

2023 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

# God's New Creation



ELCA World Hunger

# Welcome to “God’s New Creation,”

ELCA World Hunger’s Vacation Bible School program for 2023!

Farming communities around the world are important when it comes to ending hunger. They provide the world’s food, but often farmers, especially smallholder farmers, are at high risk for hunger themselves. Working with farmers to improve harvests, save money and prepare for the future can be big steps toward ending hunger around the world. This is why ELCA World Hunger works through congregations, partners and companion churches to accompany farmers as they innovate and adapt in creative, effective ways.

**“God’s New Creation” is about this work together. Our focus verse for this program is:**

***“The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.” —Isaiah 11:6***

In the sessions and activities, your group will have the chance to learn about an important part of our work: animals! By helping farmers access animals and learn new ways to care for them, we can take an effective, sustainable step toward ending hunger. For families living in poverty or hunger, eggs from chickens, milk from goats or meat from pigs can provide important nutrition and money for other needs. In some projects we have supported, farmers have even used cows as collateral to get loans for education or new businesses!

Each day of “God’s New Creation” offers large- and small-group activities, crafts, games, snacks and more. These are designed to be adaptable, so you can adjust the program to meet your needs.

We are also excited to share original music for this year’s VBS! You can find recordings and music sheets at [www.elca.org/hunger/resources#VBS](http://www.elca.org/hunger/resources#VBS).

Lastly, THANK YOU to the many leaders, children, congregations and groups that have shared gifts with ELCA World Hunger. Your generosity makes this Vacation Bible School program possible. As you use “God’s New Creation,” please prayerfully consider encouraging your group to support our work together through ELCA World Hunger.











In Christ,

*Ryan P. Cumming*

**Ryan P. Cumming**

Program Director, Hunger Education  
ELCA World Hunger

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Look for pictures, graphics, music and other materials online at [ELCA.org/hunger/resources](https://www.elca.org/hunger/resources) under the "VBS" tab. These graphics can be used for printing posters, signs, shirts and more.

# Good Gifts Catalog

Each of the stories shared in "God's New Creation" is a real story from a real project. Support for these projects and others in more than 60 countries, including the United States, is made possible by generous gifts to ELCA World Hunger from individuals and congregations. As you host "God's New Creation" VBS, consider including an opportunity for giving within your program. The ELCA Good Gifts catalog found at [ELCA.org/goodgifts](http://ELCA.org/goodgifts) has some great ideas. Here are just a few:



# Daily Schedule

## SAMPLE SCHEDULE

TIME	ACTIVITY
9:00 – 9:20	Large Group Opening
9:20 – 9:35	Small Group Time
9:35 – 10:00	Rotation 1
10:00 – 10:25	Rotation 2
10:25 – 10:50	Rotation 3
10:50 – 11:15	Rotation 4
11:15 – 11:40	Rotation 5
11:40 – 12:00	Large Group Closing

TIME	ACTIVITY
	Large Group Opening
	Small Group Time
	Rotation 1
	Rotation 2
	Rotation 3
	Rotation 4
	Rotation 5
	Large Group Closing

TIME	ACTIVITY
	Large Group Opening
	Small Group Time
	Rotation 1
	Rotation 2
	Rotation 3
	Rotation 4
	Rotation 5
	Large Group Closing

TIME	ACTIVITY
	Large Group Opening
	Small Group Time
	Rotation 1
	Rotation 2
	Rotation 3
	Rotation 4
	Rotation 5
	Large Group Closing

TIME	ACTIVITY
	Large Group Opening
	Small Group Time
	Rotation 1
	Rotation 2
	Rotation 3
	Rotation 4
	Rotation 5
	Large Group Closing

## Day 1—Gathered by God

**Lesson Focus:** God gathers us in.

**Focus Verse:** “Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is [God’s] good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” —*Luke 12:32*

**Focus Country:** Nepal | **Good Gift:** Chicks | **Bible Story:** Luke 12:32-34

## Day 2—Helping Hands

**Lesson Focus:** God puts people in our lives to help us and puts us in places to help others.

**Focus Verse:** “Joseph answered Pharaoh, ‘It is not I; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.’” —*Genesis 41:16*

**Focus Country:** Senegal | **Good Gift:** Cows | **Bible Story:** Genesis 41:15-36, 46-49, 53-57

## Day 3—Everyone Is Important

**Lesson Focus:** God has work for all of us, no matter what size we are.

**Focus Verse:** “The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom.” —*Isaiah 35:1*

**Focus Country:** Uganda | **Good Gift:** Goats | **Bible Story:** Isaiah 35:1-4

## Day 4—Small Miracles

**Lesson Focus:** What starts out small grows big with God’s help.

**Focus Verse:** “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.” —*Matthew 13:31-32*

**Focus Country:** Cuba | **Good Gift:** Pigs | **Bible Story:** Matthew 13:31-33

## Day 5—Many Gifts, One God

**Lesson Focus:** Each of us has different gifts to bring and different skills to share.

**Focus Verse:** “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord.” —*1 Corinthians 12:4-5*

**Focus Country:** USA / Iowa | **Good Gift:** Community Garden | **Bible Story:** 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

# Daily Activities



## LARGE GROUP OPENING

- Welcome and prayer
- Theme song
- Opening skit
- Reiterate the daily theme and focus prayer
- More songs
- Sending

## ROTATIONS



**Story Time** — This is a time for an adult to share with the children a story of a ministry supported by ELCA World Hunger. Included in Story Time are photos to share, facts about the featured country and a script for the storyteller.



**Games** — Every Vacation Bible School needs time for play! We've included some ideas of fun activities you can plan, based on the size of your group and your available space.



**Snack** — Recipes are included for each day, related to the country highlighted in Story Time. Each day has an option for something to buy or something to make. Either will give the children a “taste” of the country or region highlighted in the story.



**Crafts** — Directions for each craft are included in the daily rotations. Like the other stations, crafts are related to the country from Story Time.



**Simulation Station** — The Simulation Station offers children a chance to learn more about the day's theme and how our faith calls us to respond.

## LARGE GROUP CLOSING

- Theme song and music
- Talking together: A review of the day
- Return to focus prayer
- Prayer and sending

## Including Everyone

The games and activities for each day can be adapted for children with diverse ability levels. To include children of all abilities in your Vacation Bible School, follow these guidelines to adapt its activities:

1. Talk with the child or the child's parents/guardians about strategies for helping the child feel comfortable.
2. Make adjustments only when necessary, and when you do, aim at increasing the child's participation, success and enjoyment. Help them feel as if they have a say in making adjustments — or not making them.
3. Be fair in adapting activities. Try to make every child feel included but be careful not to stigmatize or single out a child with an ability level different from the others'.
4. Plan ahead. Talk with parents/guardians about any special equipment that might be needed before the activity begins, so that the child can participate from the very beginning.
5. If a child has specific dietary restrictions, do your best to make adjustments that help the child feel included rather than singled out. (Adapted from CIRA Ontario.)





# Openings and Skits





# Day 1 – Gathered by God



**FOCUS VERSE** “Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is [God’s] good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” —Luke 12:31

## WELCOME AND PRAYER

**Welcome everyone to “God’s New Creation,” using the script below or something similar.**

**Leader:** Hello everyone! Welcome to “God’s New Creation.” This week we will meet some animal friends who are helping God end hunger around the world. We will get to travel with these friends to some of the places where they live, and learn about the people they live with and the projects they are part of. All these animals are part of the ELCA’s Good Gifts program, which helps farmers around the world.

1. The theme for the week is “God’s New Creation.” Together we will learn about the many ways that God’s creation works together for the benefit of all. We will also learn about ELCA World Hunger, an important ministry of our church. ELCA World Hunger works with people in the United States and in other countries to ensure that everyone has enough to eat, a safe place to live and the things they need for a healthy life.
2. Each day we will meet a new animal and learn how that animal helps our neighbors through projects our church supports. Some animals will be familiar, but some might be a little different from what we expect.
3. Each day we will gather as a large group before dividing into small groups. You will spend most of the day with your small group before we come back together at the end.

I think our first guest, er, guests, are about ready to come out and introduce themselves. Before we begin, let’s loosen up with some singing! *[This is a good time to introduce any information about the building, the grounds or safety, or other helpful tips that visitors might need.]*



*Refer to the end of this guide for song suggestions or use songs that your group already knows.*

## DAY 1 SKIT

**Today’s guests are three chickens:** Dame Henrietta Von Featherstein, Lady Beakatrice Wingstroff and Sir Roopert Gizzardshire. Dame Featherstein is quite proper and generally annoyed with Lady Wingstroff, who is a bit of a goof. Sir Gizzardshire envisions himself a bit of a tough guy, but he has a soft heart. For costumes, consider feather boas and fancy hats for the ladies and a pair of sunglasses for Sir Gizzardshire.

**Emcee (E):** Great singing, everyone! We finished up that song just in time, because I think I see our special guests!

**Dame Henrietta Von Featherstein (H):** Greetings.

**Lady Beakatrice Wingstroff (B):** Hello!

**Sir Roopert Gizzardshire (R):** Hey.

**E:** Hello! Welcome to “God’s New Creation.” We’re so glad to have you with us! Please introduce yourselves and tell us a little about where you come from.

**H:** My name is Dame Henrietta von Featherstein, and these are my friends, Lady Beakatrice Wingstroff and Sir Roopert Gizzardshire. Honored to make your acquaintance.

**B:** We just flew in from Nepal, and boy, are our wings tired. *[Pause.]* Get it? Our wings are tired, because we flew. But chickens don’t actually fly. I mean, we flew, but in a plane.

**H:** Enough, Lady Beakatrice.

**B:** *[To Henrietta.]* They can call me Bea. *[To the audience.]* You can call me Bea. Beakatrice is such a mouthful.

**E:** Dame Featherstein, Bea, Sir Roopert, thanks for joining us. It’s wonderful to have you.

**R:** Roo.

**E:** What?

**R:** Roo. You can call me Roo, like Rooster. Because that's what I am. I'm a rooster.

**E:** Roo, of course, sorry. *[To Dame Featherstein.]* And how about you, do you have a nickname?

**H:** *[Brusquely.]* No.

**E:** OK, then. Well, tell us about yourselves. I know you came from Nepal, but what do you do there?

**H:** We are chickens, the stars of the barnyard. Lady Beakatrice, whom I will *not* call Bea, and I have the important work of laying eggs. Eggs are a delicious source of protein, and what the family don't eat, they can sell to their neighbors.

**E:** I've never been to Nepal. What's it like there? What do you eat?

**B:** Nepal is a small country very high in the Himalayan Mountains. You'll learn more about it in Story Time today. As for what we eat, we eat anything and everything. Chickens are natural foragers. We eat bugs, plants, seeds — anything we can get our beaks on.

**E:** How about you, Roo. What do you do?

**H:** Sir Roopert is our bodyguard.

**R:** That's right. I'm a rooster. I strut around and keep the barnyard safe. If there's anything unsafe going on, I crow about it, like this: *Cock-a-doodle doo!* Then all the hens know to run for the safety of the coop. Nobody's going to mess with the barnyard when I'm on patrol!

**E:** You must be very brave.

**R:** I try. But can I tell you a secret? Sometimes I get scared.

**E:** You get scared?

**R:** Yeah, it's a big, scary world out there for a rooster. But then I remember my favorite Bible verse. I think I heard you recite it today.

**E:** Oh, our focus verse: "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is [God's] good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

**R:** Yeah, that one. We're a little flock, just the three of us. But when I think about Jesus encouraging me not to be afraid, it reminds me that I am not alone. Then I can go out, help gather my community and keep them safe, just as Jesus keeps me safe.

**E:** Thanks for sharing, Roo. Today's theme is all about gathering — how God gathers us and how we gather and care for each other.

**R:** You're welcome. With that, I think we should let you get on with your day. Dame Featherstein, Bea, are you ready?

**B:** Let's fly the coop! Bust out of this global barnyard. Hen on out of here.

**H:** Enough with the puns, Lady Beakatrice!

**B:** Sorry. Goodbye, everyone! Have a great week at "God's New Creation" VBS!

## **REVIEW OF DAY 1 THEME CLOSING PRAYER**

**Today's theme is "Gathered by God." Today we are learning how God gathers us close, as a hen gathers her chicks. And we visited Nepal to see how one local woman and her chickens are changing life for her community.**

## **CLOSING SONGS**

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Dear Jesus, thank you for gathering us together this week to make friends and learn more about you and your creation. Be with us today and all through the week as we play, sing, pray and praise God together and with the whole world. Amen.

## **DISMISSAL TO SMALL GROUP TIME**



# Day 2 – Helping Hands

**FOCUS VERSE** “Joseph answered Pharaoh, ‘It is not I; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.’” —Genesis 41:162:31

## WELCOME AND PRAYER

**Welcome everyone to “God’s New Creation,” using the script below or something similar.**

Hello, everyone! Welcome back to “God’s New Creation.” This week we’re learning about some of the animals in God’s barnyard of creation and how they partner with our friends and neighbors around the world to help stop hunger. Before we meet today’s guest, who remembers what we learned about yesterday? *[Affirm all answers.]*

Today we’re talking about helping hands. This is about more than having hands, though. It’s about being helping hands for each other — and for the people who help us. Our Bible story today is about a man called Pharaoh, who had a strange dream; another man named Joseph, who helped him understand his dream; and how, together, they served a lot of people. And we’ll travel to Senegal, in West Africa, to learn about projects that are helping people there and how those people are helping others. *[This is a good time to review any information about the building, the grounds or safety, or other helpful tips that visitors might need.]*



*Refer to the end of this guide for song suggestions or use songs that your group already knows.*

## DAY 2 SKIT

**Today’s guest is a wise cow named Bonnie. For a costume, glue or tape black or brown spots on a white shirt.**

- Emcee (E):** I think I see our special guest now! Welcome to “God’s New Creation.” Please introduce yourself and tell us a little about where you came from.
- Bonnie (B):** My name is Bonnie, and I am a cow from the West African nation of Senegal.
- E:** Oh, Bonnie the cow!
- B:** Actually, I prefer “Bonnie the Brain,” since I like to think big thoughts.
- E:** It’s great that you’re here. We like to think big thoughts and ask big questions too.
- B:** Cool! What kind of big thoughts and questions are you thinking about?
- E:** This week’s theme is “God’s New Creation.” We’re learning about animals in God’s global barnyard and their human friends around the world, and how they work together to help end hunger.
- B:** That’s like what I do in Senegal! I make milk for my family. They can drink my milk or use it in cooking. It’s a great source of calcium and other nutrition. They can also sell the extra milk, along with the cheese, yogurt and butter they make from it. And my poop is great fertilizer! It helps plants to grow. I’ve got it all!
- E:** You’re a great help to your family.
- B:** They help me too. They make sure I have lots of good grasses to eat. Mealtime is a great time to think, you know. I do my best thinking in the field, chewing my cud.

- E:** What is cud?
- B:** Oh, that's right, you humans have only one stomach, don't you? That's too bad. I have four.
- E:** Four stomachs?
- B:** Four parts of my stomach really. When I first eat my food, I just get it wet. Then it goes into my first stomach and turns into cud. Once it's cud, it comes back up into my mouth and I chew it a second time.
- E:** Ew, that sounds gross!
- B:** Gross? No, it's awesome! I get to relax and enjoy a second breakfast!
- E:** Um, OK. I imagine that gives you time to think about some of those big ideas you mentioned.
- B:** It does! Recently, I've been thinking about Joseph. You know, from the Bible.
- E:** That's our Bible story for today.
- B:** I've been thinking about how neat it is that Joseph needed help but Pharaoh needed help too, he just didn't know. And that God put Pharaoh and Joseph together to help each other. And that, by helping each other, they helped all of Egypt and even Joseph's family.
- E:** That is cool. I never really thought about it that way before.
- B:** That's why you should try to chew your cud. It's great thinking time.
- E:** We'll agree to disagree, I guess. But I'm glad you enjoy it.
- B:** I do. It was nice to meet you, but I really must be going. I have a busy day of eating grass, chewing cud and thinking big thoughts.
- E:** Thanks for stopping by! Enjoy your day.
- B:** You too! Have a great day at Vacation Bible School.

