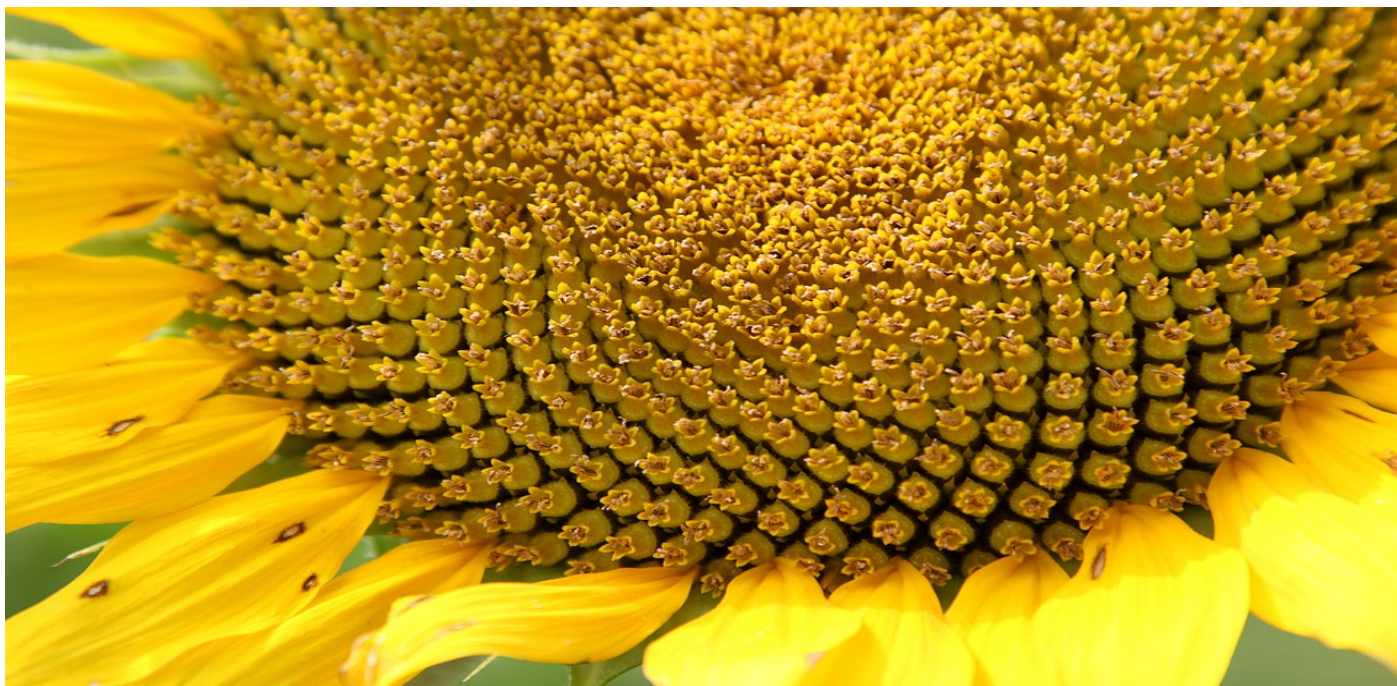


# Plant and Pray

A reflective prayer activity for schools



A sunflower

**Notes - You will need: a plant pot filled with soil; sunflower seeds; a jug of water and a photo of some sunflowers.**

**This is a reflective and visual prayer activity. Please adapt as appropriate for your school context. You can either lead the reflection with the teacher planting the sunflower seeds or alternatively each pupil could plant their own pot of seeds as you read the script. The reflection includes prayer ideas - however, the script can also be used without the suggested prayers if that is more appropriate for the context in which you are using it. This reflection would work well if you are studying environmental topics or your assembly theme is about nature and creation.**

## Reflection: Introduction and preparing the ground

Introduce the reflective activity linking it to your assembly or collective worship theme.

For example:

As we've been thinking about creation and the environment this week, I thought I'd do a little bit of gardening! I've got some seeds to plant but I'm hoping that as I plant them it will also give us some quiet space to reflect or pray.

I've got my pot ready and filled it with soil [Hold up the plant pot filled with soil.]

This is going to be home for the seeds and the place where they can grow and flourish. As you look at the pot and the soil take a moment to think about our shared home, the Earth. Christians believe God created a wonderful world for humans to live in and enjoy - a place where everyone can grow and flourish. Take a moment to say thank you for our beautiful world and to think

about the importance of caring for our planet.

