



2. Growing well

Age range: Primary

Theme: We gather together for collective worship that is **inspiring, invitational and inclusive**, reflecting the fact that we are a part of a diverse school family and the wider church community, serving the needs of our unique school contexts. As human beings, we have storytelling in our DNA, and so for this final term of the school year, we offer some stories from across the world that help us to think about **'ourselves, others, beauty and/or beyond'**, and wonder together at the power of a story to help connect us and change us. We intentionally use **language from our Diocesan spirituality offer** throughout these resources and hope that this will help to build schools' understanding of the role of collective worship as part of spiritual flourishing. We start with the only parable that Jesus explained to his listeners, about growing wisdom, using the metaphor of growing seeds to help think about what it means to grow well. There will be lots of opportunities to link this with your school's vision and values, the 'seeds' that you are growing in the lives of your children.



How does this link to your school's Christian vision & values?

The class reflection materials for this term follow the same pattern as previous terms – think, talk and do – but also (where possible) relate to questions about **ourselves, others, beauty and beyond**. Also use this section to reference your school's values with the teachings from this parable about living well – and how this is shown in your school community through your actions and attitudes.

Resources:

- The PowerPoint slides are numbered with a point in the script so you can find your way, and the parts in **bold** show you where to click on to activate the next slide or animation. There are picture slides to go with today's join-in parable, but as children have plenty of PowerPoints in class, do try to do it without if you can! If you want the pictures, they are at the end of today's slides (slides 15-21).
- Planting equipment, to set the scene. For younger pupils, this might include two gardening 'hats' for your gardeners to wear to collect the 'seeds'.
- Use the resources provided on p.4 onwards to make huge 'seeds' in packets. We've chosen a couple of words you might want to use, but you might have other ideas of your own e.g. using your school values. Make as many seeds & packets as you need to, to house your school's values. We recommend that you use these in your class reflective areas as well. You will also need some sunflower seeds for each reflective area.
- **As well as some ideas for classroom reflection, we also include some additional ideas to support spirituality in this week's materials.**

Gathering:

Slide 1: Growing leaves stilling exercise

Use the stilling slide if desired: the suggested words should be spoken slowly, leaving pauses inbetween to create a sense of stillness.

As you sit quietly, watch the leaves growing...[PAUSE]

Now practise slower breathing.....in.....and out.....in.....and out.....keep this going as you continue to look at the leaves...[PAUSE]

You maybe notice that you are feeling calmer and more relaxed...[PAUSE]

As you breathe, think about yourself and what you bring into this time today..... [PAUSE]

We come into this special / sacred space and time to be still....to think deeply.....to be together as a school community.....

In our time together today, we will **think about a question, share a story and then use it to help us to think.**

But first, let's welcome one another as we begin....

- **Slide 2:** Use our new gathering words for this term, or your usual greeting if you prefer. These greetings may change slightly each week to reflect the **spiritual elements** that we will be exploring in each week's materials.

Leader: As we gather to share our story today....

All: **May we grow in our understanding of ourselves and our actions.**

Here are BSL actions for some of the words:

Leader's words:

Gather: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/gather> (1st video); Story: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/story> (1st video)

Response words:

Grow: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/grow> (2nd video); Ourselves: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/yourself> (2nd video); Actions: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/actions> (1st video)



Engaging:

