



Episcopal
Relief & Development

Healing a hurting world

Abundant Life Garden Project:

parishes, teachers, families and other who seek to share the ministry of Episcopal Relief & Development.

Children's Chapel Edition

Lesson Three—Seeds

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Harvey Wang for Episcopal Relief & Development

Artwork Courtesy of The Rev. Jay Sidebotham for Episcopal Relief & Development
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 an attractive display of a variety of seeds.

(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, creator of all things, we thank you for the gift of this time together, and for the abundant gifts of all varieties of seeds. Bless us in this time together, and bless those in need of seeds to grow food to feed themselves and others. In Christ's name, Amen.**

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

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

Litany of Thanks for the Gift of Seeds

We share this time to remember that is it through the gift of the awesome variety of seeds providing and continuing life that we have life on earth.

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of seeds.

We thank you for the creation of plant life on earth, to give us food, to give us shelter, to give us clothing, and to give us shade, pleasure, and beauty.

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of seeds.

We thank you for wind, rain, animals, and people to send seeds to new lands, to new gardens, and to those who need them to provide new sources of food and sustenance.

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of seeds.

We thank you for the cycle of life, leaving seeds dormant until they might grow and flourish in favorable conditions.

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of seeds.

We thank you for the mystery of seed growth, taking place underground, buried and in the dark, then springing forth in new life.

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of seeds.

We thank you for the stories of seeds told by Jesus, helping us to understand the Kingdom of Heaven.

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of seeds.

We thank you for the spreading of these stories, like seeds blown by the wind, to those who seek to understand you.

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of seeds.

We thank you for all the seeds of growth and life in our lives, helping to begin the cycle of growth and of life in ourselves and others.

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of seeds.

Help us, O Lord, to participate in the sharing and spreading of seeds of hope, of life, and of nourishment so that we may seek to serve others in You.

In Christ's name, Amen.

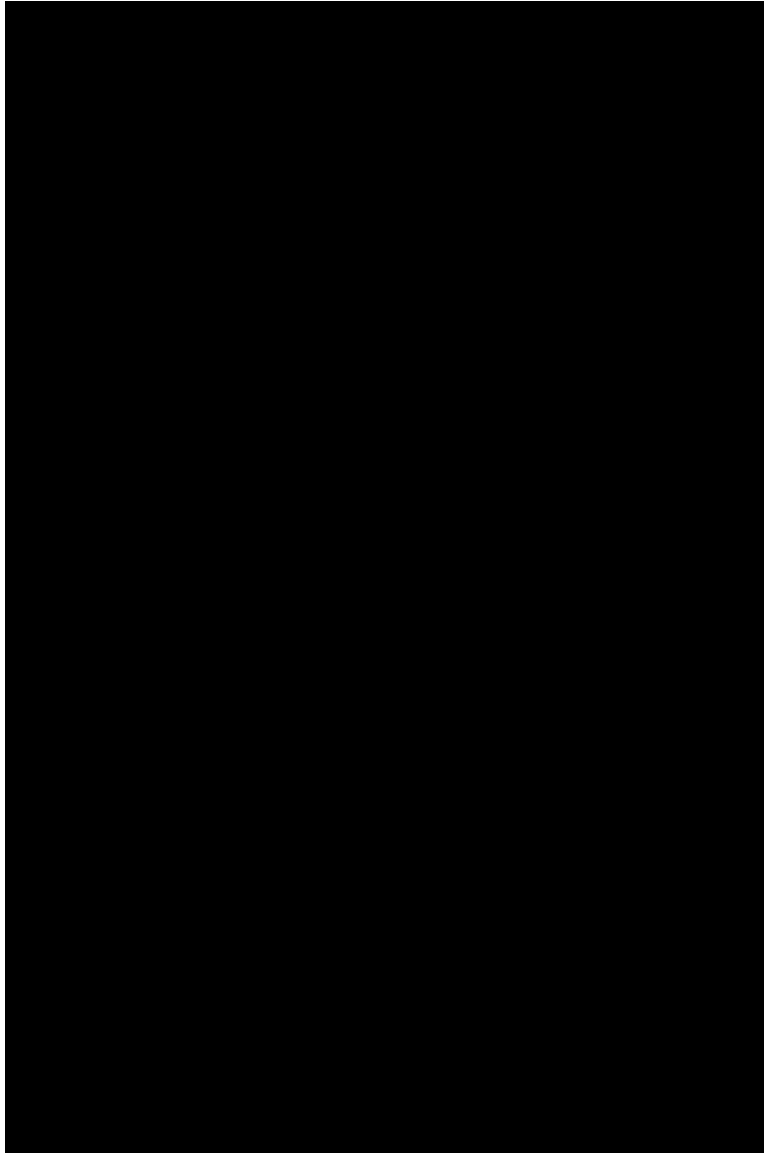


Proclaim and Respond to the Word of God

Leader: Listen to a story told by Jesus....

