

All Things...

Harvest

ideas to use with children and young people



From The Go Team



DIOCESE OF
Bath & Wells

Living the story. Telling the story.

All things Harvest

Introduction

This booklet provides you with a range of ideas to use during Harvest. The Go Team have collated some of their favourite ideas for exploring this central and significant season. You will find ideas for various age groups that you can adapt as necessary for your context. As we seek to live and tell the story of Jesus, we hope and pray that these ideas will help you and provide you with some inspiration for your toddlers, children, youth and families. Many of these ideas have been trialled and tested by ourselves and others. A number of the ideas have an online link for you to follow for further explanation.

For further help and support do contact one of the Go Team Advisers. We would love to hear your stories and experiences of using this resource. Please share them with us through sending us an email or sharing your photos with us on Twitter (@GoTeamAdvisers) and Instagram (goteamadvisers).

For more resources and to sign up to our newsletter **Inform** visit:

<https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/ministry/children-young-people>

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Top 10 Ideas for under 5s...

1. Make a place mat to use at meal times:

We have a daily opportunity to thank God for our food, some households will say a thank you prayer together before some or all meals, some may struggle in amongst the busyness of life. This activity gives children an opportunity to create their own reminder to say 'thank you' to God for their food.



For each child, you will need:

- ◆ A piece of A4 or A3 paper/card.
- ◆ Give children a range of colouring materials and/or cut out pictures of food from magazines. Let them decorate their page with pictures of food and drink.
- ◆ Pre-print labels, saying 'Thank you God for my food' and stick one on top of the children's creation.
- ◆ Once dry, laminate the page and send home to be used as a placemat and a daily reminder to thank God for our food.

2. Harvest sensory tray:

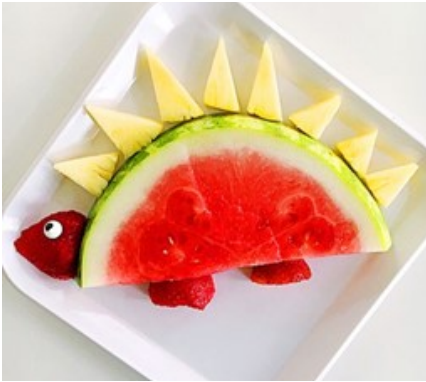
Make some playdoh to reflect the season (this may be an opportunity to blend all of your previously used playdoh together to form a brown, murky colour to reflect soil). You may like to add a suitable scent to the playdoh to provide a fuller sensory experience. See an easy play dough recipe and ideas here: <https://theimaginationtree.com/best-ever-no-cook-play-dough-recipe/>

Fill your tray with items that reflect the harvest season: tractors and trailers; plastic or real fruit and vegetables; grain, rice and corn. Engaging children in play such as this, provides an opportunity to engage in conversation with the children, helping them to think about the creator. You may like to tell the children a story such as the Parable of the Sower, before giving them time to play with the items in the sensory box.



3. Fruit/Vegetable animals:

For toddlers, helping them develop their creativity and fine motor skills is a vital part of their development. Providing children with opportunities to do this in our church groups is good and important. Why not tell the Story of Creation to your under 5s, you could use the Bible app for kids (<https://www.bible.com/en-GB/kids>) which is an interactive and brilliantly put together app for children. As a response, encourage the children to think about all the wonderful things God created. Provide the children with a range of pre cut fruit and vegetables and encourage them to make animals from them. It would be helpful to provide them with some pictures and examples. They may choose to recreate an animal that exists or it maybe an imaginative animal that they have created—both are fine. Think carefully about which fruit and vegetables you provide, as young children are likely to attempt to eat them, whether they taste good raw or not!



4. Treasure hunt:

Use the Parable of the Mustard Seed to talk about the awesomeness of God and how He can do incredible things with small things, like the mustard seed.

