



KidsHubs



**Vegetable Gardening
Guide**

INTRODUCTION TO KIDSHUBS



KidsHubs is a free global program that helps reach out to and mentor children and young people. It can be used as part of an existing program or group, in a church, a school, a camp or to start a new group in your community. KidsHubs seek to help children learn how to follow Jesus from the Bible at the same time as learning a new skill for life. It is also a great way to encourage adults and teenagers to interact with and disciple children. KidsHubs can be based around just about anything—sport, media, photography, drama, cooking, farming, chess, music and so much more. KidsHubs is not an organisation, but a free idea and a movement.

KIDSHUBS SKILL SESSIONS AND HOW THEY CAN BE USED

KidsHubs Skill Sessions can be used as a plug-in to an existing Bible curriculum lesson such as 7Ways BibleMax (max7.org) with a two-hour-plus duration time. A KidsHubs Skill Session could also be used on alternate weeks if a club is limited to one hour Sessions. A group could therefore do a BibleMax lesson one week and a KidsHubs plug-in on the next week, and so on. KidsHubs Skill Sessions used at camps could be extended to three hours by introducing extra activities.

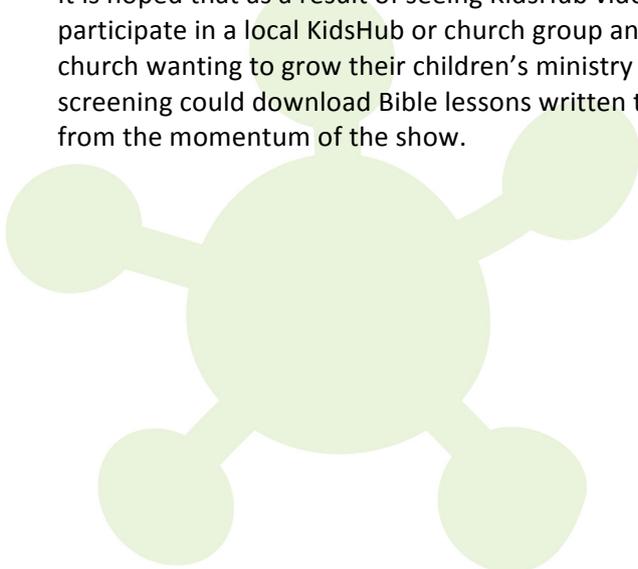
KIDSHUBTV

Alongside KidsHubs Sessions is KidsHubTV, an exciting new kids club-style TV program, which mirrors the local KidsHub groups featuring a Bible story and theme and skills demonstrated by a cast of children along with young adult leaders.

It is being produced in an open-source way so that producers across the world can have free access to core global content. Bible story animations and animated segment titles and music have been created and shared to build local versions of the show.

The long-term goal of this production is to see whole programs and short segments produced by local KidsHubs and shared via mobile phones and the KidsHubTV website with a view to broadcasting if possible.

It is hoped that as a result of seeing KidsHub videos children would be encouraged to participate in a local KidsHub or church group and/or visit the KidsHubTV website. And a church wanting to grow their children's ministry in a region (like India) where the show is screening could download Bible lessons written to complement each episode, and benefit from the momentum of the show.



GROWING AN EDIBLE GARDEN

The idea of this project is to help children learn about growing vegetables they can eat and share with others. The children will learn that God made every kind of plant and everything that a plant needs to grow or develop. They will also experience the way God develops our faith in Him. The Bible is rich with gardening metaphors that explain our deep and ongoing connection with our living God. John chapter 15 is the basis for this KidsHubs Guide. As the children learn about seeds and soil they will also learn how they themselves are attached to the vine of Jesus and can bear fruit when they are daily attached to Him.

Children will also learn to research vegetables that grow best in their context, do practical work and plan and work together as a team. The project may result in a community or local school vegetable garden that others in the neighbourhood contribute to and work in. It may be a portable vegetable garden in tubs or polystyrene boxes that children can take home, or a church vegetable garden that many can contribute to and benefit from.

These 10 sessions could be spread over 20 weeks as this is how long it may take to begin to reap a harvest. Some weeks could be spent working in the garden and then stopping to pray. Think about growing some vegetables before starting your KidsHubs Vegetable Garden project so you have more mature plants ready to put into the garden and can harvest early.

Some fast growing crops are

- *Cress*
- *Lettuce*
- *Mustard greens*
- *Oriental greens*
- *Radish*
- *Scallions*
- *Spinach*
- *Turnip*

What you will need

- *Gardening tools*
- *Vegetable seeds and seedlings*
- *Soil and, if built-up garden beds need to be made, wood to create them.*
- *Adult help for working bees*

Preparation

Explore the Bible: can be done anytime when it works for your group.

Tip: the Bible study could be undertaken together away from tools and soil, etc., so the children are not distracted by the desire to get on with planting, weeding, etc. Alternatively, think of ways of using things around you to illustrate and explore the Bible passage.

All the topics listed are just suggestions of ways to explore the Bible while setting up a vegetable garden. Select the suggestions, questions and activities appropriate for the group of children and the time available. It's great to remember that in gardening with the children

'teachable moments' will arise naturally. Ask God to prepare you for these moments and give you the words to say.