“The Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

— Matthew 13:31-32

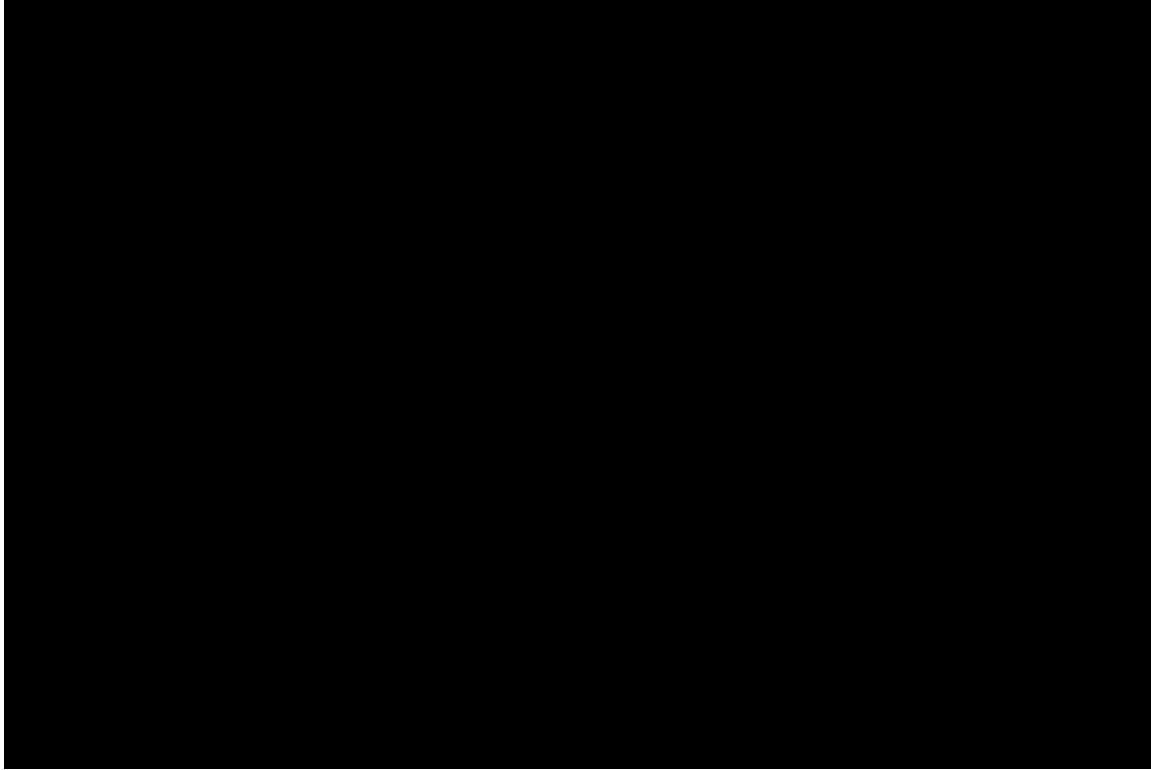


A seed is usually very, very small. Yet it can grow into something large – like watermelons, sunflowers, or oak trees. Seeds can grow into fruits and vegetables to feed us, flowers to make our world more beautiful, and trees to give us wood to build houses, chairs, and tables.

There are other kinds of seeds, too. Beatrice, who lives in Kenya, once got the gift of “seed money.” “Seed money” is a small gift of money you can use to start a business. A person who gets “seed money” might buy real seeds to plant a vegetable garden, cloth to make clothes to sell, or a chicken to lay eggs that can be sold.

