



On your marks

Harvest is usually celebrated with an all-age service in church, in which the children are invited to take part. Here is a simple idea for making the act of confession element of such a service more interactive and with a link into the theme of seedtime and harvest.

Alternatively, this could be part of a time of worship for this festival period with a children's group in the week or in a class assembly on this theme. This idea was first written as part of a harvest resource for CMS.

Get set

You will need some packets of seeds (not too small and also seeds that are not unsafe to eat, such as sunflower seeds). Have these ready at the end of the rows of chairs so that they can be quickly distributed along the line, one for each person, ready for this part of the service.

You will also need to have a hymn book and Bible available - your church may already have these by the seats - and an example of what the seeds you have chosen to use will grown into - for example, a stalk of corn or a sunflower

Go!

When the congregation or children's group is ready, invite them to hold their seeds in the different ways described below and use the words suggested for each position. These meditations and prayers could be divided up and read by groups of children. For each section there is a Bible link.

Holding the seed in the palm of the hand.

This seed is special. It contains life waiting to break out. It is precious and valuable. It is a gift from God.

Like this seed, each of our lives is precious and special. God has given each of us a life that is beyond price.

Bible link: *Those who wept as they went out carrying the seed will come back singing as they bring in the harvest.* Psalm 126

Forgive us, Lord, for taking the gift of life for granted and for not treating each other as your precious children.

Holding the seed up between finger and thumb.

This seed is small. It seems too tiny to be anything important or significant. Yet it contains a surprise



waiting to happen. It is a lesson from God.

Like this seed, God planned each of our lives to become something surprisingly more than we yet are or appear to be.

Bible link: The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed... the smallest of seeds, but which, when it is grown, is the greatest of plants. Matthew 13

Forgive us, Lord, for not recognising the small beginnings of your work in us and for not believing in your surprising plans for our lives.

Holding the seed hidden in the closed fist of one hand.

This seed is hidden. It remains out of sight so it can grow in secret. The miracle of the seed can only happen as it dies in the depth of the earth. It is a sign from God.

Like this seed, God wants us to be with him in secret. He wants to work in depth in our lives. We can only grow as we trust in the miracle of His new life out of death.

Bible link: Accept the word that God plants in your hearts, which is able to save you. James 1

Forgive us, Lord, for not spending time with you and for tolerating those things in us that ought to be put to death.

Placing the seed on top of a prayer book/hymn book or Bible, which is held in both hands.

This seed is patient. It doesn't grow in an instant. It needs time and care and the right conditions. The future of the seed is only for those who can wait. It is the way of God.

Like this seed, God's plans for us are long term and the best. He works that plan through the grace of friends, his words and our worship together. But he won't rush what is so important.

Bible link: Behold the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it until the early and the late rain. James 5

Forgive us, Lord, for wanting things the quick and easy way and for hurting the very people whom you want to use to help us grow.

Place the seed on a surface in front of you and pause to consider what this seed will become one day.

As we/you say sorry and put our/your trust in Jesus Christ who said...

Truly, truly I say to you, unless a seed of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. John 12

Pause



So may we/you know the new start that He promised through the cross.

Holding up an example of what that seed will become (sweet corn? one stalk of corn? or...?).

God, who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your sowing and increase the harvest of your kind deeds. 2 Corinthians 9