## **REVIEW OF DAY 2 THEME CLOSING PRAYER**

**Today's theme is "Helping Hands." We are learning how to be helping hands for one another.**

### **CLOSING SONGS**

#### **CLOSING PRAYER**

O God, you gave us open hearts and so many ways to help each other. Be with us today as we learn how to be helping hands to others and to reach out when we need help. Keep our hearts open, to love others and to be loved. Amen.

### **DISMISSAL TO SMALL GROUP TIME**



# Day 3 – Everyone Is Important

**FOCUS VERSE** “The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom.” —Isaiah 35:1

## WELCOME AND PRAYER

*Welcome everyone to “God’s New Creation,” using the script below or something similar.*

Hello! Welcome back to another fun day at “God’s New Creation.” Our theme for today is “Everyone Is Important.” We’re talking about how everyone has a place in God’s world and about the work we can do. We will also travel to Uganda to visit with our neighbors there and learn how they use what God has given them in order to care for others. *[You can also use this time to introduce any information about the building, the grounds or safety, or other helpful tips that visitors might need.]*



*Refer to the end of this guide for song suggestions or use songs that your group already knows.*

## DAY 3 SKIT

*Today’s guest is a tough and scrappy goat named Danielle. For a costume, cut horns and ears out of cardstock and attach them to a headband.*

**Emcee (E):** Good morning, everyone! I’m so excited for you to meet today’s guest. Here she is! Please introduce yourself to everyone.

**Danielle (D):** Hi there! I’m so happy to be here today. My name is Danielle, and I am a goat.

**E:** Nice to meet you, Danielle. Tell us about yourself. What’s it like being a goat?

**D:** Oh, it’s awesome! I love being a goat. I am small, I am portable, I am tough, and I can eat anything. Don’t tell the others, but I’m pretty sure I’m the coolest of all the barnyard animals. The scrappiest, at least.

**E:** You do look pretty scrappy.

**D:** Oh, I am. Can I tell you about my favorite goat from the Bible? It’s the goat I was named after.

**E:** Sure.

**D:** OK, so in Daniel Chapter Eight ...

**E:** Wait — Daniel like the prophet Daniel?

**D:** Yeah.

**E:** But I thought our Bible story for today was from Isaiah?

**D:** It is, but let me tell you this story.

**E:** OK.



**D:** So in Daniel there's this ram. The ram has two big horns and thinks he's all tough. But really he's just mean. He picks on people and bosses them around. He's a bully. Everyone is afraid of him, and no one knows what to do about him.

**E:** That sounds scary. What happens next?

**D:** Out of nowhere, this one-horned goat appears. Even though he's way smaller than the ram and has only one horn, he totally stands up to that bully and doesn't let him intimidate people anymore.

**E:** That goat must have been very brave.

**D:** He was. But the real message of the story is one I try to live by.

**E:** Let's hear it.

**D:** It's this: Who you are is enough. What you have to bring is what God and the world need. It's like our focus verse for today, about how the desert will blossom. We think of deserts as dry, but God knows they contain a lot. They're like goats.

**E:** Goats are like deserts? Goats blossom?

**D:** I mean that goats can live where a lot of other animals cannot. We are tough, and we can eat anything. Even if you don't have a lot of water or land for us, we can make it work. Land that some might think is too hard to live on is perfect for a goat.

**E:** Because you're scrappy?

**D:** Yep! In exchange we produce healthy and nutritious milk that families can drink or sell. When we have baby goats, our human friends can share them with their human friends, so there are more goats to go around. *[To the audience.]* You guys are scrappy too. Everyone is important to God and to us.

**E:** That reminds me of our focus verse for the whole week. There are all these big animals — a wolf, a lion and a leopard — but a little child leads them.

**D:** That's right. Everyone has a role to play. We're tough, scrappy and smart. God has blessed us with gifts and loves us too.

**E:** Wow, Danielle, thanks for sharing. It was great to learn more about your namesake and about goats.

**D:** You're welcome. I'm sure you'll learn a lot more today, especially when you visit Uganda at Story Time and get to meet some of my awesome human friends.

**E:** I can't wait.

**D:** Me neither. In fact, I'd better get back so I can make sure everything's ready for your visit. I'll find some really good grass for you to try.

**E:** Um, great, thanks.

**D:** You're welcome! Bye!

## **REVIEW OF DAY 3 THEME CLOSING PRAYER**

**Today's theme is "Everyone Is Important." We are learning about how God gives each of us gifts that we need to share in order to care for others.**

### **CLOSING SONGS**

#### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Dear God, thank you for bringing us safely through another fun day of VBS. Open our hearts to all you have given us and all we have to share. Amen.

### **DISMISSAL TO SMALL GROUP TIME**

# Day 4 – Small Miracles

**FOCUS VERSE** “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.” —Matthew 13:31-32

## WELCOME AND PRAYER

Welcome everyone to “God’s New Creation,” using the script below or something similar.

Hello, and welcome back to “God’s New Creation.” Today we’re traveling to the island of Cuba to see how, with God, things that start small can become big miracles. *[This is a good time to introduce any information about the building, the grounds or safety, or other helpful tips that visitors might need.]*



Refer to the end of this guide for song suggestions or use songs your group already knows.



## DAY 4 SKIT

*Today’s guest is a fabulous pig named Portia. For a costume, consider a pig nose, pink shirt and a curly tail made from pipe cleaner. Portia is very high-fashion, so pearls, a fancy brooch or an elegant scarf are great ideas.*

**Emcee (E):** Hi, everyone! Welcome back to another great day at “God’s New Creation.” I hope you’re all having as much fun as I have meeting our awesome partners. Can anyone tell me some of the partners we’ve met and how they help us end hunger? *[Danielle the goat, Bonnie the cow, and chickens Dame Henrietta Von Featherstein, Lady Beakatrice Wingstroff and Sir Roopert Gizzardshire.]* I feel pretty confident we can end hunger with this great team by our side.

Today I have another VERY special guest for us. Everyone put your hands together for the one, the only Portia the Pig.

**Portia (P):** Thank you for the warm welcome. How lovely to see all you fine people gathered here to welcome and admire me, Portia, a most elegant pig.

**E:** You are quite elegant. I don’t want to sound rude, but I always thought of pigs as kind of dirty. You know, like pigpens. I can’t say I ever pictured a pig with pearls.

**P:** People always think of pigs as dirty because we roll in the mud to keep cool. But I don’t think of it as getting dirty, I think of it as a spa treatment. Some humans pay for mud baths; why should we pigs view our mud as any less glamorous?

**E:** A fair point, Ms. Portia. This week we’re learning about



some of the animals ELCA World Hunger works with to help end hunger. What can you tell us about how pigs help? I'm guessing it's not by offering expensive mud baths.

**P:** Oh, no. Pig baths are very exclusive, for pigs alone. We help in more direct ways. Have you ever heard of a piggy bank?

**E:** Of course! A piggy bank is a little bank that you can keep coins in to save them for later. Some are shaped like pigs, but they can be shaped like anything. We made goat banks earlier this week!

**P:** We pigs inspired the piggy bank.

**E:** I'm confused. I can't stick a coin in your back. Do you eat money? If I shake you, will money drop out?

**P:** No! We're *like* a bank. People put their "money" into us by feeding us, caring for us and providing us with lots of good mud to roll in. In exchange, we grow. A full-grown pig can reach 200 pounds! At the market we sell for way more than the cost of caring for us. And a female pig, such as myself, can give birth to piglets, which can be sold for more money or shared with friends and neighbors. We're like banks on hooves.

**E:** I'd never thought of it that way! That's how goats, chickens and cows work. I never knew there were so many ways for animals to help end hunger!

**P:** It's like our Bible story for today. Jesus told his disciples how the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. It starts small — like a piglet, a calf, a chick or a kid. A kid, by the way, is a baby goat.

**E:** Or a kid like one of these kids?

**P:** These kids are not goats; they're human children. But yes. God's kingdom starts small. We might think that what we do is too small to make a difference. But with God, it grows and grows. It's kind of like what Daniel was talking about in the verse from yesterday. We might not pay much attention to a small blossom in the desert or a small child, but these are signs of God. *[To the audience.]* Maybe you even feel that way. Like, I'm small, what can I do? But I started small, too, and now, because of what me and God and my human family did together, I'm a 200-pound hunger-fighting machine on hooves. God can make a big difference through us when we work together.

**E:** Wow, that sums it up! Thanks, Portia, for that great wrap-up of the day and maybe even the whole week! Maybe you should be the emcee.

**P:** Don't be silly. There's a role for everyone in God's world, even you!

**E:** Thanks, I think ...

**P:** I must be going now. It's time for my roll in the mud. I like to get a good mud layer at least once a day. It's good for the skin, you know. Goodbye, all! Have a wonderful day at "God's New Creation"!

## REVIEW OF DAY 4 THEME CLOSING PRAYER

The theme for today is "Small Miracles." We talked about how small actions create big change.

## CLOSING SONGS

### CLOSING PRAYER

Gracious God, thank you for bringing us to another fun day at "God's New Creation." Help us to learn lots of new things today, to grow our friendships and to have a lot of fun. Amen.

## DISMISSAL TO SMALL GROUP TIME

# Day 5 – Many Gifts, One God

**FOCUS VERSE** “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord.” —1 Corinthians 12:4-5

## WELCOME AND PRAYER

Welcome everyone to “God’s New Creation,” using the script below or something similar.

Welcome to our final day of “God’s New Creation”! I hope you’ve had a great time this week learning about some of our animal friends in God’s global barnyard and how they and their human companions work together to end hunger. What are some things you’ve learned this week? [Affirm all answers.] Today we’re tying it all together and thinking about how our animal friends each have different skills and gifts that they bring to the work of ending hunger. We’re also remembering that we have lots of different skills and gifts we can use to do God’s work. [This is a good time to introduce any information about the building, the grounds or safety, or other helpful tips that visitors might need.]



Refer to the end of this guide for possible songs or use songs your group already knows.

## DAY 5 SKIT

Today’s ensemble cast consists of **Tómas (toh-MAS) the tomato, Pádraig (pawd-rig) the potato, Binsa (BIN-sa) the bean, Chag (chah-gg) the cabbage, and Chima (CHEE-ma) the cassava.** Costumes can be as simple as a red shirt for Tómas, brown shirts for Pádraig and Chima, and green shirts for Binsa and Chag. Because there are a lot of characters, large nametags could be helpful.

**Emcee (E):** Hello! I see our guests are here already, so let’s get right to it. There are a lot of you today! Please, introduce yourselves.

**Tómas (T):** My name is Tómas, and I am a tomato.

**Pádraig (P):** I’m Pádraig, and I’m a potato.

**Binsa (B):** I’m Binsa, and I’m a bean.

**Chag (C):** I’m Chag, and I’m a cabbage.

**Chima (CM):** I’m Chima, and I’m a cassava. Cassava is a starchy vegetable, like a yam.

**E:** Nice to meet all of you. Where are you from? What brings you here?

**T:** We’re from all over the world.

**P:** But we live together in Iowa.

**E:** Iowa?

**B:** Yes, Iowa. We’re part of a community garden.

**E:** What’s a community garden?

**C:** A community garden is a place where people can grow food to eat or share.



- CM:** Do you have a favorite vegetable?
- E:** Me? Yes, I like kale. And rutabagas. And tomatoes. Are tomatoes a vegetable?
- T:** Technically I'm fruit, but we'll roll with it.
- P:** Just as you have favorite vegetables, people from other countries have favorite vegetables. Sometimes the fruits and vegetables popular in some places can be hard to find in other places. In a community garden people can grow food they're familiar with and learn what sort of food their neighbors like.
- B:** The other good thing about a community garden is that we can include many different vegetables. Have you heard the expression "eat the rainbow"?
- E:** Doesn't that remind us to eat lots of different kinds of fruits and vegetables?
- C:** Yep, you want to eat a lot of different colors of fruits and vegetables because each of us offers different things your body needs. I'm high in Vitamin K.
- CM:** I'm high in Vitamin C.
- T:** I'm high in Vitamin A.
- P:** The point is, all of us together help our human friends to live healthy lives.
- B:** It's like your Bible story today. There are many gifts — many vitamins in this case — but the same Spirit. Working together, we each offer something different to our community.
- C:** This week you've met chicks, a goat, a cow and a pig. We're just another way God works through the world to bring God's kingdom.
- E:** Thank you, all, for being with us. You've given us a lot to think about.
- CM:** You're welcome. Now we'd better be going. It's peak growing season in Iowa right now, so we must get back.
- All, in unison:** Goodbye!

## REVIEW OF DAY 5 THEME CLOSING PRAYER

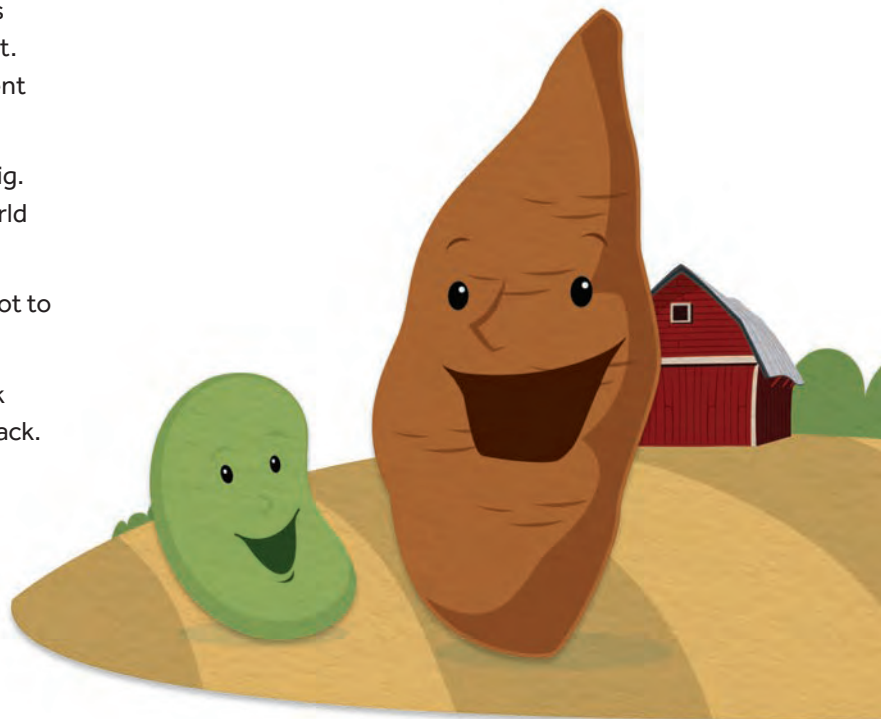
The theme for today is "Many Gifts, One God." We are learning about all the different ways we can be part of God's work.

### CLOSING SONGS

#### CLOSING PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for another day with our friends here at Vacation Bible School. Be with us today as we thank you for the gifts given to each of us, and help us to share them with everyone we meet. Amen.

### DISMISSAL TO SMALL GROUP TIME





# Small Group Time



LESSON  
FOCUS

God gathers us in.



SMALL GROUP TIME: DAY 1

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Bible
- Stuffed animal

OPENER: WHO'S SPECIAL?

For this first Small Group Time, start with a simple name game to help the group members get to know each other. Sit or stand in a circle and invite the children to introduce themselves by sharing their name and a unique fact about them, something that makes them special. For example, "My name is Malik, and I love to read" or "My name is Greta, and I play baseball." After each person speaks, invite the group to reply, "Welcome Malik," "Welcome Greta," etc., to reinforce the person's name.

ENCOUNTERING SCRIPTURE: LUKE 12:32-34

At our opening today Sir Roo talked about how he's afraid sometimes. But then he remembers that Jesus loves him and takes care of him, and this helps him be less afraid. Let's read together the story from the verse Roo shared.

