



**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***

Introduction and Lesson One—Light

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## Introduction

Welcome to the Children’s Chapel edition of Episcopal Relief & Development’s ***Abundant Life Garden Project Children’s Chapel resources***. This set of six liturgies is for use by Episcopal parishes, schools, camps, and other Episcopal organizations and individuals as worship services for children. Each liturgy provides an opportunity for children to give thanks for essential gifts of ***Light, Water, Seeds, Soil, Animals, and New Life*** and to pray for those all over the world in need of these same essential gifts.

These liturgies may be used by:

- Episcopal parishes for Sunday Morning Children’s Chapel
- Episcopal schools for daily or weekly chapel services
- Individuals with their own children for home devotionals or prayer services
- Episcopal Sunday Schools or Christian Formation programs to supplement existing curricula with a brief prayer service
- Episcopal camps or retreats for their chapel or outdoor prayer services.

Each liturgy tracks the Liturgy of the Word, though on a child’s developmental level. This program is designed primarily for young children, roughly ages 4-9, but could certainly be used for younger or older ages. If used with older children who read well, you might consider asking these older children to become fully engaged in these liturgies by serving as worship leaders themselves.

This program - through prayer, story, and thanksgiving – seeks to engage children in the needs of those in extreme poverty. Children give thanks for essential gifts necessary for life, hear the story of how simple but essential gifts enable those around the world to live more abundantly, and then pray for those in extreme poverty to receive gifts of new and abundant life.

At the end of each liturgy and the Passing of the Peace, children are given the opportunity to literally “pass the peace” of abundant living to those in need. Children and their leaders and parents are given suggestions of how to tangibly pass on Gifts of Life to others in need and served by Episcopal Relief & Development. We urge you to take on one or more of these projects and become partners with us in seeking and serving Christ in others.

## 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 lit candle to symbolize the Light of Christ.

(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 light. Bless us in this time together, and bless those living in darkness of any kind. In Christ's name, Amen.**

Leader: **Now, I will read several prayers about Light. Since we cannot live without light, please respond to each of these prayers with, "We thank you, Lord, for the gift of Light."**

(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 Light

**We thank you, Lord, for the sunshine that makes life possible on this beautiful earth.**

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

**We thank you for the dawn of morning that awakens us each day, for the full light of noon, and for the twilight of the setting sun.**

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

**We thank you for the tilt of the earth and for the seasons of light we enjoy – for our winters and autumns, for our springs and summers.**

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

**We thank you for being with us in darkness. We thank you for the moon that lights our evenings and that gives us the low tides and the high tides of our oceans.**

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

**We thank you for the light shining upon plants all over the earth, and for the oxygen these plants produce to give us breath and life.**

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

**We thank you for the Light of Jesus Christ, who is with us always and shows us the way of light in a world that may sometimes seem dark.**

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

**Help us to know, O Lord, that in you there is no darkness at all. Help us to be candles of light ourselves and to show the Light of Christ to those in need.**

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

## Proclaim and Respond to the Word of God

Leader: **Listen to Words from long, long ago:**

**“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined.” —Isaiah 9:2**



Jesus was born in a world of trouble—a world of hunger, of fear, of sickness, but also of thirst for a better world.

His mother was young, poor, and gave birth far from home.  
She received gifts and help from others so that she could care for her baby.



After growing up in a family with many mouths to feed, Jesus began to teach.



He talked about a world where the hungry would have enough to eat,  
where the sick would be made well, and where the world would be a more just place.



Jesus was a light, showing how a hurting world could be healed, how things could get better.

The light spread, and more people talked about healing a hurting world.  
They spread the Word about how life for everyone could get better.





And now the light of Jesus has spread to us.  
It is ours to spread in our own homes, in our own communities, then out into the world.



In this Advent season, we light candles to light up the darkness around us.  
We spread the light of Jesus. We spread light to the world.



We pray for the light to shine within us.  
We pray to be light to others in our homes, our communities, and in the world.

### Questions for Discussion

- How is Jesus the light of the world?
- How are we the light of the world?
- What could we do to give the gift of light to 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, Lord, to receive the light of Christ given to us. Help us to brighten our own hearts and minds to the service of God.**

*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 light in darkness. 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 light, 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.)