Find an image of a tree (example in appendix 1), ideally laminate it and cut it up into around 5-10 pieces. Hide the pieces of the tree outside in a safe space or in a suitable inside space if it is raining. Challenge children to find all the individual pieces and then assemble the tree – you may like to talk about the different parts of the tree, starting with the roots, then the trunk, then the branches, then the leaves, then the flowers/fruit and finally the birds. Make reference to the parable of the mustard seed, reminding the children how incredible it is, that something so small can turn into something so beautiful that even homes birds and living things.



5. Planting seeds:

To link into well known bible stories already mentioned, such as the Parable of the Sower and the Parable of the Mustard Seed, giving children an opportunity to plant seeds and nurture them and to help them grow, is an important and exciting activity for young children. Cress or mustard seeds are an easy option, but you may have skilled gardeners in your teams who maybe able to suggest alternative options.

6. Fruit/Vegetable/Tractor tyre printing:

Prepare to get messy! Cover the area you are using with plenty of protective plastic (cheap shower curtains are perfect!). Have a range of different coloured paint available on plates. Have a selection of fruit and vegetables such as carrots, potatoes, leek, sweetcorn, apples, peppers available. You may like to cut some of them in half or cut shapes such as crosses, hearts and stars into the vegetables such as the potatoes. Toy tractor tyres also provide great printing marks.

Have large strips of paper available (lining wallpaper is a good cheap option). Allow the children the freedom to cover the paper in different fruit and vegetable prints.

If you are feeling extra brave, you could produce a reusable tablecloth! Use a white sheet and watered down fabric paints. We definitely recommend that children wear aprons or old shirts to stop them getting non-washable paint on their clothing!



7. Harvest pizza:

Food based activities are so often a winner with people of all ages! What better way to celebrate and remind children of harvest, than to make their own food from items that have been harvested. Ensure children have washed their hands prior to starting this activity. The following link gives a simple and basic recipe for making a pizza base, but depending on the number of children you have, you may choose to buy pre-made pizza bases. Cover the bases in passata, or a homemade tomato sauce or even ketchup. Have a range of toppings available (try to make them as seasonal as possible) and give the children the freedom to create their own pizza. If you have the facilities to cook the pizza on site, do so, but ensure risk assessments are completed and that children do not go near to hot ovens. Alternatively, you may wish to send the uncooked pizzas home, with instructions on how to cook them.

Here's the recipe: <http://www.sunhatsandwellieboots.com/2012/07/mini-olympic-pizzas.html>

You can unpack lots of conversations about where our food comes from with the children and help the children explore ways of thanking God for the many wonderful foods we get to enjoy each and every day.



8. Shakers and music:

Young children often love different sounds and music. Seeds, rice, pasta and dried vegetables make brilliant shaker fillings. Gather together a range of plastic bottles that have a lid that can be sealed tightly. Provide children with stickers, ribbons etc to decorate their shaker. Help them to quarter to half fill the bottles with rice, dried peas, corn or similar. Seal the lids tightly and you will have a bunch of toddlers with their own 'noisy' musical instruments!

Encourage them to use their newly acquired instruments in some worship. Examples of some great music to use with this age group are:

- ◆ Tracks from Nick and Becky Drake on their recent album 'All Through History' are written for all ages. They have some great creation themed songs that could link into harvest and be used with your under 5s.
- ◆ 'Out of the Ark Music' tracks are frequently used within schools, for some harvest inspired songs, search their website or YouTube channel for some inspiration.
- ◆ Playtime Praise Songs for Toddlers—this is an album full of songs especially for toddlers. It has been put together by Playtime, who are a strand of Care for the Family.
- ◆ Big Ministries—The All-In Thing—this is another album that has been put together to engage with all ages. There are many family songs on the album, but presented in a contemporary way.



9. Make a Harvest Hamper for your local Foodbank:

It is great for children to start thinking about how they can support and show compassion for others. Often children do this naturally, but one way to help them think about people in your local area is to provide them and their families with an opportunity to support a local Foodbank or charity. Talk to the children and their families about the different things they can collect. The children will have a lot of fun looking at all the tins and packets and arranging them in a box. To find your nearest Foodbank in the UK visit [The Trussell Trust](http://www.trusselltrust.org), or contact your local council for information on how you could help a local charity with a food donation.