*Read together Luke 12:32-34. Use a translation that will be accessible to children.*

Questions for conversation

- What is a flock? [A group of birds, animals or people.]
- Roo's flock included him, Dame Featherstein and Bea. Who is in your flock? [Family members, friends, church family, this small group — help the children think expansively.]
- Who is part of God's flock? [Everyone.]
- How can you help others feel they are part of God's flock, as Roo helps Bea and Dame Featherstein?

Engaging the Text: Scavenger Hunt

Jesus never stops searching until all of us are gathered together. Brush up on your own searching skills by tracking down all the things on this scavenger hunt.

Find something:

- Blue.
- With a nose.
- That opens and closes.
- Good for writing.
- See-through.
- Squishy.
- Rough.
- With buttons.
- That smells.
- With eyes.

To help younger children, have the group look around the room or go on a walk together. Send older children out in pairs. Encourage them all to think creatively. A person has eyes, but so do a potato and a sewing needle.

Questions for conversation

- What was the most creative use of an object?
- How did you look for the items? How did you decide which to choose?
- What was the hardest thing to find? What was the easiest?

Engaging the Text, Part 2: Hide the Teddy

Have the children close their eyes and count to ten while you hide a teddy bear or other stuffed animal somewhere in the room. When the counters reach ten, they shout, "Ready or not, here we come!" and search for the stuffed animal. Whoever finds the stuffed animal gets to hide it in the next round.

Variation: Make the game easier by giving clues such as "Warmer!" or "Colder!" as the children get closer to or further from the hiding spot.

Closing Prayer

Dear God, thank you for gathering all of us together this week to learn more about you and your children all over the world. Bless us this week as we join together to learn about you and in the future as we are sent out to gather others. Amen.

LESSON  
FOCUS

# God puts people in our lives to help us and puts us in places to help others.

## SMALL GROUP TIME: DAY 2

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Paper  
*(one sheet per person)*
- Marshmallows
- Crayons, colored pencils  
or markers
- Dried spaghetti noodles
- Wooden blocks *(optional)*

### OPENER: WHAT'S IN A NAME?

**Open with a name game to reinforce learning names and to introduce anyone new who may have joined.**

During the opening we met Bonnie, a cow who thinks big thoughts. She likes to be called “Bonnie the Brain.” If you had a nickname similar to hers, what would it be?

#### For younger children

Invite each child to invent a motion to be performed when they say their name. For example, someone might say, “My name is Joshua” while they do a jumping jack. Demonstrate the activity for the children first, then invite the children to introduce themselves. As each child takes their turn, invite the other children to repeat the motion. (Very young children may need leaders to help them come up with motions.)

#### For older children

Invite the children to come up with at least one word that describes them and that starts with the same letter as their name. For example: “My name is Vanessa, and I am a volleyball player.” Invite the rest of the group to repeat the names and words as each person is introduced. To make this more challenging, see who can come up with the most words that start with their first initial — and who can remember them all!

### ENCOUNTERING SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 41

In our skit today Bonnie the cow shared her thoughts about how Joseph and Pharaoh both had a need and how, in meeting each other’s needs, they helped all of Egypt and even Joseph’s family in faraway Canaan.

**Read or summarize Genesis 41.** Use a translation that will be accessible to children or use the summary of the text below:

One night Pharaoh dreamed he was standing by the Nile River when out of it came seven sleek, healthy cows eating the reeds. Behind them came seven skinny, hungry cows. Then the skinny, hungry cows ate the healthy cows. After the cows Pharaoh saw seven ripe ears of grain, plump and ready for harvest. Behind them came seven scraggly ears of grain. The scraggly grain swallowed up the healthy grain. When Pharaoh woke from the dream, he was nervous. He sent for all his wise men, but no one could tell him what the dream meant.

Then one of his servants told Pharaoh about Joseph, whom the servant had met while in prison. The servant, too, had had a strange dream, and Joseph had explained what it meant. Pharaoh sent for Joseph and told him the dream about the seven healthy cows, the seven hungry cows, the seven ripe ears of grain and the seven scraggly ears of grain.

When Joseph heard Pharaoh’s dream, he explained, “God is telling you about the future in your dream. There are going to be seven years of really good crops in Egypt, followed by seven years when nothing will grow. You need to find someone who can store up food from the good years so there will be enough for the hungry years.”

Pharaoh said, “Joseph, you are the one for the job. I am putting you in charge of all the land of Egypt. You will be my second-in-command.”

For the next seven years there was plenty in Egypt. Joseph helped the Egyptians gather part of the crop and save it. After that there were seven years when nothing would grow. Because Joseph had helped the people store grain during the good years, there was plenty during the hard years.

### Questions for conversation

- When Pharaoh sent for Joseph, Joseph was in prison far away from home and needed help getting out. What problem did Pharaoh need Joseph's help with? [*He had a dream, but no one could tell him what it meant.*]
- What was Pharaoh's dream? [*Seven fat cows, seven skinny cows, seven healthy ears of grain, seven scraggly ears of grain.*]
- How did Joseph explain Pharaoh's dream? [*Seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of famine.*]
- Pharaoh thought he had a problem when he couldn't understand his dream, but all of Egypt had a problem. How did Joseph solve Egypt's problem? [*Saved food from the good years so there would be enough when things turned bad.*]
- Have you ever had a problem you couldn't solve until someone helped you? Have you ever helped someone else solve a problem when they were stuck?
- How did God help the people of Egypt through Joseph? Through Pharaoh?

### Digging deeper for older children

- Have you ever had a really strange dream, as Pharaoh did? What is the strangest dream you've ever had?
- What gifts did Pharaoh use to help the people and Joseph? [*Power to get Joseph out of prison, authority to make people store up grain.*]
- What gifts did Joseph use to help the people and Pharaoh? [*Ability to interpret dreams, a plan for the lean years.*]
- Pharaoh was a powerful leader, whereas Joseph was an ordinary person in prison. What do you think the story tells us about the kind of people God works through? Does God work only through powerful and famous people?
- Can you think of a time when the help you or someone else needed came from someone unexpected?

### ENGAGING THE TEXT: HOW CAN I HELP?

Joseph helped Pharaoh by interpreting his dream. Joseph also saw how to use Pharaoh's dream to solve the problem of the coming famine. Pharaoh knew that Joseph was the right person for the job and put him in charge of gathering food.

What job are you the person for? What is a job you can help complete? Maybe you're good at helping your family cook a meal or cheering up your friends when they're sad. Draw a picture of yourself helping someone or something.

### Questions for conversation

- Tell us about your picture. Who are you helping? What are you doing?
- How does it feel to help other people?
- How does it feel when other people help you?

### ENGAGING THE TEXT: WORKING TOGETHER

Saving Egypt from famine wasn't a one-person job. Joseph had the understanding, Pharaoh had the vision to put Joseph in charge, and all of Egypt shared their crops from the good times to get through the bad. We too can do great things when we work together.

*Divide into groups of three or four. If the children are young, make sure each group has an adult. Give each group a handful of marshmallows and dried spaghetti noodles. Instruct them to work together as a group and build the tallest freestanding tower they can using only marshmallows and noodles. Note: Very young children can do the activity with blocks — or even just marshmallows.*

### Questions for conversation

- How did you build your tower?
- How did you figure out what worked to make the tower stand tall?
- Did you try anything at first that didn't work?
- How did you work together with each other?

### CLOSING PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for giving us each other. Teach us how to be good helpers and guide us to the people who can be good helpers for us. Amen.



LESSON  
FOCUS

**God has work for all of us,  
no matter what size we are.**

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

- Large sheet of poster paper
- Green construction paper cut into leaf shapes
- Pens or markers for writing

**OPENER: HI, MY NAME IS ...**

As the group get to know each other better, use this game to reinforce names and loosen up the group with some giggles.

Sit or stand in a circle. One person starts by saying, "Hi, my name is [whatever their name is]" while performing a simple motion such as waving with one hand, giving a thumbs-up, stomping, etc. The group responds, "Hi, [name]" and repeats the motion. Everyone in the group keeps up the motion, while the next person in the circle says, "Hi, my name is [their name]" and adds another motion. For example, waving the other hand, wiggling fingers on a waving hand, etc. The group responds, "Hi, [name]" and adds the new motion. Keep going around the circle until everyone has had a chance to say their name and add a motion. Things should get rather silly rather quickly.



**ENCOUNTERING SCRIPTURE: ISAIAH 35:1-4**

Have you ever been in a desert? What is a desert like? [Hot, dry, not a lot of water to drink.] In the Bible story we're about to read, the Israelites are traveling across a hot, dry desert. They're alone and afraid. The prophet Isaiah gives them hope by telling them what life will be like after God rescues them.

*Read Isaiah 35:1-4. Use a translation that will be accessible to children.*

**Questions for younger children**

- Read verses 1 and 2 again. What does Isaiah say will happen? [The desert will bloom, flowers will rejoice.]
- Isaiah says that the desert will "rejoice." What might a joyful desert look like?
- Read verses 3 and 4. What does Isaiah say will happen? [Those who are weak and frightened will be given courage.]
- Have you ever been afraid? When you're afraid, what helps you feel brave?

**Questions for older children**

- Isaiah's description of the wilderness and the desert is a promise of what will come. How might this promise have given the Israelites hope?
- Have you ever done something because of a promise that things would be better in the future, even if they were hard then?
- If you were with the Israelites, how might you encourage them? How do you encourage friends or family when life seems scary or hard?

### **ENGAGING THE TEXT: GOD FINDINGS**

The prophet Isaiah said these things so that the Israelites would see God's presence even when they were alone in the desert. Use this activity to demonstrate how seeking God's presence in the world around us can help us grow and give us hope.

On a sheet of posterboard, draw the outline of a tree with branches but no leaves. Give the children a pile of leaves cut out of green construction paper (these can be simple ovals). Invite the older children to write on the leaves the places where they find God; the younger ones can simply answer out loud. (Examples: In prayer, in music, in a friend or family member, etc.) With each "God finding," attach a leaf to the tree. Notice how quickly the tree spreads and blooms.

### **ENGAGING THE TEXT: BANDAGE TAG**

This freeze-tag game emphasizes seeking help from others to stay safe. Designate a playing area and select one volunteer to be "it." Whenever someone is tagged by "it," they must hold a "bandage" (their hand) on the spot where they were tagged, and the game continues. When a player runs out of hands but gets tagged a third time, they are frozen until two other people help them by tagging them at the same time and counting to three. Continue the game for as long as it remains fun and exciting. Switch the person who is "it" often.

The object of the game is to give kids a chance to help each other. If too few players are getting tagged, add a second "it." If there are no more helpers to unfreeze people, the child who is "it" has won.

For children younger than 6, the game can be simplified as freeze tag. In freeze tag, players are "frozen" when tagged until another free player tags and unfreezes them.

### **Questions for conversion**

- How did it feel to be wounded or frozen?
- Was it harder to run with your hands as bandages?
- How did you help each other?

### **Questions for older children**

- Did you spend more time in the game trying to keep yourself safe from "it" or trying to help other people who were wounded?
- If you were frozen or wounded, could you help others? What might that say about who's important in the game?

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Dear God, thank you for grass that grows, for flowers that bloom, for creeks and streams and rivers that bring water and life. Be with us today as we grow in our love for you and our friendship with each other. Amen.

LESSON  
FOCUS

# What starts out small grows big with God's help.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Food coloring (for older children)
- Lemon juice, salt, sugar, pepper and a variety of spices or herbs (for older children)
- Clear glasses of different sizes (for older children)
- Small disposable cups (for older children, at least four per child)
- Water (for older children)
- Sticky notes or index cards, six per child
- Markers, colored pencils, crayons
- Large pile of rubber bands

### OPENER: BIG/SMALL (For Younger Children)

Invite the group to stand in a circle, with the adult leader in the middle. In this activity, the leader will call out two types of animals and invite the children to imitate the bigger of the two. Continue for several rounds, then invite each child to be the leader, calling out two animals for the group. End the time by asking the children to start as a tiny animal and grow into successively larger ones (ant, snake, dog, pig, horse, elephant).

### OPENER: BIG/SMALL (For Older Children)

Set up clear glasses of water where everyone can see them. The group will use food coloring, lemon juice, salt, sugar, pepper and other spices to see the big difference a small additive can make in the water. Start with the food coloring and ask the children how many drops they think it will take to change the color of the water completely. As you add a drop at a time to each glass, point out how just a small amount of coloring spreads throughout the entire glass.

Now use the lemon juice, salt, sugar, pepper and other spices to show how a small amount of each can alter the taste. Spread out the disposable cups and add a small amount of water to each. Ask the children which of the additives will make the biggest change. Add a small amount of each to the glasses, starting with the spices and continuing with the salt, sugar and lemon juice. As you add each, invite the children to sample the water. At some points it will be palatable but far from tasty!

To wrap up, remind them that the story for today is about how something small — a mustard seed — can make a big change. Even a tiny seed or a tiny amount of food coloring, salt, sugar, etc., can have a big impact on its surroundings.

### ENGAGING SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 13:31-33

The Bible story for today is a parable. Parables are stories Jesus told to teach people about God and God's reign. Jesus taught in parables because stories can help us understand complicated things.

**Read Matthew 13:31-33.** Use a translation that will be accessible to children. Then show a picture of a mustard seed like the one on this page.



In the parable Jesus said a mustard seed grows into a mighty tree. In the Bible trees often symbolize powerful nations and rulers. The people who lived in Jesus' time would have appreciated trees. They lived in a hot, dry desert area. Big trees would have provided shade to keep people cool.

But mustard plants are not big shade trees. In fact, they are weeds. The people would not have liked mustard growing in their fields. Once it started growing in people's fields, it was very hard to get rid of. It could quickly take over a whole garden! *[Find a picture of a field of mustard and show it to the children.]*

Have you ever heard someone compare heaven to a weed? The people in Jesus' time probably didn't either. But that's exactly what Jesus did! He compared the reign of God to mustard — a weed. The people hearing his parable would have known how hard a mustard plant is to get rid of once it starts growing, and they might have understood that God's reign, though it may start small, will grow and grow. From Jesus' story we can learn, too, that with God's help even the smallest start can lead to bigger things.

### Questions for younger children

- Can you name something that starts small but grows really big?
- What are some "big" things you can do to help other people?

Make yourself as SMALL as you can, maybe by curling into a ball, or tucking in your arms and legs. Now, make yourself as BIG as you can by stretching out your arms and legs and puffing out your chest.

### Questions for older children

- The people listening to Jesus probably didn't expect to learn about God's love through the story of a mustard seed. Have you ever experienced God's love from an unexpected place? *[Example: You thought you were going to get in trouble for something, but the person forgave you instead.]*
- Can you think of a time when someone did something that seemed small but meant a lot to you?
- How could you share God's love in an unexpected way? How might such sharing cause surprising results? *[Example: Be kind to someone who was mean to you, and they may respond by acting nicer.]*

### ENGAGING THE TEXT: RUBBER BAND BALL

*[Show the children a single rubber band.]* What is this? *[A rubber band.]* Is it a ball? *[No.]* Could I throw it like a ball? *[No.]* Could it bounce like a ball? *[Yes, if you shot it at the wall.]*

*[Show the children a large pile of rubber bands.]* Are any of these balls? Could any of these bounce? What would happen if I threw them? Could we play catch with them?

Alone, each of these is just a rubber band, but what happens when they all work together?

*Roll one of the rubber bands into a ball, wrap a second rubber band around it and invite the children to wrap more rubber bands around these. Notice how the ball grows as more rubber bands are added. Once you have a good-size ball, invite the kids to toss or bounce it to each other.*

Like the mustard seed in the story, this ball started small, as a single rubber band. But working together, we turned it into a fun ball for us to enjoy.