## Thank you prayer [optional]

Creator God, thank you for our beautiful and wonderful world. We see your goodness all around us and we thank you for every part of it, from the rich variety of plants and animals to the different landscapes across the continents. Thank you for the high mountains and flat plains; for countryside and seaside; deserts and islands; for flowers and trees; sea life, insects and mammals. Thank you for air to breathe and food to eat. Thank you for all good things.

Help us to look after the world and to find new ways to make it a place where everyone can live well and flourish.

Amen.

There are lots of wonderful things in our world to be grateful for and to

enjoy. However, we're also aware that humans haven't always looked after our world as well as they could have. People have made choices which have contributed to problems such as climate change. Take a moment to think about the things we could now do to look after the world in a better way.

Christians believe that when God created the world he also invited and trusted humans to care for and look after our planet. Many people, of all faiths and no faith, share the belief that as human beings we have a responsibility to work together to look after our amazing, beautiful world; that, together, we need to change and find new ways to look after our planet. Take a moment to think about people you know, or have learnt about, who are taking actions to look after the environment and to protect our world from harm.

### Planting the seeds

[Hold the seeds in your hand and show them to the pupils.]

I'm going to put the seeds into the soil so that they can grow. However, they'll need more than just soil to grow - I wonder, can you think of other things that will help them to develop? They'll need water, air, warmth and light in order to flourish. As I water the seeds [add water to the plant pot], think about all the things that keep the seeds safe and help them to grow. Now spend a moment thinking about the things which keep you healthy and safe - so that you can grow and use your unique gifts and talents. Think about your unique gifts and qualities. Now, think about the person sitting next to you - what do you value about them? How are they unique and special? What are their gifts and qualities?

If you would like to, take a moment to say thank you for your gifts and skills.

### Thank you prayer: if appropriate you might like to use the following prayers

Creator God, thank you for all the things which help us to grow, and which keep us healthy and safe. Thank you for nourishing food to eat; for homes to live in; for the people who love us and look after us; for education; medical staff who look after

us when we're poorly; opportunities for exercise and time spent with friends.

Take a minute to think about the special things you want to give thanks for....

Amen

[You might like to share some ideas as a class]

### Thinking about our shared home

As we say thank you for the good gifts we have each day, we take a moment to remember that our world is a shared world, a shared home. We reflect for a moment on the vastness of the world and the many different places and communities on the Earth. I wonder if everyone born into the world has the opportunity to grow up healthy, to learn and develop their unique gifts and talents? Sadly, many of the gifts and resources in the world aren't shared fairly so that everyone can flourish and reach their full potential. Climate change is also making life very difficult for many communities particularly due to erratic and unpredictable weather patterns which cause things like flooding and drought.

Take a moment to think about the Earth as our shared home - what sort of things can individuals and communities do to make our Earth a safe, beautiful and secure place for everyone?

### Prayer for the world, our shared home [Optional]

Creator God, you love and care for all people and want the very best for each person born on Earth. We pray for our global neighbours who are living with the worst effects of climate change; for those who experience ongoing difficulties due to unpredictable weather patterns. We pray for all people who are living in places of conflict and those who are refugees; for all those who don't have easy access to education or health care. Please help us to take actions and speak up in ways which ensure the world's resources are shared fairly and all people can reach their full potential and live in health and safety. Amen



### Closing reflection: Beautiful Sunflowers

[Show pupils a picture of fully grown sunflowers]

These flowers started life as a small seed just like the ones I've just planted. Who would have thought that in such a small seed there is the potential for a huge flower to burst into life! If you look very closely at the sunflower itself, you will see that it contains hundreds of new seeds – the potential for hundreds of new plants to grow. The miracle of life and potential for growth is ongoing.

When my seeds are fully grown, I hope they'll look like the ones in the photo. Sunflowers are magnificent to look at and look amazing when they grow side by side - standing tall and visible for everyone to see. Sunflowers love the sun and each day, as the sun moves across the sky, they turn their heads to follow... absorbing the sun's rays, using it as a source of power and nourishment.

Ask pupils to imagine holding a small sunflower seed in their hand. Keep the picture of the sunflowers on the screen and play some quiet, reflective music. This small seed has the potential to grow into an amazing plant – to be transformed. We all have the potential to take small actions each day that, put together, could transform our world.

I wonder, what small actions you could take? I wonder, what small actions could we take together? I wonder, what or who inspires you and gives you energy and power to live well in the world, our shared home?