



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 Six—New Life

Copyright 2012 Episcopal Relief & Development. All rights reserved.

A license to print, reproduce, and share these materials is given to those individuals and organizations who wish to use these materials to engage others with the work and mission of Episcopal Relief & Development in healing a hurting world.

Photos Courtesy of Episcopal Relief & Development and
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 a small plant with fresh buds or new growth.

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

Leader: The Lord be with you!

Children: *And also with you!*

Leader: Thank you, Lord, for this time together and for the new life in Jesus Christ you offer us always. Bless us in this time together, and bless those whose lives might be made new in you. In Christ's name, Amen.

Leader: Now, I will read several prayers about new life. Since new life is a gift, please respond to each of these prayers with, "We thank you, Lord, for the gift of new life."

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

Litany of Thanks for the Gift of New Life

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

We share this time together to remember that it is through you, Lord, that we may new life.

We thank you, Lord, for the gift of new life.

We thank you for new beginnings of all kinds. We thank you for the creation of our world and for the continuing creation that takes place each and every day.

We thank you, Lord, for the gift of new life.

We thank you for seeds in the ground, hidden from our view, yet growing in darkness towards the light of the sun. We thank you for the fruitfulness with which these new plants will feed us.

We thank you, Lord, for the gift of new life.

We thank you for baby animals – for baby chickens, ducks and geese, for goat kids and lambs, calves and piglets. We thank you for the gifts they will give us to provide us eggs and milk, feathers to warm us, and fertilizer for our plants. We thank you for the gift of growth in all creatures.

We thank you, Lord, for the gift of new life.

We thank you for the sun and the wind, for soil and water. We thank you for our food and for those who care for us. We thank you for all gifts you give us to help us grow.

We thank you, Lord, for the gift of new life.

We thank you for the gift of Jesus, who was a baby himself and who shows us how to grow through the stories of the Bible.

We thank you, Lord, for the gift of new life.

We thank you for the ability to keep growing every day through the gift of the Holy Spirit, which guides us towards abundant life in you.

We thank you, Lord, for the gift of new life.

Help us to always continue to grow, O Lord, into the people you would have us become. Help us to cherish all the gifts of your creation. Help us to always share our fruitfulness with others.

In Christ's name, *Amen*.



Proclaim and Respond to the Word of God

Leader: **Listen to the words of Jesus...**

“I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”—John 10:10b

In Jesus, we celebrate new life. Just like a seedling pushing up through the ground, the coming of Jesus into the world and into our lives is something that begins in darkness, in ways we may not see or understand. Yet this new life in Christ can give us new life—and an abundant life.



All of us can be new lives in Christ. All of us are born as little babies with lots of potential for new life. All of us have the potential to give life to others, just like a little seedling. Yet like seedlings, all of us need the air and water of the Holy Spirit and fertile soil in which to grow.



The world is full of little seedlings and little children who need good places to grow. Like seedlings, children need special protection and care, so that they can grow into adults able to take care of themselves and others.

There are many things we can do to help children who need our help to grow up. Our church can give medicine and food to new mothers and their babies.



We can give mosquito nets to small children so they will not get a disease called malaria.



We can set up kitchens in schools to feed hungry children two hot, nutritious meals a day.



We can help children whose parents have died of a virus called HIV.



All these things we do because each child is important. Each baby is a child of God. We help these children just as we would help Baby Jesus himself.



As we give each other gifts, the most important gifts we can give are the gifts of life itself. We share our abundance as the hands and feet of Jesus, feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, and helping to heal a hurting world.

Questions for Discussion

- How are we like little seedlings?
- What do we and other children need to have life?
- What would it be like for everyone on earth to have “abundant life”?
- How could we help others have an abundant life?
- What gifts do we have to share with others?

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 leader might ask children to practice saying, “We pray to share your peace, dear Lord,” before continuing.)

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 new life in you. We thank you for fresh starts, new beginnings, new opportunities, and new ministries to others. We thank you for new creation and new life that nourishes us, sustains us, and helps us to grow towards you. Give us strength, courage, and endurance to continue to grow into the people you would have us become. Help us to always share our abundance with others also in need of new life and fresh starts.