### ENGAGING THE TEXT: PLANTING SEEDS OF KINDNESS

Make "kindness seeds" to share. These can be sticky notes, index cards or blank greeting cards. Give each child five or six cards and invite them to decorate them with messages of kindness. Younger kids might draw a heart, smiley face or sun; older ones might write short messages such as "You are awesome," "You're doing a great job" or "God loves you." Ask the children to share the cards with friends or family.

For ideas on how to be kind, visit the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation site at [www.randomactsofkindness.org/kindness-ideas](http://www.randomactsofkindness.org/kindness-ideas).

### CLOSING PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for bringing us all together to learn more about your love. Alone, each of us may be as small as a mustard seed, but we know that, as we learn and grow together, you will use us to do great things. Amen.

*As an alternative, invite children to catch the rubber band ball, share a prayer of thanksgiving and toss the ball to someone else until everyone has contributed.*

## LESSON FOCUS

# Each of us has different gifts to bring and different skills to share.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Paper plates
- Glue
- Markers, crayons or colored pencils
- Stickers (for younger children)
- Paper

### OPENER: PASS THE MOVEMENT

(For Younger Children)

Arrange the group in a circle. The leader starts with a simple movement — touching their ears, patting their head, etc. The leader then “passes” this movement to the person on their right, who repeats the movement and “passes” it to the person on their right. After the movement has traveled all the way around the circle, the person on the leader’s right gets to choose a new movement.

After everyone has gotten the chance to pick a movement, see if you can remember all the movements and do them in order. You can even do the movements to the music, creating your own small-group dance.

### OPENER: FIND THE LEADER

(For Older Children)

Have the group sit or stand in a circle. Select one child to be the “detective” and have them step out of the room. Select another child to be the leader. The leader chooses a movement for everyone in the group to perform, such as clapping, patting their heads, snapping, tapping their feet, etc. Everyone continues this movement until the leader starts a new one, then everyone switches to that movement. Let them practice a few transitions, then invite the detective back into the circle. The detective’s job is to identify the leader. The group try to keep the leader’s identity a secret by switching movements quickly. After the detective identifies the leader, the leader becomes the detective and a new leader is chosen.

### ENGAGING SCRIPTURE: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-11

In the letter we’re about to read, Paul is writing to the Christian church in a city called Corinth. A lot of different people live in Corinth, with a variety of gifts and skills. Paul lifts up some of those gifts and reminds people that everyone’s gifts are important to God.

*Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 together. Use a translation that will be accessible to children.*

### Questions for conversation

- One gift Paul mentions is wisdom. Whom do you know who is wise?
- Another gift is faith. What does it mean to have faith? Who do you know who has faith or helps you have faith?
- Another gift is healing. Who is a healer in your life?
- Another gift is teaching. Who teaches you things?
- Another gift is encouragement. What does it mean to “encourage” someone?
- What gifts do you have? How can you use them to help others?
- What gifts have you seen in each other this week?

*Encourage group members to affirm the gifts they’ve seen in each other.*

### ENGAGING THE TEXT: AFFIRMATION CIRCLE

Because this is the last time the small group will be together, give them time to share affirmations. Ask each child to sit in the middle of the circle, and invite everyone else to say something they like or appreciate about that person.

As an alternative for older children, give each child a piece of paper and invite them to write their name in the center. With tape, attach the paper to the child’s back. Then invite the children to wander the room and write affirming messages or words on each other’s paper. (Be careful with markers that might bleed through to people’s clothing.)

### **ENGAGING THE TEXT: SHARING OUR STORIES**

This week we've been learning all about ELCA World Hunger and how people and animals work together in God's world. One gift you can give is to share what you've learned with others. Decorate a paper plate to look like one of the animals you learned about. Display the paper plates in the church, along with the descriptions of animals in the ELCA Good Gifts catalogue, so that the whole congregation can learn what we've learned.

*Leaders can draw the animals for younger children and invite them to decorate the plates by coloring them or adding stickers. Display pictures of the different animals featured and invite students to build on those ideas or generate their own.*

*When the project is complete, display the paper plates in your church, along with the descriptions of animals in the ELCA Good Gifts catalogue, so the whole congregation can share in what the children have learned.*

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Give thanks for each member of your group, identifying them by name. With older children, go around the circle, asking each person to pray for the child next to them.*

Dear God, thank you for this wonderful week of Vacation Bible School and all the fun we've had. Thank you especially for every member of this group: *[name them]*. Let them feel your love and help them share your love with everyone they meet. Amen.

# Story Time



TODAY'S  
THEME

# Gathered by God



## LOCATION: NEPAL

**On page 42, you will find a map of the world.** This can be used for a quick opening activity at each Story Time station to help children see the many places God is at work in the world and to tie together the stories from each day. If you will be seeing different groups in the rotation, you may want to make a copy for each group, so that each can have its own map to follow with you during its Story Time.

Open your Story Time by telling the children that the ELCA works with neighbors all over the world. Hold up a world map and ask them to find the country or region. (Most may not be able to do this accurately.) Show them the correct location, then color it in, highlight it with a sticker or mark it in some other way. With older kids, share facts about each country or region. If you do this each day, you will have five countries or regions marked on the map by the end of the week.



## Facts About Nepal

- Nepal is a country in the Himalayan Mountain range, between China and India. The Himalayas are the highest mountains on Earth, and eight of the ten highest mountains on Earth are in Nepal.
- Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world, sits on the border between Nepal and Tibet. Much of the Western world calls the mountain Everest, but the Tibetan name is Qomolangma (*kwahmah-LANG-mah*), which means “the mother’s universe.” In Nepali — the language of Nepal — it is known as Sagarmāthā, which means “the heaven’s forehead.”
- Nepal is the only country in the world whose flag is not a rectangle. Its two triangles symbolize the Himalayas and the country’s two major religions, Buddhism and Hinduism.
- The traditional greeting in Nepal is to press one’s palms together in front of one’s chest, nod or bow slightly, and say “namaste” (*NA-mah-stay*). Namaste is a Sanskrit word that means “I honor the divine or the sacred in you.”

***If possible, use one real egg and one empty plastic egg as props for this story.***

### **What is this?**

*[With the real egg.]*

### **Where does it come from?**

*[A chicken, but allow for imaginative answers.]*

### **What can you use it for?**

*[To eat, but allow for imaginative answers.]*

### **Have you ever eaten an egg?**

### **Did you like it?**

### **How was it cooked?**

We can cook eggs in many ways. We can boil them and have them as a snack. We can scramble them up for breakfast. We can even put them on sandwiches or in pasta. Lots of people around the world eat eggs. That’s a good thing, too, because eggs are really healthy!





Christians use eggs quite a bit, especially around one holiday. What holiday do Christians use eggs for? *[Easter.]* Eggs are pretty incredible things. And when they're decorated for Easter, they can really be pretty things! Eggs can provide us with food, but some eggs also hatch, and baby chicks are born from them. Because of this, eggs remind Christians of new life. Some eggs are empty, though. *[Show children the plastic egg and open it.]* Especially during Easter, these empty eggs remind us that Jesus' tomb was empty after he rose from the dead. Whether real or plastic, eggs remind us of God's new creation — from the birth of baby chicks to the new life we can have with God.



In some communities, eggs and chickens do more than remind people of new life — they help people start new lives of their own or help them live their lives in new ways.

Our story today comes from the country of Nepal. *[This is a good opportunity to share the facts about Nepal above.]*

In some communities in Nepal, women and girls are not allowed to go to school.

*[To school-age children:]* What things would you miss if you couldn't go to school?

When Nepalese girls are still young, sometimes as young as 13, they're supposed to leave school and start their own families. This is what happened to Mira Shaha. When she was 16, her parents made her marry a man and start a family. She had to stop going to school, even though she wanted to keep learning.

She and her husband had four kids: two daughters and two sons. When they were teenagers, Mira was left to take care of them all by herself. This was hard at first, but Mira soon found out that she wasn't alone.

In her village ELCA World Hunger helped support a group called a "cooperative." What do you think "cooperative" means? *[Allow time for answers from older children.]*

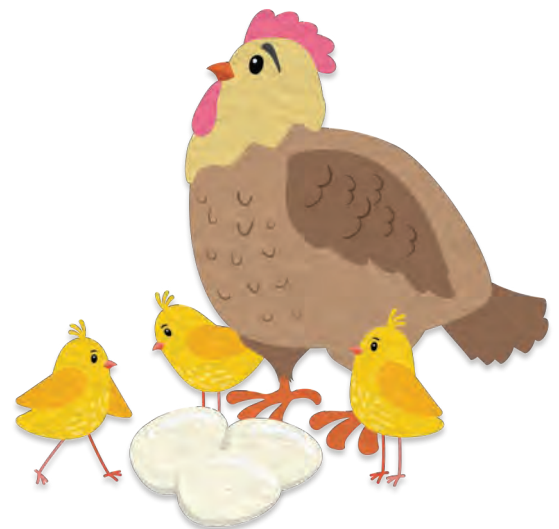
"Cooperative" comes from the word "cooperate," which means to work together. The cooperative in Mira's village worked together to help each other get enough food and meet other needs.

Mira wasn't sure what she would do to help her children, but working with other people gave her hope. Because of the cooperative, she had money to send her daughters to school and start a chicken farm. She rented some land, planted vegetables and started raising chickens. She could use the eggs, chickens and vegetables to feed her family and sell the extra food to neighbors. Her farm thrived so much that Mira was able to hire people to work it and even bought a second farm!

Now Mira can use the profits from her farm to make sure her children have enough to eat and can stay in school. Do you know what else Mira did? She went back to school and graduated! Now she enjoys her days and looks to the future with hope.

Chickens might seem like small animals, and eggs are even smaller. But chickens and eggs remind us that God works in incredible ways — through animals, farmers such as Mira, and our church — to make new things happen every day.

So the next time you hear a rooster crow or a chicken cluck, or the next time you eat an egg, remember Mira's story and how she was able to work with her neighbors to build a new life for herself and her family.



TODAY'S  
THEME

# Helping Hands



## LOCATION: SENEGAL

If you are using the map activity for the Story Time station (see the Day 1 story), help the children find and mark Senegal on the map. Teach the children the name of the country and share some of the facts below.

Today's theme is "Helping Hands." What are some ways our hands can be helpful? *[Allow time for creative answers.]* We can help in all kinds of ways and not just with our hands. How many people helped you get to Vacation Bible School today? Can you name some of them? *[Allow time for answers.]* Wow, those are some great examples! But more people helped you get here today than you even realize.

If someone drove you here today, there were people who built the car you rode in. There were also people who built the roads and made sure they were safe. If you took a bus or train, the people driving helped you; so did the people who keep the buses and trains running. If you cycled or walked, there were people who helped you by building the sidewalks, the crosswalks and your bicycle.

There are so many people around us helping us every day that we might not even notice! We need every one of them to do all the things we do every day! It takes a lot of helping hands to make a community work!

In our story today we're going to hear about a community in Senegal where neighbors work together to raise cows, running a dairy to help one another and their whole community. ELCA World Hunger is helping too! *[This is a good opportunity to share some of the facts about Senegal listed above and show the children where Senegal is on a world map.]*

One way ELCA World Hunger helps in Senegal is through a program that teaches farmers how to raise cows and whose dairy helps them collect and sell their cows' milk.

Who remembers the name of our special visitor today? *[Bonnie.]* What do you remember about the big thoughts and questions Bonnie pondered while chewing her cud? Bonnie was thinking about the story of Joseph and Pharaoh and how God brought them together to help each other. When Joseph and Pharaoh helped each other, they ended up helping their whole country!

That's exactly what God does through the farmers in Senegal. They connect dairy farmers from around the country, teaching them to raise cows and to help their cows produce more milk. The farmers care for the cows, and the cows produce milk. That's some pretty good teamwork!



## Facts About Senegal

- Senegal is the westernmost country in Africa. Dakar, its capital city, is located on a peninsula that juts into the Atlantic Ocean.
- Senegal is home to a pink lake. Lac Retba is so salty it breeds bacteria that looks pink in the sunlight.
- The national symbol of Senegal is the baobab tree. These ancient trees live up to 5,000 years, stand almost 100 feet tall and measure over 160 feet around. They provide shelter, food and water for animals and humans. The fruit of the baobab is packed with vitamins, and the bark can be made into rope or clothing.
- Senegal is known as "the Land of Teranga." Teranga, meaning hospitality and generosity, is a word used by the Wolof, the largest ethnic group in Senegal.



These farmers work together to collect and sell the milk their cows produce. What are some things we can do with milk? What other foods can we make with milk? *[Yogurt, cheese, butter, etc.]*

How many people do you think it takes to make all that food? Yes, it takes a lot of people to collect milk and turn it into other foods! There are people who collect the milk, people who drive the milk to a dairy, people who make sure the milk is safe, people who turn milk into cheese or yogurt, and people who sell all those things in stores.

By working together to sell milk, the cooperative can help the whole community! Farmers can buy things they need to live healthy, happy lives, and others can feed their families with the money they earn driving milk to the dairy, turning it into other foods and selling it in markets. So even people not working with the cows can enjoy the benefits they bring.

God's new creation is all about working together! In Senegal we can see the many ways God works through neighbors, animals and the land to make sure everyone has enough to eat and whatever else they need to be healthy and happy in God's world. There are a lot of helping hands in God's new creation!

TODAY'S  
THEME

# Everyone Is Important



## LOCATION: UGANDA

If you are using the map activity for the Story Time station (see the Day 1 story), help the children find and mark Uganda on the map. Teach them the name of the country and share some of the facts below.

Today's theme is "Everyone Is Important." We are all loved by God, and God has a place for each of us in creation. Today's Bible story mentions the desert. Have you ever been to a desert? What things would you expect to find in a desert?

In the Bible story for today we heard about deserts blooming. What do you think it means to bloom? When you think of blooming — flowers opening, trees budding and so on — do you usually picture a desert? How often do you think deserts bloom?

Deserts do bloom, but it takes a lot for that to happen. The desert needs just the right conditions. It can't be too hot or too cold. And the desert needs to get just the right amount of water at the right time. Because of this, deserts bloom only every five to seven years! That's a long time, even longer than some of you have been alive!

In between these blooms, plants and seeds are waiting and slowly growing. Sometimes they grow so slowly that we don't even notice! But just because we can't see how they're



growing doesn't mean they aren't. Even in a desert, God is at work creating life. Desert plants might not always look bright, colorful and full of flowers, but they're still important parts of God's creation. In fact, the whole time the desert plants are waiting for the right time to bloom, they have all they need to produce flowers. They just need the right environment to do so.

We humans are a little like these desert plants. God gives us all we need, and God is always with us, even when we aren't blooming. But being all that we can be means having other needs met too. We need other people to help us be healthy and happy. These might be people who provide us with food or water, or people who make sure we're taken care of when we get sick. With all these people in our community helping, we can bloom just like desert plants.

Today I would like to tell you the story of Nakidde and her siblings in Uganda, who got the help they needed to bloom. Nakidde and her siblings are beloved children of God, and just like all God's children, they need support and the right conditions to blossom. This is where our church and a few goats come in.



## Facts About Uganda

- The gray-crowned crane is Uganda's national bird and is featured on its flag. This gray, black and white bird with a golden crown of feathers on its head stands about 3 feet tall.
- Uganda is home to the mountain gorilla, as well as the largest land mammal, the African elephant, and the rare southern white rhinoceros.
- Uganda is bordered by Lake Victoria, the second largest freshwater lake in the world.



Nakidde and her siblings have a virus called HIV that makes it hard for their bodies to fight off infections. So Nakidde and her siblings got sick more often than many other kids in their community. Because they were sick often, they missed a lot of school, and they couldn't help their family with work that would make them money.

Their medicine is expensive, and sometimes people with HIV travel a long way to get it. Even when they're healthy, life can be hard for them. They can't always get or afford their medicine. If they're adults, they might miss work, and if they're children, they might miss a lot of school. They must always be careful about getting sick.

