

Seeds of Life: Worship for a Small Group

Adapted from Miles J. Russell, "Seeds of Life," Mandate 41:2 (May 2010), pp. 17–18. Used with permission of Mandate.

Spring is the best time for this short worship.

Props and Materials

Place small dishes of different varieties of local seeds in the middle of the worship space. Place a larger container of soil in the middle with the dishes of seeds around the edge. Use seeds grown by farmers and gardeners in your area.

Call to Worship

Leader: After the dormancy of winter,

People: **new growth springs to life.**

Leader: The birds return from their southern home.

People: **Buds emerge on the trees as they discover again the warmth of the earth.**

Leader: Crocuses and other early spring flowers begin to carpet the land as it throws off its wintry coating.

People: **The creation awakens to the possibilities of spring.**

Leader: Life shows itself in every corner of the earth.

People: **God is our Creator, who continues to create in the rhythm of life we call the seasons.**

Leader: Come let us worship. Come let us enter into the Spirit of God's creative moments. Come let us sow the seeds of new life.

Opening Prayer (unison)

Gracious God, open our eyes that we may see the abundance of your creative love in all that surrounds and sustains us. Enable us to become people of hope and life, who plant the seeds of your earthly garden for the benefit of all. Help us to be gardeners and caregivers for the earth that is home for all life. Fill us with your gentle love, that we may walk tenderly on the earth, cooperating with your intention of abundant love and life. Amen.

Scripture Readings

Genesis 1:11–12 (creation of plants and seeds)

Matthew 13:31–32 (parable of the mustard seed)

Seeds are a miracle of life. They are the sign of what is possible. They speak to the abundance that God intends for the creation. The seeds we sow in gardens and fields are meant for blessing. The seeds we sow in our acts of compassion, healing, peace-making, and justice-seeking, small as they seem, like the mustard seed, are also meant to bless. The seeds we sow are intended to produce a harvest far beyond the tiny seed we start with.

Ask the group to reflect silently on the seeds they sow and the impact of the seeds they sow. Ask the group to reflect silently on the gift of life they hold in their hands when they take a seed, and the responsibility of cherishing and planting the seeds they are given.

Seeding Our Prayers

Leader: Receive these seeds, signs of the power you have to join with God as stewards of the earth, as people who plant in the soil of the earth and in the soil of our words and deeds.

Give each person a small handful of seeds to hold. Then invite each, in turn, to plant some seeds in the container of earth set in the centre. Invite each to offer some words about how they might care for the land that receives the seeds, and also how they might sow seeds of words and action to further bless the world around them. After someone speaks and plants, the group offers each sentence in turn, as follows:

1. We sow this seed in God's good earth, trusting in the promise of hope.
2. We sow this seed in God's good earth, trusting in the promise of abundant life for all.
3. We sow this seed in God's good earth, trusting in the gift of life for all.
4. We sow this seed in God's good earth, trusting in the possibility of compassion for all.
5. We sow this seed in God's good earth, trusting in the assurance of faith that the dream of God is possible, for a creation that is blessed and named good.
6. We sow this seed in God's good earth, praying for all who care for the land, for all who produce the food that feeds the earth.
7. We sow this seed in God's good earth, praying for a just sharing of the abundance that is part of God's creation.
8. We sow this seed in God's good earth, praying that we would learn to walk gently on the earth and so preserve it for future generations.

After all seeds are planted, conclude with the following.

Leader: We offer the seeds of the earth, the seeds of our lives, that they might bring blessing. We pray in the name of Christ, who sowed the seeds of transforming love. Amen.

Depending on the numbers, either repeat the sentences or have two sow and speak before offering the group prayer.

Hymn

"For Beauty of Prairies" (*Voices United* 303)