



Episcopal  
Relief & Development

Healing a hurting world

**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 Five—Animals

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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 photographs from Episcopal Relief & Development's *Gifts for Life* catalog, found at <http://www.episcopalrelief.org/GiftsforLife/>

(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 animals to feed our hunger, quench our thirst, and help our plants to grow. Bless us in this time together, and bless those in need of farm animals to feed themselves and others. In Christ's name, Amen.**

**Leader: Now, I will read several prayers about animals. Since all kinds of animals are important gifts in the cycle of life, please respond to each of these prayers with, "Thank you, Lord, for the gift of animals."**

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

### Litany of Thanks for Animals in Providing Our Food

**We thank you, Lord, for the gift of animals in our lives. We thank you for cows, pigs, sheep, and goats. We thank you for fish, earthworms, ducks, chickens, and bees.**

*We thank you, Lord, for the gift of animals.*

**We thank you, Lord, for wool and feathers to keep us warm and clothe our bodies. We thank you for milk, cheese, and eggs to help us grow and to keep us healthy. We thank you for horses, donkeys, and oxen that work hard on farms around the world.**

*We thank you, Lord, for the gift of animals.*

**We thank you, Lord, for all animals on earth and for their roles in the cycle of life on our planet.**

*We thank you, Lord, for the gift of animals.*

**We thank you, Lord, for animals that eat plants and fertilize the soil, making it richer and more fertile for new growth and new life.**

*We thank you, Lord, for the gift of animals.*

**We thank you, Lord, for the gift of insects, and especially bees, to pollinate fruit and vegetable plants for us to eat and flowers to give us joy.**

*We thank you, Lord, for the gift of animals.*

**We thank you, Lord, for the gift of those who tend flocks and raise animals to provide food and drink. We thank you for the gift of those in the Bible who cared for animals. We thank you for Noah and his family, Abraham and Sarah and their family, for Moses, and for David. We thank you for the animals that gave life and sustenance to those who came before us.**

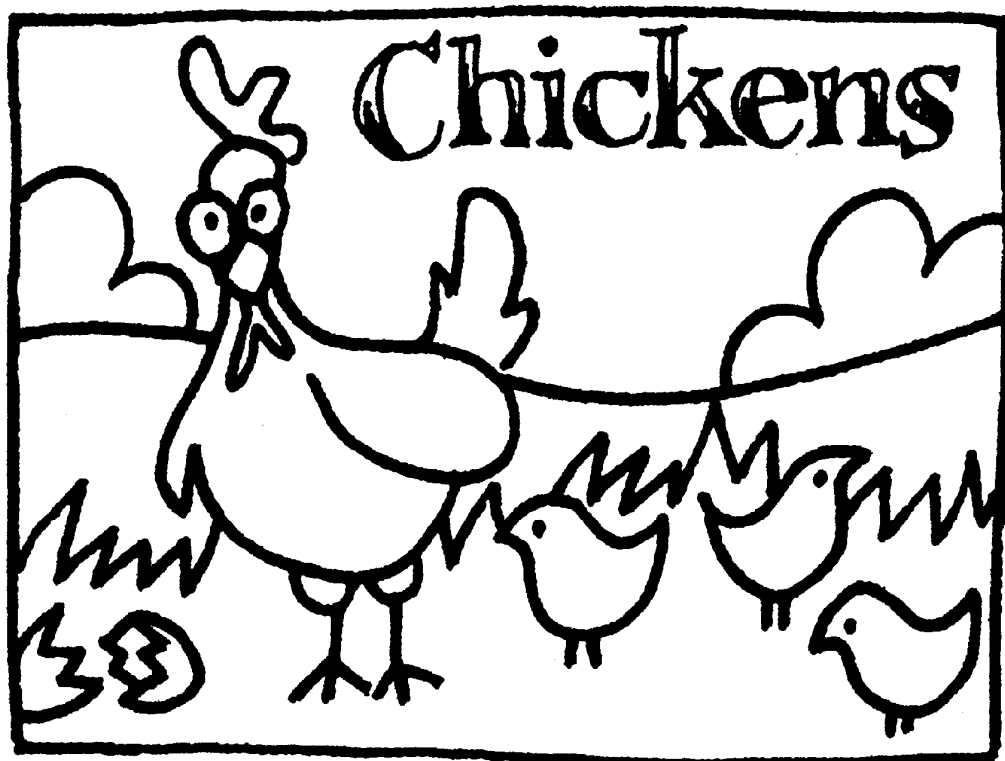
*We thank you, Lord, for the gift of animals.*