A partner of ELCA World Hunger in Uganda learned about Nakidde's family and wanted to help. Do you know how this partner helps people? It provides families with goats and teaches them how to raise the animals. How could goats help families such as Nakidde's? *[Allow for creative responses.]* Goats provide milk that can be turned into a lot of different foods. Have you ever heard of goat cheese? It's a soft, healthy and delicious cheese. What about goat butter?

How do you think goat milk, goat cheese or goat butter might help Nakidde's family stay healthy? *[Example: By providing them with protein.]* How might goats help them afford medicine?

The partner in the community provided Nakidde's family with five goats, and Nakidde and her siblings learned how to raise them. Some of those goats gave birth to baby goats, and soon Nakidde and her siblings had seven animals! By selling the extra goats they can afford medicine they need to

stay healthy. Asked about the goats, Nakidde said, "God is great!" She knows that through her neighbors, the goats and her family's hard work, God will help her stay healthy and finish school, even while living with HIV.

The work in Uganda is about more than goats. Sometimes, people living with HIV are treated poorly by their neighbors. Other people might avoid them, or they might be told that they have HIV because they did something wrong. This project in Nakidde's community provides goats, but it is also a reminder to Nakidde and to us that no one is separated from God's love — and no one should feel alone when they need help.

God and our goat friends are indeed great, even when we need a little help to let all our beautiful colors shine! Nakidde's story reminds us that we are not alone, that every one of us is important to God and to other people, and that nothing can stop us from blooming big when we have the help we need.



TODAY'S  
THEME

# Small Miracles



## LOCATION: CUBA

If you are using the map activity for the Story Time station (see the Day 1 story), help the children find and mark Cuba on the map. Teach the children the name of the country and share some of the facts below.

Today's theme is "Small Miracles." Does anyone know what the word "miracle" means? *[Affirm all answers.]* Miracles are good surprises in our lives. They're something that we didn't expect but that bring us joy or something we need.

When was the last time you received a good surprise? Wow! Those are some great surprises!

Another thing that makes something a miracle is that it feels impossible or unbelievable and helps us understand who God is. Can anyone name any miracles or unbelievable, surprising things Jesus did in the Bible? *[Healing the sick, raising Lazarus from the dead, walking on water.]*

Sometimes miracles are big events, such as Jesus and the disciples feeding 5,000 people with just five loaves and two fish. Sometimes miracles seem small but still make a big impact, such as the mustard seed in our Bible story today. Sometimes God works in big, huge, miraculous ways! But other times God works in small ways, through people and events that we might not expect. In our story today we're going to hear how God is at work among our neighbors through something pretty small: piglets!



**Do you know what a piglet is?**

**Have you ever seen one in person?**

Do you remember who we met in our skit today? That's right, Portia the Pig! In our story today we're going to hear about a community in Cuba that received pigs and learned to raise them together because of a partner of ELCA World Hunger and our church. Together these farmers learned how God finds surprising ways to help people when we work together.



Pigs come in many shapes and sizes. Adult pigs usually weigh between 200 and 600 pounds. The largest pig in history, Big Bill, was 5 feet tall and weighed an impressive 2,552 pounds. Pigs can also be very small. At birth a piglet usually weighs only about 2 1/2



## Facts About Cuba

- Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean. Long and narrow, it is nearly 750 miles long but only 62 miles wide.
- The most popular sport in Cuba is baseball.
- The most popular game in Cuba is dominoes.
- Cuba is home to the world's smallest bird. The bee hummingbird, also called the zunzuncito, is only 2 1/2 inches long. Cuba also has the world's smallest frog, the Mount Iberia frog. This little guy is less than half an inch long.



Photo: Paul Jeffrey/Life on Earth.

pounds. That's about the weight of a loaf of bread! How do you think pigs grow to be so large and stay healthy? *[Allow for some creative responses.]* Farmers and many others care for and feed them. Pigs need food, shelter and medicine to be healthy and to grow, just as we do!

That's exactly what's happening in Cuba. One way God is at work through the church in Cuba is by helping communities purchase farm animals and learn how to raise them. In El Dajao, Cuba, neighbors who'd been working on their own to raise crops and animals decided to work together. When the community got five pigs, they were placed with five different families, but everyone chipped in to learn how to care for and raise them. As a result, some of the pigs had piglets! This small gift of five pigs multiplied to become a larger gift and help even more people! What a good surprise, or maybe even a miracle!

Did you know that pigs can be a big help to people? Pigs can be sold at market for much more than it costs to raise them. By raising pigs and taking them to market, people can afford the things they need to live healthy, happy lives, such as food and medicine. They can also give charitably to their neighbors so that other people can meet their needs.

Another way pigs can help people is by building community. One of the pigs in Cuba went to a woman named Estela, and

another went to Estela's neighbor Mariela. Estela's pig gave birth to four piglets, and Mariela's gave birth to eight. Estela felt sad because her sow, a mama pig, didn't have as many piglets as Mariela's. She was worried that she hadn't taken care of her pig as well as she could have. Mariela assured Estela that she hadn't done anything wrong, that everything would be fine and that, together, they could learn to take better care of all their pigs. This made Estela feel a lot better.

A piglet can seem small, and to farmers pigs might not seem all that miraculous. But with God's new creation, so much is possible! God sometimes works through the smallest of things, even piglets, to bring us together with our neighbors and provide all that we need. God can work through our words as we comfort and care for each other, just as Mariela did for Estela. Because of that, we have miracles all around us, every day, if we know where to find them.

TODAY'S  
THEME

# Many Gifts, One God



## LOCATION: IOWA, UNITED STATES

If you are using the map activity for the Story Time station (see the Day 1 story), help the children find and mark Iowa on the map. Show the children where Iowa is and where you are, and share some of the facts below.

In our skits this week we've been meeting lots of new animal friends. Do you remember who we met in today's skit? Where were they from?

*[Allow time for responses.]*

That's right, these vegetables from all over the world — and that one pesky tomato fruit — lived together in a community garden in Iowa.



Today's theme is that we each have different gifts but all our gifts come from one God. From the skit we learned that vegetables from all over the world can grow in one community garden. Does anyone remember what a community garden is? *[Allow time for responses.]* A community garden is a place where people can grow foods that they're familiar with and learn about what sort of food their neighbors like.

We're going to learn about a community garden in Iowa that's supported by ELCA World Hunger. Tapestry Farms employs refugees new to their community to grow fresh fruit and vegetables together. Have you ever heard the

word "refugee"? A refugee is a neighbor who's been forced to leave their home and travel to a new place, even a new country, so that their family can be safe and healthy. The refugees working at Tapestry Farms are doing more than growing food — they're getting used to living in a whole new country together.

What are some things they might need to keep their garden growing? *[Allow time for responses, such as vegetables, land and people.]* Great answers! All kinds of things have to come together for a community garden, not just seeds and dirt!

Let's start with the land. One friend of Tapestry Farms purchased a plot of land that hadn't been used for 25 years! That's a long time. The people needed a lot of creativity to dream about how this lot could be transformed, and a lot of cooperation to make their dreams a reality.

First, three of the refugee women working with Tapestry Farms, Charlene, Esperance and Vanis, began putting their heads together. They knew how to grow food in their home countries and in refugee camps because that's how they fed their families before coming to Iowa. Their new home, though, is different from where they first learned to grow food. As they were thinking about their new land, they had to decide together what plants might thrive in this very different environment.

Speaking Swahili and Kinyarwanda, their first languages, the women named the veggies they hoped for in the summer — including one from their home country that they want to bring to Iowa. It's called intoryi, which means "garden eggs." Have you ever heard of a garden egg? Here's what it looks like. *[Show image of intoryi on page 41.]* It's similar to an eggplant, but it's green instead of purple!

Intoryi are rich in vitamins and minerals, helping people stay healthy. Why do you think Charlene, Esperance and Vanis wanted to find out how they could grow intoryi in the new garden?



## Facts About Iowa

- Iowa is named after the loway tribe, the first people to call the land home.
- Portia the Pig from today's skit would feel right at home in Iowa. More pigs live in Iowa than in any other state, 23 million of them.
- Many things were invented in Iowa, including the computer, the red delicious apple, the butterfly swim stroke, and sliced bread.





Next, the three women had to figure out how to find intoryi so they could start growing it. What would you do to find something or learn how to do something? What might you use or ask a parent to do? *[Allow time for responses, hoping to get to Google or an internet search.]* Well, the women got on their phones and started googling.

They found a woman nearby who grows intoryi starter plants, and they purchased some for Tapestry Farms. Other veggies made the list, too: tomatoes, red onions, cabbage, spinach, carrots, corn, potatoes, squash, peppers and beans. The women also decided to grow a few fruits: apples, pears and berries.

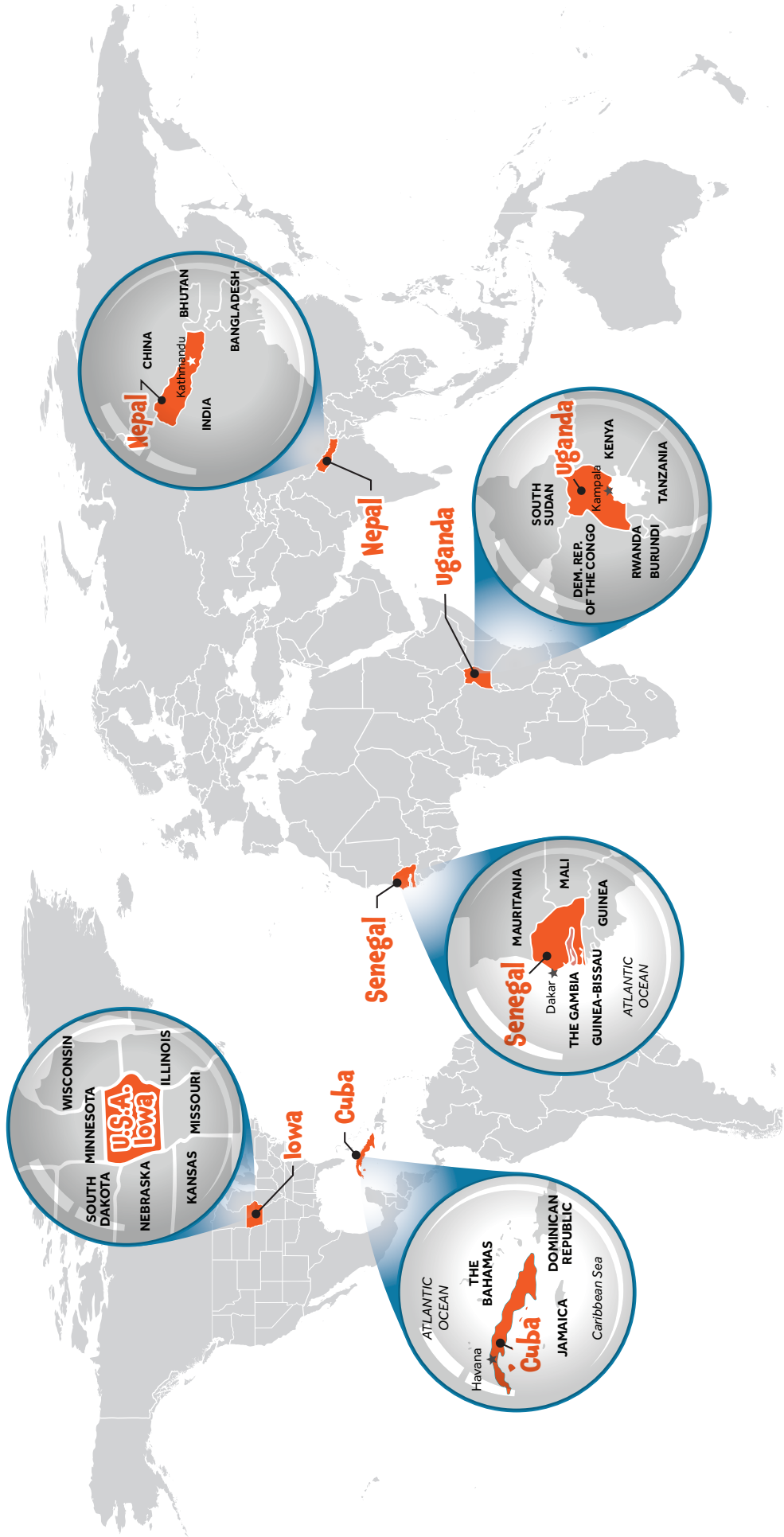
The women worked with another local nonprofit to decide how their raised beds would be built (picture 2) and determine the tools they needed to grow food. Topping the list was a hoe called a jembe, which they were able to buy from a local grocery store. Soon their empty lot was well on its way to becoming a place where food, community and hope will grow.

The leaders at Tapestry Farms looked at an empty lot and saw something many other people might miss. They saw hope! They saw a gift of land that could be used in some



incredible ways. That's a good lesson for us too. Sometimes, even if we don't notice it at first, God is already at work, providing many different gifts and helping us dream about how we can use those gifts to help others.

Tapestry Farms began the summer with a full crew to bring the community garden to life. Their work reminds us of our lesson today, that we all have different gifts and need to share them so God can make things happen through us. That's all part of God's new creation. The people at Tapestry Farms have gifts to share, the land itself can be a gift, and the plants they grow can be gifts that help them not only feed themselves but learn from each other and work together in a new place.







# Games



# Day 1 – Gathering Games

Today's theme is about being gathered. Play these games that involve gathering.

## BLOB TAG

**Age range: All ages**

Tag is popular with children all over the world. Play this version to gather everyone up into one group.

If you have children with diverse ability levels, consider using a pool noodle or soft beanbags to tag.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Set out boundaries for the tag area, based on your space and the size of the group.
2. Choose one player to be "it."
3. Begin a regular game of game except that once "it" tags someone, the two players hold hands to become a blob.
4. Continue the game until everyone is in the blob.
5. Repeat the game a few more times with different people getting to be "it."

### QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

- Did tagging people become easier or harder as the blob grew?
- How did you escape the growing blob, and what finally got you caught?



## DANDI BIYO

**Age range: First grade and older**

This popular Nepalese game is played around the world and may have been a forerunner of cricket. It's best played in a large outdoor space.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- A 2-foot stick; this is the Dandi.
- A 6-inch stick; this is the Biyo.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Divide players into two teams. One team bats while the other team plays the field. The batting team selects one player to be the batter.
2. The biyo is set on the ground with either a rock propping up one end of it or a small hole dug so the dandi can fit under it.
3. The batter uses the dandi to flip the biyo in the air and then hit it as far as they can. If they cannot hit the biyo after three tries, they are out and another batter gets a turn.
4. Once a batter has successfully hit the biyo, the fielding team tries to catch it. If the biyo is caught, the batter is out and another batter gets a turn. If the biyo hits the ground before being caught, the batting team gets a point.
5. The team with the most points after a predetermined number of rounds wins the game.

## PASS THE CHICKEN

Age range: All ages

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Two rubber chickens, stuffed-animal chickens or other soft, random objects

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Create a starting line and finish line set as far apart as possible in your space. The winning team will be the first to get everyone across the finish line.
2. Divide players into two teams, Team Cluck and Team Chick.
3. Arrange each team in a single-file line, facing forward, with the first person behind the starting line.
4. Give a rubber chicken to the first person in each line.
5. To move, team members will need to pass the chicken all the way to the person at the back of the line. The first person will pass the chicken over their head to the person behind them, who will then pass the chicken through their legs to the person behind them, then the sequence repeats. Players cannot turn around, throw the chicken, drop the chicken or repeat the previous person's movement. If they do any of these things, they must give the chicken back to the line leader and start over.
6. Once the person at the rear of the line has the chicken, they must yell, "Chuck the chicken!" Then they must close their eyes, spin around 360 degrees and throw the chicken.
7. After the chicken lands, the team must travel in a line over to the chicken and pick it up. The line leader then goes to the back of the line, and the team can start passing it through the line again.
8. The team reaching the finish line first wins.