Garden

Before you start, find somewhere close to where you meet. If you have contacts at a local school, community group or council find out if creating a vegetable garden is possible, and/or if there is any common land that could be used. They may help by providing advice, plants, money or other assistance. Or your church may have some space to build a garden. Alternatively, recycled polystyrene boxes (sometimes used to transport vegetables to market) can be used to create portable gardens. Find other adults who are keen gardeners and handy builders to help. Here are a few things to consider:

- **Location:** ideally the vegetable garden should be easy to access and get good sunlight. Root vegetables and leafy greens need a minimum of only 2 – 4 hours of sunlight, fruiting vegetables need 4 – 6 hours. Ideally, if you have a choice between morning or afternoon sunlight, choose the gentler morning sun.
- **Water:** make sure fresh, clean water is easy to access near your vegetable garden.
- **Size:** start small and make the veggie garden as productive as possible. You can always expand your garden later. Two square meters can grow a good variety of vegetables and herbs.
- **Birds and Insects:** these are pollinators and eat unwanted insects that attack your plants. Aim to create a mini-ecosystem that attracts birds and beneficial insects. Fruit trees, fragrant flowers and herbs incorporated into your garden can help this.
- **Soil:** sandy loam is best for vegetables. Compost made from kitchen scraps and garden waste encourages worms, helping to develop a friable texture suited to vegetables. Compost and manure are also great fertilizers building up nutrients in the soil which promote healthy growth in vegetables.
- **Drainage:** in clay soil or peat, water may sit around and rot roots if it does not drain well. On the other hand, if the soil is very sandy water will run through it too quickly for the plants to take up the moisture.
- **Pest control:** as much as possible avoid using pesticides. Research natural alternatives such as particular plants, e.g. pyrethrum daisies, marigolds as companion plants, to deter pests.
- **Planting tip:** if possible plant some quick growing seedlings (herbs, sprouts, lettuce, etc.) so that the children will have something to harvest when you get to Lesson 9 on 'Harvesting'.

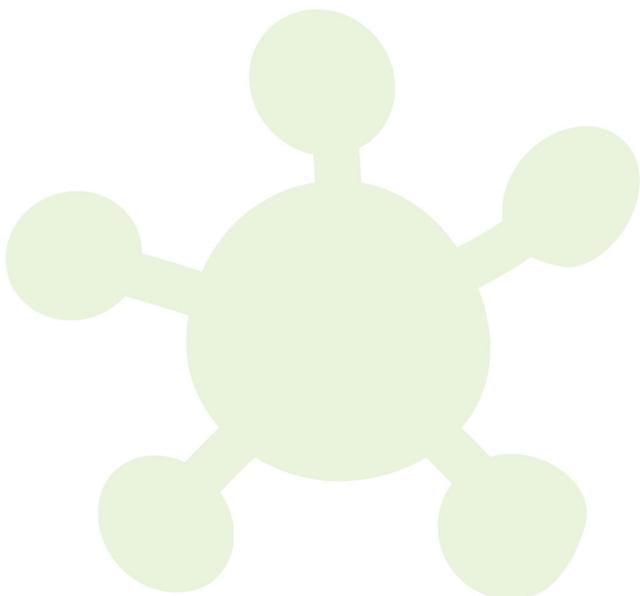
Portable Gardens

Collect unwanted pots or recycle polystyrene boxes to grow vegetables. Make sure there are plenty of holes in the bottom of the container so water can drain away. The pots can be put on a saucer to hold some water which is gradually absorbed. This also saves mess!

Built-up or Raised Garden Beds

Use wood to create raised garden beds that can be placed anywhere, or simply prepare a patch of soil for the vegetable garden. Try to mix compost and natural fertilizers like manures, (chicken droppings, being small, are great) to enrich the soil. Place mulch (straw or rotting leaf material) on top of the soil and around your vegetables to discourage weeds and stop the soil from drying out.

Search the internet for hundreds of sites on setting up a vegetable garden.



SESSION 1 | PREPARING THE SOIL

THOUGHTS FOR THE LEADER

This lesson is all about giving children an opportunity to aspire to and consider a relationship with God. The intention is to allow children to explore where they are at with God. Do they want to respond to his message? As you work with the soil with the children in your group, think about how the ground could help to describe our hearts and our attitudes towards God.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Matthew 13: 1-9 and 18 – 23 'Parable of the Sower'

As you read the Bible passage with your group move to different parts of your garden so you can pick up the soil, hold seeds etc.

- *In the story, the sower plants EVERYWHERE... on all sorts of soil. How is that different to how we plant in this garden?*
- *What does that tell us about God as our Sower? (He wants everyone to know Him.)*
- *What does this tell us about God's message being sown everywhere in the field, paths etc.? (We don't know how people will respond to God when they hear about Him. Only God knows that, but everyone should be given the opportunity to hear.)*

Maybe use only these 2 or 3 questions:

- *What is the best type of soil in the story?*
- *What sort of soil do we want to be in this story?*
(Do we want our life to be choked by weeds, by the things of this world or do we want to see a harvest of others coming to know Jesus?)
- *What would we need to be like to be that kind of soil?*
(Pray to ask God to help me, listen carefully when the Bible is read, be open to hear from God through other Christians.)

ACTIVITIES AS YOU GARDEN TOGETHER

Observation

- Look at different soils.
- Test which soil is best by growing the same seed in any different type of soil you can find.

Discussion

- Discuss which soils would be best for growing plants?

Practical

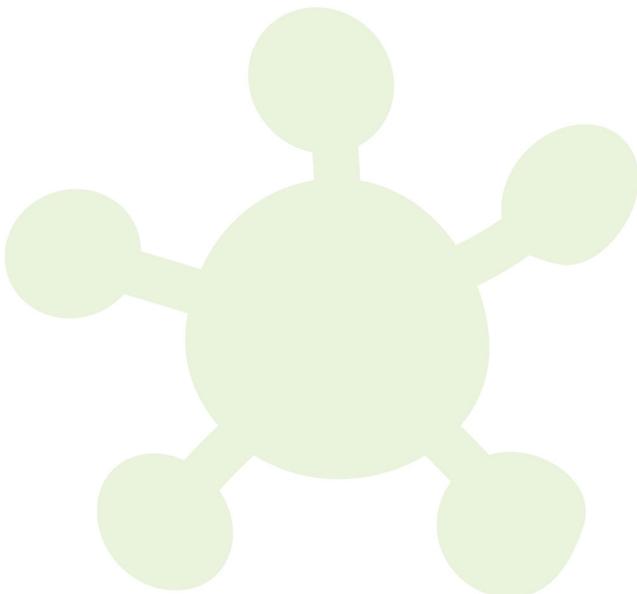
- Prepare the soil for the garden. This may mean weeding, turning the soil for aeration, adding manure, using tools, making labels for the plants, etc.