**We thank you, Lord, for the donkey that carried Mary to Bethlehem and for the donkey that carried Jesus to Jerusalem. We thank you for the Shepherds who were the first to hear the Good News of Jesus. We thank you for the animals in the barn surrounding Jesus as a newborn baby.**

*We thank you, Lord, for the gift of animals.*

**We thank you, Lord, for being our Good Shepherd, for seeking us when we are lost, for showing us water to quench our thirst, and for leading us to green pastures. Help us to likewise seek those who might be lost and to help lead them as well to clear waters and green pastures.**

**In Christ's name, *Amen*.**



## Proclaim and Respond to the Word of God

Leader: **Listen to the words 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**



We are all one flock. We all need water. We all need food to eat. We all sometimes need help in finding water and food.

In a tiny village in India, a man and woman named Rupchard and Rhada have struggled for years to feed themselves. They have a piece of land, where they have grown vegetables and raised pigs. They have also tried to make money by going fishing. But their work was never enough to support themselves.



Rupchard and Rhada needed help. They were able to borrow a little money from the Church of North India and Episcopal Relief & Development. With this money, they bought baby chicks and chickens. They also bought chicken feed and built a shed to protect the chickens. The chickens laid about 30 eggs a day, and Rupchard and Rhada are able to sell these eggs and make enough money to feed themselves and the chickens, too.



Rupchard and Rhada are like “good shepherds” to their chickens. They make sure their chickens are fed, have a place to live, and they protect their chickens – just like a good shepherd takes care of his sheep.

Jesus is our Good Shepherd, and we are asked to be Jesus' hands and feet in taking care of Jesus' flock. Even if other people live far away, they are still part of our flock. Sometimes we are asked to help others in our flock find food to eat. Sometimes we are asked to help others find clean water to drink. Always, we are asked to take good care of each other, just like a Good Shepherd would take care of his sheep.



By giving the gift of animals, we can take care of others in the human flock who need chickens or ducks to give them eggs, goats or cows to give them milk, and geese or sheep to give them feathers or wool to keep them warm. When we take care of each other, we can all be one flock. We can set up kitchens in schools to feed hungry children two hot, nutritious meals a day.

## Questions for Discussion

- 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?
- What does it mean to be a good shepherd in today's world?
- How might we listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd ourselves?
- How could we all become one flock?

**Special note:** Older children might bring up the use of animals for meat. Please be aware that young children may find this topic distasteful or even disturbing. You might acknowledge the use of animals for meat (e.g., “yes, pigs give meat”) but you may want to redirect the discussion to gifts of milk, eggs, and feathers if there are young children in your group.

## 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 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.**



## 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, “The Lord, the Lord, the Lord is my shepherd (#102 in *My Heart Sings Out*, ed. Fiona Vidal-White)
- For older children, “A new commandment” (#92 in *My Heart Sings Out*, ed. Fiona Vidal-White)

