay, but stainless is best)
- Snack size resealable plastic bag
- Table Salt
- Butter knives (or plastic knives)
- Bread or Crackers



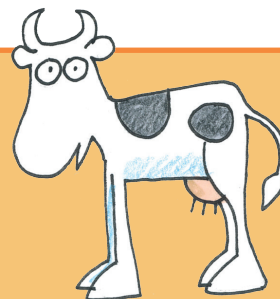
Creative Activity:

Butter Me Up

Leader: Cows are one of the gifts that you can give through Episcopal Relief and Development's Gifts for Life program. A milk-producing cow will not only supply nourishment, including much-needed protein and vitamins for families, it will enable those same families to sell surplus milk and milk based products in the marketplace and better provide for their children. One of the things you can make from milk is butter! Who likes butter? Well today, we are all going to learn how anyone with access to fresh cream and a jar can make butter!

Directions:

1. Have all kids wash hands thoroughly.
2. Divide the cream between the two mason jars, filling them ideally no more than 1/3 of the way full.
3. Add two marbles to each jar.
4. Began to shake. And shake. And shake. Have kids take turns shaking. Let leaders and volunteers take turns as well.
5. Keep shaking. Eventually you will hear sloshing and feel something banging on the sides of the jar. This means you have buttermilk and a ball of butter in your jar.
6. Skim or strain off the buttermilk into the third Mason jar. (You can save it to use in baking later!) At this point the butter is actually fine to eat.
7. You can finish by having the kids add a sprinkle of salt on to each ball and spread a small amount on bread or crackers.
8. If you want to go a bit further, dump the butter balls into the chilled bowls and have kids take turns kneading the butter until all the buttermilk is out.
9. Sprinkle with salt and knead once more.
10. Let kids taste a small amount of butter.
11. Divide remaining butter into snack bags to send home and remind them to give thanks every time they eat butter for the gifts of abundant life!





Do

Contemplative Activity: Meditation



Begin by asking the children to sit “crisscross applesauce” or to lie flat on their backs, next, ask them to take three deep breaths and then, if they comfortable, to rest their hands on their stomachs and to close their eyes. The leader should close their eyes and take deep breaths, in order to model silent meditation for the children.

Next, ask them to listen closely with their imaginations as you read:

Ask the children to take a moment to reflect on the parable just read, then ask the following questions:

What does it mean to be a good shepherd?

How might we listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd?

How could we all become one flock?

Listen to the word of Jesus:

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

John 10:14-16

Repeat the first two steps. Have the children assume their meditation position, and ask them to listen once again to the passage of scripture. After a minute or more, the leader might ask children to share any thoughts they have. Some of these thoughts will be quite profound. Others might be silly. Some children might not want to share their thoughts at all. All these reactions are perfectly okay, and children should not be forced or pushed to say anything.

Finish this time by having asking the children to open their hands, palms facing up, and to repeat this prayer after you:

May I know the love of Jesus in my heart.

May I plant the love of Jesus in the world.

May I grow the love of Jesus in my home.

Amen.

For tips and information on the importance of silent time with God and how to lead children in meditation, please see **Abundant Life Garden Project® Facilitators Guide** as offered by Episcopal Relief & Development.



The Abundant Life Garden Project®

Do

Interactive and Intergenerational Activity:

Local Garden

If you have a local garden in your church or neighborhood, here are three interactive and intergenerational activity options:

1

Work with your garden coordinator to determine if this is a good time to fertilize the soil. If so, see if you can find a local gardener or farmer to bring in compost, worm compost or worm “tea”, or manure. Ask the farmer or garden coordinator to explain the importance of Animals in the fertilization process. Then get to work fertilizing the soil!

While you work ask the children: Sometimes we make mistakes or bad choices, but God always forgives us. Sometimes the lessons we learn from those mistakes lead to good growth in our lives. Just like the manure leads to good plants. **What is one mistake you have made that you learned a good lesson from? How has that lesson helped you?**

Intergenerational connection: Invite members of your church who work with the incarcerated or recovery groups to join you for this activity. Ask them to share about the work they do for Christ.



2



Invite some furry and feathered friends for a visit. **Is there a member of your church who has chickens or ducks that they can bring for a show-and-tell? Maybe someone with pygmy goats?** See if you can coordinate a visit of these creatures to your class. Have their owner's share how they care for and feed their animals. If they have chickens or milk goats, do their share their eggs or milk with others? Allow the children to ask questions of the owners.