Fact

- *“There are three common types of soil – silt, clay and sand. The ability of different types of soil to retain moisture and support life is affected by their particle size. Sand has the largest particle size, and therefore struggles to hold moisture, while clay has the finest, and tends to become waterlogged. The ideal soil is sandy loam, which combines the strengths of each type of soil to create a super soil. Made up of a mix of 40% sand, 40% silt and 20% clay, it is able to retain nutrition as well as to drain water.”*
(pg.8 The Little Veggie Patch Co, Capomolla and Pember 2011).
However, growing vegetables requires good soil that is continually cultivated and nurtured by adding compost and natural fertilizers, and by keeping it free of stones and weeds.

Reflection

- What would you need to be like to be the best kind of soil the Bible story talks about? *(Pray to ask God to help me, listen carefully when the Bible is read, be open to hear from God through other Christians)*



SESSION 2 | SEEDS

THOUGHTS FOR THE LEADER

This session gives great opportunity to marvel at what a great Creator God is, and what amazing things He has made. But this is just the beginning. Every moment spent in the garden with children can be a great opportunity to marvel at what God has made and how intricate and incredible His designs are.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Mark 4: 26 – 29 Read or act out the Bible story together

- *What happens in the story Jesus told?*
- *What is surprising about seeds? (God has made these tiny capsules with everything they need to grow to be a big plant).*
- *What question did the farmer have?*
- *How would we answer him? (God makes the plants grow. God is behind and in charge of everything we see around us)*
- *What does Jesus' story tell us about God's kingdom? (It is God who is in control of everything. He causes plants to grow and he causes us to believe in Him and grow more like Him. He is the one who makes this happen.)*

ACTIVITIES AS YOU GARDEN TOGETHER

Observation

- Match some seeds with some grown plants or vegetables
- Put some small quick growing seeds (e.g. alfalfa, mung bean, etc.) on damp cotton wool in a small container/cup and observe them growing during the week.

Discussion

- Variety: what is amazing about a seed?
- Naming or cataloguing seeds: when seeds are collected at the end of each plant's season why should they be put in named envelopes?

Practical

- Plant seeds and seedlings in the garden using cardboard egg cartons, or newspaper folded into cup shapes, or toilet paper rolls cut in half and placed in a tray. Fill with soil. Once seedlings have developed transplant them into the ground.

Fact

A seed has a baby plant inside, waiting to grow.



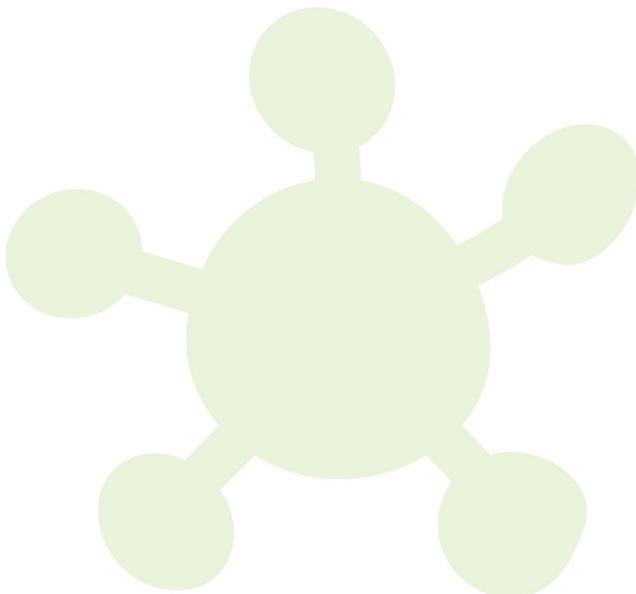
There is some food to get the plant started and a coat around the outside to protect it.

"I planted the seeds, Apollos watered them, but God made them sprout and grow."
1 Corinthians 3:6

- Show them this diagram of a seed and what is inside it (*from page 3 of the 'God in the Garden' booklet*). Explain how God made each seed with a baby plant waiting to grow inside it. God made the seed so that this baby plant is surrounded by its own special plant food to help it grow when it is first planted. There is a coat or tougher layer around the seed to protect it. God made the seed with everything it needs to grow. It just needs air, water, sun, soil and care when it bursts out of its protective shell.

Reflection

- What is most amazing about how God designed our body?



SESSION 3 | ROOTS

THOUGHTS FOR THE LEADER

Talking about 'roots' provides so many links to our lives. Enjoy helping the children make connections. For example, we try to remove weeds when they are small and the roots are small. In the same way, we try to recognize sin in our lives early on, and repent of it quickly.

Deep roots in God mean we are not rocked by life's storms as easily. Roots continue to grow; the more roots the stronger and more stable the plant. We, too, should be actively growing our roots in God, nurturing our relationship with Him, reading His Word, talking to Him and meeting with other Christians, etc.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Colossians 2:7

Read the Bible passage. Stand around a big tree if possible and ask one of the children to try and pull it out. Why doesn't it move? Talk about the tree roots that grow deep and far into the soil.

Our lives need to be rooted in God and His ways so we can grow successfully.

