



The Abundant Life Garden Project:
**An interactive Scripture-based instructional program offered to parishes,
teachers, families and others who seek to share the ministry of Episcopal
Relief & Development**

Children's Chapel Edition

Lesson Two—Water

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Text by Cynthia Coe

Gather in the Lord's Name

Children might be asked to sit or stand in a circle. A prayer table might be placed in your worship space, furnished with a clear bowl of water to symbolize the water of Baptism.

(Leader's prayers are **boldface**; children and others' lines are in *italics*.)

Leader: **The Lord be with you!**

Children: *And also with you!*

Leader: **Lord, we thank you for this time together and for the gift of water. Bless us in this time together, and bless those in need of clean and more abundant water. In Christ's name.**

Leader: **Now I will read several prayers about water. Since water is such an important gift, please respond to each of these prayers with, "We thank you, Lord, for the gift of water."**

(The leader might ask children to practice saying, "We thank you, Lord, for the gift of animals," before continuing.)

Litany of Thanks for the Gift of Water

We thank you, Lord, for your creation that gives us life on earth.

We thank you, Lord, for the gift of water.

We give thanks for rain, snow, fog and dew. We give thanks for water under the ground, above the ground, and in the oceans.

We thank you, Lord, for the gift of water.

We give thanks for vast waters of the oceans, for water in lakes, rivers and streams. We give thanks for waters in glaciers, on the polar caps, for water bubbling out of rocky streams, for aquifers running underneath us and in the tiniest puddles and buckets.

We thank you, Lord, for the gift of water.

We thank you, Lord, for the many uses of water. We give thanks for water to drink, water for cooking, water for bathing and cleaning, water upon and through with we travel to places far and near, and for water that cools us, warms us, and in which we might play.

We thank you, Lord for the gift of water.

We especially thank you, Lord, for the gift of water to grow our food. We ask you to bless us and all people on earth with adequate water to water our farms and gardens, to satisfy the thirst of ourselves and of our animals, and to wash away germs and keep us healthy.

We thank you, Lord, for the gift of water.

We thank you for the stories of water in the Bible – for the story of the creation of the earth, for the story of new life after the earth was flooded, for the story of water saving your people in the desert, for the story of crossing through water to get to the promised land.

We thank you, Lord, for the gift of water.

We thank you Lord, for the water in which Jesus was baptized and for the stories of water during his time on earth. We thank you for the water turned to wine, for the water that quenched his thirst, and for the water made into bread and wine during his Last Supper.

We thank you, Lord, for the gift of water.

We ask your help, O Lord, through all floods, droughts, and storms, to see the new creation that follows each one. We ask you to help us remember that you will be with us always in the gift of water.

Help us to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves. Help us to strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of every human being. In Christ's name, *Amen*.

In Christ's Name, Amen.

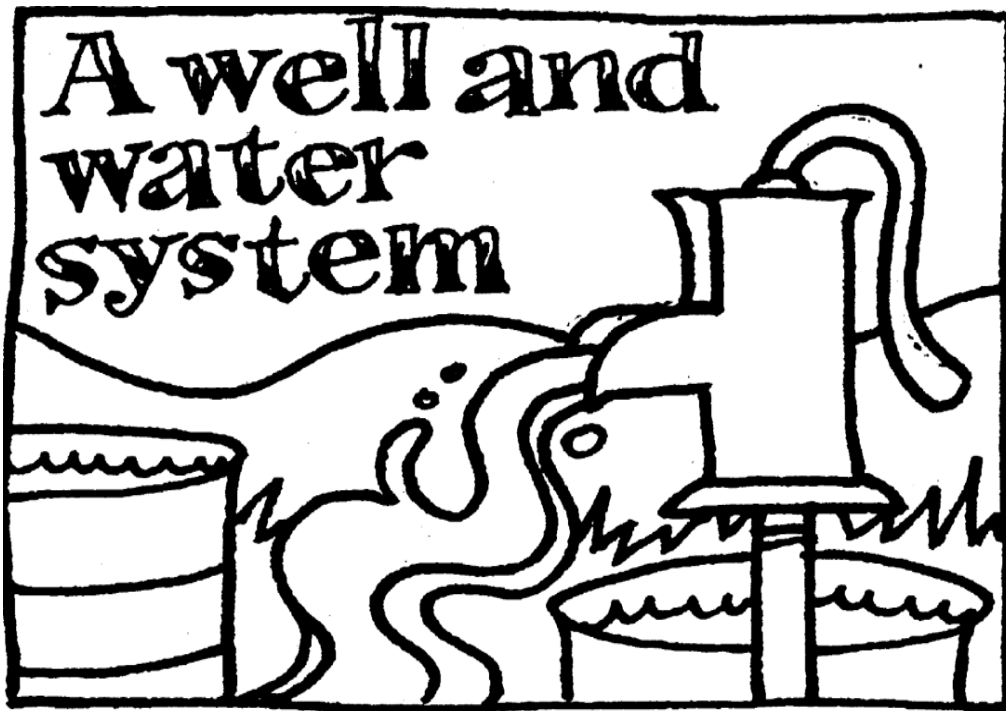
In Christ's Name, *Amen*.