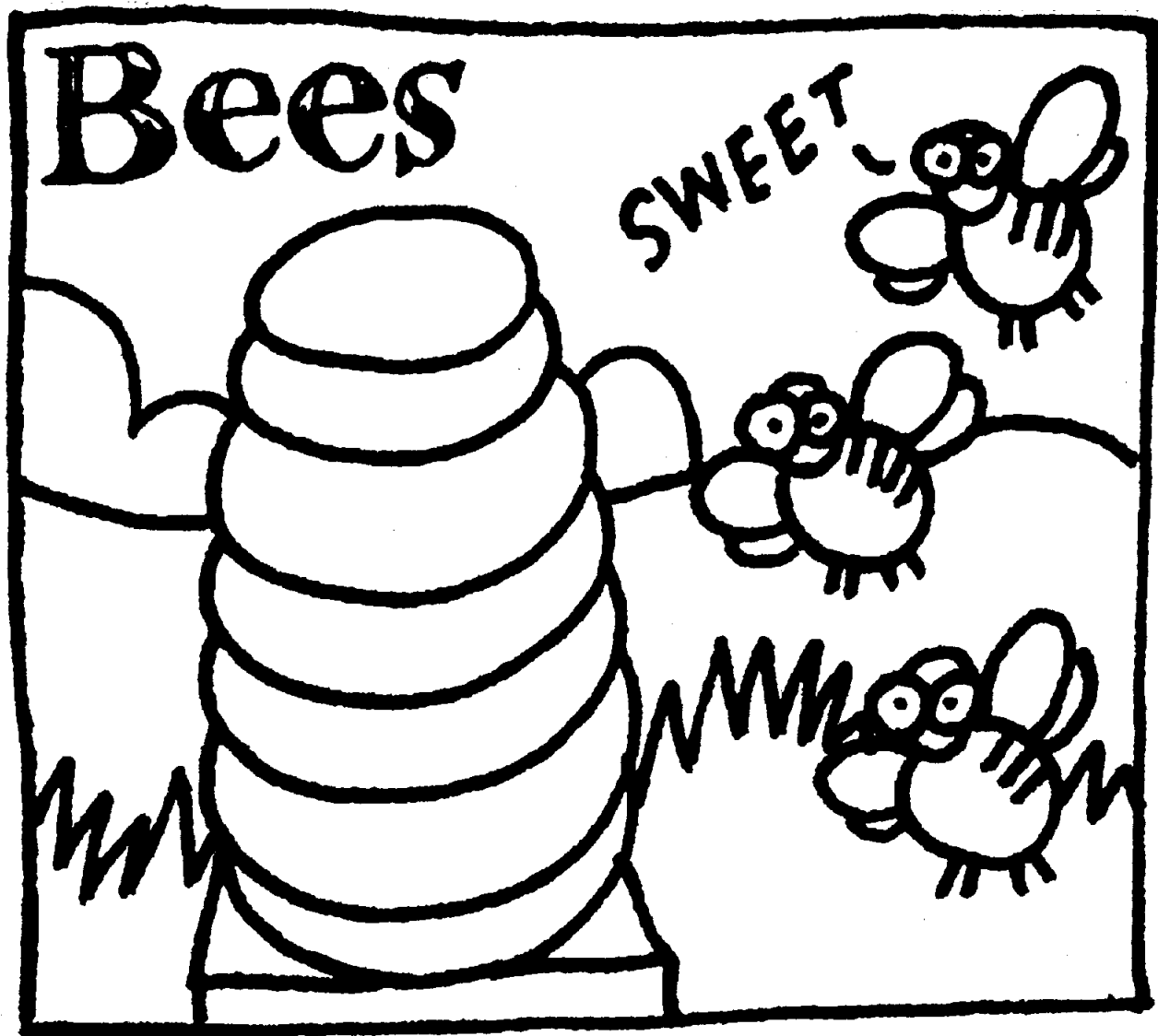


The gift Beatrice received was money to buy sunflower seeds. Beatrice needed to feed and take care of her grandchildren, and she did not have a job or a way to make money. But she did have some land that could be farmed. With her “seed money,” she bought sunflower seeds and started a sunflower farm.



These sunflowers made more and more seeds. Beatrice then bought a machine to press oil out of these new seeds to make vegetable oil for cooking. Now, Beatrice sells this oil and sunflower seeds to her neighbors. She uses the money to buy food for herself and for her grandchildren.

Beatrice also put bee hives near her sunflowers. The bees help the sunflowers grow, and they also make honey for Beatrice to sell. With a little bit of help from friends in the Church who gave her “seed money,” Beatrice can now feed her family and help her grandchildren have a sunny future.



We can also give “seeds” to others that might grow and grow into something wonderful.

Questions for Discussion

- What gifts were Beatrice and her grandchildren given?
- Was the money given to her a kind of seed?
- Was the training to learn about sunflowers and bee hives a kind of seed?
- What could you do to provide “seeds” to others?
- How are you like the mustard seed?
- In what ways could you grow to provide homes and shelter to others?
- In what ways could you help to do something that seems small but could grow into something huge?

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 thank you, Lord, for the gift of seeds. Through the gifts of the amazing variety of seeds on earth, you feed our hunger, give us shelter and clothing, help us to wisely use our soil, and give us beauty and pleasure. Through these gifts, you give us the ability to live, to grow, and to serve and be served by others.

