

Group discussion

Jesus said the workers are few, but when we think of those around us who are harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd, how can we bring in the 'harvest' by teaching, preaching, healing the sick and showing compassion?

SCRIPTURE SENTENCE AND SUMMARISE

"But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from You, and we have given You only what comes from Your hand."

1 Chronicles 29:14

God has given each of us diverse spiritual gifts, which are expressions of His grace, that reveal His love to a watching and hungry world. As Christians, we are walking, talking, living, breathing expressions of our generous God to our communities around us. In other words, God becomes visible to the world by the fruits we are given by His Holy Spirit, being 'harvesters' for His Kingdom to come.

CLOSING PRAYER

In a time of silence, let us pray that we may draw closer to the one who has created all things.

Silence is kept.

God of grace, ever creating and restoring, You breathe life into all things and embrace us with an everlasting love; help us to grow in wonder and awe, to embody a spirit of gratitude, and to dream generous dreams; that, in harvesting what we have, we may graciously offer ourselves to accomplish what You will, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen



Bible Study for Harvest



The harvest is plentiful...



OPENING PRAYER

Let everything be said and done in the name of the Lord Jesus, **giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ.**

Let us bring our gifts to the Lord **that they may be used for His glory.**
May the Spirit of God fill our hearts **as we come to meet Him in this place. Amen**

Silence is kept.

Jesus said, "Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me, and I in them, bear much fruit. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

John 15.4-5, 8

God of abundance, the author and giver of all good things; grant us a gracious and humble heart, that we may give You glory through offering the First Fruits of our lives, and grow more into the likeness of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

During in this harvest time together, we are exploring God's generosity to us, and how we can express our gratitude by working with Him to bring His bountiful kingdom to the people around us. We may reflect on how generous giving might be challenging, as we are called to step away from our natural yearning for independence and put our trust more fully in God. We are also going to explore the different types of gifts God has given us through His Holy Spirit, and how we might use them to bring His 'harvest' in.

Paired chat

Share a skill or talent that you are particularly good at or gifted in. If this is tricky, share something you love doing.

FIRST READING

1 Corinthians 12.1-11: ***Spiritual Gifts***



Reflection

Spiritual gifts come in all shapes and sizes, and Paul makes it clear in his letters to the Corinthians (and Galatians) that these diverse gifts are given to us by God through the Holy Spirit. The word Paul uses for spiritual gifts is 'charismata', formed from the word 'charis' meaning 'grace'. Therefore, our spiritual gifts are tangible expressions of grace; God's grace coming into visible effect in word or deed through us. As St Teresa of Avila writes, 'Christ has no body, hands or feet on earth now but yours'.

Paired chat - with an opportunity to share with the group

Share an experience when you have been the recipient of the spiritual gift of another person.

How did that experience bless you?

Group discussion

What do you recognise as your own spiritual gifts, or expressions of grace?

Is generosity a gift from God, for those around us?

How often do we see generosity through this lens?

SECOND READINGS

1 Cor 12.12-14: ***Unity and Diversity in the Body/ One Body, Many Parts***

Romans 12.3-8: ***Humble service in the Body of Christ/ Living Sacrifices***

Reflection

During a visit to the NASA Space Centre in 1962, President John F. Kennedy noticed a janitor carrying a broom. He interrupted his tour, walked over to the man and said, "What are you doing?" "Well, Mr. President," the janitor replied, "I'm helping to put a man on the moon." In this famous story about the NASA Space Centre, the janitor recognises that he is part of a bigger picture, he understood the vision and his part and purpose within it.

In St Paul's letters, after the earlier verses about spiritual gifts, he moves on to speak of the body of Christ, and how each of us play our part within it – all individual, all with different gifts, all equally as important as we are invited to join in with the community of God and the mission and ministry He calls us into.

Paired chat, leading to group discussion

Do we have a tendency to think more highly of some types of spiritual gifts over others? If so, which ones, and why?

How aware are we of the spiritual gifts of others in our community, and how do we encourage them?

THIRD READING

Matthew 9: 35-38 - ***The Lord of the Harvest***



Reflection

In this season of harvest festivals, we take the time to be thankful for the harvest of the fields and being grateful for the farm workers who toil to bring us our food. We also turn our attention to the 'spiritual harvest' and how we can bring God's kingdom here, through our generous God-given skills, experiences, time and resources; we can be 'harvesters' for Christ in thanksgiving for His sacrificial suffering and eternal love for us.