**Note:** Younger children can play the same game without closing their eyes or spinning, and with a shorter distance to travel. If there are fewer than four people per team, assign the children to one team and identify a point they must reach together.

### QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

- What was the easiest position?
- Which was the most important position? Who needed to do their job correctly for you to win? *[Everyone.]*
- How were you forced to rely on each other during the game? How were you forced to help each other?

# Day 2 – Cooperative Games

Today's theme is all about working together and helping one another. Play these cooperative games to help children work together.

## FRENZY

Age range: Preschool to 8 years

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mark off a large area for play, either indoors or outside.
2. Scatter around the area one ball per player.
3. Players must work together to keep all the balls in constant motion and inside the marked area.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Beanbag, balloon or ball (more than one per player)

4. If a ball stops or leaves the marked area, the game leader points it out and yells, "Hectic!" Players have three seconds to get the ball moving again. After five "hectics," the team loses and the game is over.
5. Time each game to see how long players can make it last. To keep the game interesting and raise the challenge level, add another ball occasionally.

## HOW MANY CAN YOU HOLD?

Age range: All ages

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Divide into groups of three or four. Each group selects one player to be the holder.
2. The object of the game is to see how many balls the holder can hold at one time, while standing or while sitting, without using their pockets or other articles of clothing.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Lots of tennis balls, other small balls, or beanbags

3. The other team members must stack the balls in the holder's arms, lap, etc. The balls cannot touch anything except other balls and the holder, and the holder must hold the balls for ten seconds.
4. Groups are welcome to switch holders after a few attempts.

## ICEBERG

Age range: Kindergarten and older

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Divide players into groups of four to six. Give each group an old sheet or tablecloth and ask them to lay it on the floor.
2. At the start of the game, blow a whistle or clap your hands to announce that all players must get on the sheet. Anything off the sheet is out of bounds. When all the players are on the sheet, blow the whistle again for them to get off.
3. Have each group fold its sheet in half and, at the sound of the whistle, all get on the sheet again. Again, everything off the sheet is out of bounds. If any part of any player is out of bounds, the team must start over.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Old sheets or tablecloths, one for every four to six players

4. Continue until the sheet is too small for everyone to get on. See how many folds each group can accomplish.
5. For older children, score the game. A team receives one point for being the first to get everyone on the sheet and two points every time they fold the sheet.
6. Added challenge for older groups: Have them fold the sheet without getting off. Players must stay on the sheet and work together to fold it without anyone falling off.





## JOINING BACKS

Age range: 6 years and older

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Divide the group into pairs.
2. Invite each player to sit back-to-back with their partner.
3. The goal of the activity is for the pair to stand up, using only their legs and their backs against each other. If any player in a pair touches the ground with their hand, the partners must start over.
4. Play a couple of rounds in pairs, then divide the group into trios. Invite each trio to sit with their backs forming a triangle and to try to stand again.
5. Continue playing, increasing the group size each time until the entire group must try to stand up together while in a circle, pressed against each other.
6. For added difficulty, invite the players to reverse the action, standing first and then sitting down while pressed back-to-back.
7. This game can be adapted for children with different physical abilities. Instead of asking pairs to stand up or sit down, provide each with a ball to keep between their backs as they move from a starting line to a finish line. The smaller the ball, the more challenging the activity will be.

### QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

- Was it easier to stand with just one partner or with a larger group?
- How did you work together to accomplish the task?
- How did you have to adjust to make sure you stayed together?

## Senegalese Children's Games

These familiar games are popular with children in Senegal.

### HOT PIMENT

Piment is "pepper" in French, the official language of Senegal.

Age range: All ages

#### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Small ball or beanbag for tossing
- Speaker or phone to play music

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Start music playing from a stereo or phone. While the music plays, players toss the ball around the group like a hot pepper.
2. The person holding the ball when the music stops is out.
3. Continue until only one player remains.

### LAGAN BURI

Age range: All ages

#### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Handkerchief or scarf (called a "lagan")

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Designate an area as home base and choose one player to be "it."
2. All players stand on home base with their eyes closed while the player who is "it" hides the lagan. When the lagan is hidden, the person who is "it" moves to home base and calls out, "Buri!"
3. The other players look for the lagan, and the player who finds it tries to tag the others before they reach home base. Once a player has been tagged, they also become a tagger.
4. Once everyone has been tagged, the person who found the lagan hides it and the game starts again.

# Day 3 – Overcoming Obstacles

Goats are adventurous animals and can go nearly anywhere. Test your inner goat with an obstacle course today!

## OBSTACLE COURSE

**Age range:** All ages

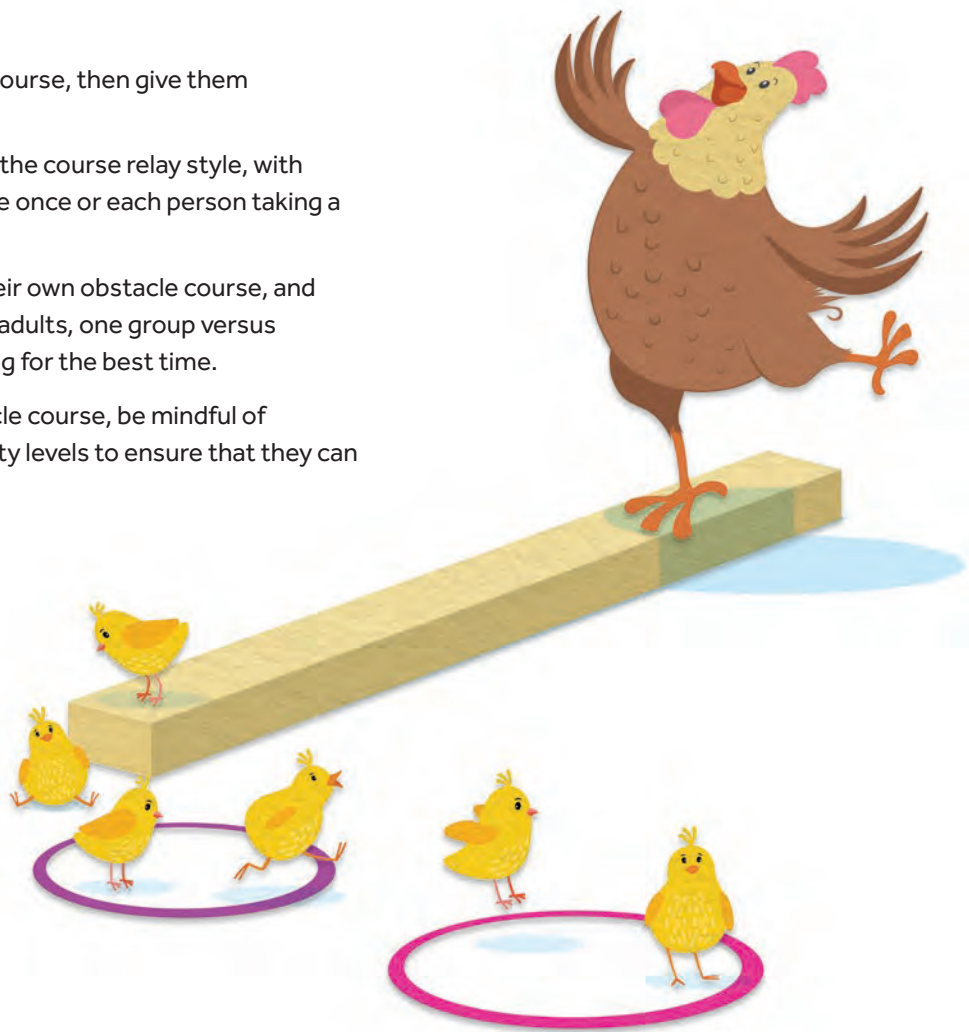
Goats love to climb and balance. (Search online for “Goat obstacle course” to find many photos of goats doing just that!) During game time today, channel your inner “goat” with an obstacle course adventure. You are limited only by your available space and imagination. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- **Balance beam** — Lay a board on the ground for the children to walk across.
- **Over/under** — Children crawl over or under sawhorses or pool noodles bent into semicircles and stuck in the tops of orange traffic cones.
- **Weave** — Lay out cones for children to weave through.
- **Hoop hop** — Children jump from hula hoop to hula hoop.

**Ways to use the course:**

- Time the children through the course, then give them a chance to beat their time.
- Divide the group in two and run the course relay style, with everyone completing the course once or each person taking a separate obstacle.
- Invite older groups to create their own obstacle course, and run the course with kids versus adults, one group versus another or individuals competing for the best time.

**Note:** As you assemble your obstacle course, be mindful of children with different physical ability levels to ensure that they can participate and finish the course.



## Ugandan Games to Try

Duulu and Kwepena were once popular games for children growing up in Uganda. Both are currently making a comeback in the country.

### DUULU

**Age range: All ages**

The goal of Duulu is to keep your opponents from reaching the hole while advancing your own marble to the hole.

#### MATERIALS NEEDED

- One marble for each player

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. In the middle of the designated playing area (about 10 feet by 10 feet), dig a small, shallow hole in the ground.
2. Players start by standing outside the playing area and tossing their marbles into it. The player who gets closest to the hole without going in takes the first turn, then the next closest, etc.
3. Players shoot their marble at either the hole or another player's marble. To shoot the marble, one finger (generally the thumb or the pinkie) stays in contact with the ground, while the marble is catapulted from another finger (generally the index or ring finger). Players score one point by hitting the hole or another marble.
4. The game ends when one player reaches a predetermined number of points.

### KWEPENA

**Age range: 7 and older**

This variation of dodgeball is surging in Uganda under the name chewa, with official playing fields, equipment and tournaments. Children still play it as kwepena.

#### MATERIALS NEEDED

- One small, soft ball for dodging
- Cones or flags to mark the two ends of play

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mark out an open area for play and select two players as the throwers. The rest of the players are dodgers.
2. Throwers throw the ball to one another, trying to hit the dodgers.
3. Meanwhile, the dodgers run from end to end of the play area, scoring a point for each round trip and two points if, instead of dodging the ball, they manage to jump over it.
4. When a dodger is hit, they are out of the game and become a thrower.
5. In a game with three people, play ends when the dodger scores a predetermined number of points. In a game with more than three people, play ends when all the dodgers are out.



# Day 4 – Starting Small

Whether it is an amoeba or a single drop of water in a bucket, today's games remind us that what starts small doesn't end that way when we work together.

## AMOEBA TAG

Age range: 6 and older

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Set out a playing area based on the size of your group and the children's running abilities. Choose one person to be "it."
2. When the person who is "it" tags someone, those two people link arms.
3. When the amoeba reaches four people, it "splits" into two groups of two. Each group can now tag people and grow.
4. Continue playing until everyone is in an amoeba.

## WATER RELAY RACE

Age range: 6 and older

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Two buckets, wastebaskets or other water containers
- One cup (approximately 8 ounces) per child

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Divide into teams. Set the buckets up on either side of the playing area and fill one bucket with water.
2. Teams take turns running back and forth across the playing area with cups, carrying the water from their full bucket to their empty one. The first team to fill their empty bucket or reach a designated water level wins.
3. In play with younger and older children, require the older ones to carry the water over their head, or poke small holes in their cups so that they must reach their bucket before all the water leaks out.

## Cuban Games

These familiar playground games are also popular in Cuba.

### EL GATO Y EL RATÓN (CAT AND MOUSE)

Age range: 7 and older

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Arrange the players in a circle, holding hands. Pick one player to be the gato (cat), which stands outside the circle, and another to be the ratón (mouse), which stands inside it.
2. The gato cannot enter the circle but can reach through it to tag the ratón.
3. The ratón tries to avoid being tagged; it can move in and out of the circle but can stay inside it for no more than ten seconds at a time.
4. Players forming the circle help the ratón by lifting their arms to allow the ratón in and out and by blocking the gato with their arms and bodies. If the ratón is tagged, that person becomes the new gato. The old gato chooses someone in the circle to become the new ratón and takes their place in the circle.

### LA GALLINITA (LITTLE HEN)

Age range: 7 and older

#### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Blindfold

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mark out an open space for play and choose one person to be the little hen.
2. Blindfold the hen and turn them around several times.
3. Players move around the area while the little hen tries to tag someone. The hen calls out, "Where are you?" to which the other players respond, "Not telling."
4. When someone is tagged, the hen says, "Hey there, hey there, who are you?" The person replies, "Guess little hen, I'll never tell you." The hen must guess the name of the person tagged. If they guess correctly, that person becomes the hen; if they guess incorrectly, they remain the hen and the game continues.

# Day 5 – Lots of Gifts

The games today remind us that God gives us all we need — including ways to share our gifts with one another.

## ALL YOU NEED

### Age range: 6 and older

This game is a great way to learn about the many gifts God gives each of us. Each player brings something that the group can use to create a new thing. This is true in the world, too. We all have gifts we can share to help each other and our neighbors.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Timer
- Large open space

### SETUP

1. If there are eight players or more, divide the children into groups of four to eight.
2. Before explaining the directions, ask each child to bring their group a random item. Pair younger children with older children or adults, and limit the search to three minutes.
3. Explain that, throughout the game, the group will create various objects, using only the chosen items, their bodies and whatever they're wearing.

## INSTRUCTIONS

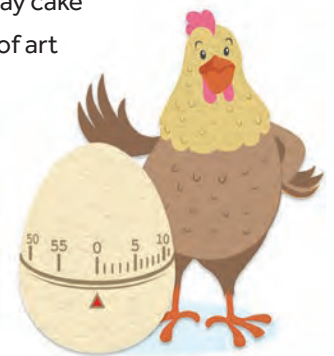
1. Using the suggestions below or your own ideas, call out an item for the groups to create and start a two-minute countdown.
2. Once the time is up, invite a member from each group to present their creation to the rest of the large group. This task should rotate with each round so that each child has a chance to present.
3. Continue for as many rounds as you like. After a couple rounds, invite one of the children to decide the item to be created.

### Some possible items and ideas for challenges:

- Slice of pizza
- Sandwich
- Teddy bear or stuffed animal
- Robot
- Smiley face
- Nativity scene
- Halloween costume
- Car
- Musical instrument
- Animal you see at the zoo
- Book
- Map
- Birthday cake
- Piece of art

## QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

- What was the hardest thing to make?  
What was the easiest?
- What item was most useful to your group?  
Was there an item that was used hardly at all?
- Can you think of a time when your group thought of something together that surprised you when it was fully assembled?



## HUMAN KNOT

### Age range: All ages

The knot in this game can seem difficult to untangle, but if we work together, we can do it! Life in a community is the same: the challenges can seem hard, but if we work together, we can face them.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Invite the players to stand in a tight circle. If your group is large, you may want to break into smaller groups of five or six.
2. Players extend their right hands into the circle and grasp the right hand of another player NOT immediately next to them.
3. Once every player is grasping the right hand of someone else, players extend their left hands into the circle and grasp the left hand of a player NOT immediately next to them.
4. The goal of the game is for players to untangle the knot created without letting go of anyone's hand.

## FOLLOW THE LEADER

**Age range:** All ages

Any age group can play this simple game, but it's especially fun for children younger than 6, especially if there is a large space, such as a sanctuary, for them to move around. By following a leader — or being one — we learn that each of us has unique gifts to offer.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. This simple game involves following the leader in a single-file line and mimicking all their movements.
2. To get younger children started, make the first leader an adult who can demonstrate the game and inspire them with fun, creative movements!
3. Be sure that every child gets a chance to lead and to follow.

## HOT CHOCOLATE RIVER

**Age range:** Third grade and older (see options below for younger children)

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Two equal lengths of rope, or small cones, to mark the edges of the "chocolate river"
- "Marshmallows" — carpet squares or paper plates

### SETUP AND INSTRUCTIONS

Lay two ropes on the ground, parallel to each other and about 20 feet apart. Line up the children on one side of the rope and tell them that what they're looking at is a giant river of hot chocolate. They must get their entire team across the river, which is too hot to swim across and too deep to walk across. The only way to cross is by using the large, fluffy "marshmallows" you provide. Give the campers eight or nine marshmallows so that they have enough to get across, with one or two left over.

