



**SEASON OF
CREATION**



THE ABUNDANT HARVEST

EDUCATION ACTIVITY

LEARNING TO BE GOOD STEWARDS OF OUR HARVEST

These activities are adaptable to all ages and will be broken down into three sections. Feel free to use them together or individually.

*And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi,
"Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain behind someone in whose eyes I may find favour."*

- Ruth 2:2



**THE WISE HARVEST
SEASONAL AND LOCAL**



**THE FAIR HARVEST
GLEANNING**



**THE GREEN
HARVEST
SOW, GROW,
EAT AND REPEAT**

Welcome and Introduction (15 min.)

The leader presents the theme of the day and the three activities. S/he then asks the group what an abundant harvest means for them and how it relates to the environment. This can be done either as a round table or 'popcorn style' (shout out the answers as they come).

Once participants have warmed up, you can engage them in one or all three of the activities:



The Wise Harvest (Introduction)

Seasonal and Local consumption

Learn why developing a seasonal mindset and buying locally grown food are important.

The Fair Harvest

Gleaning

Focus on encouraging efficient food systems and being responsible consumers

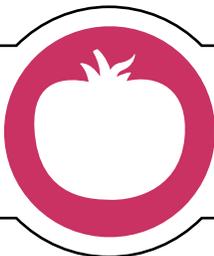
The Green Harvest

Sow, grow, eat and repeat

Duration: 1 - 3 hours

Location:

General gatherings could take place in the church or other community space. We will have break-out groups so be sure to be prepared for several groups working simultaneously.



"LORD HELP US INCREASE OUR AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPING A SEASONAL MINDSET..."



Goals:

- To increase our awareness of the importance of developing a seasonal mindset.
- To integrate the purchase of local and seasonal products into our buying practices.
- To become more aware of the importance of reducing waste in growing our food.
- To make the practice of gleaning part of our growing and purchasing practices.
- To become more aware of the importance of integrating green/environmentally friendly practices into the entire growing cycle on a long-term basis.

"...AND HELP US BECOME MORE AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF REDUCING WASTE IN GROWING OUR FOOD. AMEN"

THE WISE HARVEST

SEASONAL AND LOCAL



SEASONAL AND LOCAL



When acquiring fruits and vegetables, we try to follow these strategies in order.

Best - grow it yourself

2nd - buy from a local farmer

3rd - buy organic

Objectives

To develop an awareness of the importance of maintaining a seasonal mindset. To integrate the purchase of local and seasonal products into our buying practices.

- Developing a seasonal mindset
- Buying local

Introduction (15 min)

Begin by introducing the idea of seasons and growing zones. Throughout Canada we have a great diversity of climates and therefore a significant variety of growing zones.

Take a seed packet and have kids go out in the snow and plan where they are going to sow the seeds.

When the kids laugh and say 'that's crazy' use the activity as a talking point for them to realize that food is grown seasonally.

Discussion (15 min)

Use some of these leading questions to get the ball rolling:

1. What can be harvested close to us, right here?
2. What is your favourite fruit/vegetable?
3. What produce do you grow at home?

Using the responses to these questions try to identify if/when crops are harvested in your area or where and when they are harvested elsewhere. Then have older children or adults research what is considered seasonal for your area.

Buying seasonal produce (30 min)

Know how to buy seasonal produce is great, but it's not always possible. When acquiring fruits and vegetables, we try to follow these strategies in order.

- Best - grow it yourself
- 2nd - buy from a local farmer
- 3rd - buy organic

Returning to the list of fruits and vegetables collected at the beginning of the activity try to place each one in one of the three acquisition categories above. Once it is placed, discuss the advantages of using these strategies, for example:

Participant. 'My favourite fruit is strawberries, so I could grow them at home or buy them from a local farmer or buy those organically grown in Mexico.'

Leader. 'Good. Let's look at the advantages and disadvantages of each strategy, starting with growing them at home.'

P. 'Well growing them at home is cheaper than buying them, plus they will be right there when I want them which is great. Plus I'll know and control which products (pesticides or fertilizers) were used. On the other hand I don't think I'll be able to grow as many strawberries as I want, it's a bit of work to grow them too and I will only get strawberries for like one month of the year.'

