



# Harvest by Josh Grear



## Messy reflection

Then he said to the crowd, 'Don't be greedy! Owning a lot of things won't make your life safe.'

So Jesus told them this story:

A rich man's farm produced a big crop, and he said to himself, 'What can I do? I don't have a place large enough to store everything.'

Later, he said, 'Now I know what I'll do. I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones, where I can store all my grain and other goods. Then I'll say to myself, "You have stored up enough good things to last for years to come. Live it up! Eat, drink, and enjoy yourself!"'

But God said to him, 'You fool! Tonight you will die. Then who will get what you have stored up?'

'This is what happens to people who store up everything for themselves, but are poor in the sight of God.'

Jesus said to his disciples:

I tell you not to worry about your life! Don't worry about having something to eat or wear. Life is more than food or clothing. Look at the crows! They don't plant or harvest, and they don't have storehouses or barns. But God takes care of them. You are much more important than any birds.

Luke 12:15–24 (CEV)

Jesus tells this story of an abundant harvest to teach people about our attitude to wealth – will we build bigger barns and keep the additional harvest for ourselves, or will we have a generous spirit and have faith to rely on God's provision? Harvest is a time when we celebrate the gift of God's creation and its abundance to sustain us. However, while there is enough for everyone, not everyone has what they need to survive, such as a safe secure home, food to eat and water to drink.

The work of Christian Aid challenges these inequalities and highlights how in a world with plenty, everyone should have access to the things they need. Sadly, because of the climate crisis, where people were already struggling to provide for themselves and their families, it is getting harder and harder.

Christian Aid recognises that this is a climate justice issue – the communities on the frontlines of climate change did the least to cause the crisis, yet they experience its worst impact. It is the responsibility of rich nations who have caused the crisis to compensate and accommodate those who are paying the price.

## #discipleship: team

### How does this session help people grow in Christ?

This session will help those present to explore the importance of justice to Christian faith and practice. The session will help them explore themes of God's abundant provision for all people.

## #discipleship: families

### Mealtime card

- Do you have a favourite place in God's creation? Where is it and what do you love about it?
- What is your favourite food?
- Have you ever tried to grow food? What did you grow? What was your harvest like?

### Question to start and end the session

So... if God created earth with enough resources for everyone to live full and happy lives, why do so many people not have the resources to live full and happy lives?

## #discipleship: extra


### Social action

Could you write to a family member or your local MP (or both) about climate justice and the importance of taking action that empowers people who are being affected first, and worst. Our solutions to climate change need to include everyone and include a sustainable future for all, no matter where they are in God's creation.



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## Activities

### 1. Bigger barns giant junk modelling

**You will need: a variety of cardboard boxes of different sizes and shapes; masking tape. You might like to have the Bible passage printed out: Luke 12:15–24**

As a group, create the scenery to tell the story Jesus told of the farmer who had a big harvest, who kept building bigger barns. You will need to make a collection of barns that keeps on getting bigger! Use this during the celebration to tell the story. At the end of Messy Church, remember to take off the tape and recycle the boxes.

**Talk about** the story Jesus told in Luke 12:15–24 of the farmer who kept on building bigger barns to store his bumper harvest.

### 2. Community harvest collage

**You will need: paper; glue; images/magazines with a range of themes of people, places and nature**

Cut out images to make a community harvest collage. Start by writing, 'We give thanks for...' in the middle of a large piece of paper. Add images that represent different things to thank God for. These might be favourite animals, landscapes like the trees in the forest, foods you like to eat, activities you enjoy, or communities of people in faraway places that help you see yourselves and the world differently.

**Talk about** how at harvest time, we celebrate God's gifts, the food we have grown and the wonderful things we have to eat. However, climate change is affecting the harvest in some parts of the world. Right now millions of people in east Africa (Ethiopia, South Sudan and Kenya) are unable to grow crops as the climate crisis rages on. After the worst drought in 40 years, they are facing the threat of famine. Find out more about the Christian Aid Harvest appeal: [christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/harvest-appeal](http://christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/harvest-appeal). How can we pray and make a difference in this situation? What message did Jesus give in the story of the bigger barns (Luke 12:15–24)?