- *Where do our roots go deep?*
- *What do we spend a lot of time doing?*

ACTIVITIES AS YOU GARDEN TOGETHER

Observation

- Pull plants out of the ground and look at the roots. What can we learn? *(Some roots you eat, some are easy to pull out, some are hard to pull out. Some weeds have roots that interconnect and shoot up new weeds as the roots spread – these are the most difficult to get rid of, etc.)*

Discussion

- What kind of roots do we eat? (potato/kumara/yam/ginger/peanuts/cassava/carrots)

Practical

- Water the plants
- Remove small weeds (while the roots are small) and care for the garden

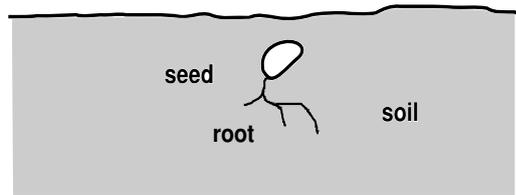
Fact

When it is warm and wet,
the seed puts out a root.

Roots get food and water
for the plant from the soil.

The root holds the plant in
place.

We sometimes eat big roots
like carrots.

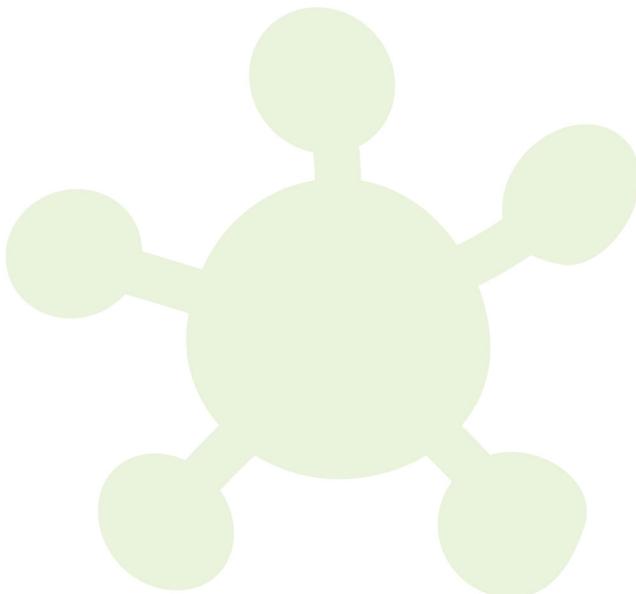


"Plant your roots in Jesus and let him
be the foundation for your life."
Colossians 2:7

- *Roots draw water and nutrients from the soil and help make the plant stable in the ground.*

Reflection

- Draw the important roots of life (label them). Does anything need to be changed? What do we spend a lot of time doing (what are our big roots)? What food does this root produce, and is it giving stability? What can be done about this in the next 24 hours?



SESSION 4 | SPROUTING LEAVES

THOUGHTS FOR THE LEADER

This session does not have activities for the children to dig or plant or weed. However, if any gardening jobs need doing, then get the children to help.

The health of a leaf usually indicates the health of a plant. Again, links can be made with the sort of leaves our lives display? A link to the kind of 'fruits of the Spirit' God wants us to show in our lives could also be brought out (Galatians 5:22).

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Jeremiah 17:7-8 Read together

- *We can see if a plant is healthy by the leaves. How healthy are we?*
- *What must we do to be 'blessed' by God? (v 7).*
- *What are ways we can be healthy spiritually? (Learn about and hear from God by reading the Bible, talking to God, talking and meeting with other Christians.)*

ACTIVITIES AS YOU GARDEN TOGETHER

Observation

- If seedlings are starting to appear, or if the seeds on cotton wool are growing (in previous session) observe the leaves, their shape and color.
- Look at leaves on plants around you and diagnose problems with the plant (*if any*). *(The health of the leaves often shows the health of the plant. Chewed leaves mean there's a caterpillar or bug eating it so look for these bugs and remove them. Leaf discoloration or leaf curling can mean the plant is not receiving enough nutrients or water. If you're not sure what bugs or diseases are causing leaves to look 'sick' ask a gardener or look it up.)*

Discussion

- Discuss how we use leaves? (For food, as material to create useful objects, roofing material, creating shade, etc.)

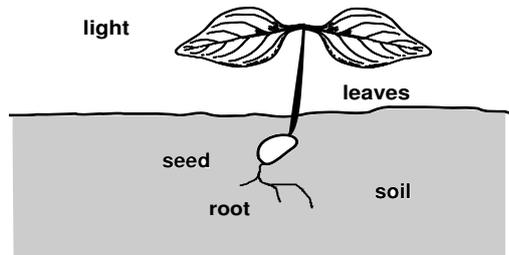
Practical

- List leaves we eat (group challenge).
- Leaf rubbing designs: place leaves under a sheet of paper and gently rub over them using a crayon or lead pencil.

Fact

Leaves come up above the ground. Leaves need light to make food for the plant.

We sometimes eat leaves like lettuce.

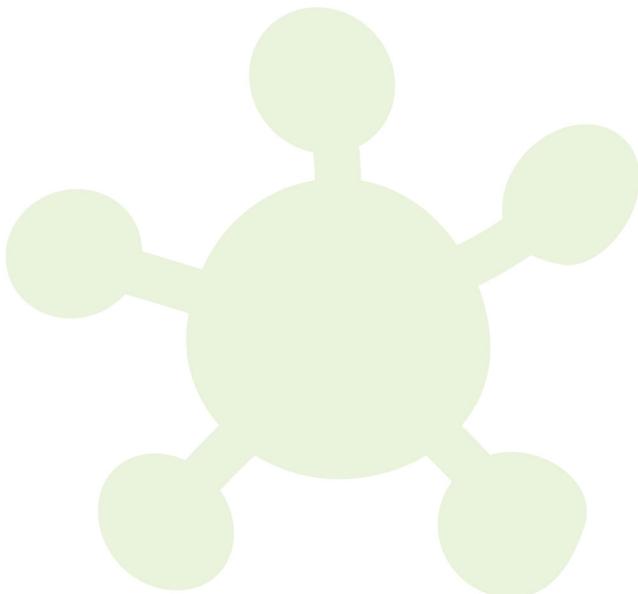


"God will bless those who trust him.
They will be like trees with roots that
reach down to the water, and with leaves
that are always green."
Jeremiah 17:7-8

- Leaves absorb energy from the sun and give energy to the plant. Look up 'photosynthesis' to learn more.

