

Welcome, Garden HERO

(That's our fun name for amazing kids like you)

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR
HELPING US WITH THIS EXCITING
PROJECT!

You are doing a **wonderful** thing by helping your parents give food to people who are hungry. Helping people in need, especially people who don't have enough food to eat, is something God actually tells us to do in the Bible:

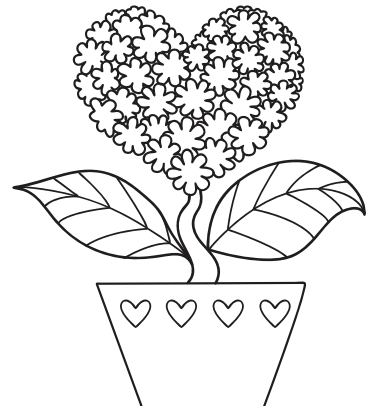
*"There will **always** be some in the land who are poor. That is why I am commanding you to **share freely with the poor and with others in need.**"*

Deuteronomy 15:11

That is what YOU are doing!

WOW!

From all of us on the Garden Outreach team,
thank you from the bottom of our hearts!



Dear parents,

Thank you for participating in **Grow2Give**! We're thrilled to be able to offer your family this unique opportunity to find amazement in the natural food God has blessed us with.

This is also a wonderful time to teach children, regardless of their age, that they **do** and **can** have an important part to play in helping people in need. That by helping provide for those in need, and with your guidance, they will be encouraged and inspired to seek out new opportunities to show compassion.

The following pages include ideas of how to use gardening as a means of teaching your young children about God, gardening, and assisting people in your community. These ideas are geared toward children in 3rd to 6th grade.

Consider "spreading out" the following activities over several days, or even a couple of weeks. They are not meant to be presented as an hour long Sunday School lesson, but rather as touch-points during the larger gardening process. If you received the planting kit, I suggest starting with planting the seeds first, since children will be most interested in this part of the process. Then, every couple of days, do one of the other activities to keep their interest in the project and deepen their understanding of how this process relates to serving God.

Finally, Page 1 and 8 are for specifically for your child, from us. It includes simple spiritual lessons and, with your help, provide your child with encouragement to continue growing in love and compassion.

Thank you again. Your energy and compassion inspire us all.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.



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Parable of the Sower (1)

Luke 8:5-8

Have children look up and read the Parable of the Sower – Luke 8:5-8 in their Bible. (Other accounts are Matthew 13:3-8 & Mark 4:3-8. Perhaps read all three accounts and compare them. What is different? What is the same?)

Questions for discussion:

1. **What is a seed?** Answer: *a seed is an embryonic plant enclosed in a protective outer covering. In short, a seed has the POTENTIAL to become a plant.*
2. **If I said YOU were a seed, what do you think that means?**
Answer: *YOU have everything inside of you to become the productive “fruitbearing” person God wants you to become.*



Parable of the Sower (2)

Let's look at the elements of Jesus' parable (a parable is a story meant to teach a lesson).

THE ROADSIDE. This is NOT where seeds are meant to be planted. The seeds don't belong there. The birds eat the seeds and they never get to grow into plants. They never use their **POTENTIAL**.

SNACK: Have a snack of sunflower seeds or pumpkin seeds or trailmix that has seeds in it. Enjoy the snack as you discuss the rest of the parable.

ROCKY GROUND. The plants can't send roots down into rocky ground. Without good roots the plant quickly dies. Why? Roots are what feed the plant, they bring in nutrients from the water and soil up into the plant. They also provide an anchor for the plant to give it stability so it can grow up. Think about how tree roots hold a tree in place even in windy, stormy weather.

Parable of the Sower (2, continued)

Questions: What do you think Jesus is getting at? What are your roots? What are the nutrients that you need to be a follower of Jesus? What helps you stay rooted when life gets tough?

EXPERIMENT: pick a flower and leave it on the counter over night. What happens to it? Did it wither up and die? Without being connected to the roots, the flower had no way of getting the nutrients it needed to live.

Now try this: leave a stalk of celery on the counter over night. What happened? It wilts. Take the wilted celery and put it in a cup of cool water. Leave it there for a couple hours. What happens to the celery after just a couple of hours in the water? It revives! Why? Because it has access to nutrients again!

Questions: How do you think this is like us? What are our roots? What gives us stability when life gets tough? How are we fed to grow up to be the strong fruitful people God has given us the potential to become? What happens to us if we don't get God's Word in us?