10. Seed mosaics:

Use the Parable of the Sower to think about how things grow and who the greatest gardener is.

Encourage children to draw a simple outline of a seed, branch or tree (or print out a stencil from the web) and glue along the outlines. Pour on some seeds and leave to dry, then lift up your paper to see your very own seed art!

Top 10 Ideas for children...

Some of the suggestions and activities in this section were adapted from ideas produced by the Farming Community Network: <http://fcn.org.uk>

1. Harvest Displays:

Work with your children's leaders to design and make a Harvest display in the church that speaks of how God provides. You can use different displays and produce. The Harvest display can also be used as a Harvest prayer station. All the produce can be given to a project after the Harvest service.



2. Harvest fun activities:

Arrange a special church / school Harvest event after the Harvest day service with your children's group or class friends (the leaders will need to help). Invite all the parents, families and friends. The church can organise a 'bring and share' lunch and invite a few local farm stalls to be present. The children can organise some harvest linked games and activities.

Suggested activities:



Make traditional corn dollies or wreaths



Welly throwing



Apples on a string



Harvest soaking with sponges and water

3. Harvest craft and story telling:



Using craft materials and lolly sticks or garden canes, make stick people puppets, seed puppets and plant puppets etc. linked to farming and harvest. You could also make a background stage set. Then use the puppets to re-tell the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13: 1-23).

http://www.dltk-bible.com/cv/jesus_tells_stories.htm

4. Harvest exchange:



Think about how others celebrate Harvest.

Twin your children's group / class with a church / school in a different sort of community (if you are in a rural community, twin with an urban area and vice versa). You could do a joint project sharing what Harvest means to you in your settings and how you celebrate it. You could use art, stories, photographs, a logbook. You could even set up an interview or video call via Zoom or other platform.

If your church or school has a link with a country overseas, this could be done with them too. This would add a global dimension.



5. Who provides the food we eat?:



Invite the children in your group to bring 5 different items of food from home to your group. Talk about how they think these food items were grown, made, produced.

If you have access to the internet you could do some research to help with the discussions.

Reflect on how farmers and shops provide our food; look at how God provides for us. Read the Feeding of the 5,000 (Matthew 14: 13-21). Consider how Jesus provided in the story. Use this as an opportunity to pray with your children, using something like the example below:

Foodie prayer (the children could rewrite their own version of this prayer)

Leader: For food, glorious food and those who provide it

Children: Let us praise God

Leader: For potatoes and pasta, crumbly cheese and juicy tomatoes

Children: Let us praise God

Leader: For the smell of freshly baked bread, for butter and honey, jam and cream

Children: Let us praise God

Leader: For colourful carrots and bendy bananas, peppers and peanuts and pears

Children: Let us praise God

Leader: For sizzling sausages and bacon butties, for crunchy apples and seedless grapes

Children: Let us praise God

Leader: For milk and for juice, for fish and for chips

Children: Let us praise God

Leader: For chocolate and for biscuits, for cornflakes and toast

Children: Let us praise God

Leader: For food, glorious food and those who provide it

Children: Let us praise God

All: Amen

6. Harvest shoeboxes:



Instead of just doing the normal bring a tin to church at the Harvest service or school assembly, why not run a Harvest shoe box campaign similar to the Christmas shoe box campaign? These can be done by individual children, a group effort, in a school class or as a family. You can work with local charities to distribute them to families who struggle. You can collect a mix of food and personal items.

In preparation, boxes can be decorated, painted or wrapped in the week leading up to the Harvest service. This personalises the boxes.

Prayers can be said for those receiving the boxes and those organisations distributing the boxes and those who support vulnerable families and individuals.

7. Harvest bread:



Discuss with the children all the things they think are made from wheat. Then focus on the different stages of making bread: planting, cutting, harvesting, milling, grinding, baking and eating. Think about who is involved at each stage of the process.