## 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.)

- Draw a picture of how you might bring light to someone in darkness.
- Give each child a small candle to take home, to remind them that they, too, are the light of the world.
- Visit someone who lives in darkness of some kind with your parents, relatives, or other community leaders. Visit an older person who lives alone, a nursing home, or a homeless shelter. Share the light of your smile and warm heart.
- Decorate candles or make Advent wreaths or other seasonal candle arrangements for others in your community to share the love of Christ with them.
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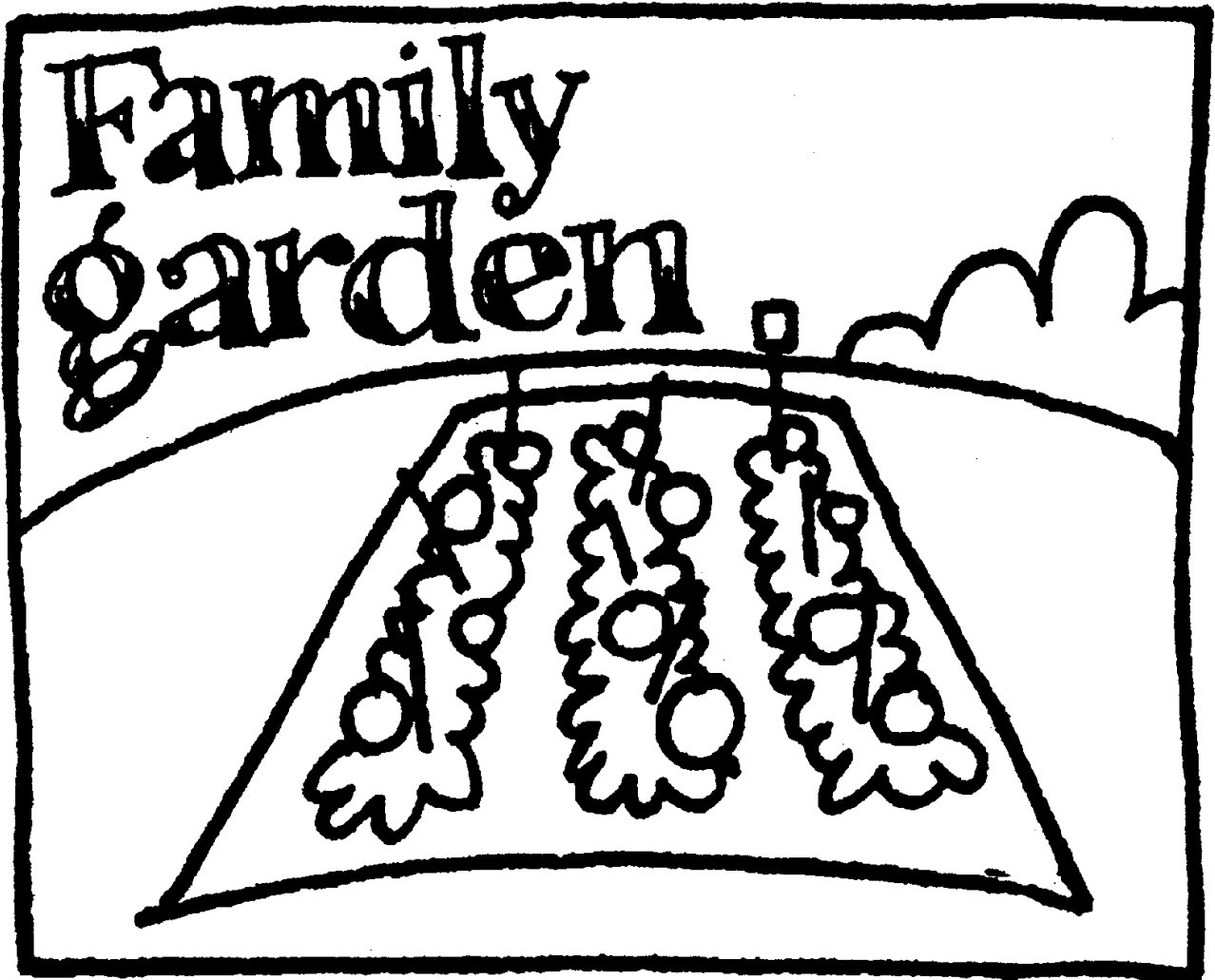
(Children might share their pictures, ideas, or other gifts by placing them on the altar as they return to the celebration of Holy Eucharist with their families.)

## Song Suggestions

One or more songs might be sung as time allows. These might include:

- For small children, “This Little Light of Mine”
- For older children, “I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light”

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*