- **Slide 3:** Here's a question to get you thinking: **What do seeds need to help them to grow?** *Pause and talk together – this should be shared knowledge from EYFS upwards!*
- **Slide 4:** We're going to begin our time together with a story. It's a special story called a parable, which has a hidden meaning. Jesus often used parables to teach the crowds that followed him important things about God and his Kingdom, and about how to treat each other. As with all Jesus' parables, they're so well written that you can hear it over and over again, and 'hear' something new each time! There are some parts for you to join in with. *[You could also divide the gathered community in half and have each half respond in turn. The next 2 slides are to help you teach the words. You might want to flick between slides 5&6 at the appropriate points in the story]*
- **Slide 5:** After I say the words 'And then', join in with **'the rain fell and the sun shone down....'** Try that now....And after I say the words 'but the seeds said.... you can say:
- **Slide 6: 'Oh no! We can't grow!'** Try that now, using a 'seedy' type of voice if you want to!.... Do watch out for the final bit in the story, because it's different – but don't worry, you WILL know exactly what to do! *[Opt: There will be some pictures to look at as we go along – but don't forget to join in!]*
- Use script on p4: **'Oh no! We can't grow!'** *[NB You might want to flick between slides 5&6 at the appropriate points in the story]*
- **Slide 7:** Earlier on, we thought about the question: **What do seeds need to help them grow?** What did you think? You're right: for seeds to grow really well, they need three things.... a **safe place** where their roots can go deep (unlike some of the seeds in our story) ...they need **water**...and **sunshine**...and they grow even better when someone looks after them properly! And when they are grown, there will be all sorts of fruit (depending on what you planted!) and even more seeds....
- **Slide 8: Let's go back to Jesus' parable:** After he'd told his story, Jesus explained to the people listening that the seeds that fall on good ground are like the people who listen to what God says and live in a way that pleases him, even when life is difficult. And these are difficult times, to be sure! Jesus said that people who do this will grow good fruit in their lives.
- **Slide 9:** During your time with us in School, we hope that we sow many seeds into *your* lives. Not seeds that grow in the soil, but seeds that grow in our hearts. I need a couple of 'gardeners' to help me now as we think about what these seeds might be for us at school.... Here are some very large seed packets, containing some very special seeds, some seeds that will help us to think about **ourselves**, about our actions – and about how these have an impact on **others**.....*[invite your 'gardeners' up]...let's open them....*
- Like all seeds, these special seeds need to be taken care of in order for them to grow as they should: that's the job of every person here! *[Talk together about the ways in which these seeds will grow – and how this relates to us being good 'soil', looking after the seeds that we sow in our hearts – and the connections between thoughts, words and actions]* As Jesus said in his parable, the seeds grow in good soil: that's having hearts and minds that will listen and learn. But to really grow well, we need to practise these things in order for them to become fully a part of us as a school community. Gardening can be hard work!! But Jesus also taught that God would help those who ask him, so in a few moments, there will be an opportunity for us to do that.
- Our seeds help us to think about ourselves and about others – our actions



Slide 10: Responding (and words for worship)

Let's be still and quiet together now...

...in the stillness, think about the things that you've heard today....

....about the type of soil that will grow good seeds.....

....and the connections between our thoughts, our words and our actions.....

....I wonder how today's parable has helped us to understand the things we hold deep in our hearts?.....

....or the things that will help our seeds of *[insert your school's values here]* to grow....

....these seeds don't need water, or soil, or sun.....

....our seeds will grow because of the attitudes we hold in our hearts....

...the words that we speak...

....and the things that we do....our actions.....

...think about these things for yourself now, and how you might help the seeds of your heart to grow.....

....I wonder how being a part of this school community might help us to grow these seeds?.....

I'm going to turn my thoughts into a prayer now, as I ask God to help us to put some of these ideas into practice,



using some words that David the Psalm-writer wrote. He talked about the connection between our words, our hearts and our actions.

Make the prayer your own if you'd like to...or if you'd prefer not to pray, then just sit quietly with your own thoughts. There are some actions that you can join in with if you'd like to *[explain these before using the words]*.

Slide 11: [words adapted from Psalm 19:14]

Dear God

May the words of our mouths *[place your hands on your lips]*

And the thoughts in our minds *[place your hands on your temples]*

And the attitudes in our hearts *[place your hands over your heart]*

Be pleasing to you *[both thumbs up]*.

Slide 12: Amen

Sending: Slide 13

Leader: As we leave this place and time and go into the day ahead...

All: May we grow well!



To sing / listen to:

You can listen to a version of David's words in Psalm 19 here: [May the Words of My Mouth - Tim Hughes - YouTube](#)

Nick & Becky Drake's song '[City on a hill](#)' talks about being light in the darkness and is a good song to sing about how our actions can 'shine' for others to see, and change the world.

Or sing [While we live, we learn](#) (BBC)



Slide 14: Reflective areas

Make big seed packets for each classroom, containing your school's 'seeds'. Also place a dish of real sunflower seeds so pupils can take one away.

