

HARVEST THANKSGIVING 2012

My Favourite Things – Saying Thank you!

Harvest Thanksgiving is about saying 'thank you' for all of these things that we see on tables, the food that we eat & enjoy, our favourites and the things we maybe don't like so much but are good for us. It is such a good display of food. Every year we have this special service to say 'thank you' to God for all His love. That set me thinking:

How do we say 'thank you'?

- We write a letter to someone who has helped us – but we can't send God a letter, because Royal Mail doesn't reach that far!
- We speak to someone on the telephone to say 'thank you'.

How do we say 'thank you' to God?

- We sing a song – lots of our songs have the word 'thanks' or 'praise' in them and we sing songs to say thank you to God for all that He has done. When we sing, we praise God for all His love and goodness to us; we use the words of the songs to help us understand something important about God
- The music that goes with the songs: people like Florence and Chris us their musical gift to praise God. We have some instruments: anyone fancy playing them during the next song?
- We paint a picture: you can see the Messy Church poster that has pictures of crops and flowers on it as way of showing us what God has given us; the tractor reminds us that God not only gives us food, but gives us skills to make machines that farm the land better.
- We tell someone else: Tilly is going to read some verses from the Bible in which a man of faith tells everyone who reads it just how good God is and how glad he is of God's help - *Psalm 65:9-13*
- We say 'thank you' to God – that's what we do when we pray. Prayer is not just about asking God for things that He might give us to help us or bless us, but we say 'thank you' to God when He hears our prayers & answers us.
- We give – we give this food today to say 'thank you' to God; He has given us lots of good things, so we give something back. We give by bringing these things to Church; we give money to Church; we give not just to Church, but to people in need and these things on the tables will go to Bethany to help people in the city who are in need.

These are all the sorts of ways by which we say 'thank you' and the next one is a song, which we will sing and play – does anyone want to bang or shake an instrument?

A story in pictures

Can we find Africa on my globe?

Do you know any countries in Africa?

What animals live in Africa?

What's the weather like?

Has anyone been to Africa?

Aidan is 8; he lives near London; his dad works for Tearfund and in March they went to Uganda on a trip and we showed some photos from that trip, to tell us about some people they met and what harvest is like for them! Here's the link:

<http://www.tearfund.org/~media/files/main%20site/resources/church%20resources/harvest%202012%20childrens%20resources/childrens%20photo%20activity.pdf>

1. The Church in Wigweng – what is different about their church from ours?
2. Here are George, Tonny & Evelyn, brothers and sister – George loves to play football, but he can't because he has to look after his brother and sister, since their parents have died; they are alone and poor and work hard to grow food, do the washing, cook the meals
3. here are Jimmy and Rose and their children
4. Here they are In the fields with Aidan – does this look an easy job? Anyone who is 8 – would you like to do that job? They are trying to grow maize – corn on cob; the fields look a bit rough! Often the sun is so strong and there is no rain so the crops just dry up and die. Jimmy and Rose and their children go hungry because they don't have enough food to eat.
5. Korina and her grandchildren – how many? They all live in this round house with a thatched roof and Korina looks after her grandchildren because their parents have died. But she is getting old and going blind – it is hard for her to look after them. 'All of the children go to bed hungry every night. We eat at midday – and they have no more food. I see it and have to face this pain and the reality of this. I am 88 and I am weak.'

The Church in their village is trying to help people like these by helping them to know which crops to grow and how to grow them better and train people to be better farmers. They also give them the hope that God loves them and will help them even when life is hard.

Important things

I have a bag marked 'important things' – let's see what is inside?

A bag of rice - Do you like this food? Why is food an important thing for us? We need food to live; if we don't eat, then we will be ill and even die; if we don't drink we will die; we need food and drink to live; so food is an important thing. But read what Jesus said - **Matthew 6:26**

A jumper! Does my jumper fit you? It is too big! Why do we need clothes? To keep warm in the winter apart from anything else! We have lots of choice about the clothes that we wear: you can choose the colour you like, the style, the size etc and there are so many choices, shops and catalogues. Clothes are an important thing. Read what Jesus said - **Matthew 6:28-30 (exc)**

So these are important things but God tells us not to worry about them. Jesus tells us that God will provide for us. He feeds birds and so He will provide food for us to eat, so we need not worry about it; it is not the most important thing in the world. He clothes the flowers, gives them their colours and their beauty and Jesus says that not even the most splendid king that ever lived in Israel was as beautiful as one of these flowers. Clothes not most important thing in world; God knows that we need them and He will provide for us. So if not food, and not clothes, is there something left in my "most important" bag?

30th September 2012

A Bible – God’s kingdom! In *Matthew 6:33* Jesus says that the most important thing of all is God’s Kingdom. God’s kingdom is not a place like Africa on a map; God’s Kingdom is about the kind of people that we are, people who learn to be the kind of people that God wants us to be. We are to be people who have faith, who believe in Jesus and who trust Him as Saviour; people who love God and love others; people who try to obey Jesus as Lord and do what He tells us to do. For Jesus, these are the most important things in the whole of life. The problem is that we forget and we get things out of order: we make food, clothes, money etc *the* most important and forget about Jesus; we make ourselves most important and forget about Jesus; we worry about things and forget that God has promised to provide all that we need.

We give thanks for the Harvest; God provides. The birds and flowers tell us that God provides for us; Jesus reminds us that most important of all is the kind of people we are, people who have faith, love and obedience in our hearts.