Reflection

- What sort of leaves are we 'displaying' to others in the way we speak, think and act? What needs to be worked on in the next 24 hours?



SESSION 5 | GROWTH

THOUGHTS FOR THE LEADER

Seeds are sown with the expectation that they will grow into plants/trees and be beneficial in some way. Let's pray to God that our children will grow in Him and expect to see realistic growth in them.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

1 Corinthians 3:5-7 Read it together

- *Who makes our faith in God grow? (God is responsible for our growth.)*
- *What do these verses say to us? (God grows people's faith. We need to be ready to tell others about Him. We all have different ways we can do this.)*

ACTIVITIES AS YOU GARDEN TOGETHER

Observation

- Look at the plants in your garden. What do they need to keep healthy? Check the plants to see if they are showing signs of needing water or more light or more nutrients in the soil.

Discussion

- Ask the children to think about how they are like a plant? What do they think our bodies need to grow healthy and strong?

(Clean air to breathe and water to drink, healthy food like fruit, vegetables, grains and legumes/beans).

- What other things help us grow?

(Happy family, good friends, playing outside, sports and games, learning at school/getting an education, sound sleep, a safe place to live, a happy home, neighbors who care, etc.)

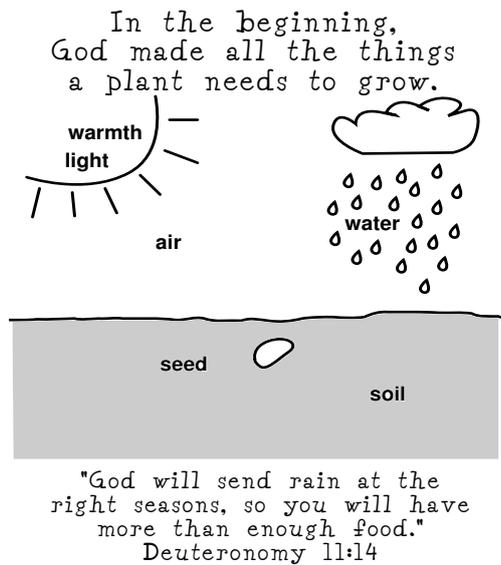
- What helps our hearts or spiritual bodies grow healthy and strong?

(Knowing that God loves us and that He provides for us. Knowing that God promises He is always with us in the good times and the bad. Talking to God in prayer and reading about Him and how He wants us to live in the Bible. Meeting up with others who follow Jesus (at church or other group). Experiencing God's love and care through another person who follows Jesus. Knowing we can tell others about Him and show them God's love and care.

Practical

- Tend to the plants you are growing. Some may need stakes to climb on to get them more sunlight and air to keep them healthy.
- Experiment: choose some plants to not care for and neglect for a few weeks. Compare these plants with ones you have tended after a few weeks.

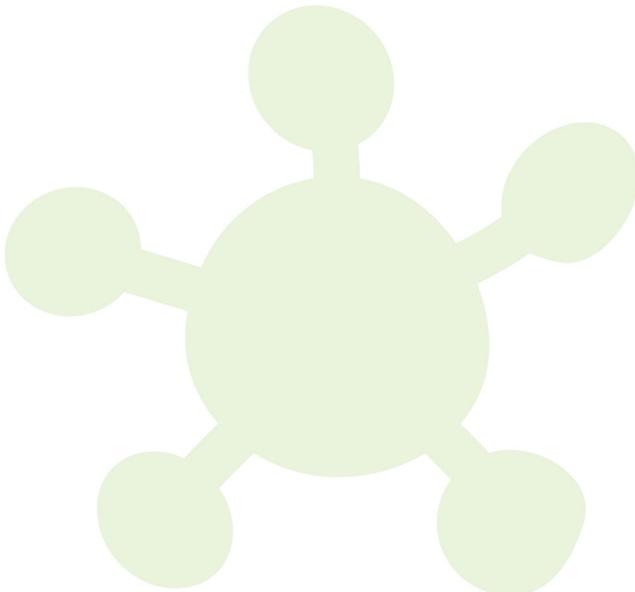
Fact



- What four things does a plant need to grow?

Reflection

- How healthy are our spiritual lives? What do we need to do to keep our spiritual lives growing? (Read the Bible regularly, pray, meet with other Christians, etc.)



SESSION 6 | PRUNING TO BE FRUITFUL

THOUGHTS FOR THE LEADER

Pruning can cause damage where it takes place. The plant's response to the pruning may be at some distance from the cut made by the pruners. Does God's pruning in our lives cause damage or pain? Does it promote growth elsewhere in our lives?

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

John 15:1-6 Read it together

God is the gardener and we are the branches. God trims and disciplines us. And we need to stay connected to Jesus.

- *How does God prune our lives? Is pruning good or bad?*
- *How do we want to be fruitful?*
- *What kind of fruit is Jesus talking about?*
- *How do we stay connected to Jesus (to the vine)?*

ACTIVITIES AS YOU GARDEN TOGETHER

Observation

- Look at an unpruned vine or plant.
- Find a plant you can prune. Explain why you prune, and demonstrate how to do it.
- If possible show a fruiting tree that hasn't been pruned well (e.g. is showing disease, or deformed fruit).

Practical

- Prune and weed plants in the garden together.
- Gather up the prunings and compost them if they are healthy, and burn or properly dispose of any diseased trimmings.