Think: As you look at our big seeds, think about how you might help these to grow in your heart.

Talk: How might we put these ideas into action as part of our school family?

Do: Take away a small seed as a reminder of the part you will play in growing these qualities in our school. You might even want to plant it, take care of it and keep thinking as it grows!

Extra ideas to build spirituality or work with this parable:

- **Reflecting/praying with seeds:** see script on p.8. Adapt the words to suit your context.
- **Dig it!:** Go outdoors and dig some soil. As you do, think about the things you will do to help the 'seeds of your heart' / your school values grow well.
- **Watch a time lapse video of a seed growing:** such as this one of an acorn https://youtu.be/gj1iRU9pf_k Then think about all the creatures that live in or off a fully grown oak tree. This video will give you some ideas <https://youtu.be/IRG-UXg2Cwg>
- **Watch this Lego video** of the parable; <https://youtu.be/Sj4xEwh1MrY> You could try to make your own Lego scene.



‘Oh no! We can’t grow!’

This is a story that Jesus told about seeds – a parable – a special story with a hidden meaning. This is what he said:

[Slide 15:] ‘Once, there was a farmer who went out to sow his seeds.

[Slide 16:] As he was scattering the seeds, some fell along the path. *And then* the rain fell and the sun shone down...*but the seeds said....* **‘Oh no! We can’t grow!’** And the seeds were trampled on by people’s feet as they walked by, and pecked up by birds.

[Slide 17:] Some more seeds fell on rocky ground. *And then* the rain fell and the sun shone down... *but the seeds said* **‘Oh no! We can’t grow!’**

[Slide 18:] And when they sprouted, there was no soil for their roots, so the little green plants dried up, withered and died.

[Slide 19] Other seeds fell into thorny bushes, *And then* the rain fell and the sun shone down... *but the seeds said* **‘Oh no! We can’t grow!’** And the thorns choked and killed the seeds.

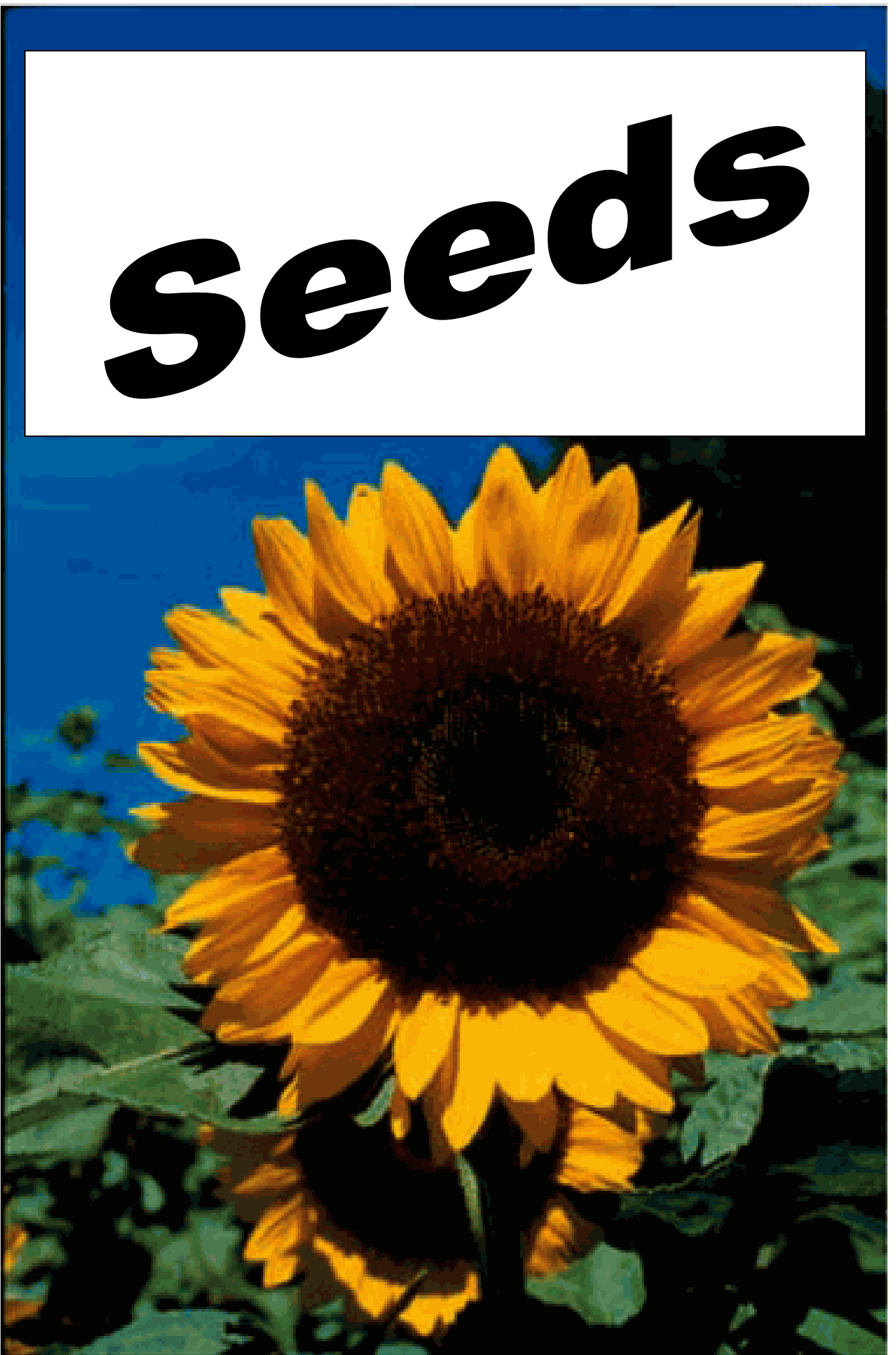
[Slide 20:] But some seeds fell on good soil. *And then* the rain fell and the sun shone down... *and the seeds said* **‘Oh yes! We CAN grow!’**