Proclaim and Respond to the Word of God

Listen to this Bible verse:

“Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.”
(a portion of Exodus 17: 6)

This is the story of people who were very thirsty:



The people of Israel, who lived long ago, had been in slavery in Egypt. They had to work and live as the Egyptians told them. They had no freedom. A man named Moses led the people of Israel into freedom. Then, they wandered through the desert. The people became very, very thirsty. They camped in the desert, but there was no water for the people to drink.

The people said to Moses, “give us water to drink.” They were afraid they, their families, and their farm animals would die of thirst.

Moses cried out to the Lord, “what shall I do?” Moses heard the Lord tell him to go out ahead of the people and to take some of their leaders with him. He also heard the Lord tell him to take his shepherd’s staff with him and to strike a rock with this shepherd’s staff. Moses knew that God would be waiting for him, and that he would find water for the people to drink.



Moses did just as he heard the Lord telling him to do, as the leaders of the people watched. They all saw that the Lord was among them.

Even today, people in our world do not have enough clean water to drink and need help to find water. In the village of Lomas de Café, in a country called Nicaragua, Leonardo and Xiomara live with their two small children. There is not much water in this village. A creek once supplied water to families in the village, but the creek dried up.



For six years, people in the village had to carry all of their water for drinking, cooking, cleaning and bathing over a distance of about a mile and a half every single day. It took the people of Lomas de Café nearly all day, every day, just to get water to their homes. The people became very frustrated.

The village leaders got together to find a better way to get clean water. With help from friends in the Episcopal Church, the people in the village were able to dig a well and keep the well water clean. Now, Leonardo and Xiomara's children have time to go to school, and the parents in the village can spend more time earning money to provide food and other necessities to their children. Everyone in the village can be healthier, too, and are less likely to get sick.



Questions for Discussion

- What would it be like to be one of the people in these stories?
- How did God give people water?
- How would it feel to finally get water, if you were one of the people in this story?
- How are the people in the village in Nicaragua like the people in the Bible story?
- How were the village people and their children helped, and why?
- How could we help more people like Leonardo and Xiomara and their children?

Prayers for the People, Prayers for the Passing of the Peace

Leader: Now, we will pray to seek and serve others through the gifts and abundance we enjoy. Please respond to each of these prayers with the words, “We pray to share your peace, dear Lord.”

The Lord be with you!

And also with you!

Help us to remember the stories we have heard today, and help us to remember your Word.

We pray to share your peace, dear Lord.

Help us to bring healing to this hurting world. Help us to act as Jesus to those in need.

We pray to share your peace, dear Lord.

Help us to be the arms and legs of Christ in the world today and every day. Help us to share what we have with others.

We pray to share your peace, dear Lord.

Help us to especially to share your hope, your care of each and every person in this world, and your Kingdom of Heaven, so that all will have abundant life in you.

We pray to share your peace, dear Lord.

We also pray for those in need in our own community. You may name them or pray for them silently, if you wish.

(Please pause so that children and leaders may freely make their own intercessions.)

We pray that you continue to give us the gift of water. We pray that you will quench our thirst, feed our hunger, help us to be clean and healthy, and give us the ability to live, to grow, and to serve and be served by others.

Give all the people in this world, we pray, the gift of clean water, and help us to do our part in serving others through this gift.

In Christ’s Name, *Amen*.

Passing the Peace, Passing Our Gifts

The peace of the Lord be always with you!

And also with you!

(Children should greet each other and their leaders with a handshake or other appropriate gesture.)

One or more songs might be sung. These might include:

- For small children, “Sent by the Lord” (traditional Nicaraguan melody, #79 in *My Heart Sings Out*, ed. Fiona Vidal-White)
- For older children, “Crashing Waters at Creation” (#95 in *My Heart Sings Out*, ed. Fiona Vidal-White)