Give all people in this world, we pray, the seeds of hope and nourishment, 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, “In the bulb there is a flower” (#86 in *My Heart Sings Out*, ed. Fiona Vidal-White)
- For older children, “Thank you for the gift of Jesus,” especially verse 3 (#139 in *My Heart Sings Out*, ed. Fiona Vidal-White)

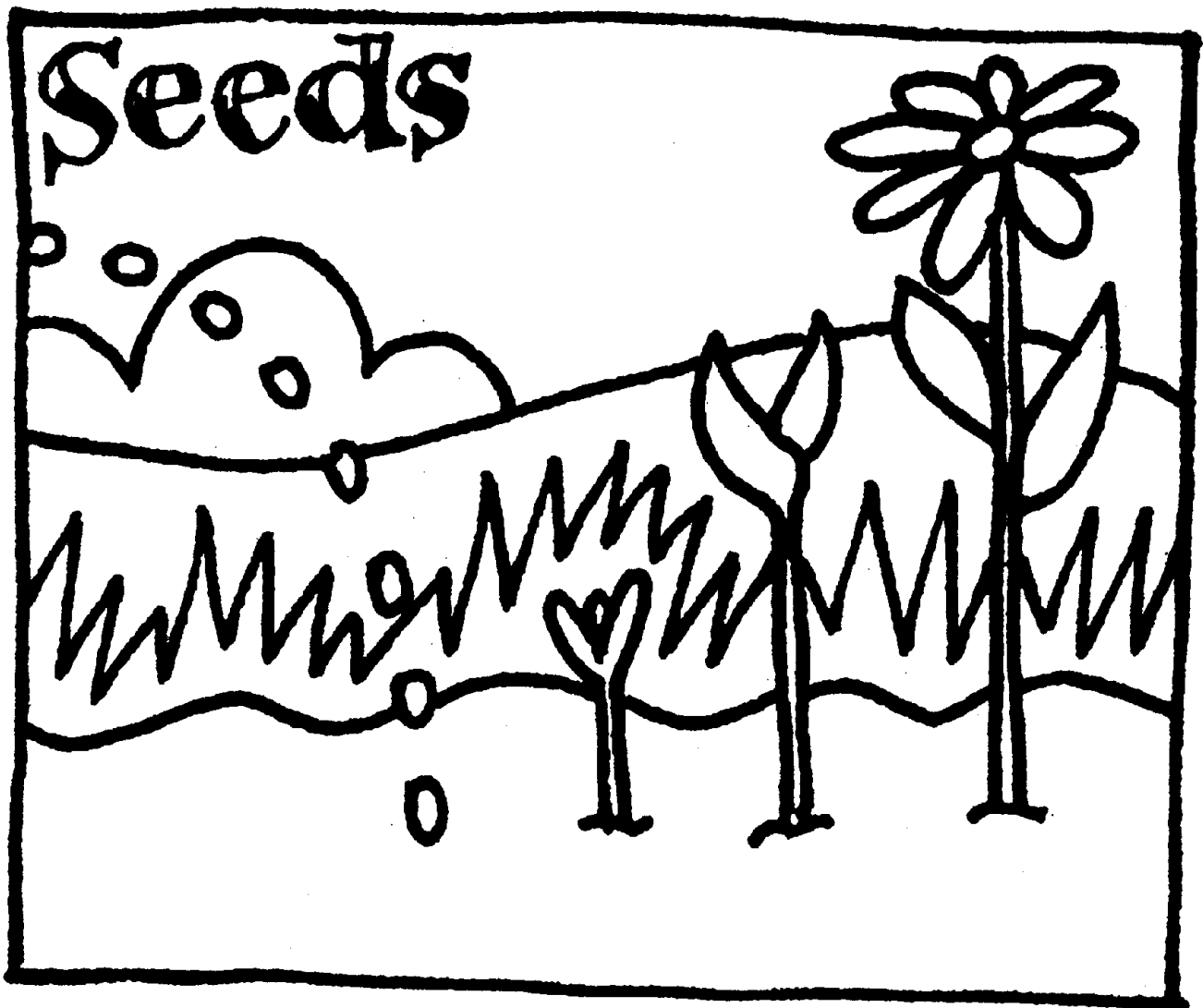
Offertory

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 seeds.
- Draw pictures to go with the Litany of Thanks for the Gift of Seeds; display them in your church, school or camp
- Pass out seed packets to church members, neighbors, or friends so that they might have a gift that will grow into something wonderful. Attach a card letting them know how precious the gift of seeds can be, and how many people in our world could use gifts of seeds of all kinds.
- Plant a community garden. Share your harvest with those who need fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Plan and hold a fundraiser to give the gift of seeds to those in need. A gift of only \$45 will purchase seeds and tools to help those in need, as well as training in their use.

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