

DONE

Seed Blessing

Being an agricultural community gives us a unique opportunity to connect our work with our faith. There are rich biblical references and images that lend themselves to that.

By having a Seed Blessing service, we are not asking for bumper crops or wealth, rather we are acknowledging our work as a gift from God and affirming our participation in God's creation. The following story and prayer have been used in our church during such a service.

The Farmer and the Seed

This is the story of the farmer and the seed, which sounds like there was only one farmer and one seed, which is exactly how it was in this story. There was only one farmer and only one seed in the whole, entire kingdom, which may as well have been in the whole, entire world.

The farmer knew absolutely nothing about farming. He had never farmed a day in his life. And the seed was just a tiny little thing. A farmer who knew nothing, and one tiny little seed, made the future of farming in that kingdom, look pretty dismal indeed. One might ask, if this farmer knew nothing about farming and had never farmed, then why was he called a farmer? Well, quite simply, he was a farmer because the king told him he was a farmer. He was appointed, you might say.

The king came to him one day and said to him, "*You are a farmer. You are the only farmer in this kingdom.*" Then he said to the farmer, "*I have a gift for you*", and he produced a beautiful golden box. He removed the lid. Inside, on a tiny bed of purple velvet, was a single seed. The king used a silver tweezers to pick up the little seed.

The king said, "*You are a farmer, the only farmer. This is a seed, the only seed. You must plant this seed, so that there will be more seeds, so that there will be more farmers. But before you plant it, you must come to me for my approval, for my blessing, just so you do not forget where the gift comes from.*"

Grateful, humble and overwhelmed, the farmer took the gift of the seed. Recognizing it's value, he held the priceless treasure close to him. He thought to himself, *I can't do it. I can't plant this seed. What if it doesn't grow? I'll have wasted the only seed, the only chance.* With thoughts like this chasing about in his mind, he fell asleep. During this restless sleep, the farmer had a dream. In his dream he saw an open Bible coming down from the sky. It was opened to Genesis chapter 2 and these verses were underlined in gold.

(Read Genesis 2:4b-5)

It would be hard to imagine nature in such a state, but in his dream the farmer saw it clearly. No life, no growth, everything at a complete stand still. When he woke up, the

words kept ringing in his ears, *there was no one to cultivate the land, there was no one to cultivate the land.*

The farmer knew what he must do. He went to the king and said, *"I have decided to plant the seed. I am willing, but I don't know how.*

The king said, *"go, before you plant the seed, I will show you"*. The farmer went home and that night had another dream. An open Bible appeared again. This time it was opened to Isaiah chapter 28 and these verses were underlined in gold.

(Read Isaiah 28:23-29)

The farmer woke up and ran to the king and said, *"I am ready to plant the seed and I have come for your approval so that I do not forget where the gift of the seed comes from. The king said, "You have my approval, go, and plant the seed."*

And the farmer did, and the seed grew and produced more seeds, which were also planted. Soon there were many seeds, and many farmers.

It would be nice if the story could end there, but it doesn't.

The farmer farmed more and more land, the farmers around him farmed less and less land. His granaries got fuller and fuller, the others got emptier and emptier. He got too busy to go to the king for approval every year. And the idea of the seed being a gift seemed very remote and didn't really seem appropriate, after all, hadn't he worked hard for everything he had?

One night the farmer had another dream. In his dream he saw an open Bible coming down from the sky. It was opened to Deuteronomy chapter 8, and these verses were underlined in gold.

Read Deut 8:12-17

The farmer woke up in tears over what he had become, tears over how he had abused the land and his neighbor.

That year, he went to the king before seeding; for approval, and, so that he would not forget again, where the gift of the seed came from.

The farmer worked to restore the land and his relationships. And every year after that he went to the king before seeding, for the king's approval and blessing, and so he would never forget where the gift of the seed came from. (*Props such as a seed, little gold ring box and tweezers add to the story*)

In the same way we go to God, for approval and blessing. Not because we want God to perform according to our expectations, but because we want to perform according to God's expectations.

We do not ask for bumper crops, we do not ask for wealth. We go to God so that we do not forget the gifts and our place in creation, not as exploiters of the earth, but as caretakers.

(note: this prayer comes from A Book Of Blessings, copyright Concacan Inc., 1981.
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Prayer

Eternal Father, maker of heaven and earth, we bless you and give you glory.

Bless this seed and make it fruitful.

Look upon our work this season, and grant that the seeds we plant will produce plentiful crops, providing food and work for many.

In your love, give us favorable weather throughout this growing season.

Make us truly grateful for all our gifts, and willing to share our goods and talents with others, especially those without adequate food.

All praise and glory are yours, almighty Father, through your Son Jesus Christ, in the unity of the Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

(A small, token amount of seed can be held in a jar during this prayer)

Sunday School Picnic

At Springridge, the annual picnic is always special and always the "best one we've ever had" Partly, the long tradition and the predictability of it ensure the certainty that it will be a success.

We begin with an outdoor morning service at the picnic site (park). The service includes voluntary contributions from families and sometimes guest speakers that focus on themes relating to Sunday school. Here we also acknowledge any promotions that might be happening in our Sunday school program.

The lunch that follows the service is an elaborate potluck.

Then we enjoy some game sand races, a nice intergenerational time. This leads into the indispensable base ball game, which leads to the equally indispensable watermelon that seemingly mysteriously appears without fail, about half way through the game.

After the baseball game we have a barbecue that is finished off with a feast of ice-cream.