Parable of the Sower (2, continued)

WEEDS. Print off the “weeds” coloring sheet. Let children color it in while you consider the following points:

Weeds are often very pretty plants. Look at some of the ones on the sheet. They are probably plants you have seen, and maybe even picked to make a wildflower bouquet. Dandelions, clover, Queen Anne’s lace, thistle, goldenrod, mustard. But here’s the thing, they aren’t helpful to the plants you are trying to grow in your garden. As a matter of fact, they can use up the nutrients your vegetables need, and they compete for space in the garden and choke out your vegetable plants.

Things in our life can be like that. They may not necessarily be bad things, but they can take up too much of our time and energy. They just aren’t helpful in making us more like Jesus and living up to our God given Potential.

GOOD GROUND. God is the farmer in this parable. (A “sower” is someone who scatters or plants seeds, a farmer).

“I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and soul” says the LORD (Jer. 32:41)

This verse is talking about how God planted the people of Israel, his chosen people. **You** are also one of God’s chosen people, and he has planted you in good ground too. He has planted **you** in loving families who love God. He has planted **you** in meetings with caring Sunday school teachers, CYC leaders, and many friends who can help you as you grow in your faith. **They are all part of the good ground that can have you reaching your Potential to be fruitful in your life to God.**



The Environment

Good Soil

Now we are going to talk about environment. Good soil is one part of the environment a plant needs to unlock its potential to become healthy and productive, but good soil alone is not enough.

Questions: *What other elements of the environment does a plant need besides good ground?*

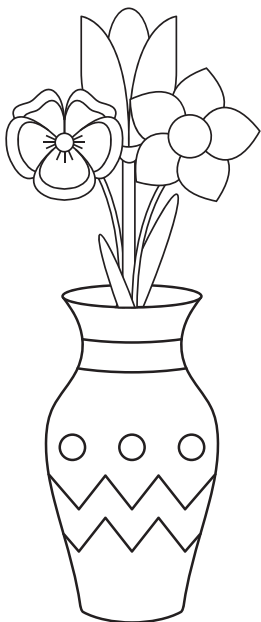
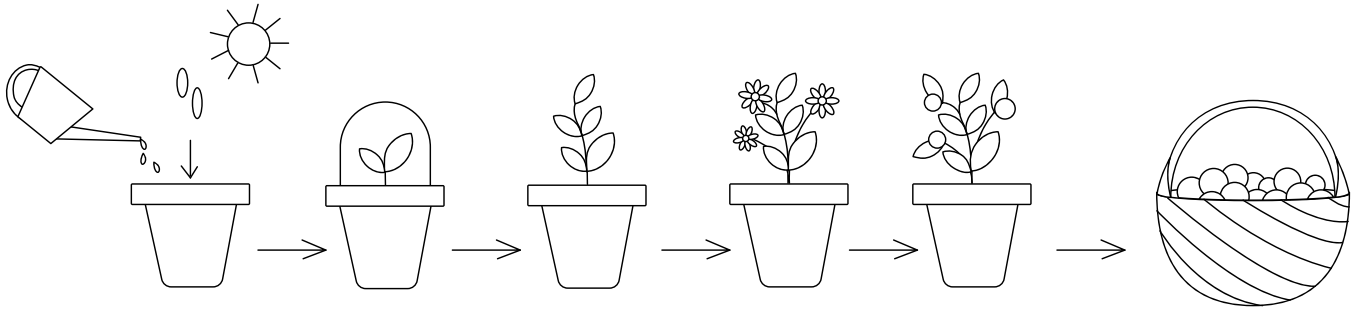
Answer: LIGHT + WATER

Can you think of any Bible verses that talk about **LIGHT**? Look up the following verses and read them:

1 John 1:5, Psalm 119:105.

What about **WATER**? Can you think of any Bible verses that talk about water?

Read John 4:10-11. Who is the water we need? Jesus!



Changing Colors

Luke 8:5-8

Here's a neat science activity to help explain what Jesus means about being living water. At the grocery store or florist, buy a couple of WHITE carnations. When you get home find a clear vase or glass to put them in. When you trim down the stems, be sure to cut them at an angle and not just straight across. Now put the flowers in the glass of water. Add 25 drops of food coloring to the water (any color is fine). Put the flowers in a sunny window and watch what happens over the next day or two.

Did you notice the flowers sucking up the colored water into themselves? The flowers become the color of the water they are drinking up. Jesus is the water, and the more we learn about him, the more we become like him, just like the flowers became the same color as the water in the glass!

What is your fruit?