### 3. Prayer people paper chain

**You will need: pens; A5 paper; scissors; colouring pencils; Christian Aid story about impact of climate change on harvest**

The purpose of this activity is to reflect and pray for people around the world who are being affected by the climate crisis and are experiencing harvest failure. Read the Christian Aid story below or watch the video, and then make a people people chain. Cut a long strip of paper and fold the paper accordion-style into a rectangle. Make the folds as even as possible. Draw half a person on one edge of the rectangle. The person's body and head will be on the edge. The arm will extend out to exactly the middle of the paper. Draw the second person on the opposite edge. The second person can be different. Make sure the hands of the two people are touching. Cut out around the people, making sure the hands stay connected. Unfold to reveal a chain of people. There are lots of templates and instructions online you can use to help. Write a short message or prayer on each figure, representing different people on the front line of climate change.

Christian Aid video clip: [youtu.be/N0qBPJpURm0](https://youtu.be/N0qBPJpURm0).

Jen and her husband are farmers in Malawi. The climate crisis has threatened their crops, their homes and their livelihoods. They have two acres of pigeon peas, but they are struggling with the effects of the climate crisis. The rainfall is unreliable, and there are more storms, flooding and stronger winds. Malawi has experienced more severe and frequent cyclones that are threatening whole communities.

Jen and her husband have had to change the crops they grow; they now grow pigeon peas which are a tough plant, able to withstand a lot – just like Jen. To make the most of her crop, Jen needs to plant good quality seeds and sell for the best price possible.

**Talk about** what part of this story stands out for you? Who are the people who are being most affected by climate change? Climate change will affect all of us, but it has been affecting and will continue to affect people living in poverty the worst. What do you think about this?

## 4. Scales of justice

**You will need: balancing scales; a variety of weights**

**Remember to risk assess this!** This exercise is all about learning that when we work together, we can positively change the world. Set up the scales with a heavy weight on one side. It represents a large insurmountable problem, that we want to change. Invite people to take a smaller weight and take turns to see if each smaller weight is enough by itself to balance the large weight. When it doesn't work, take it off and invite someone else to try. After a few goes, ask the group what the problem is (hopefully they will notice the smaller weights on their own are not heavy enough). Ask for suggestions for a solution (adding the weights together).

**Talk about** what the heavy weights could represent? What could the smaller weights represent? When we think about the world and the ways we want to make it better as individuals, it can feel a lot like being a little weight on its own. Making change for the better is hard, and almost impossible on our own. But when we work together with our friends, our families and our community, it's like adding all the little weights together. When we work together, we can make big changes over time, making the world a better place.



## 5. Foods from around the world

**You will need: dried foods from around the world (we recommend lentils, rice, pigeon peas, coffee beans etc.); small bags or cardboard boxes with a hole cut in the side for people to put their hands into**

**Remember to risk assess for allergies.** In each box, put a small amount of dried food. Encourage people to put their hands into the box without looking inside and feel the food, describing the size, texture etc. Can you guess what the food is and where in the world it comes from? Do you eat food with these ingredients?

**Talk about** how at the start of the Bible (Genesis 1), God created the world with enough resources (food, water, natural materials) for everyone to have what they need. However, we read in Genesis 3 that after sin entered the world, our relationship with God, each other and the rest of the creation was broken. We see this in our world today where some people have MUCH more than they need, while lots of people struggle to get enough to live full and happy lives. Jesus told a story about harvest to help people think about how much we really need. Harvest is an important time in the year to think about God's creation and provision. What good things are happening in your life that we can thank God for? How can we make sure everyone has enough to live full and happy lives?





## 6. Design and write a postcard

**You will need: A5 piece of blank thick paper or card; colouring pencils; pencils; colouring pens**

Invite people to think about what a fair and sustainable future for everyone, no matter where they live in the world, could look like. What are their hopes for God's creation? Once they have had a chance to share ideas, ask them to draw a picture of their hopes on a blank postcard. Take photos of the drawings and send them to [schools@christian-aid.org](mailto:schools@christian-aid.org).