Pray this prayer over the animals:

Thank you God for the gift of animals and the happiness they give us. Help us to protect them from harm as Noah did and care for them with love like St. Francis. Everytime we see an animal that you have created, help us to give thanks for your holy creative nature. In the name of the Father (who thought up the giraffe and the zebra) and of the Son (who was named after the beautiful white Lamb) and the Holy Spirit (who came to us as a Dove) Amen

Intergenerational connection: Invite members of the congregation who work with animals - veterinarians, vet assistance, ranches, farmers, animal groomers, and animal shelter workers. Ask them to share with the kids why they do their work, and how they see their work as part of caring for creation.

3

Bees are another great animal that benefit the garden. Contact your local Beekeeping Association about having a local beekeeper come and teach the children about the importance of bees in the garden. Additionally you might consider making a Mason Bee Habitat out of bamboo for your community garden similar to the one found here: <https://www.naturalbeachliving.com/mason-bee-habitat/>

While you work ask the children: Bees are very busy, always working to make sure that they are doing their job of pollination.

What work has Christ called us to do? (love others, care for creation, share)

Intergenerational connection: This would be a great time to invite some of your older seniors to join in the learning fun. Ask them to share stories of their encounters with bees.





Do



Connecting the Lesson

Leader: All farmers have certain practices that they must follow in order to help raise and care for their livestock, fowl, bees, or worms. This is part of what Episcopal Relief and Development does - they help farmers learn new and sustainable ways to care for their animals in order that they can provide milk, eggs, cheese, honey, compost, and meat for their families and the marketplace.



I wonder what practices we can do to make sure that the seeds of abundant life are planted in the soil of our hearts and the hearts of others?

I wonder what practices we can do to make sure that we are caring for creation the same way that farmers care for their animals?

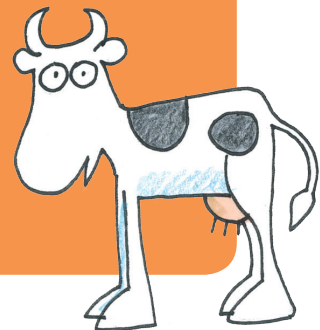
What choices can we make to help care for the environment and all of creation?

Ideas: recycle, eat locally grown or raised food, don't litter, make sure animals in our homes and neighborhoods are well cared for, compost, watch our water and electricity use - turn off lights when you leave the room, don't leave the water running when brushing your teeth.

What are some of the practices we learn at church that can help us care for creation?

Ideas: we pray for farmers, for the earth, for creation. We give offerings to groups like Episcopal Relief and Development who are providing animals to families in need.

Ask kids to choose one way that they are going to take care of creation in the coming months. Next, have them write or draw their plans for making their goal a reality. If you would like to go a little deeper, ask them to work together to write a prayer of thanksgiving for the gifts that animals provide for humans.





Do

Closing Reflection

Ask children and adult or youth helpers and leaders to form a circle again around the bowl of animal feed. Pass out one animal card to each child. Ask your group to take a few deep breaths, hold the photos of animals given them, and think about what they saw, heard or experienced during their time today. Ask the class:

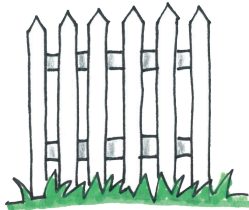
What did you learn during our time together?

Do you think about anything differently now?

What might change in your life as a result of this time together?

How will you share the gift of abundant life this week?

Songs may be sung here. If you have older children, the Litany of Thanks may be used here (Available as a separate download)



Home Activity

Send the Abundant Life Garden Project® Handout *Great and Small* home with the children, either by hardcopy, or by sending the project home digitally.

Additional Resources

Songs

God's Got the Whole World in God's Hands
(insert Farm Animals for the verses)

All Creatures Great and Small

Old Saint Isidore Had a Farm
(to the tune of Old MacDonald) *St. Isidore*
is one of the patron saint of farmers

Arky Arky

The Doxology

Books

One Hen: How One Small Loan Made a Big Difference
by Katie Smith Milway

Beatrice's Goat by Page McBrier

Milk: From Cow to Carton (Let's-Read-and-Find-Out Book)
by Aliki

Farming by Gail Gibbon

What If There Were No Bees by Suzanne Slade and Carol Schwartz

Prayer:

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of animals in our world. We thank you for the role of animals in fertilizing our soil, in pollinating our plants, and in providing food and drink for us. We pray for those who raise animals to support themselves and their families, and we pray to help give others gifts for life. In Christ's name, Amen

Charge:

Leader: Let us go into the world with grateful hearts, sharing the gifts of abundant life with everyone we meet!

Children: Praise be to God!

