

Sunday school presentation to the congregation

A presentation by your Sunday school is a great way to engage the whole congregation. The Sunday school can share what they have learned about harvest time, African farmers and the work of FARM-Africa, and help inspire the congregation to take part in fundraising activities. Your Sunday school's presentation will be a lively and thought-provoking activity for both participant and spectator, and will help bring to life the true meaning of the Harvest Festival.

Here we have outlined a presentation for your Sunday school, which can involve children of all ages.

Introductory reading

Harvest Festival is a time we give thanks to God for the food we grow from the land. Just like in our country, African people pray for good soil, rain and sunshine to help their crops grow.

People in Africa need good harvests to survive. If harvests fail in Africa, farmers and their families are hungry and ill. They are too poor to buy medicines or send children to school.





Day in the life plays

To help compare and contrast the lives of children in the UK and children in Africa, the Sunday school can act out two short plays based on the following stories.

The children can dress as farmers – the British farmers can wear wellies, jeans and shirts, and the African farmers can go barefoot and wear old plain skirts and T-shirts with colourful wraps over the top (for the girls) and old plain trousers/shorts and T-shirts (for the boys).

You can choose older children to read aloud the case studies, and then other children can act out the various activities. Alternatively, you may feel inspired to give children their own lines which explain what they're doing.

British farming: Sam's day

Sam lives on a farm in England with his mum and dad. He is 8 years old.

Sam gets up at 7 o'clock. He gets washed and dressed, and has some toast and jam for his breakfast. He feeds his dog, Shep, and then his mum drives him to school.

Sam's school is called Church Hill Primary and his teacher is called Mrs Lewis. In the morning, Sam does reading, writing and sums.

At lunchtime Sam has a sandwich. Then he plays football outside with his best friend David.

In the afternoon Mrs Lewis teaches Sam's class about Africa. She has a big globe that shows all the countries in the world, and she shows the class where different countries in Africa are. She explains that most people in Africa find it hard to afford food and even school books.

Sam's mum picks him up after school. Back at home, he helps his dad on the farm for an hour. Sam feeds the sheep and the chickens while his dad drives the tractor in the fields.

Then Sam goes inside to do some homework. At dinner time he sits down with his parents and shares a pizza.

In the evening Sam watches some television and plays table football with his dad. At 9 o'clock he says his prayers, says good night and goes to bed.

Sam dreams of playing football.



African farming: Rehema's day

Rehema is 7 years old. She lives in Tanzania. Her family are farmers. She gets up at 5 o'clock, has a wash and gets dressed, and then heads out into the fields with her mum and dad.

The sun is just coming up when Rehema starts work. She helps her mum use a hoe to dig the land, and then she sows some seeds. At 7 o'clock, Rehema begins the hour-long walk to school.

Rehema's school is called Gedbung School. FARM-Africa helped build a chicken shed at the school and gave them ten chickens and three cockerels. Rehema's teacher is called Mr Utange. He teaches Rehema and the other children how to look after the chickens and stop them getting ill.



At lunch time, Rehema and her friends eat maize and beans. Then, after lunch, Mr Utange teaches the class how to mix the chicken's manure with the soil to make the soil richer – which helps plants grow big and healthy.

When Rehema gets home from school just after 4 o'clock, she tells her mum and dad all about what she learned. Her dad says that from now on he will use the manure from their two chickens and their goat to make the soil better in their fields. That way, they will have better harvests.

Next Rehema goes with her mother to the river, which is a mile away. They collect water in plastic jerry cans and walk home carrying the cans on their heads. Rehema is very good at balancing the pot and no water splashes over the side.

When Rehema gets home, she helps cook dinner. She has a dish made of maize which looks a bit like mashed potato. After dinner, Rehema helps around the house and looks after her younger brothers and sisters. When it gets dark, the family finish work for the day. Rehema does her homework by candle light. Then says her prayers, says goodnight, and goes to bed.

Rehema dreams that her family's crops grow and grow overnight, and she is dancing happily with her friends among the tall, healthy plants.

Reading

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” Galatians 6:9

‘We Plough the Fields and Scatter’ hymn

This hymn ties in nicely with the theme of the Harvest Festival. As well as thanking God for our own harvest, in singing this song the children invite the congregation to think of farmers in Africa.

The children sing the first verse and the chorus (overleaf). You may like to come up with actions that can accompany the words – for example, swaying for the breeze and hands outstretched for sunshine. Once the children have finished their presentation, the entire congregation can sing the hymn together in full.



We Plough the Fields And Scatter

Words by Matthias Claudius (1740-1815) Translated by Jane Montgomery Campbell (1817-78)

We plough the fields and scatter
The good seed on the land,
But it is fed and watered
By God's almighty hand:
He sends the snow in winter,
The warmth to swell the grain,
The breezes and the sunshine,
And soft, refreshing rain.

Refrain:

*All good gifts around us
Are sent from heaven above;
Then thank the Lord,
O thank the Lord,
For all his love.*

He only is the maker
Of all things near and far;
He paints the wayside flower,
He lights the evening star;
The winds and waves obey him,
By him the birds are fed;
Much more to us, his children,
He gives our daily bread.

We thank thee then, O Father,
For all things bright and good,
The seed time and the harvest,
Our life, our health, our food.
Accept the gifts we offer
For all thy love imparts,
And what thou most desirest,
Our humble, thankful hearts.

Refrain

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www.farmafrica.org.uk/givepovertytheboot

Harvest prayer

To close the presentation, invite the congregation to pray together. One of the older children can read the following prayer aloud.

*We thank you, Lord, for our harvest.
We thank you for the warm sun, the sustaining rain, the rich soil and the hard-working farmers.
And we thank you for blessing our tables with the fruits of the land, so that we may be nourished
and satisfied.*

*We give gifts today, Lord, so that others may know Your bountiful harvests.
We remember those in Africa who are hungry, poor and ill.
And we remember those in Africa whose hearts are heavy with worry and pain.*

*We pray for African farmers – that they may feel the sun on their faces and rich earth crumbling in
their hands.*

*We pray for African parents – that they may provide for their families and see them grow up
healthy, hopeful and happy.*

*And we pray for African children – that they may know love and no longer feel the ache of hunger
or the despair of poverty.*

*Father, please watch over all your children, here and in Africa.
Please comfort and support, heal and lift up.
And please plant in us all the seeds to reap harvests of Your love, Your compassion,
and Your charity.*

Amen