Now turn the postcard over and write a message to reflect your hopes for a just and sustainable future for everyone, in all parts of the world. You might like to send these postcards to your local MP as part of a climate justice campaign.

For support on writing to your MP take look here: [christianaid.org.uk/resources/get-involved/beyond-bake-sale](http://christianaid.org.uk/resources/get-involved/beyond-bake-sale).

**Talk about** how all people in the world depend on a healthy natural environment to live full and happy lives. What is your hope for the future? How can we look after the planet and each other better? What would you like people with the power to make decisions to do, what is your message to them?

## 7. Pea seed planting



**You will need: egg boxes or small biodegradable planting pots; scissors; potting soil; pea seeds**

Using scissors, cut the egg boxes into individual pots. Add a small amount of soil to pot. With a finger, make a small hole in the soil, place a pea (or different type of seed depending on the season) in the hole and then cover with more soil. Spray the soil with a little bit of water. Wash your hands afterwards!

**Talk about** how the plants we eat for food need the right conditions to thrive – if it is too hot or too cold, too dry or too wet they won't grow. Plants need the right conditions to flourish. People are also like plants; we need basic conditions to thrive. Sadly, the climate crisis is making it harder for some people to thrive and grow the food that they need. The people most affected by climate change are often the people who have done the least to cause the problem. Christian Aid are working with partners in Malawi, helping farmers transform their livelihoods using pigeon peas: a drought resistant, soil-revitalising, high-protein, low-cost, delicious crop. Find out more here: [christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week/the-big-pea-challenge](http://christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week/the-big-pea-challenge).

Encourage everyone to take their seeds home and look after them – they will need to plant their egg pot into a larger pot with soil (the egg pot will naturally degrade as the plant grows), keep in a warm place like a windowsill and keep moist. Each time they water their pea plant encourage them to pray for people in the world who are struggling to cope with the challenges of farming and growing food as the climate changes.

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## 8. Global connections

**You will need: a large world map; stickers/pins; cork board if using pins**

This is a collective activity. Ask participants to mark (with pins or stickers) places they have been in the world, or places they have connections too – such as via family or friends. They could mark places that they would like to visit, or places where they love the music/food. Use it to explore your shared connections and hopes, as well as celebrating the differences.

**Talk about** how we are connected to people around the world: the food we eat, the places where things are made, where food is grown, where our clothes come from, where our family come from, where our friends come from, the music we make, the cultures we join in with – we are all connected to one another.

We are globally connected! The things we do and the choices we make can be felt around the world – for better or for worse. If we choose to buy ethically sourced food or clothing, it means that elsewhere in the world someone is receiving a fair amount of money for their work. If we chose to raise our voices to call for a fairer world, the impact can be seen and felt elsewhere! What we do matters. How could you shop for food and clothes in an ethical way, that also helps others?

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## Celebration

Start off with a round-up of the different activities.

Using the junk modelled barns as your props, read or act out Luke 12:15-24.

What surprises you about this story Jesus told? What could the farmer have done differently when he had a bigger harvest than expected? What would Jesus do if he had extra food?

God has created the world with enough food for every person! As we celebrate God's generosity and thank God for all the people across the world who work to grow food for everyone to eat and enjoy, let's remember there are a lot of people who find accessing food and resources a challenge, both in the UK and around the world.

Read the Christian Aid story below about Esther from Malawi or watch this video: [youtu.be/JS5CZUSB94I](https://youtu.be/JS5CZUSB94I).

Esther is a woman from Malawi, who no matter what, works hard to care for her family and her community.

Before we start our story, think of someone you know who works hard to care for others.

Malawi is a country in south-eastern Africa and is home to nearly 20 million people. One of those people is Esther. She lives in the southern region of Malawi. Esther is a farmer, a mother to two daughters, a grandmother to two boys, a widow, and she is also a community leader.