L. 'Interesting, and what about buying them from a local farmer?'

P. 'Well that would certainly be easier, though I'll have to pay. I'm still limited in how long the growing season is.'

L. 'And finally how about buying organic?'

P. 'Well, when they are out of season, I can buy organic strawberries that are imported. They cost a little more and they aren't as tasty but at least I have the strawberries.'

L. 'Do you think you could change your habits to only eat strawberries when they are in season here?'

P. 'Honestly I think I could. I'm usually disappointed when I buy imported strawberries anyway so maybe it's a change I could make.'

Repeat this conversation with a few different products then encourage participants to apply this to the rest of what they eat.

Conclusion (10 min)

To close the activity remind participants of the ranked strategies:

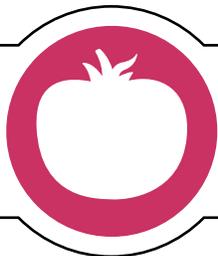
Best – grow it yourself

2nd best – buy from local farmer

3rd best – buy organic

Highlight the advantages of local food environmentally, socially and in regard to quality. Have participants pledge to make one change in the way they buy produce.

This activity is adapted from: <https://www.mcgill.ca/foodservices/sustainability/green/local>



WE PLEDGE TO MAKE ONE CHANGE IN THE WAY WE BUY PRODUCE.



THE FAIR HARVEST

GLEANING

Objectives

To develop an awareness of the importance of reducing waste in the way we grow and consume our food. To integrate the practice of gleaning into our growing and purchasing practices.

1. Aiming towards a zero-waste harvest
2. Discovering and implementing the practice of gleaning

Introduction (15 min)

Begin this activity by explaining the basics of gleaning:

- what it is
- why it is done
- who can do it
- how to do it

For a basic guide to gleaning visit:

www.nbfoodsecurity.ca/wp-content/.../06/Kent_Gleaning-toolkit_2014-english.pdf

Learning to Glean (30 min)

Younger kids: Sow and Glean Bean Game.

1. Divide the class in three.
2. Distribute dry kidney beans to the first group and have them "sow" them around the classroom.
3. Give the second group 30 seconds to harvest all the beans. Gather and count them.
4. Have the third group 'glean' the remainder of the beans and count them.
5. Use this game to explain the concept of gleaning and why it's important. Redistribute the beans to the children for them to sow in soil using rolled up newspaper pots they make themselves and bring them home to grow.

Older Kids and Teens: Organize a School Trip

Organize a school trip to a local farm during harvest season and have the children meet and talk to the farmer. Weeks before the field trip have children read harvest-themed books and prepare question cards to ask the farmer during the field trip as well as idea cards as to what the farmer should do with the extra produce that is not harvested.



THE FAIR HARVEST GLEANING



And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain behind someone in whose eyes I may find favor." Ruth

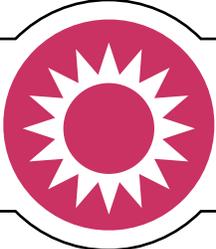
Teachers prepare a question asking the farmer what they do with the produce that remains in the field after they harvest and present the farmer with the idea cards that the children have previously prepared. Propose a yearly farm visit which includes youth participation in gleaning as an activity. The gleaned produce can then be donated to local food banks etc.

Community Ideas

- View some videos from different gleaning ministries:
<https://gleanings.org/videos-2/>
<http://ontariogleaners.org/1313>
- Encourage the discovery of gleaning ministries and organizations by having a gleaning kiosk set up in fall harvest celebrations. If no gleaning network exists in your area, form a committee to start one. Work with local food

banks and homeless shelters to coordinate donations of gleaned produce.

- Study gleaning in the bible and discuss your findings.
<https://biblehub.com/topical/g/gleaning.htm>
- The Bible speaks about leaving a part of the harvest for the poor to glean and that when the harvest is plentiful, we need to pray for labourers to help.
- View this video that shows how gleaning is helping the needy at home and abroad:
<http://ontariogleaners.org/1313>
- A great toolkit for gleaning can be freely downloaded here:
https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usda_gleaning_toolkit.pdf



WORK WITH LOCAL FOOD BANKS AND HOMELESS SHELTERS TO COORDINATE DONATIONS OF GLEANED PRODUCE.