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, “Jesus our brother, kind and good” (#65 in *My Heart Sings Out*, ed. Fiona Vidal-White)
- For older children “Great work has God begun in you” (#124 in *My Heart Sings Out*, ed. Fiona Vidal-White)

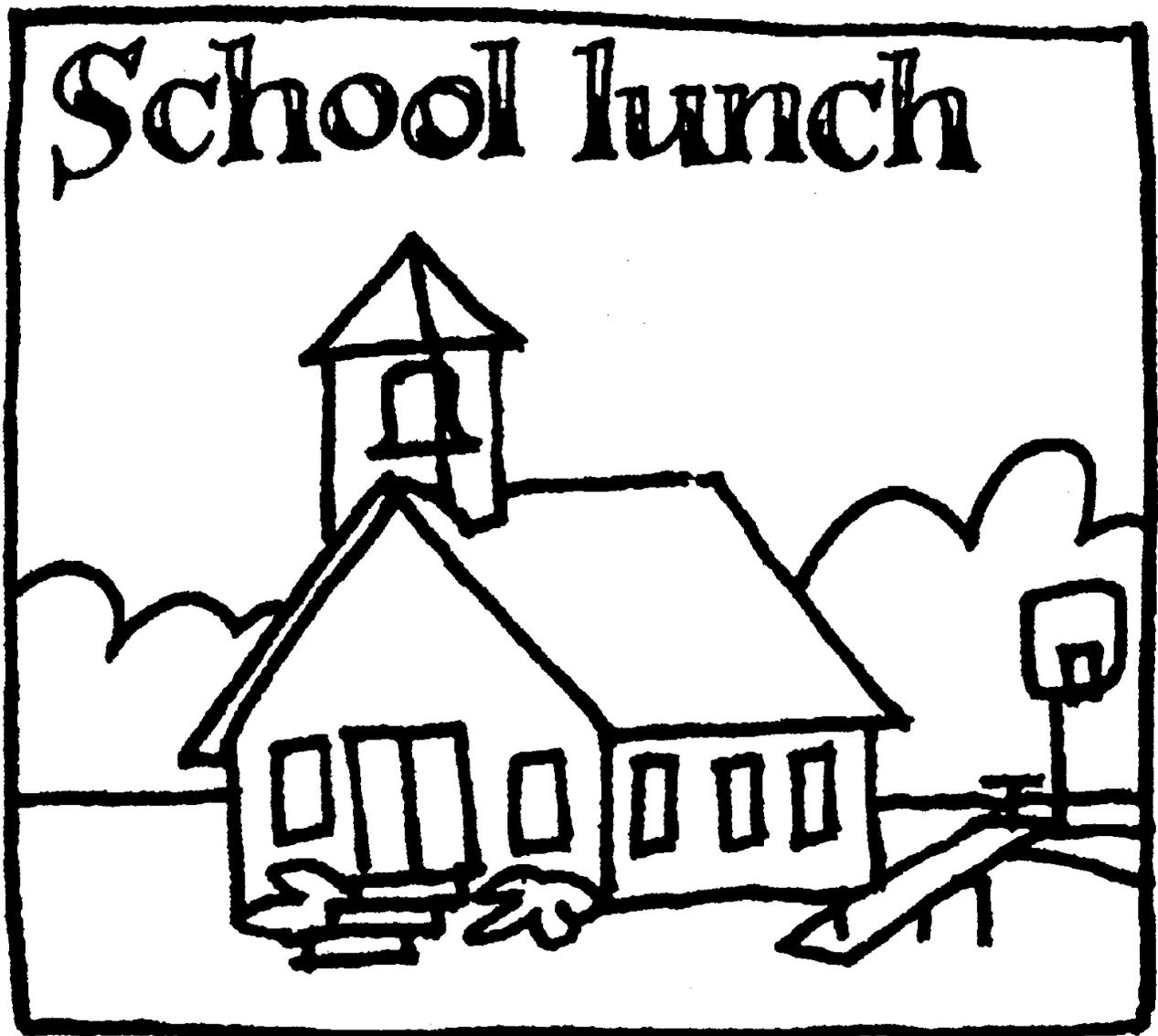
Offertory

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 what abundant life for everyone would look like.
- Draw pictures to go with the Litany of Thanks for the Gift of New Life; display them in your church, school or camp
- Talk about the needs of new babies and children born in countries where there is drought, hunger, or disease. What do these children need to grow up healthy and strong?
- Plant seedlings and hand them out with a message or photo showing the needs of babies and small children in countries served by Episcopal Relief & Development. Tell others about the need for food, water, and good nutrition for all kinds of new life on earth.
- Plan and hold a fundraiser to give the gift of life to children in need. A gift of only \$15 will help a hungry child get two hot, nutritious meals a day at a school canteen. A gift of \$65 will help a new baby and its mother get necessary medicine, immunizations, and food for a good start in life.

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