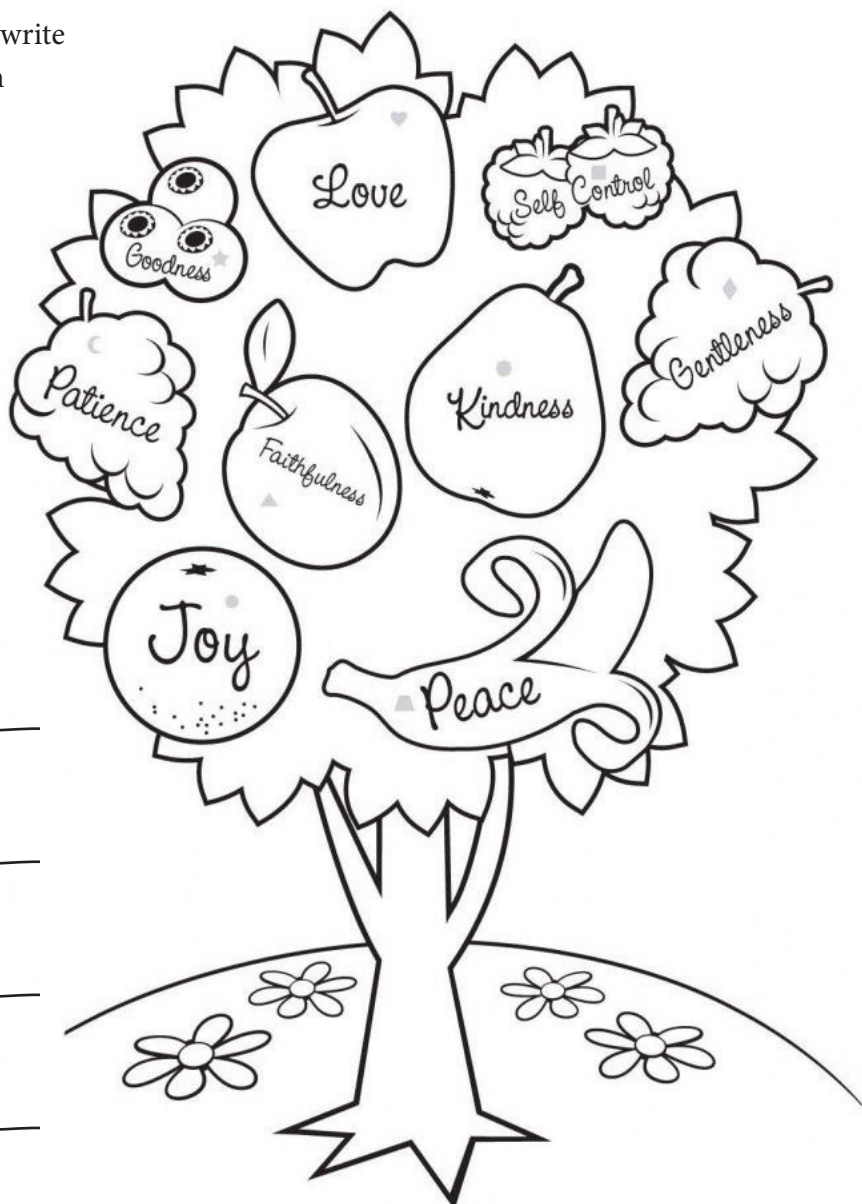
We are seeds in God's garden. We are in good ground, and we have the light of God's word and the living water of Jesus. We have everything we need to unlock our God given Potential. We can grow to be strong and productive and fruitful in our life.

That is our final question to think about – what is your fruit? Galatians 5 says the Fruit of the Spirit is LOVE and that we can show that in different ways: through joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.

Can you think of examples for any of these?

Color the Fruit of the Spirit tree, and write your ideas of how you can show them on the lines below.

How I can show
fruits of the spirit:



You're Awesome!!

Now that you know a bit more about seeds and how things grow, and especially your amazing potential and the ways you can show the fruits of the spirit, think about how Jesus showed his love and kindness. Jesus helped people who were sad feel happy again and he's asked you to do the same thing. And you know what?

YOU CAN!

There are so many ways to help people. We can give them a friendly smile, hold the door open for them, or just say "hello". We can also help people by giving them things they don't have, like food. There are a lot of hungry people in the world and maybe even some in your neighborhood as well.

If your parents say it's okay, your family could give the fruits and vegetables you're growing with people who are hungry by donating to a food bank! That would be so helpful!