For a long time, Esther and her husband worked hard together on their farm growing pigeon peas. Pigeon peas are like normal peas, but they are drought resistant (which means that they can grow even when there isn't much water).

For ten years Esther had been farming pigeon peas. Working hard to provide for her family. But she couldn't get a fair price, and to make matters worse, climate change was making it harder and harder as she was sometimes losing her crop to storms and extreme weather.

### 9. Frank and the pea stalk



**You will need: cushions/blankets/bean bags;**  
**Frank and the Pea Stalk**

Set up a comfortable story corner. This station is a quieter moment to provide space for a familiar story with a twist. Encourage families to read together the Frank and the Pea Stalk story. You can download it here: [christianaid.org.uk/resources/appeals/frank-and-pea-stalk](https://christianaid.org.uk/resources/appeals/frank-and-pea-stalk).

**Talk about** which part of this story do you like best? Which part of this story do you find challenging? Who might the Ogre represent?

### 10. Hunter tag/family tag



**You will need: outdoor space or a big hall**

Hunter tag/family tag is a twist on the classic game of IT/Tag. Start with one person who is 'IT' – their job is to tag other players, except, when they tag someone they have to hold hands and work together to tag someone else. Each time they catch someone their chain gets longer until they have caught everyone.

**Talk about** how the person who was 'IT' started on their own, but as they caught others and their team grew they caught more and more people. Doing big and difficult things is often hard when we are alone, but when we build a community around shared ideas, we can do difficult things together. But it also requires teamwork – we have to communicate well and listen to one another if we are going to do it well.



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Things have gotten a bit easier as she has joined in with Christian Aid's local partners – the Nandolo Farming Association – who have helped farmers like Esther to work together to make sure that they can sell their pigeon peas at a fair price and with a better market. Rather than competing, they work in a cooperative together.

They sell the pigeon peas, as well as bake bread out of pigeon pea flour. By working together, Esther's cooperative have been able to provide for their families and their communities.

Esther has been able to:

- buy tools for her daughter Ziwone's carpentry business
- pay for other daughter, Rashida's school costs, the lodgings near her school and a part-time tutor
- acquire a herd of 13 goats, who provide manure for her crops, saving on expensive fertiliser
- store her pigeon peas in a warehouse, safe from floods and storms
- buy a sewing machine.

While Esther and others like her have been able to benefit by working together, there are more challenges that they have to face. Climate change is still making farming harder in Malawi – they are having more and more extreme weather that damages crops, leaving farmers with less than they need to survive and can leave the community without the food they need too.

Esther and her community are experiencing some of the worst impacts of climate change... but Esther, like most people in Malawi, has done the least to cause climate change.

What do find encouraging about this story?

What do you find challenging about this story?

As we remember and celebrate God's plentiful harvest, it is important to remember that God's plan is for all people, both in the UK and around the world to have enough to live full lives. All that is in the world is provided by God for everyone.

How might we help everyone have the things they need to live full and happy lives?

Have we been building 'bigger barns' and storing things up for ourselves?

What is God asking us to share with others?

## Prayer

*Hold up the prayer people chain from activity three.*

**Loving God,**

**We are sorry when we have not been generous.**

**Show us where we can be generous with sharing our food, money or voices to speak to people who have the power to make the world a fairer and better place for everyone.**

**We give you thanks for the story of Esther and her community that helps each other.**

**May we learn and be inspired**

**to be part of a community that helps each other.**

**Help us look after our global community**

**so that all over the world**

**all people may live full and flourishing lives.**

**Amen.**

## Song suggestions

'Global neighbours' – Fischy Music

'Speak up' – Fischy Music

'Let justice roll like a river' – Fischy Music

'Lighting up the world' – iSingPop

'This is our world' – iSingPop

'Counting every blessing' – Rend Collective

## Meal suggestion

Could your Messy Church organise a bring-and-share community meal? If you have leftover food, make sure you box it up and have it available for people to take away at the end of the session.