THE GREEN HARVEST SOW, GROW,



THE GREEN HARVEST

SOW, GROW, EAT AND REPEAT

Objectives

Develop the Christian community's sensitivity to the importance of integrating green environmentally- friendly practices into the complete growing cycle on a long-term basis.

Introduction : Choosing Your Seed (25 min)

We can buy seed packets from the store; every spring multitudes of seed packets can be purchased from the local hardware store or supermarkets. Begin the conversation by bringing in a collection of seed packs available locally.

- Where do seeds come from?
- Are all these seed packets the same?
- Have the students research different seed packet companies.
- What's the big deal with knowing where the seeds come from?

Watch the Seed Story video and discuss what you have learned:

<https://www.usc-canada.org/resources/for-educators/seed-story>

Play the Name that Seed game online here:

<https://www.usc-canada.org/name-that-seed/>

Context (20 mins)

Discuss the context of seed choice and seed saving. Here are some ideas for discussion.

- Historic context: In the old days before seed packet companies existed, people kept the seeds from their harvests to sow them the next year. Great care was taken to preserve the seeds and they were considered very valuable. Even some immigrants travelled to their new country with their seed stash, knowing it would ensure they wouldn't go hungry. They would still be able to grow their produce like back home.
- Greener options today: Nowadays, people concerned with preserving genetic diversity still keep their seeds from the harvest and many have joined Seed Exchanges where they share some of their seeds with others and in turn receive seeds from different varieties etc.
- Why is seed diversity important?

It is nature's way of protecting harvests from different pests and diseases. When people sow the same seeds of the same limited varieties, their harvests become more vulnerable. If a certain variety is targeted by a particular disease and all the fields are planted using that variety, the whole harvest is lost. Planting diversified seeds allows for a greater chance of some portion of the harvest surviving, pests and/or diseases.

Conclusion (10 min)

Discuss sources of good quality local seeds for planting in our gardens. Are their local varieties of common crops from our area? Are their any favourite heritage varieties. Could we start a mini seed exchange in our community?

**TIPS AND RESOURCES****Hold an ugly vegetable festival**

An abundant harvest brings about some ecological challenges. Some produce doesn't meet supermarket standards and is left to rot in the fields. Solutions include educating people that produce does not need to win a beauty contest to be tasty and just as nourishing:

<http://www.endfoodwaste.org/ugly-fruit-posters.html>

Organize an intercity gleaning

Have your community organize an intercity gleaning through the use of Fruitshare databases or make up your own. Research who has fruit trees in your neighbourhood that they no longer harvest or whose harvest is too abundant for personal use. Organize a network of fruit trees to harvest in your city or town's backyards.

Organize a presentation on how abundant harvests and social justice should go together

Find out what happens to the excess produce grown in your area. Is it thrown out? Is it given to food banks? If not, why? Is it because of a lack of harvesters or transportation? How can your community help? Find out if they would need volunteers in these areas and start a group in your faith community.

- USC Canada seeks to build food sovereignty by working with partners to enhance biodiversity, promote ecological food systems, and counter inequity: <https://www.usc-canada.org/>

- Guide to sources of local and sustainable food: <https://www.eatwellguide.org/>
- Example of youth program that has had great success: <https://www.foodbankscanada.ca/Blog/October/Fresh-from-the-Farm-%E2%80%93-More-Than-a-Youth-Gleaning-P.aspx>
- Fruit-rescuing organizations such as Fruit Share have shared a chart of established fruit-rescuing groups across Canada: <http://www.fruitshare.ca/tag/fruit-gleaning-canada/>
- Lesson plans for growing beans by students: http://www.greeneducationfoundation.org/institute/lesson-clearinghouse/294-how_to_grow_beans_in_a_plastic_bag.html
- Learn about traditional First Nations food use and harvesting: <http://www.farmtocafeteriacanada.ca/2019/03/first-nations-traditional-foods-fact-sheets/>
- Watch "The Story of Food" video and have the students discuss it: <https://www.usc-canada.org/resources/for-educators/the-story-of-food>
- Canadian resources for seed diversity including free downloadable pdf files that explain how to save some more common seeds: <https://seeds.ca/diversity>
- Read about Safeguarding Seed Biodiversity: <https://www.seeds.ca/seedfinder/>