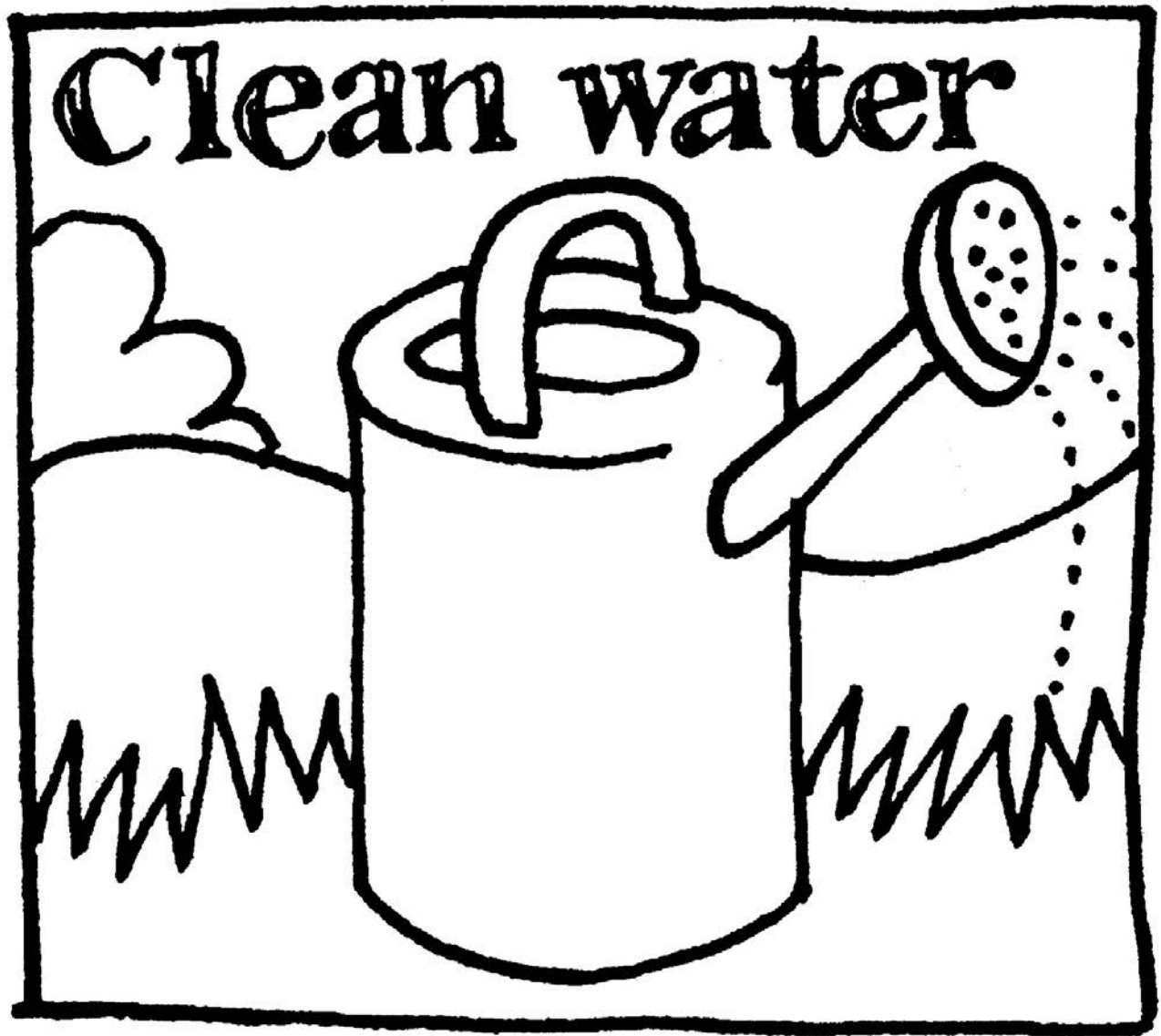
Offertory

If time allows, children might now spend time thinking, acting or planning a response to the scripture, prayers, and story presented. Below are several possible responses.)

- Use the last page of this module as a coloring sheet for young children to color and take home to their parents.
- Draw a picture of how God gives us life through the gift of water.
- Draw pictures to go with the Litany of Thanks for the Gift of Water; display them in your church, school or camp
- Pass out cups of water during your church hospitality hour or other social occasion; let people know how precious water is and that many people in our world today still need clean water
- Do a Water Walk; many people in the world must walk long distances just to get clean water; carry buckets to a water source located 10-15 minutes away, then carry the water back and use it for a good purpose – to water a garden, use for refreshments, or even fill your Baptismal font
- Plan and hold a fundraiser to give the gift of water to those in need. A gift of only \$35 will help provide water, hygiene education and nutrition education to those in need; other gifts might go toward providing a well for an entire village.

Children might share their pictures, ideas, or other gifts by placing them on the altar as they return to the celebration of Holy Eucharist with their families.

This page may be used as a coloring sheet for young children. Please feel free to make copies for children to color and take home to their families.



Artwork Courtesy of The Rev. Jay Sidebotham for Episcopal Relief & Development