

Harvest Assembly

We suggest you start the assembly by reading our special Harvest story '**Frank and the Pea Stalk**'. The assembly text below can follow that story, or it can be delivered separately.



The slideshow presentation that accompanies the 'Frank and The Pea Stalk' story and these assembly notes can be downloaded from carlisle-diocese.org.uk (The first eight slides illustrate the story, and the rest of the slides illustrate the assembly text below.)

Assembly notes

Ask pupils: 'Do you know what the words pip, bean, tuber, seed, bulb, and nut have in common?'

Show slide 9 of the presentation.

Answer: 'They are all ways that plants grow new plants. Seeds come in all sorts of shapes and sizes!'

Show slide 10.

Ask pupils if they know or can guess which seed grows into which plant. Can they name the plants? They are: dandelions, sunflower seeds and runner beans.

Show slide 11.

Seeds are amazing. There is an ancient saying: 'Mighty oaks from tiny acorns grow'. If you switch this sentence around, it sounds less poetic, but it's easier to understand: 'Tiny acorns grow into mighty oaks'. Ask pupils if they can work out what this means (beyond the obvious). The point of this saying is that amazing things can come from small beginnings. That's what happens in nature, when a tiny little acorn grows into a huge, beautiful oak tree. But a saying like this hints at another deeper meaning: that amazing things can grow out of small things in all sorts of ways. Ask pupils if they can think of other small things that grow into big things, or small actions that make a big difference.

Show slide 12.

Frank lives in Malawi. (If you have already read 'Frank and the Pea Stalk', explain that this is the same Frank.) He's been making amazing things happen from small beginnings.

Show slide 13.

Many people in Malawi grow their own food to eat. Lots of people in our country do this too, but you don't find many people here who live entirely on the food they grow themselves. Frank's family do. Their vegetable patch is not a hobby, it is their only food source. So, if things don't grow well, they go hungry. And in recent years, things have not been growing well at all. That's because the weather in Malawi has been changing. It used to be much easier to grow food, because the seasons were regular, and people knew what weather to expect at different times of the year. When Frank was younger, his grandfather taught him how to grow vegetables, and gave him a special calendar to show him when to plant seeds, and when to harvest his crops. But the special calendar doesn't work anymore because the weather is all over the place and unpredictable!

Show slide 14.

Ask pupils if they know why the weather is all over the place. It's because the climate is changing. The pollution that has been caused by people burning fossil fuels for the past few centuries has thickened the atmosphere around the Earth, holding more of the sun's heat in, like a blanket around the world. And because it's warmer, the weather is different. That means that in some places it is hotter or drier than it used to be. In other places, it might be wetter, or stormier than it used to be. And in lots of places, the weather is just more mixed and unpredictable.

That's a problem if you want to grow food, because seeds need certain things to grow. Tiny acorns cannot turn into mighty oaks without some special ingredients from nature. Ask pupils if they know what those ingredients are.

Show slide 15.

Seeds need warmth, they need sunshine, and they need rain (not too much and not too little). Most vegetables in our country are planted in the spring and harvested in the autumn. That's because in the spring the weather starts to warm up, the days get longer so there is more sunshine, and there are usually lots of rain showers in April, giving enough (but not too much) rain – perfect for planting seeds. But this year, in our own country, it was unusually dry in the spring and very little rain fell. Most of us probably didn't notice this, because we buy our food from the shops. But can you imagine how you would have felt if, like Frank, you relied on growing your own food to feed your family and you knew that your seeds could not grow without rain.

Show slide 16.

Several years ago, the rains didn't come when expected in Malawi either. But the consequences for Frank were very serious. His little boy, who is only four, became very ill, and the doctors said it was because he was not getting enough to eat. The dry weather had destroyed Frank's harvest so there was not enough food for the family.

**Show slide 17.**

Frank tried to grow more food, but this time heavy rains came when they WEREN'T expected, and washed his crops away.

Showed slide 18.

When the rains failed again, Frank's mum tragically died from hunger.

Show slide 19.

Frank was in despair. But he was given some amazing new pea seeds by the charity Christian Aid.

Show slide 20.

These pea seeds are very strong, and they grow even if it's hotter or drier than usual.

Show slide 21.

The peas even grow if it's wetter than usual, so Frank doesn't have to worry so much about what the weather is doing.

Show slide 22.

Last year, he enjoyed a brilliant harvest.

Show slide 23.

Frank's story is just one example of how people are learning to live with climate change. All over the world, people are coming up with inventive ways to cope with changing weather patterns, and in many of the world's poorest places, Christian Aid is helping them do it. The charity is also asking people in charge – politicians – to make sure that they keep their promises to reduce pollution and find greener ways to do things, so that we can all continue to enjoy bountiful harvests.

Show slide 24.

Because Christian Aid is a Christian charity, it feels there are special reasons why this is important. Christians believe that God created the world, and that he blessed humans by creating such a beautiful home for them, and providing them with everything that they need. In the Bible (Genesis 1:29), God said: 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food.' So, Christians feel that they have an important duty to care for God's creation by looking after our planet. Luckily, the desire to look after our world is a feeling that is shared by most people. Christians might feel that they have a duty to do this because of their belief in God, but you don't have to follow a particular religion to believe that caring for our home is important, and there are lots of things that everyone can do to help reduce pollution.

You could finish the assembly by asking pupils to name a few things they can do to reduce pollution.



Prayer:

Dear Lord,

Thank you for this beautiful world.

Thank you for seeds and trees and fruit and vegetables.

Give us the wisdom to care for our planet better.

And the courage to help others whenever we can.

So that, across the world, people can enjoy their harvests.

Now and always.

Amen.

Further activities

The 'Frank and the Pea Stalk' Harvest story can be used in a number of ways. You could:

- read the story aloud in class and ask pupils to answer questions on it as a group
- act it out as a play or performance in an assembly to parents
- set it as an individual reading exercise and use the questions to test comprehension
- get pupils to design their own illustrated version of this story in a 10-block storyboard
- link this to any initiatives to reduce the school's own carbon emissions
- set pupils the challenge of growing their own seeds (cress is a good option in the autumn term). You could include some variables including sets of seeds with too little water and too much water, to help pupils understand the optimum conditions for plants to grow.

Suggested songs:

- 'He's got the whole world in his hands'.
- 'Oats and beans and barley grow'.

By fundraising for the Bishop of Carlisle's Harvest Appeal, your school will be supporting the project featured in this resource, as well as helping communities in South Africa to flourish through USPG.

To download the Frank and the Pea Stalk Harvest story, find out more about the appeal, and how your school can celebrate harvest with your local church, visit carlisle-diocese.org.uk