Advise the group that this challenge isn't about physical ability but about communication. The current of the river is so strong that it sweeps the marshmallows away unless someone holds them down with a hand or foot. Also, once the marshmallows are placed in the river, they swell up and become too heavy to move again, so they must remain where they were placed. Play until everyone has made it across the river.

### QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

- How did you plan out your use of the marshmallows?
- Was it hard to remember to make sure that everyone made it across?
- What if this weren't a chocolate river but a challenge our neighborhood faced? How could we make sure that everyone made it through?
- Were there differences in how each person made it across? How did your differences help you work together or learn from each other?

### OPTIONS FOR K-SECOND GRADE

You can use the same scenario for younger kids; they will love the challenge but have less capacity to work together as a group. Send younger children across the river individually, with just enough marshmallows to reach the shore. Then send them across in pairs, giving them two extra marshmallows. Make sure they understand that the marshmallows wash downstream if not held down, or set the marshmallows out yourself and allow them to remain in place.

### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

- *[After children cross individually:]* What if every marshmallow were a person in your life, helping you get to safety? Who are the people you would trust to help you?
- Was it easier to cross by yourself or with others? Sometimes life is like that: we may need help from our neighbor to get across, and there is a cost to that. It takes more time and effort!
- How did you decide on a plan to get across with a bigger team?
- Did you need to listen to each other? Help each other?
- What if this weren't a chocolate river but a problem in your life? Who would you take with you?

# Snacks



# NEPAL



Recipe

**SOMETHING TO MAKE:**

## Kasaar (Sweet Rice Balls)

These easy-to-make rice balls are traditionally served at Nepali weddings. Typically this recipe would be made with ghee and jaggery; here we have substituted canola oil and dark brown sugar. You can also use coconut oil in place of canola oil.

**Serves 10**

**INGREDIENTS**

- 5 cups rice flour
- 1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons fennel seeds (optional)
- 3/4 cup plus 3 tablespoons canola oil
- 2 1/2 cups dark brown sugar
- Milk

**DIRECTIONS**

1. In a large bowl mix the rice flour, fennel seeds and canola oil with a whisk.
2. Mix in the dark brown sugar.
3. Add the milk slowly to bind the mixture together so that it becomes a bit doughy.
4. Lightly grease your hands with oil and form the dough into balls, about 1 tablespoon each.
5. For additional flavor add chopped raisins to the mixture or roll the balls in chopped raisins or dried cranberries.



**Something to Buy:**

**SEL ROTI**

A cross between a bagel and a doughnut, sel roti is a Nepali fry bread. Traditional sel roti is made with rice flour. A plain doughnut is a close substitute, though frozen roti bread can also be found in many grocery stores.



# SENEGAL

## Recipe

### SOMETHING TO MAKE:

## Thiakry (cha-kry)

The unofficial dessert of Senegal, thiakry is a creamy, sweet and mildly tangy pudding that can be eaten for dessert or breakfast.

Serves 24

### INGREDIENTS

1 cup millet  
 2 cups water  
 1/4 teaspoon salt  
 14 ounces (about 1 cup) sweetened condensed milk  
 1 cup yogurt  
 1/2 cup milk  
 1 teaspoon vanilla  
 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon  
 Chopped pistachios, raisins or other nuts or dried fruit as topping (optional)

### DIRECTIONS

1. Rinse and boil the millet in two cups of water and 1/4 teaspoon salt for 30 minutes on low to medium heat.
2. To prevent the millet from clumping, allow it to cool completely in a flat tray/plate.
3. In a separate bowl whisk together the sweetened condensed milk, yogurt, milk, vanilla and cinnamon.
4. Whisk in the millet and allow the mixture to cool in the refrigerator for at least an hour. Serve in small bowls, with toppings if desired.



### Something to Buy:

#### FRUIT

Senegal is a great place to grow all sorts of fruits and vegetables. Mangoes and dates are especially popular. Peanuts are a staple in Senegal, but be aware of children's allergies before serving them peanuts.

Consider serving the snack in the Senegalese fashion by slicing the fruit and placing it on large plates for people to share. The "Land of Teranga" values hospitality and sharing, so common meals are very important. Everyone washes their hands before eating, and the meal is served in common serving bowls. To be polite, eat from the part of the bowl in front of you, try a little bit of everything and linger over the meal for conversation and fellowship.

# UGANDA



Recipe

## SOMETHING TO MAKE:

### Rolex

Rolex is a classic Ugandan street food. The story is that the food started out as “rolled eggs,” visitors heard this as “rolex,” and the name stuck.

Serves 1

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 eggs
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced green cabbage
- 1/4 cup finely chopped tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon minced red onions
- salt
- vegetable oil
- 1 large tortilla

## DIRECTIONS

1. Break eggs into a mug or small bowl and beat well.
2. Add vegetables and salt and stir to combine.
3. Preheat a large nonstick pan over medium high heat.
4. Pour the egg and vegetable mixture into the pan and spread it out with the back of a spoon. Let it cook until it's mostly set and the bottom is brown.
5. Flip this patty, place a tortilla on top and cook the patty a few more minutes until the other side is brown and the eggs are cooked through.
6. Remove it from the pan, roll it and eat it.



## Something to Buy:

### FRUIT

Tropical fruits such as bananas and pineapple are popular snacks in Uganda.

# CUBA



Recipe

## SOMETHING TO MAKE:

# Fried Plantains

Plantains are a popular snack in Cuba. They can be served on their own, topped like nachos or dipped in sweet or savory sauces. Though plantains look like bananas, they are much starchier and must be cooked.

**Serves 8**

## INGREDIENTS

6-8 ripe plantains

Vegetable oil, as needed

Salt, cinnamon or sugar (optional)

## DIRECTIONS

1. Slice the ends of each plantain, then slice the thick peel lengthwise to make the fruit easy to remove.
2. Slice the plantains crosswise into medium-size coins (about 1/2 inch thick).
3. Pour into a large frying pan enough oil to submerge about half of each plantain slice. Heat the oil over a medium flame.
4. Fry the plantain slices in batches, turning once, until golden brown, two to three minutes per side.
5. With a slotted spoon remove the slices from the pan and set them on paper towels to remove the excess oil. Season the slices with salt, cinnamon or sugar, to taste.



## Something to Buy:

### SWEET POTATO CHIPS OR PLANTAIN CHIPS

Plantains and yuca, root vegetables similar to sweet potato, are popular in Cuba. Buy sweet potato chips or plantain chips online or at a grocery store.

# IOWA



Recipe

## SOMETHING TO MAKE:

# Vegetables

The guests in today's skit were fruits and vegetables from a community garden. Serve a variety of sliced fruits and vegetables. If there is a farmers market or community garden close to you, plan a visit to introduce children to food they could grow in their own backyards, on their patios or in window boxes.



Today's Simulation Station is a Tastefest, during which participants will get a chance to try fruits and vegetables that may be new to them. Consider hosting your snack and Simulation Station together — or inviting children to help prepare the foods during one of the stations for other groups.

# Crafts



## Day 1 – Clucking Chicken Cup

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- 6-ounce red plastic cup
- Small nail
- Glue
- Yarn cut into 18- to 24-inch lengths
- Sponges cut into 1-by-2-inch rectangles
- Plastic “googly eyes”
- Small triangles of felt or foam
- Feathers

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Use nail to poke small hole in the bottom of the cup, just large enough to thread yarn through.
2. Thread yarn through hole and tie a knot on the outer base of the cup to secure thread.
3. Tie other end of the yarn around piece of sponge.
4. Make face on your cup with googly eyes, triangle beak and feathers.
5. To make chicken squawk: lightly moisten sponge. Squeeze damp sponge around yarn and pull down in short strokes. As the sponge slides down the yarn, it will make a squawking noise like a chicken.



## Day 2 – Clothespin Cows



### MATERIALS NEEDED

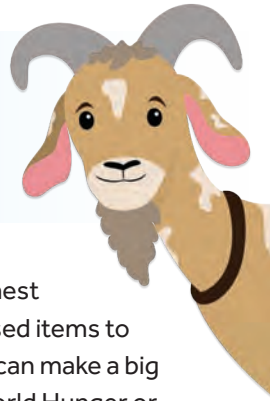
- White card stock
- Pink and black construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Black markers
- Clothespins (four per child)

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cut a rectangle and oval out of cardstock. For younger children, have the shapes already cut out or outlined on cardstock.
2. Cut or tear black construction paper to make the cow's spots, and glue them onto the cardstock rectangle.
3. Cut or tear a pink square for the cow's nose and a small black oval for the cow's ear. Glue them to the cardstock oval. Add eyes and a mouth to the oval with a black marker.
4. Glue the two pieces of cardstock together to make the cow.
5. Draw spots on the clothespins with a black marker and attach the clothespins to the body of the cow.



# Day 3 – Goat Banks



## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Toilet paper tube
- Cotton balls
- Paper grocery bag
- Rubber bands
- Scissors
- Glue

Goats are valued for their ability to survive in the harshest environments. Make these goat banks out of repurposed items to remind you that a little ingenuity and resourcefulness can make a big difference. If you're raising money to support ELCA World Hunger or other church ministries during Vacation Bible School, suggest to the children that they use these banks to collect gifts and return them at the end of the week.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. From a paper grocery bag cut two pieces measuring 3 by 3 inches and a third piece measuring 1 1/2 by 6 inches. Use the scraps for horns.
2. Cut a coin slot into one of the 3-by-3-inch squares. Wrap this square over one end of the toilet paper tube, glue it down and secure it with a rubber band while the glue dries. (Pro tip: Forming the square over the tube is easier when the tube sits on a hard surface.)
3. Repeat this process with the second square but forego the coin slot and glue this time and simply fasten the square in place with a rubber band. This is the base and needs to be removable to empty the bank.

**Note: Steps 1-3 can be done in advance, especially for younger children.**

4. Fold the rectangle in half, to a length of 3 inches, to form the ear strip, and cut out the ears. Cut out horns and glue these to the ear strip. With the coin slot facing up, glue the ear strip around the toilet paper roll.
5. Draw a face, using markers, googly eyes, etc. Glue on cotton balls for hair.



# Day 4 – Pig Snouts



## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Cardboard egg cartons
- Pink paint
- Black paint
- Stapler
- Elastic cord

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cut the cardboard egg cartons into individual egg cups.
2. Paint the outsides of the egg cups pink.
3. Paint nostrils on each egg cup.
4. Staple an elastic cord to each egg cup.

# Day 5 – Garden Seed Balls

Our guests today were all parts of a community garden. Use this craft project to grow flowers in your own garden.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Construction paper in a variety of colors or recycled paper such as old bulletins or newspaper
- Flower seeds (marigolds or a wildflower native to your area)
- 1-2 larger bowls
- 1 small bowl per child
- Water
- Cookie sheets



## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cut or tear the construction paper into 1-inch squares and place these in small bowls, one color to each. Cover the paper with water and let it sit for 30 minutes. Note: Do this ahead of time or have each group prepare paper for the next group.
2. Give each child a bowl and place the shredded paper of their choosing into it. Each child will need about two tablespoons of wet paper per seed ball.
3. Sprinkle seeds into the bowl with the paper. Form the paper and seeds into a ball by squeezing out excess water and rolling the paper into a ball.
4. Set the seed balls on a cookie sheet to dry overnight, then plant them anywhere you want flowers to grow.





# Simulation Station



# Day 1 – Build Your Farm

Age range: All ages

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Cardboard boxes
- Pool noodles
- Tape
- Large blocks
- A variety of other materials that can be used for building
- Ribbons or small toys as prizes

## LESSON

In the Bible we learn that God cares for us as a farmer or shepherd might care for animals. But caring for animals is hard work! Helping farmers today means more than just providing them with animals to end hunger. It also means helping farmers provide these animals with food, shelter and care.

**Divide the group into pairs, give them a time limit (15 minutes should be enough) and invite them to get started.**

Once each shelter is complete, invite the pairs to present their shelters, with one partner getting into the shelter to demonstrate that it will fit their animal. Award ribbons or prizes for best shelter, best feeding system, most creative waste system, etc.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION (For Younger Children)

- Why do animals need shelter?
- Do you have a pet? If so, how do you take care of it?
- Why is it important to take care of animals?

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION (For Older Children)

- What was the hardest part of your shelter to make?
- Do you think your shelter would work for a real animal? How might a real shelter differ from your shelter?
- Some farmers don't just get rid of animal waste; they use it! How might animal waste be used on a farm? *[Fertilizer for fields.]*
- Animals can be a big step toward ending hunger for farming families. But is getting an animal enough? What other needs might go along with having and caring for an animal?

## SETUP

In this activity children will construct several items: a shelter for animals, a feeding system for those animals and a way to get rid of animal waste. This will require a lot of items that children can use as building materials. Older children, working in pairs, can use large cardboard boxes, pool noodles, etc., and act as animals to demonstrate their "farm." Younger children might want to use a stuffed animal or small toy and build a shelter around it with wooden blocks, popsicle sticks or other small items.

## INSTRUCTIONS

**Begin with the script below or something similar:**

Welcome to the "God's New Creation" farm! This week we'll be learning about all the ways animals can help farmers end hunger in their families and their communities.

Taking care of animals, though, is no small task. It's a lot of work! What are some things animals need? *[Affirm all responses.]* That's a lot! Animals need shelter, food, water, bedding, medicine and more.

Today you've all been given your own animals — pigs! The catch is, you have to get things ready for them. The first thing you're going to need is a shelter! You can use any of the materials here, but it must be large enough to fit a growing pig and strong enough to stand on its own.

*[To older children:]* A shelter is just the beginning. You're going to need some way to feed the pig, so make sure you include this in your shelter design. And if you feed them, what else will you need to take care of? Yep, waste! Your shelter will need some way to get rid of the waste your pig produces.

## CONCLUSION

ELCA World Hunger supports projects that help farmers acquire animals. Sometimes its partners provide farmers with animals; often these partners help farmers learn animal care, build shelters, buy or produce animal feed, and collect manure to fertilize their own fields or to sell.

The Bible verse for today compares God to a shepherd and us to a flock God gathers. But like real sheep, we have many different needs. Caring for animals is neither easy nor simple, but God provides for all our needs through creation (food, clean water, sunlight) and through our neighbors.

If you are using the ELCA Good Gifts catalog as a fundraiser, this activity can highlight some of the ways gifts are used. If a pig is purchased through the catalog, the gift might be used to provide a pig to a local farmer or to help a farmer build a shelter, afford food or medicine, or learn how to care for the pig. This ensures that the gift will be used in the most effective way to meet the needs of the animal and the farmer.

# Day 2 – Farm Challenge/Bingo

Age range: All ages

## LESSON

Farmers provide the world with food, but many farmers face a high risk of going hungry themselves. In today's Simulation Station your group will have the opportunity to learn about some of the challenges — and opportunities — smallholder farmers face. With our help, farmers can use their hard work and deep knowledge of the land to end hunger.

## FOR OLDER CHILDREN: THE GLOBAL FARM CHALLENGE TO-GO CARD GAME

Children ages 8 and up can use this station to play ELCA World Hunger's Global Farm Challenge To-Go Card Game. This easy-to-learn game can be ordered free of charge from the ELCA online resource store at [resources.elca.org](https://resources.elca.org). Search for "Global Farm" (without the quote marks). Instructions and discussion questions are included.

## FARM BINGO

Age range: All ages

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- One "farm bingo" card for each child
- One marker per child
- One "farm bingo" card cut up into its individual images
- A basket
- Non-food-related prizes such as stickers (optional)
- Lamination sheets (optional)

## SETUP

Decide how many rounds of bingo you would like to play. Print one farm bingo card for each child per round, or print one bingo card per child and laminate the cards so they can be wiped clean after each round. Cut up one bingo card into its individual images and place these in a basket or hat.



## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Hand out one bingo card and marker to each child. Ask the children about the images on their cards: What do you see? What images do you like? What kinds of animals are on the card? What items on the cards might be things that animals need?
2. Review the rules for bingo: You will draw a card from the basket, and after you show the children the picture you have pulled, they will cross it off their sheet. Specify what patterns you will accept as a winning bingo (vertical lines, horizontal lines, diagonals and so on). With the older children, consider using more complex patterns and changing the winning pattern every round.
3. When a child completes a pattern, they shout "Bingo!" and receive a small prize.
4. To make the game more challenging, cut up all the pictures from the cards and hide them around the room. The children will then need to search for the pictures and assemble their own bingo cards.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

This simple game is a great way to talk about things we find on a farm. After you have finished, ask the children these questions or others about farming.

- What kinds of animals are on the cards?
- What are some things that animals need to live?
- What are some things that farmers need in order to take care of animals?
- What things on your cards come from God and show how God cares for us and for animals?

## CONCLUSION

Being a farmer means more than just owning an animal or planting seeds. It means caring for animals, crops and the land. That takes a lot of work! Farmers need to know how to care for soil, how much to feed animals, how much to water crops, when to plant seeds, and a lot more! All this can be hard work, and a lot depends on there being enough water and sunlight. One way our church helps farmers is by listening to them and learning from them. That's an important lesson! Being a good helper means being a good listener and learning from others.

# Day 3 – My Book of Me

Age range: All ages

## LESSON

Everyone is important to God — including each of us! God wants us to love ourselves just as we love other people. That means celebrating what makes each of us special.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Craft supplies — crayons, markers, stickers, glue, etc.
- Booklets (see below). Note: If your congregation has access to a sufficient number of computers or tablets, this activity can be done electronically, with the books shared online.

## INSTRUCTIONS

This Simulation Station works best with a few older youth or adults available to help nonreaders.

1. For this station each child will create their own version of “My Book of Me” — a book all about them.
2. Set up the activity by placing craft supplies at several workstations around your space so that children have space to work.
3. Using the prompts below, create a small booklet for each child. Or print out copies of each prompt on half-sheets of paper, ask the children to gather one of each prompt as they work, and staple the booklets together at the end of the session.
4. Allow the children sufficient time to work on their books. Read the prompts aloud to the nonreaders. They can write on their own, request an adult’s help or draw pictures. Once everyone is finished, invite each child to share their book with the group.

## BOOKLET SETUP

Every booklet should have a cover with a byline, a hand-drawn self-portrait and the title *My Book of Me*. Include a page for each of the following prompts (and feel free to change or supplement this list):

My favorite game is ...

Here is my family ...

Here is my teacher ... From them I learn about ...

When I grow up, I want to be ...

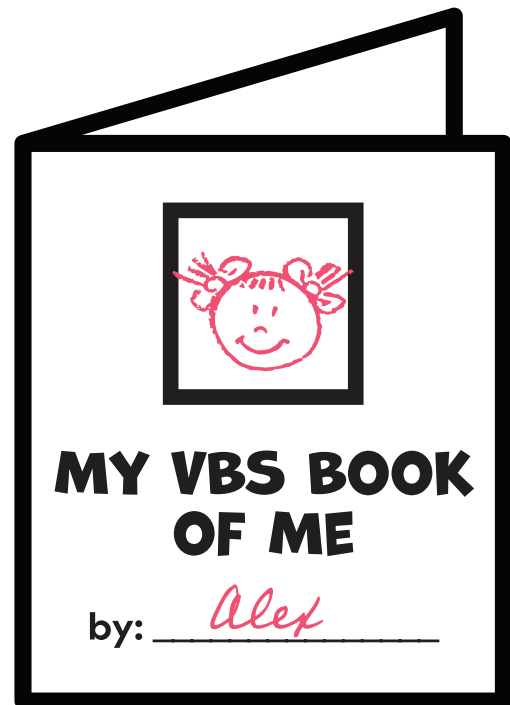
At church I like to ...

My church helps people by ...

One way I help other people is by ...

One thing I ask God for when I pray is ...

I thank God for ...



# Day 4 – Servant Learning

Age range: All ages

## LESSON

The theme for today reminds us that even small steps can make a big difference. In this Simulation Station you are invited to consider a service project to help neighbors in your community. Such efforts may seem small, but they can be an important part of making big changes.

*Note: As you plan your Vacation Bible School, consider using Day 4's Simulation Station to host a service activity of some kind. If your congregation operates a food pantry, ask the leaders if they need help. If you know of another local food shelf or food pantry, ask the leaders there if you can donate, collect or sort food for them after your sessions conclude. Two "helping kits" are described below.*

## HELPING KITS

**Age range: All ages**

Providing a kit of basic supplies can be an important way to help someone in need, and assembling such kits can help people remember their neighbors in need. As you plan this activity, reach out to a local ministry such as a food pantry or shelter to ask if they can help distribute your kits. When you speak with local ministry leaders, ask them what other supplies might be needed.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Use a large table or set of tables to create an assembly line for the materials.
2. Ask each participant to wash their hands thoroughly, then give each participant a resealable plastic bag.
3. The children can either carry their own bag through the assembly line, gathering the materials they need, or man stations, adding one of each item to a bag before passing it to the next person.
4. Once all the kits are assembled, distribute them to households attending Vacation Bible School. If your congregation has a relationship with a community ministry such as a food pantry, ask if the ministry can distribute the kits to neighbors who might need them.

### Supplies for the kits

Supplies for the kits can be donated or purchased prior to your Vacation Bible School program. Ask congregation members to bring supplies on the Sunday before the program begins, or solicit supplies from the children on Day 1. If you would like to purchase supplies ahead of time, consider forming a Thrivent Action Team and applying for a grant to support your efforts. More information can be found at [www.thrivent.com](http://www.thrivent.com). Community partners may have access to some supplies; a local dentist's office might donate toothbrushes and a local store might donate some of the smaller food items.

If you would like to turn these kits into an ongoing ministry, solicit donations to make the project self-sustaining. Keep the kits on hand in your church office or narthex and invite congregation members to donate \$5 to take a bag with them, so they might have it on hand when they meet someone in need in your community. The money collected can fund the next round of supplies.

## FIRST AID KITS

First aid is an important way to help someone in need. These small first aid kits can be a great way of showing care for our neighbors, providing them with the supplies they need to treat minor injuries.

### SUGGESTED SUPPLIES

- Bandages in a variety of sizes
- Small rolls of cloth tape
- Gauze pads
- Cotton balls
- Safety pins
- Sterile gloves
- Antiseptic wipes
- Hydrocortisone ointment
- Tweezers
- Small scissors
- Antibiotic ointment
- Hand sanitizer
- Instant cold compress

## BASIC NEEDS KITS

These kits can be kept at your church to provide to people in need, or each household participating in your program can take kits with them, either for themselves or to share with others. Some households may want to keep a kit or two in their car to provide to people they meet in the community. (Remind children that they should not give the kits to strangers without a trusted adult present.)

### SUGGESTED SUPPLIES

- Brochure of local shelters or hot meals (if available in your community)
- Dried fruit
- Meal bars
- Milk
- Peanut butter crackers
- Hand sanitizer
- Toothbrush, toothpaste
- Water bottle
- Socks
- Lip balm
- Hand warmers
- Preloaded rail or bus pass
- Adhesive bandages

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Have you ever used one of the items in the first aid kits? Why did you need it? How did it help you?
- How can a first aid kit or a basic needs kit remind us that God cares about us?
- Why might our neighbors, or some of us, not have all the things needed to treat cuts, scrapes, burns or other injuries? [Cost.]
- Will a first aid or basic needs kit meet all the needs a neighbor might have? [No.]
- Can it be a first step? [Yes.]
- What else can we do to care for ourselves and our neighbors?

These kits can help our neighbors, but they can also help us by reminding us of those neighbors in need.

## BLESSING OF KITS

God, you call us to be servants to each other. Bless these kits and our work today, that they might be a blessing to our neighbors and remind us to be good to them. Help us to remember that we all depend on each other, and teach us to love everyone as you love us. Help us to recognize you in the people who receive our kits. Amen.



# Day 5 – Tastefest

Age range: All ages

## LESSON

Creation showcases God’s abundance in its wonderful diversity. Today’s theme is “Many Gifts, One God,” and the story for today features community gardens, which are amazing places to experience the many gifts of God. In today’s Simulation Station, children will have a chance to sample a variety of fruits and vegetables and talk about the abundance and wonder of God’s creation.

## SETUP, MATERIALS NEEDED

At this “Tastefest” children will have the chance to sample a variety of fruits and vegetables, some of which may be new to them. Bring plates, toothpicks (for serving pieces of food), napkins, drinking water and hand sanitizer. Poll the children about any allergies or food sensitivities before getting started.

Try to serve a wide variety of foods, including some fruits and vegetables that are familiar to children and some that might not be. Here are some suggestions:

- Apricots
- Artichoke hearts
- Berries (blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, etc.)
- Bitter melon
- Carrots (look for different colors!)
- Coconut
- Cucumbers
- Dragon fruit
- Green onions
- Guava
- Honeycrisp apples
- Jicama
- Kiwis
- Kumquats
- Lychee
- Oranges
- Papayas
- Persimmons
- Plumots or plumcots (hybrids of plums and apricots)
- Prickly pears
- Rambutan (soft, edible center inside a prickly, inedible rind)
- Soursop (also called guanabana; sometimes sold as frozen pulp)
- Star fruits
- Sweet potatoes
- Tomatoes (look for heirloom varieties of different shapes and colors!)
- Zucchini

Some of these will require preparation such as peeling or cutting. This can be a fun step for the children; the rinds of dragon fruit, lychee, rambutan and prickly pear provide great tactile experiences.

Use the questions below both during and after the Tastefest to deepen the experience.

## OPENING

*Share the script below with the participants or devise a similar opening to the activity.*

One way we experience God’s many gifts is through eating. Eating allows us to taste God’s goodness in creation, and meals help us enjoy the gift of family, friends and neighbors. There are lots of biblical stories of people eating together. In the Garden of Eden, God creates plants to provide food for the first humans. When God’s people flee Egypt, God provides food called manna that is a sign of God’s love for them. And, of course, Jesus loved eating with people! There are lots of stories of Jesus eating with his friends and neighbors, and Jesus tells stories of people eating together to teach his followers about the kingdom of God.

Do you eat with your family or friends?

What sorts of things do you like to eat together?

What are some of your favorite foods?

## QUESTIONS AND CLOSING FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

### Before tasting:

- Do you recognize any of the fruits or vegetables here? Have you tried them before?
- What does the fruit or vegetable feel like?
- What colors do you see? Do you think the inside will be the same color as the outside?
- Does it have a smell?
- What do you think it will taste like?

### During eating:

- What does it taste like?
- Is it soft or crunchy?
- Would you like this in your lunch or dinner at home?

**Closing discussion:**

- What was the best food you tried today? What did you like about it?
- Who created all these foods? *[God.]*
- Why do you think God created so many different fruits and vegetables? *[Affirm all answers.]*

God creates so many wonderful things: different fruits and vegetables, trees that grow tall and plants that stay small, mountains and oceans, and more! God creates all different kinds of people too! This week we've been learning just how amazing God's creation is and how we get to experience the new things God is doing in our world — with animals, through people and among communities near and far. As we end our Vacation Bible School today, let's celebrate the many, many ways God is at work in the world!

**QUESTIONS AND CLOSING FOR OLDER CHILDREN****Before tasting:**

- Do you recognize any of the fruits or vegetables here? Have you tried them before?
- What does the fruit or vegetable feel like? If it has a hard shell, what do you think that might be for? If it is prickly, why might it feel that way? *[Example: To protect it from animals.]*
- What colors do you see? Do you think the inside will be the same color as the outside?
- What does the food smell like?
- Where do you think something like this might grow?

**During eating:**

- What does it taste like?
- How does it feel in your mouth? Is it crunchy, soft, squishy, etc.?
- Was it what you expected?
- As you eat, think about what it takes to get this food to your plate. What people might have been involved in that process? *[Farmers, harvesters, processing facility workers, trucking or shipping workers, retailers.]*
- What do fruits and vegetables need in order to grow?

**Closing discussion:**

- What was the best food you tried today?
- What did you like about it?
- Who created all these foods? *[God.]*
- Why do you think God created so many different fruits and vegetables? *[Affirm all answers.]*
- Think again about all the people involved in helping us get our food. Do you usually think about them when you eat a meal or snack?
- Why is it important to remember them?
- Sometimes we might call food "strange" or "unusual." But if the food grows in our part of the world or is part of our meals all the time, is it really "strange" or "unusual"?
- How might calling a food "strange" make it seem as if we are calling people "strange"?
- What might be another way to describe foods that are new to us?

God creates so many wonderful things: different fruits and vegetables, trees that grow tall and plants that stay small, mountains and oceans, and more! God creates all different kinds of people too! This week we've been learning just how amazing God's creation is and how we get to experience the new things God is doing in our world — with animals, through people and among communities near and far. Food can be a powerful way to experience the diversity and abundance of creation. Through food we can learn about each other. For example, when we eat a Christmas cookie, we can learn about our family history or share the story of Christmas. When we share our favorite foods with each other, we share something that is part of us, something we enjoy and delight in. And when we eat, we can remember the miracle that food is! Food is a sign of God creating the world and everything in it — and calling it "good"! Food reminds us of the sunshine, water and nutrients needed to grow it, and eating reminds us of all the people who work hard to produce food. It really is a miracle that food ends up on our plates! The next time you eat, think about all the ways God, creation and other people are working together to bring food to us.

As we end our Vacation Bible School today, let's celebrate the many, many ways God is at work in the world, doing miraculous things right before us!



# Farm Bingo



# Farm Bingo



# Farm Bingo



# Farm Bingo



# Large Group Closing

## WELCOME AND MUSIC

Welcome the children (and adults!) to the closing time for “God’s New Creation.” Sing the theme song and some other songs as people gather. To find original music for “God’s New Creation” Vacation Bible School, visit [elca.org/hunger/resources#VBS](http://elca.org/hunger/resources#VBS).

## TALKING TOGETHER: A REVIEW OF THE DAY

Invite the children to share with the group what happened during the day. Questions to ask:

- What was the theme for today?
- Who were our guests today?
- What did they talk about during the opening?
- What was your favorite part of today?
- What was a new thing you learned today?
- Where did you experience God today?
- What will you share about the school with others when you get home?

## RETURN TO FOCUS VERSE

**Our focus verse is “The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them”** (Isaiah 11:6). How can you be a leader and share something you learned today with others?

## PRAYER AND SENDING

Invite someone to offer a closing prayer. If you have a sound system, invite them to use the microphone to pray. Nothing makes leading prayer more fun than getting to lead it over a microphone.

Close with any final announcements or reminders.

## SONGS FOR “GOD’S NEW CREATION”

Original music for “God’s New Creation” was written and composed for ELCA World Hunger by the Rev. Matt Simpkins and Chase the Melody LLC. Recordings, lyric sheets and guitar chords for each of the songs below can be found at [elca.org/hunger/resources#VBS](http://elca.org/hunger/resources#VBS).

## THEME SONG — “GOD’S NEW CREATION”

Day 1 – “I AM Awesome”

Day 2 – “Helping Hands”

Day 3 – “God Loves Goats”

Day 4 – “SuperHERO (Just As I AM)”

Day 5 – “Love Across the Land”

**A note on licensing:** Your congregation is welcome to use, distribute or record the songs listed above as part of your VBS program. If you do so, please include the following copyright notice in any printed materials, videos, or online versions of lyrics or music:

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# Stay Connected!

Thank you for using ELCA World Hunger's  
**"God's New Creation"** Vacation Bible School!  
We'd love to stay connected with you.

## Email us

Questions, stories or photos of your  
VBS experience to share?

Email them to [hunger@elca.org](mailto:hunger@elca.org).

Follow @ELCAWorldHunger on social media:



2023 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

# God's New Creation



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