[Slide 21:] And so they sprouted, grew roots deep into the ground where there was water and yielded a good crop, a hundred times more than what was sown.’



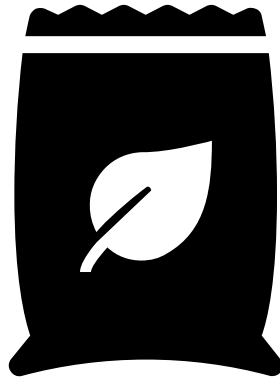
Make this into a large seed packet for your 'seeds'

Seeds



Make these seeds to fit your school's values – you'll probably need to print more than these two!





Seeds



As you look at our big seeds, think about how you might help these to grow in your heart.



How might we put these ideas into action as part of our school family?



Take away a small seed as a reminder of the part you will play in growing these qualities in our school. You might even want to plant it, take care of it and keep thinking as it grows!



Reflecting/praying with seeds

Adapted from an idea in Messy Parables by Martyn Payne

You need some seeds that are not too small and safe to eat. If you don't have any seeds you could use a black peppercorn, a dried bean or even a grain of rice. (NB Be aware that young children could choke on larger seeds or beans.) There are opportunities to reflect using the words in italics – you might want to turn them into prayer if appropriate.

Hand out the seeds. Invite everyone to hold their seed in the way described below and use the words suggested for each position.

Holding the seed in the palm of the hand

This seed is special. It contains life waiting to break out. It is precious and valuable. It is a gift of life. Like this seed each of our lives is precious and special. Each of us has a life that is beyond price.

May we not take the gift of life for granted; may we treat each other well, because we are each precious.

Holding up the seed between finger and thumb

This seed is small it seems too tiny to be anything important or significant. Yet it contains a surprise waiting to happen. It is a lesson for us to take into our hearts. Like this seed, each of our lives have the potential to become something surprisingly more than we yet are or appear to be.

May our time here atSchool help us to become all that we have the potential to be.

Place the seed on a surface in front of you

This seed will grow. Depending on what type of seed it is one day it will be a plant, or even a tree. It might have flowers, or berries or fruit. Maybe some creatures will be able to eat it or even live in it.

May we be the very best versions of ourselves that we can – and share our lives with others.

Place the seeds in a dish or on a plate.

You could put a label next to the dish with the words 'The Seeds of God's Kingdom' or 'The seeds of our school'