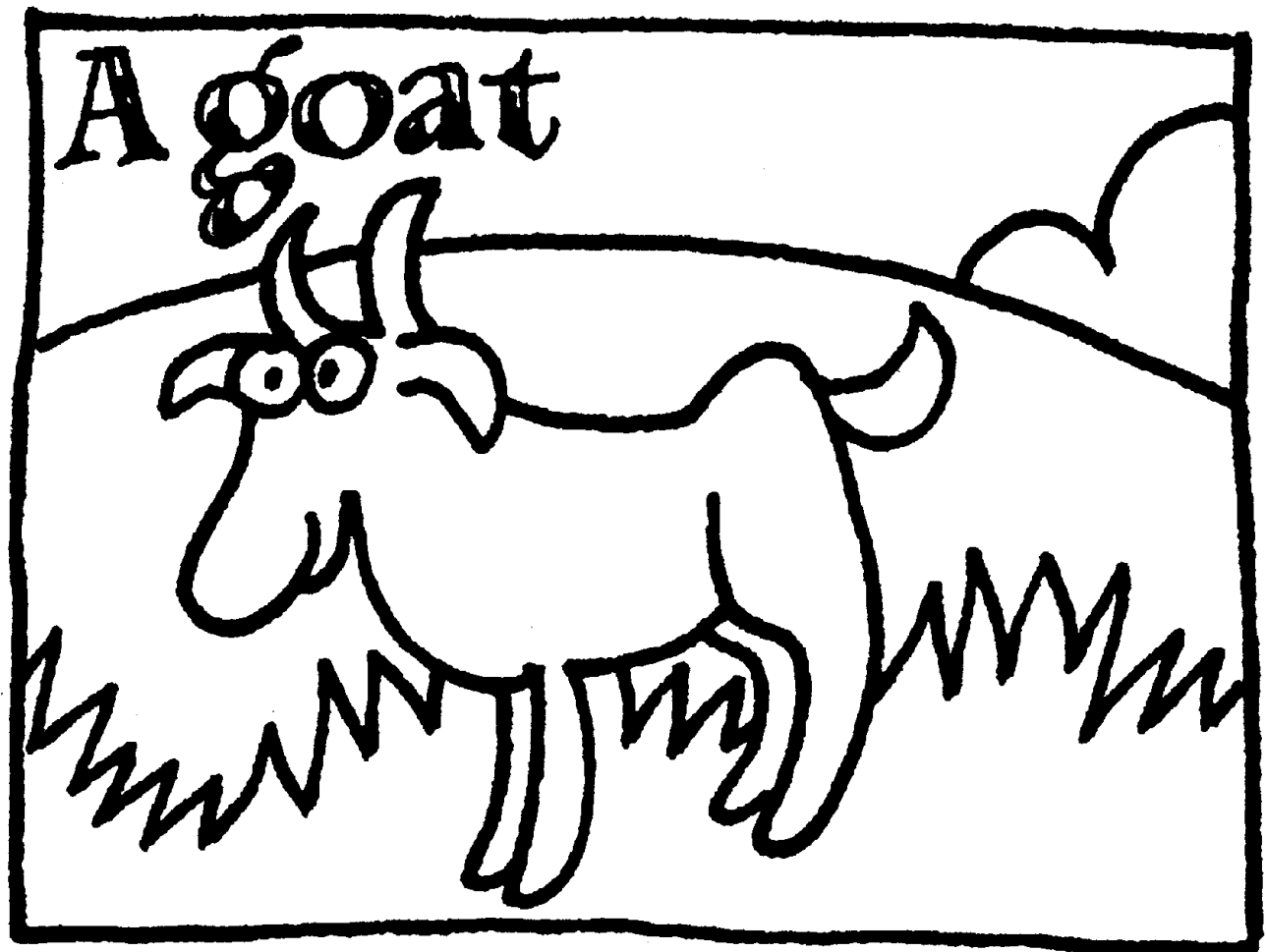
## Offertory

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 animals.
- Draw pictures to go with the Litany of Thanks for the Gift of Animals; display them in your church, school or camp
- Visit a farm and learn about the work of real farmers who tend dairy cattle, goats, or sheep. Ask questions about the amount of work involved in raising animals that give us milk or wool. Find out how real farmers and farm workers live and the challenges they face.
- Celebrate and honor the animals in your life by giving the gift of farm animals to others.
- Plan and hold a fundraiser to give the gift of animals to those in need. A gift of only \$25 will buy a share in a flock of chickens for a family in need. A gift of \$80 will buy a goat, and a gift of \$100 will purchase a pig for a family to raise.

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*