Discussion

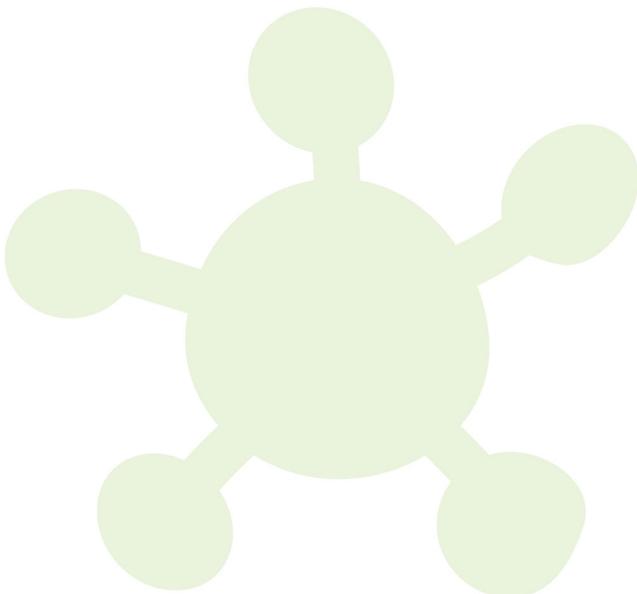
- How did we feel about pruning a tree/plant?
- Were we confident that we were doing the right thing? Why or why not?
- What is the same and what is different about God pruning our lives? *(He knows what He's doing, He sees the end from the beginning. He treats everyone as they need. He sees the whole picture of our lives and how He is transforming us into His likeness, just like a gardener looks at the whole tree when they're pruning it.)*

Fact

- The purpose of pruning branches off fruit trees is to open the structure of the tree up so that air and light can get between the branches. Typically an open vase shape is desired. This not only helps the tree to fruit more successfully but to resist disease. If disease is allowed to grow then the whole plant and fruit crop is affected.
- A pruned vine or tree will concentrate its efforts on fewer fruit, and will produce a healthier and higher quality harvest.

Reflection

- What would it be like to have God as the pruner and gardener of your life?



SESSION 7 | FERTILIZER

THOUGHTS FOR THE LEADER

Fertilizing with compost and/or manure nourishes the plants. This is particularly necessary in a hostile environment. Mulching is especially important during dry seasons or drought. How much time and effort do we spend nourishing ourselves with spiritual resources as we go into hostile environments where Satan tries to dominate? This is about reminding us that we all need to repent and be saved, or suffer eternal judgment. It also illustrates by means of useless fig tree that we need to cultivate our spiritual life if it's not bearing fruit: fertilizing, digging around it, giving it extra attention.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Luke 13:5-9 Read together and/or act out

- *What happened in this Bible story?*
- *What does the owner want the fig tree to do?*
- *What does the gardener think the tree needs? (time, fertilizer and care)*

ACTIVITIES AS YOU GARDEN TOGETHER

Observation

- Show the children some different types of natural fertilizers and soil care, e.g. animal manures, worm farms and composting (whatever is appropriate in your region).

And/or

- Look at plants that have not fruited yet, or don't seem very productive. Discuss what you think needs to be done with them. Alternatively, if you can observe very fruitful plants, then discuss why they are doing so well.

Discussion

- Discuss different types of natural fertilizer you have access to with the children. What do you need to do to collect it or make it? (E.g. creating your own compost heap or worm farm).

Practical

- Brew up some compost, mixing green waste (fresh clippings and vegetable waste) with animal manures (pig, sheep, cow, chicken, goat, etc., but not human faeces); and brown waste (dry leaves, recycled newspaper/cardboard pieces). Remember making compost so that it is ready to put on the garden takes anywhere from 3 to 8 weeks depending on the heat and humidity (see **Fact** below).
- Make manure 'tea' to feed the leaves of the plants. Put a mix of animal manure into a piece of old cloth, tie the top together and submerge the bag into a large bucket of

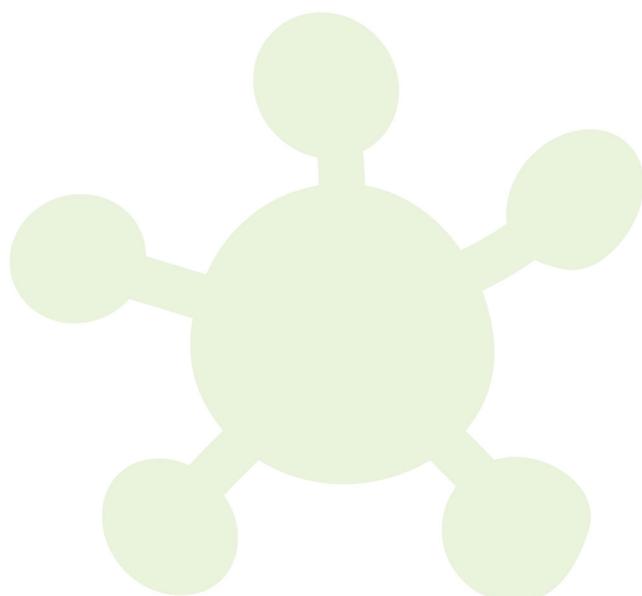
water, leaving it to soak for 3 to 7 days. Then use this as a concentrated fertilizer. You must dilute this with water. Check proportions. Water the leaves of the plants with this. It works quickly as a "tonic" to boost the nutrients to the plant. The plant is able to take up the nutrients through the leaves and into its whole system. Put the manure from the 'tea bag' directly around a larger plant as compost and dig it into the soil.

Fact

- The higher the heat and humidity, the shorter the time it takes to create natural compost to put on your garden as fertilizer. The lower the temperature, and the dryer the air is the longer it will take to be ready. Over winter it may take 3 months, in summer it could be 3 weeks. Compost needs this time to age so that it is mixed well by the insects, microorganisms and worms that feed on the ingredients. They mix them and process them so that it is easier for the plants to use as food.

Reflection

- Is there a plant in the garden that reflects where we are at with God. Are we repenting and staying so close to God that it is helping us produce 'good fruits'? Or are we needing care and help to get there? How are we like or not like a particular plant in the garden?



