



Weekly Resources for Schools

PHASE: PRIMARY

FESTIVALS THEME: HARVEST





KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

Harvest is a time for celebrating abundance, giving thanks for all the good gifts we have received. Yet we know that many people do not have enough. In the Bible, God frequently reminds His people of the importance of taking care of those who are in need. The story of Ruth and Boaz is an example from the Old Testament where they both put other people first. How can we also look to the needs of others?

‘When we give generously, with an abundance mentality, what we give away will multiply.’

Henri Nouwen

BIBLE STORY OF THE WEEK:

The Story of Ruth and Boaz

“GOD bless whoever it was who took such good care of you!” Ruth 2:19 (The Message Bible)



Gathering

Close your eyes and think about your favourite food.

Think about the people who cooked that food for you....and give thanks for them.

Think about the ingredients that are needed to make that food....do you know where they are grown or come from?

Think about how that food got to you...give thanks for all those who were involved...the farmer...the delivery driver...the shop or supermarket workers.

Today we are going to think about the harvest we share and how we care for those whose harvest is not so good.

Engagement

Here is a story from the Bible about two poor widows: Naomi and Ruth. It shows us something about how those of us with plenty should help those in need. Beware it has a happy ending and a footwear theme!

[Sealed with a Sandal](#)

In this story Ruth takes advantage of the Law of Gleaning which was a form of welfare. If you owned a field, your reapers (the people who worked for you gathering the crop) could go through the field once, and only once. Whatever they missed had to be left for widows, orphans and the poor – for those in need.

People believed that the existence of the Law of Gleaning was proof that God cared for the poor and expected those who had enough to share.



The Law of Gleaning decreed that landowners were not to harvest the full extent of their fields, but were to leave produce in the hard-to-reach areas for the poor and foreigners who might be in the land.

Response

In the story Boaz had a plentiful harvest so he was able to give some to those in need. How could you do the same today? Could you consider asking your parents or carers to add a few items into the food bank box when you next go shopping?

Ruth was not wealthy like Boaz, but she also gave something very important – she showed kindness to Naomi and stayed with her through a difficult time. How could you support someone having a hard time?

Sending

Why not 'send' with some prayers taken from this [prayer guide](#) produced by the Trussell Trust? They can be easily adapted to suit your community.

This [Bible Mat](#) from Bath and Wells Diocese is a great way to start a conversation within families about what Harvest means to them, especially for younger children.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)

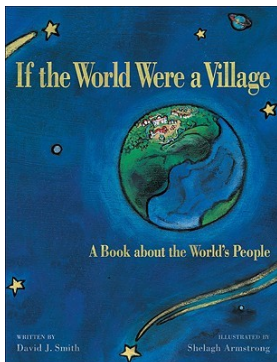
EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

Listen to the song '[Harvest for the world](#)' originally written by the Isley Brothers but many other versions are available including this version by pop band The Christians.

Reflect on the words to this song and produce an artistic response to the powerful lyrics.

Harvest Festival looks very different this year but consider holding a 'Brew and Bake' event to raise money for Christian Aid or other charity that you would normally support at Harvest Festival time. You can either do this in your bubble or virtually across the schools. There are some great ideas about how to do this [here](#).

To find out more about Christian Aid's harvest appeal why not look at Ariana's story in this [PowerPoint resource](#).



Look at the book '[If the world were a village](#)' By David J Smith and Shelagh Armstrong. As a class illustrate the pages for a display. Reflect on what it means to live in a global village.

ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

Use the **EXAMEN** prayer to reflect on Harvest. It has 5 steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

1. GIVE THANKS for something you had to eat today that was good
2. ASK FOR HELP with your attitude toward those who are hungry
3. REFLECT on your day and think about the things you have done which have helped share what you have 😊, and the times you may have kept things to yourself too much ☹️
4. SAY SORRY for the times you may have been selfish and hoarded things for yourself.
5. DECIDE how you will be more generous, sharing what you have, tomorrow.

To discover more about using the Ignatian Examen with children, listen to this [podcast](#).

CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES:

The story of Ruth and Boaz offers many wonderful insights for people today.

Firstly, Christians believe this story teaches that God often works through those who have endured tragic situations to change the lives of others. Both Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi had lost their husbands, yet Ruth was able to make a real difference to the people she met.

How have people you know managed difficult or sad situations? What or who has helped them?

Can you think of an example of someone who experienced something tragic themselves, then went on to help others?

Second, that God will work through unlikely means. Ruth was a poor widow and a foreigner who was willing to show kindness to Naomi by accompanying her back to her hometown. Boaz was a wealthy, well-respected man in his community who was willing to welcome and provide for Ruth (a poor foreigner).

Why do you think some people have more than others?

Do we need to be wealthy ourselves to help people who are poor, hungry or homeless?

Third, some Christians see this story as an example of God's sovereign power – that we can trust him, even when we do not understand the situation.

Have you ever been in a situation which was confusing or difficult to understand? Who could you trust to help you?

Ruth eventually ended up becoming part of the family line of both King David and Jesus. Although a big part of her story was very sad, she also had a lot to be thankful for. Harvest is a time both of giving thanks and thinking of others.

What do you have to be thankful for? How can you share what you have with others?

You can explore more of the story of Ruth through the [Giants of Faith resources](#) from Big Start Assemblies.

INVITATIONAL

Everyone is welcome to take part in collective worship, as much or as little as they or their parents and carers are comfortable with. This means we use invitational language and consider carefully our choice of words and songs. Children are invited to pray but are not compelled or expected to do so; they always have a choice. We invite them to pray or reflect in whatever way they would usually as a family, if that is part of their home experience.

INCLUSIVE

Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, we choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When we present Christian teaching, we make it clear that this is 'what Christians believe', saying things like:

'I wonder why this story might be important to Christians?'

'The story today comes from the Bible (the holy book of Christians), which teaches that ...'

Our worship should be accessible for children and young people with a range of different backgrounds, and so we take care that activities do not require expensive resources. We also offer a variety of activities, so that children and young people with differing needs can all find something they can engage with.

INSPIRING

We aim for our acts of worship to inspire those engaging with them. How might it engage their emotions, enabling a sense of peace, comfort, hope or motivation? How might it inspire them into action, into thinking differently and considering their behaviour or actions? How might it inspire them to reflect on their faith or beliefs, and on the faith or beliefs of others?