Then make either a Harvest sheaf or Harvest plait rolls. You will need to find a bread recipe and have somewhere to cook the bread. If you don't have access to an oven you could just bake a normal loaf using a bread maker.

Have a conversation with the children about what Jesus says about bread in John 6: 29-25.

8. Fairtrade Harvest:



Consider doing a Fairtrade project in your church / school.

Introduction to Fairtrade:

Fairtrade is a worldwide movement to help farmers and producers in poorer countries to get a fair price for the goods that they produce. Goods that are sold with a Fairtrade label mean a fair price is paid to those who have produced it and the community in which they live benefit too. Fairtrade products include coffee, sugar, tea, chocolate, cotton, wine, bananas, and handicrafts.

Use this link to watch a short film about Fairtrade cocoa beans that are used to make hot chocolate:

<https://schools.fairtrade.org.uk/resource/my-fairtrade-adventure-ages-7-11/>

The children could have a discussion about how they want to respond or what they can do to help introduce Fairtrade products into their homes, churches and/or schools.

Here are some links for a more global understanding of Harvest and Fairtrade around the world:

<https://schools.fairtrade.org.uk/resource#page-1>

<https://www.theschoolrun.com/homework-help/fair-trade>

<http://www.funkidslive.com/learn/environment/f-is-for-fairtrade/>

[Send a Cow | Church Harvest](#)

Biblical perspective:

Read Psalm 8 to show how God invites us to help look after the world and all the things in it.

Prayer:

Invite the children to look at their left hand. Explain there are five parts to this prayer and we will be using the fingers on the left hand, whilst holding each finger with their right hand.

Little finger – pray for those local and around the world who do not have enough food and go hungry.

Ring finger – pray for farmers and those who make food for others around the world.

Middle finger – pray for all who work in shops to sell food to us and those in food outlets who serve us.

Index or pointy finger – pray for those who help farmers to get a fairer trade for the food they produce.

Thumb – give thanks for our favourite food that nourishes us and helps us to grow.

Amen

9. Visit a farm:



Consider arranging a trip to a local farm to find out more about farming and harvest from the farmer. This will need to be done safely. If it is not possible to visit a farm, invite a farmer to come to your children's group to tell you what it is like to be a farmer and work on the land, interview the farmer encouraging the children to ask questions. Here is a useful link for safely visiting a farm; it includes a generic risk assessment: <http://www.farmsforschools.org.uk/ffsinformation/healthandsafety.htm>

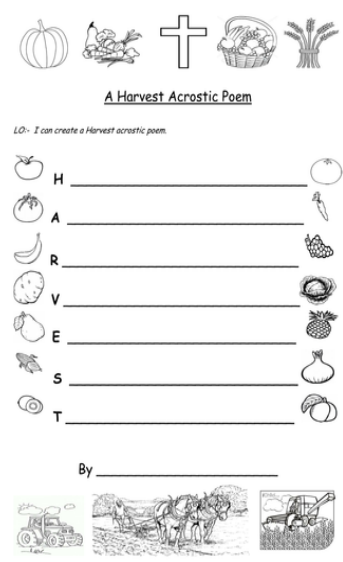
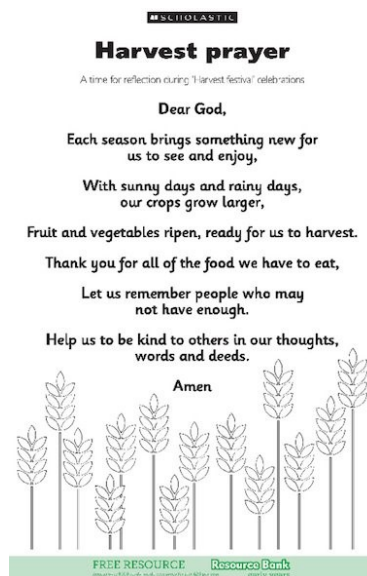
If neither of the above is possible, arrange a trip with your children's group / class to a local Farmers Market. Speak to the people there about how they got their produce and where it came from. Look at the packaging and range of things on sale. Then take the group to a local supermarket and look at what is available there and how it is packaged. Then talk with the children about any differences and similarities.