SESSION 8 | PESTS

THOUGHTS FOR THE LEADER

We live side by side with non-believers. We may not be able to distinguish who are God's chosen ones, because he has made us all differently, and God is to be the judge. We should keep our attitudes and values distinctively grounded in Christ while being amongst unbelievers, whom God will cull out when he harvests. Our responsibility is to ensure our own relationship with God is true, and to ensure that those around us know the way to have an acceptable relationship with God, too.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Matthew 13:24-30 and 36 -43 Read together and/or act out

- *How can a garden help us understand God's big plan (which includes the end of the age, when Jesus returns, etc.)?*
- *Why are weeds so frustrating? (They keep returning, they get in amongst the good plants and can ruin the good that is in a garden, etc.)*
- *What does God do with weeds? (He judges who are the 'weeds' and decides when and what to do with them. It is not our job to judge others. We do not know when or whether someone will bear fruit for God).*

ACTIVITIES AS YOU GARDEN TOGETHER

Observation

- Dig up the roots of a beneficial plant and a weed which are tangled together. Try to pull them apart, and get rid of the roots of the weed.

(In the same way we need to find sin in our life, name it and confess it and get rid of it with God's help. Let's not be vague about our own sin. But NOTE: the passage is more about God being the judge, and He will give us time to bear fruit in our lives to show we are part of his family/kingdom. He is patient and willing to wait for as many to come to Him as possible.)

Practical

- Identify and pull out weeds. Help the children to be careful of weeds tangled around good plants. Burn the weeds if possible/practicable.

Discussion

- How does it feel to have a weed-free garden?
- What do you think the effects will be?
- Do you think they'll come back?

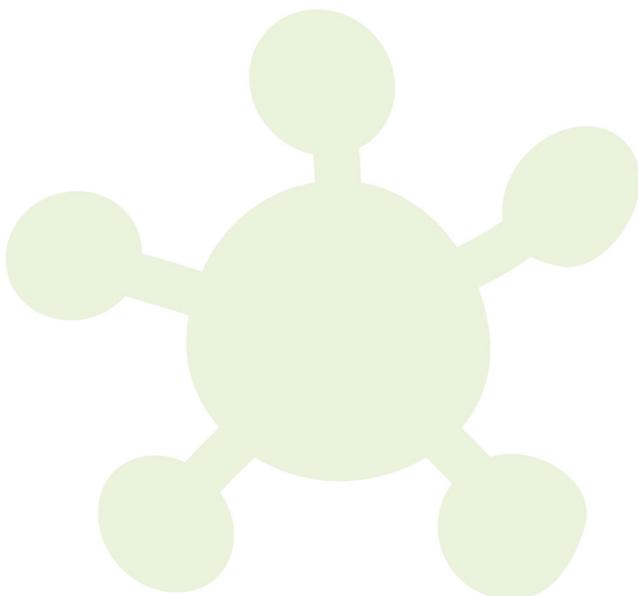
- What will stop them?
- What makes a weed different to a good plant?

Fact

- How to stop weeds: it's good to pull them out before they flower/set seed. If you can identify the weeds when they are seedlings they are easier to pull out. Weeds are very successful at reproducing themselves without adding any benefit to a garden. They may be harmful (e.g. certain weeds in a field where cows are grazing can cause illness in the cattle). Weeds compete for sunlight and nutrients with the good plants.

Reflection

- If we are not to judge others, what can we do to help each other to bear good fruit?



SESSION 9 | HARVESTING

THOUGHTS FOR THE LEADER

It is best if you have something to harvest in your garden before you do this lesson.

- If there is time it might be good to talk with the children about ways of 'harvesting', e.g. how we present a Christian attitude in our families, communities, or at school; how we tell others about Jesus, and then, going the next step, how we ask them to commit to following Jesus? Perhaps work through a simple 'tract' that shares the gospel with kids, and take them through a Believer's Prayer.

Or

- Get kids to draw a picture of a plant, which represents them, and show how God gives us his Word and his Holy Spirit to help us grow (light, water, soil). Our roots are connected to Jesus and this helps us to grow more like him. Our flowers and fruit show us that becoming more like Jesus makes God happy. They are a sign that we are following Him, etc.?
- Give children the opportunity to use the 'garden metaphor' and work out ways of explaining their friendship with God using the garden themes that have been covered in each session so far. They could garden with a partner and share their stories of how they came to believe or where they're at with God, now using the garden as a way of explaining it.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

John 4:34 Read together

- What is harvesting?
- What's Jesus talking about? Is He talking about farming or something else?
- How does harvesting help us understand God's plan to save everyone? *(All Christians have the responsibility of telling others about Jesus. We're part of a team of believers/followers who all have a part to play in bringing people to know and follow Jesus.)*

ACTIVITIES AS YOU GARDEN TOGETHER

Observation

- Look at your garden. Ask the children to tell you which parts of the garden they've worked on and what they've done. Who dug here? Who watered it? Who planted the seeds? Who made the mulch?
- *Read 1 Corinthians 3:6* (Remind them of when you looked at it in the session on 'Seeds'.)

- Say: we have all had different roles in our garden and sometimes we all have different roles in sharing the message of Jesus. I wonder what special role in telling His message God has for each of us? Today we are all harvesters.

