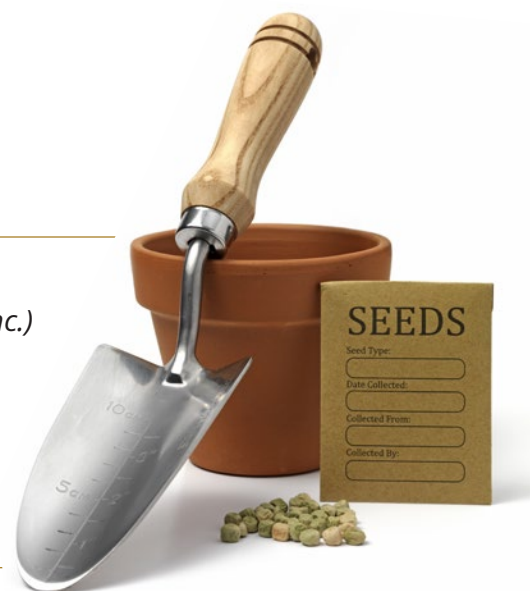


THE BLESSING OF

Seeds

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Blessings (Copyright © 1989, The Order of St. Benedict, Inc.) offers the Order for the Blessing of Seeds at Planting Time (see Book of Blessings 986-1006). The following is an adaptation for use in the religious education or Catholic school classroom setting.



PREPARING TO PRAY

Before celebrating the blessing, decide whether you will ask students to bring seed packets or seedlings to class, or if you will provide a packet of seeds or a seedling for each child in your class.

Arrange the seed packets or seedlings on the Easter prayer table, along with some of the hand tools needed for planting (trowel, garden gloves, watering can, etc.).

Choose a song about creation that is familiar to the children. Practice the song before celebrating the blessing. Suggestions include: the refrain of "Canticle of the Sun" (Haugen/GIA), "For the Beauty of the Earth" (traditional), "All Things Bright and Beautiful" (traditional), "Let All Creation Sing Alleluia" (Tate/World Library Publications), or the refrain of "All the Earth" (Deiss/World Library Publications).

The Blessing

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Gathering hymn of your choosing

Sign of the Cross

Leader: In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Words of Introduction

Leader: Today we will ask God's blessing on the seeds (the seedlings) before us, knowing that the plants they will produce will bring beauty to the earth and food to our tables.

Let us first listen to God's Word about seeds and growing.

THE WORD OF GOD**Gospel**

Acclamation: *Sing a Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia) known by your students.*

Scripture

Reading: Matthew 13:31-32 Parable of the Mustard Seed
OR
Mark 4:26-29 The Seed and the Kingdom of God

Reflection:

Invite the children to share what they think is the message of the Gospel passage.

Invite them to consider why the Gospel passage they heard is appropriate for the blessing of seeds.

Challenge them to consider what kinds of seeds they plant by their words and actions each day (*seeds of kindness, joy, hope, love, faith, etc.*).

Conclude the reflection by inviting each young person to come forward and choose a packet of seeds (or a seedling). Invite them to hold their seeds or seedlings as the prayer continues.

Prayer of the Faithful

Leader: God provides the seeds and sends the rain and the sun to help them grow. Let us turn to God in prayer.

For the Church.

May she continue to plant the seeds of faith and justice in the world today.

We pray to the Lord.

All: LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

Leader: For the world.

May the seed of peace take root in every nation, and may true peace grow on the face of the earth.

We pray to the Lord.

All: LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

Leader: For those in need.

May the seeds of our money, time, and love help those who are hungry, those in need of shelter and clothing, and all in need of special care.

We pray to the Lord.

All: LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

Leader: For the farmers.

May the seeds they plant this spring grow and produce much food.

We pray to the Lord.

All: LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

Leader: For the prayers of our hearts.

(Pause for a moment of quiet reflection, or invite students to share their prayers.)

We pray to the Lord.

All: LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

PRAYER OF BLESSING AND CONCLUSION

Leader: *Invite the young people to hold high their seeds or seedlings as you offer the following prayer.*

God our Creator,
you have given us many gifts
of creation and you have asked
us to care for them all.

We ask your blessing
as we go forth to plant these
seeds (seedlings).

As we care for them,
help us remember to also care
for those in need
so that your love and goodness
may grow in our hearts
and in the hearts of all we meet.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.
AMEN.

Conclude by singing a refrain or song celebrating God's gifts of creation.