Use this as an opportunity to thank God for his amazing creation and for the wonderful farmers who God has called and equipped to work the land in our country and beyond.

10. Poems and prayers:

Encourage your group or class to think about harvest and invite the children to write a poem, prayer, or acrostic poem about Harvest. These could be read out at a harvest service or assembly.

Here are some examples:



5. Harvest Quiz

Here is a short quiz on harvest related things, adapted from the BBC website, to test your young people's knowledge...

1. When peas are harvested, how long do farmers have to get them from the field to the freezer to maintain maximum freshness?

- a) 30 minutes b) **2½ hours** c) 6½ hours d) 12 hours

2. A harvest Moon is the full Moon closest to the autumnal equinox, when night and day are equal in length. What is the name for the full Moon that comes after it?

- a) **Hunter's Moon** b) Deer-mating Moon c) Red-plum Moon d) Full-beaver Moon

3. In a much-celebrated April Fool's spoof in 1957, the BBC filmed "spaghetti crops" being harvested. In which country did it claim the crop was grown?

- a) **Switzerland** b) Italy c) Turkey d) Wales

4. Crop Over is the name for the Harvest Festival in which country?

- a) South Africa b) New Zealand c) **Barbados** d) Zambia

5. What is special about the harvest mouse?

- a) It's the world's smallest rodent
b) **It has a prehensile tail**
c) It can only be found in Yorkshire
d) All of the above

6. Many apple varieties are harvested in the UK at this time of year, but why did one apple in Devon make the news?

- a) **It was half red and half green**
b) It was the world's largest apple
c) It had no pips
d) It looked like it had the face of Jesus in the centre

7. In ancient Greek religion and myth who is the goddess of the harvest?

- a) Dionysus b) Ceres c) **Demeter** d) Harvestius

Correct answers in **bold**.

Quiz adapted from BBC website.



6. Parable of the Sower on location

How about getting outside with your group, and if possible heading out into the countryside and reading the Parable of the Sower 'on location'?

Jesus told this parable outside and to those who would have understood the metaphor of sowing and growing seeds (you can find it recorded in Matthew 13, Mark 4 and Luke 8). Read the story together and perhaps bring it to life by scattering some actual seed, walking along a path, looking at different types of plants etc.

Ask the group what they think Jesus was meaning when he told this story to those gathered. Notice that this is the only parable where Jesus explains it's meaning to his disciples afterwards. What do you think it means for us who have heard the 'message about the Kingdom' to 'produce a harvest'? Pray for one another that having heard the message we may grow in faith and be fruitful.

7. Praying for harvests around the world

Use a large world map (or a globe) to think with the group about harvests around the world.

Where are the harvests good and plentiful?

Where is there shortage due to drought or other adverse weather conditions?

Find out what the group know already, perhaps things they've learnt in school or from family & friends.

Add in things you know about specific places around the world – it may be your church has a link with Zambia or somewhere else that your church prays for regularly. Take time to pray for different countries around the world – for those in plenty to share and take action as well as for those in need.

Feeding the World

(Tearfund prayer)

Lord, the scale of global poverty is beyond our understanding.

Give bread to those who are hungry,
and hunger for justice to those who have bread. In Jesus' name.

Amen

A Prayer for Harvest Sunday

(Gideon Heugh, Tearfund)

Lord of the Harvest, we thank you for your creation,
For its beauty and fruitfulness,
We thank you for blessing us with our daily bread.

Lord of Mercy, we confess to you our failure
To be wise stewards of this world,
We confess to you our selfishness in not sharing the earth's bounty fairly.

Lord of Justice, we pray for those living in poverty
And cry out for an end to inequality,
We pray that you help us to help others, that all might live a life of plenty.