Practical

- Involve the children in 'harvesting' or picking whatever is ready in your garden

Discussion

- How do you feel when you pick/ harvest something that you have helped to grow?
- What is good about this harvest today?
- What part of growing plants did you like best?
- What would you like to try growing in future?
- What else do we need to know about these fruits and vegetables now that we have picked them? (*Storage? Food prep? Any further ripening?*)

Fact

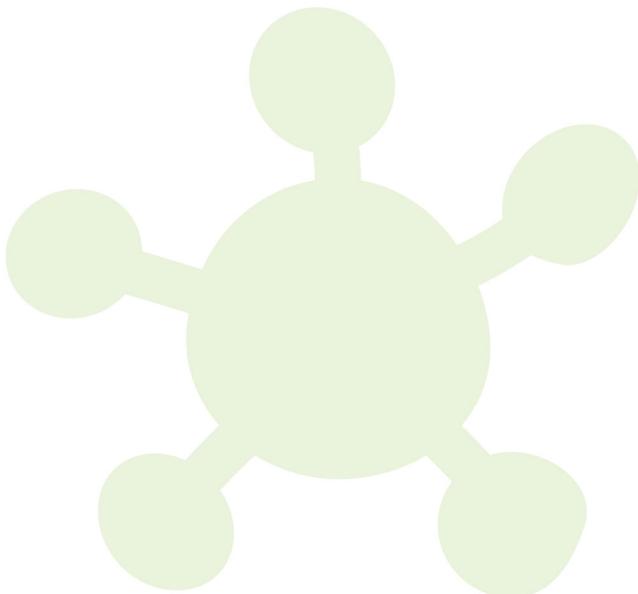
- Some fruits and vegetables are best left on the plant until they are very ripe (show and name some), others can be harvested unripe and left to ripen (show and name some). Explain your reasoning for how you harvest the food grown with the children. (Note that this will depend on the plants/vegetable you are growing.)

Reflection

- Do we want to be harvesters for God and tell others about Jesus? What could we do about that this week? Is there something we could do as a team or with a Christian friend?

OR

- Jesus talks about celebrating together after the harvest, about people celebrating when others turn to him. What would be a big "harvest celebration" for us?



SESSION 10 | HOW'S YOUR HEART?

THOUGHTS FOR THE LEADER

This will be a different session where you give the children an opportunity to talk honestly about how they're going with God. Are they following, trusting and obeying Him? Have they tried telling others and joining in the 'harvest'?

There are some questions titled 'Digging deeper' for those children who are more mature in their faith and want to be challenged in how they are living for God.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Matthew 13:1-9 and 18-23 'Parable of the Sower'

Explain to the children that you are going to look at the Bible story about the Sower again. Before you read the passage together ask the children:

- *Do you remember what happens in the story? (See if they can retell the story or what parts they remember).*

Now read the Bible passage.

Reiterate the previous questions:

- *What soil is best in the story?*
- *What sort of soil do we want to be in this story?*
(Do we want your life to be choked by weeds or by the things of this world, or do we want to see a harvest of others coming to know Jesus?)
- *What would we need to be like to be that kind of soil?*
(Ask God to help us, listen carefully when the Bible is read, be open to hear from God through other Christians)

Now ask the following questions:

Have we done anything to work on becoming the best type of soil, that is, are we someone who hears God's message, changes, responds and obeys?

What challenges have we faced in being the best kind of soil?

What happened since the last session? Did any of us try telling others the message about Jesus? What happened?

Is there something that you would like to pray about with the group or the leader?

Digging Deeper

Give each child a short passage to read from James (see below) and tell them that each passage is a seed from God, a message for our hearts. How do we respond? What does it mean to us? What do we want to do about it?

James 1: 13-15

Don't blame God when you are tempted! God cannot be tempted by evil, and he doesn't use evil to tempt others. 14 We are tempted by our own desires that drag us off and trap us. 15 Our desires make us sin, and when sin is finished with us, it leaves us dead.

James 1:5

If any of you need wisdom, you should ask God, and it will be given to you. God is generous and won't correct you for asking.

James 1:19 -20

My dear friends, you should be quick to listen and slow to speak or to get angry. 20 If you are angry, you cannot do any of the good things that God wants done.

James 2: 8 -9

You will do all right, if you obey the most important law in the Scriptures. It is the law that commands us to love others as much as we love ourselves. 9 But if you treat some people better than others, you have done wrong, and the Scriptures teach that you have sinned.

James 3: 2

All of us do many wrong things. But if you can control your tongue, you are mature and able to control your whole body.

James 3:9-11

My dear friends, with our tongues we speak both praises and curses. We praise our Lord and Father, and we curse people who were created to be like God, and this isn't right. Can clean water and dirty water both flow from the same spring?

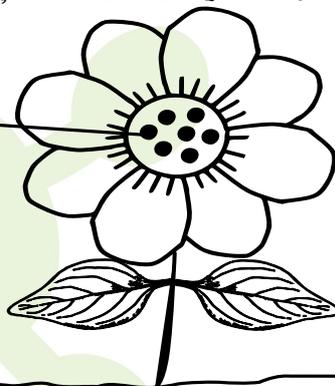
James 3: 16-18

Whenever people are jealous or selfish, they cause trouble and do all sorts of cruel things. But the wisdom that comes from above leads us to be pure, friendly, gentle, sensible, kind, helpful, genuine, and sincere. When peacemakers plant seeds of peace, they will harvest justice

Plants sometimes make flowers. The middle of the flower can turn into seeds when the petals fall off.

We sometimes eat seeds like peas, corn or beans.

new seeds



"Flowers and grass fade away, but what our God has said will never change."
Isaiah 40:8

Final thought for children in your group

Read together James 4:7-9

Encourage them to keep growing their faith in Jesus in the same way they have grown vegetables. Seasons will come and go, there will be times of great growth and some of rest in their lives, some hard times and some good, but we're asked to keep on following Jesus.

Other Activity Options

- Have a celebration eating the food that was grown.
- Give the food grown to others.
- Organize an 'open garden' time when parents, friends, church and community leaders can come and view the garden, and taste some of what has been harvested. Children could talk for a minute each about what they did in the garden and how their knowledge has grown, etc.
- Brainstorm with the children what some of the results of creating the garden has been besides just the harvest. What are the results? (Being able to cooperate and work as a team, seeing their hard work pay off, etc.) The children could do 'body sculptures' representing their thoughts. These could also be presented at an 'open garden' time.
- Children could make a display of what they have grown in their garden to place in a church or community area, or at the 'open garden' time.
- Work in the garden together doing whatever jobs need doing.

