

Resources for the Celebration of Harvest





POSSIBLE THEMES TO EXPLORE AROUND HARVEST

- Food and faith
- Harvesting issues throughout the world
- Where does our food come from? Our roots in the earth
- Bord Bia – What's in Season
- Food security and politics
- Harvest and the urban church
- Fair trade for Irish farming
- Local food initiatives
- Climate change and global food sustainability
- Wild harvest – the harvest of the countryside
- The beauty of the rural landscape
- The Christian response to the global food situation
- The Church's Mission to farming
- The importance of land in the Bible



IDEAS FOR ENHANCING YOUR CELEBRATION OF HARVEST

Here are some ideas to explore for celebrating harvest:

- Invite the local primary school to undertake a nature walk, notice the changes of the seasons, the different types of seed. Encourage them to gather different seeds and prepare them for sowing in the spring.
- Consider involving the local secondary school in projects connected with environmental sustainability.
- Have a harvest flower and fruits festival
- Arrange a Harvest display of local produce in the church.
- Add elements to your harvest thanksgiving that connects farmers, gardeners, allotment holders, processors, retailers, shoppers, caterers and anyone involved in the food sector!
- You may like to consider highlighting the work and contribution of the local farming community.
- Commit to continuing support of your farming community through prayer, making pastoral contact and letting them know that you are behind them.
- Identify members of your congregations who may have a particular heart to work with the agricultural community and ask if they would like to be part of a wider Christian response to farming.
- Arrange a trip to your local Farmers Market around harvest time or invite local producers to contribute to a local festival of local food.



SCRIPTURE READINGS SUITABLE FOR HARVEST

- The Feast of Tabernacles (Exodus 23:16 and Deuteronomy 16:9, 13) gives the Old Testament background to celebrating the in-gathering of the threshing floor and wine press
- Genesis 1:1-5, 24-end; 2:1-4
- Genesis 41:46-49, 53-57
- Deuteronomy 8
- Deuteronomy 26:1-11
- Deuteronomy 28:1-14
- Ezekiel 27:1-12
- Joel 2:21-28
- Micah 4:1-5
- Psalm 65
- Psalm 104
- Isaiah 35:1-10
- Matthew 6:2-end
- Matthew 13:1-9
- Matthew 13:18-30
- Luke 12:16-31
- John 2:1-11
- John 4:31-38
- John 6:5-12
- John 6:27-35
- Romans 8:18-25
- 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

(source: fcn.org.uk)



SUGGESTED HARVEST SONGS

This is a sample list of hymns that can be found in a variety of hymn books or praise collections.

- For the beauty of the earth
- All creatures of Our God and King
- In Christ Alone
- Great is thy faithfulness
- Men sowed the fields in the spring
- We give you thanks
- Ag Críost an Síol
- As the Deer Longs
- Unless a Grain of Wheat
- I am the bread of life
- I the Lord of sea and sky
- Now the green blade riseth
- Morning has broken
- We come to your Feast
- Sing, all creation
- The Heavens Proclaim the Glory of God
- I will be the vine
- How Great Thou art

MASS OF THANKSGIVING FOR HARVEST

(The text below can be adapted for use as a Service of Thanksgiving)

Opening Prayer

God of the heavens and the earth,
You call us to share in the care of your creation
and to bring food and fruitfulness from field and farm.
Hear our prayer for all who make their living on the land
and make us grateful for the work of their hands
and for the generosity of your provision.
We ask this in the name of Christ. **Amen**

First Reading

A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy.

(Deut. 28:1-12)

If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God: You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks. Your basket and your kneading trough will be blessed. You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out. The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The Lord your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.

The Lord will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the Lord your God and walk in obedience to him. Then all the peoples on earth will see that you are

called by the name of the Lord, and they will fear you. The Lord will grant you abundant prosperity—in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground—in the land he swore to your ancestors to give you. The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. Do not turn aside from any of the commands I give you today, to the right or to the left, following other gods and serving them.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

R./ The Lord's is the earth and its fullness.

The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders;
where morning dawns, where evening fades,
you call forth songs of joy. **R./**

You care for the land and water it;
you enrich it abundantly.
The streams of God are filled with water
to provide the people with grain. **R./**

You drench its furrows and level its ridges;
you soften it with showers and bless its crops.
You crown the year with your bounty,
and your carts overflow with abundance. **R./**

The grasslands of the wilderness overflow;
the hills are clothed with gladness.
The meadows are covered with flocks
and the valleys are mantled with grain;
they shout for joy and sing. **R./**

Gospel

(Luke 12:22-31)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

“Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you Lord, Jesus Christ.

Intercessions

We pray for farmers, their families and communities and all who depend on them for the food they eat. **Lord, hear us.**

For all in the farming industry who are worried about tomorrow and facing difficulties today. **Lord, hear us.**

For agencies who support the farming community: the IFA, Teagasc, Bord Bia, and Social Farming Network. Guide policy makers who safeguard farming life and the environment. **Lord, hear us.**

Protect those who work with livestock, farm the land, and operate farm machinery. **Lord, hear us.**

For retailers and suppliers and for all involved in the processing and transporting of food. **Lord, hear us.**

For urban communities far removed from food production; deepen within them an appreciation for the food they eat and where it comes from. **Lord, hear us.**

For those who work alone, those who are lonely or isolated; May they know your presence and always be conscious of the help that you bring. **Lord, hear us.**

For the countryside: May we safeguard it against exploitation and pollution. May its beauty be a source of leisure, relaxation and renewal. **Lord, hear us.**

For those that go hungry and those who endeavour to feed them;

for relief agencies and aid workers giving help and healing to those in need. **Lord, hear us.**

For the blessing of seed and soil, of rain and sunshine, to nurture our crops and yield a bountiful harvest. **Lord, hear us.**

For the welfare of animals. Give them good stewards who will be faithful in their care, feed them with plentiful pastures, and protect them from danger. **Lord, hear us.**

Prayer over the Gifts

Sanctify, O Lord, the offerings
we bring to you with thanksgiving from the fertile earth
and, as you give us a rich harvest of the earth's produce,
so make our hearts abound with heavenly fruitfulness.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion

Almighty and bountiful God,
You have given us this earth as an inheritance for ourselves and for
the generations to come:
Accept, we pray, the fullness of our harvest,
and guard our thankful hearts and minds in Christ Jesus,
who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and forever. **Amen.**