Amen



8. A changing climate

Climate change and the effect it has on harvests around the world has been a much debated issue that your young people may have strong opinions about. A variety of Christian organisations are campaigning on the issues around climate change, check out the resources and ways your group could get involved on the following websites:

Christian Aid www.christianaid.org.uk/campaigns

Tearfund www.tearfund.org/takeaction

A Rocha arocha.org.uk/

Send A Cow [Send a Cow | Our action on the climate crisis](#)

9. Big Bake

One great way of getting active around Harvest time is by being part of Tearfund's Big Bake and fighting poverty. If you've got budding bakers inspired by the Great British Bake Off in your group (or some parents/grandparents/friends who are) why not organise a Big Bake Sale with your group to raise money and awareness of others who don't have the plenty that many of us do. Find out more and sign up for resources at www.tearfund.org/big-bake



10. Harvest campfire

Before the nights draw in too far, how about getting out around the campfire with a harvest twist? Portable metal fire pits are readily available and so as long as you think through the potential safety concerns and do a simple risk assessment you could have a 'campfire' just about anywhere, even if you don't have a local woodland campfire area.

Whilst around the fire toasting your marshmallows you could encourage the group to think about the good things they enjoy (amazing world around us, food on our plates, things we might take for granted) and speak out prayers of thanks. Then turn to prayers for each other (quietly all praying for the person on your right) asking God to help you share the good things with others.