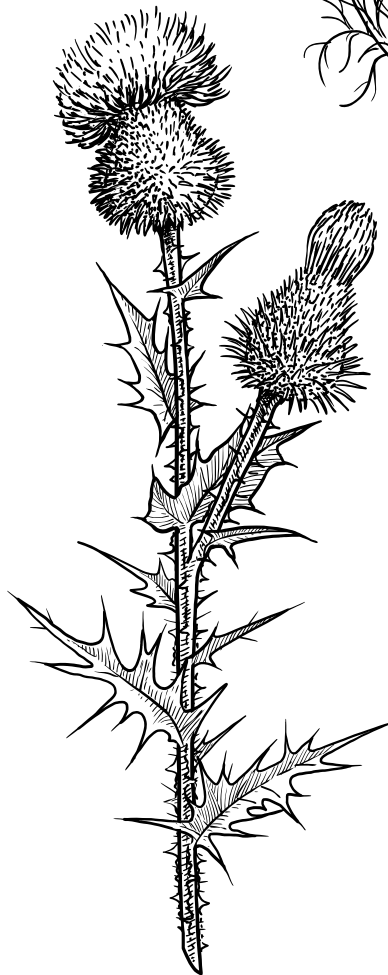
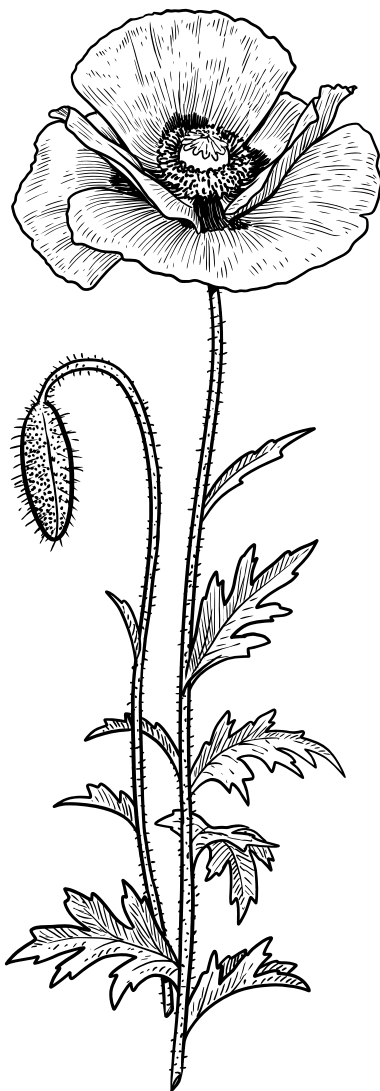
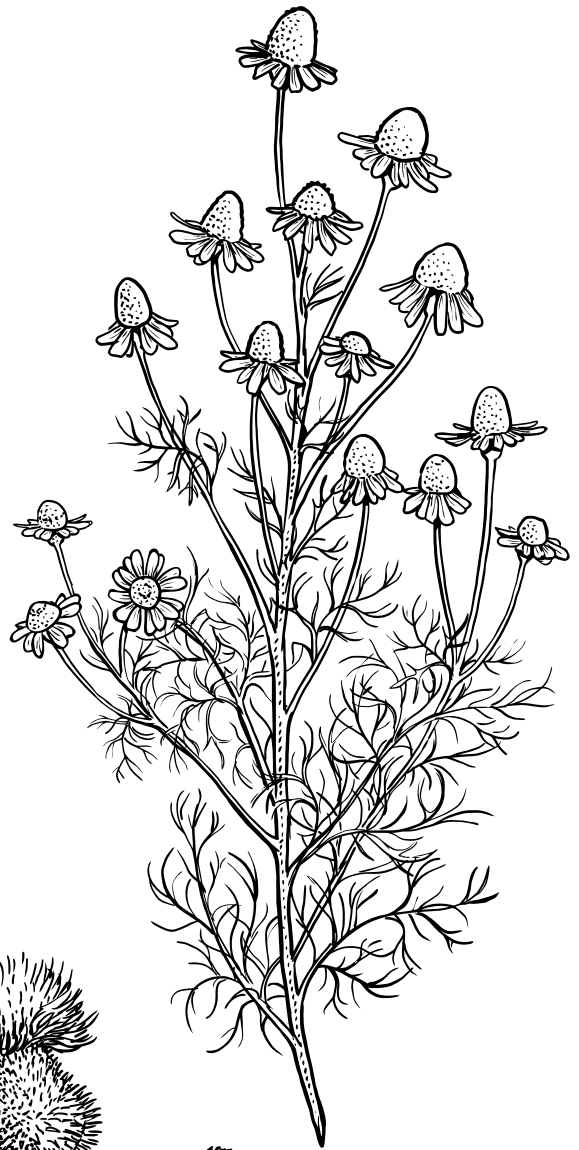
Thank you for helping us with this! We've left you your very own garden to color and decorate. Ask your parents to send us a photo once you're done and show us how colorful and creative you made it!



Weeds



Weeds



My name is _____ and this is my garden!