Appendix 1



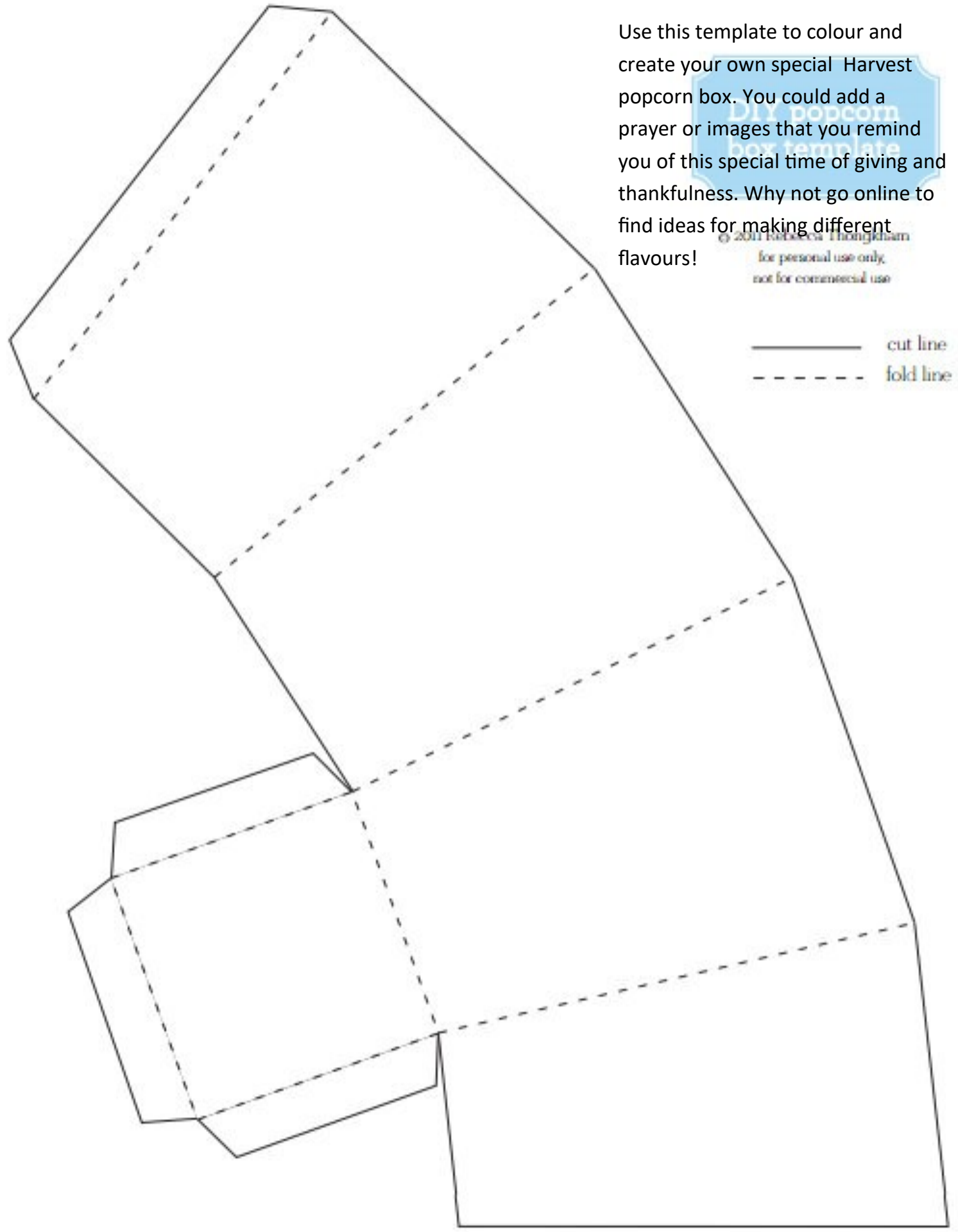
Harvest Popcorn

Use this template to colour and create your own special Harvest popcorn box. You could add a prayer or images that you remind you of this special time of giving and thankfulness. Why not go online to find ideas for making different flavours!

DIY popcorn box template

© 2011 Rebecca Thompson
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not for commercial use

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Ethical and Sustainable Arts and Crafts Suppliers



Arts and crafts activities offer endless opportunities for learning about faith and creation and as a way to express thoughts, feelings and experiences throughout our Christian journeys. As good stewards of creation and the resources God has given us, we can commit to giving due consideration to the materials we use and where possible, choose ethical, sustainable and recycled or upcycled products that produce minimal waste and environmental harm.

Below is a brief guide to sourcing ethical and sustainable materials for Sunday school meetings, Messy Church, Youth Groups and craft groups. Realistically, some products do cost more but many are very reasonably priced and planning ahead can help keep costs low (e.g. accessing sales and end of season items or bulk-buying if possible).

Upcycle and Recycle First:

The most sustainable materials are those that are being reused or repurposed. We are blessed in the diocese to have multiple scrap-stores which for a small fee offer a wide range of materials and craft essentials.

Yeovil: <https://www.thehubyeovil.co.uk>

Weston Super Mare: <http://communityscrapstore.org.uk>

Glastonbury: <http://yeastscrapstore.co.uk>

Ethical Kidz:

Ethical Kidz has a clear and easy to use website that provides ethical and sustainable craft products and gifts including Fairtrade and charity-supporting purchases. They also have an excellent overview of their business considerations including how they reduce their own energy use and waste.

See <https://www.ethicalkidz.co.uk/shop/fairtrade/>

Yarn Yarn:

Specialising in yarns and fabrics from India that support women's co-operatives, Yarn Yarn provides some beautiful, handmade supplies that also reduce waste and encourage a circular economy. See <https://www.yarnyarn.co.uk/pages/our-yarn-journey-1>



Conscious Craft:

Conscious Craft offer a wide range of plastic and waste free craft materials, toys and educational materials with the aim of providing items that will last. See <https://consciouscraft.uk>

Myriad:

Myriad has an expansive range of sustainable products, mostly produced in Europe and they do not use air freight. They source their products solely from manufacturers who pay fair wages.

See <https://www.myriadonline.co.uk>

Baker Ross:

A well-known craft supplier with a good ethical policy. Whilst they still have some way to go to be sustainable, there are sustainable and low waste options including a natural materials section.

See <https://www.bakerross.co.uk>

And finally, please share your stories, questions and sustainable craft photos with us.

For more info about our Diocesan Environment policy visit: www.bathandwells.org.uk/faith/environment



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