

## Growing Point

*Garden lessons in the Bible*

Week 11: Circle of Life

*Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "I planted the seed, Apollos watered the plants, but God made you grow. It's not the one who plants or the one who waters who is at the center of this process but God, who makes things grow. Planting and watering are menial servant jobs at minimum wages. What makes them worth doing is the God we are serving. You happen to be God's field in which we are working."*

*-1 Corinthians 3: 6-9 The Message*

Our vegetable garden can't thrive on its own. It needs us to tend it and care for it. We need to plant the seeds in the garden. We need to water the garden. We need to weed the garden. The better we do these things, the better the garden will grow. And the better that the garden grows, the greater harvest we will reap. It is hard work, but the reward of the harvest is worth it.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians that each of us is God's field. We too need to be tended to and cared for. Just as we plant seeds in the garden, people plant seeds in us. These are the people who teach us and inspire us. Just as the garden needs to be watered, people water us. These are the people who encourage and support us. And just as the garden grows, we grow too. Good food and exercise help our bodies to grow big and strong. Participating in worship, Sunday School, and MCC Kids in the Garden are just some of the ways that our faith is nourished, helping us to grow inside. As we grow inside, we learn to love ourselves and each other more, to be more patient, to be more compassionate, and to discover our purpose and share it with the world.

Our bodies stop growing, but we continue to grow on the inside throughout our entire lives. Your body is growing every day. You are growing well on the inside too. Your soul has been nourished at MCC and you are good. With more nourishment you will be even better.

## Soul Water

*Nurturing your soul through prayer*

Week 11: Circle of Life

Dear Growing God,

Thank you for life.

Thank you for the people who plant seeds in me when they teach and inspire me.

Thank you for the people who water me as they encourage and support me.

Thank you for good food and exercise that helps my body to grow.

Thank you for my faith that helps me to grow on the inside.

Help me to love myself and others more deeply.

Help me to be more patient.

Help me to be more compassionate.

Help me to find my purpose and share it with the world.

Amen

# Earth Explorations

## *Nurturing Connections to the Soil*

### Week 11: Circle of Life

## Where do all the leaves go?

In *Nicky, the Nature Detective* by Lena Anderson and Ulf Svedberg, Nicky wonders about this very question. She reports "A football field covered with leaves would weigh about one thousand kilos (2,200 pounds) [as much as a car]. But by spring, most of them have disappeared. Where do they go? Earthworms dispose of a lot of them. They drag them down into their tunnels under the ground and eat them. Earthworms are more interesting than you think. Nicky likes to listen to them. Try it yourself! Let an earthworm crawl across a piece of paper and you will hear the scratching of its tiny bristles. If you use a magnifying glass, you can see them clearly. The earthworm uses its bristles to brace itself against the walls of its tunnels. When a blackbird pulls a worm up out of the ground, you can see the worm stretching out – it is holding on with its bristles.

## How fast is soil made?

NASA reports on their Science Education Homepage that only approximately one inch of soil has been created since Columbus discovered America in 1492.

## Is the ground solid?

Are you walking on solid ground or on air? Think about the earth under your feet. It seems solid. You can jump on it and nothing appears to collapse under you. But if the earth is so solid, where do trees and other plants put their roots? How do earthworms breathe? And why does rainwater soak into the ground?

Soil comes from solid rock that has broken down into very tiny pieces and also from decomposed plant and animal tissues. These bits of rock and organic matter are many different shapes and sizes, so they don't fit solidly together, but contain many tiny spaces.

For more about soil, check out the Science Education Homepage at <http://soil.gsfc.nasa.gov/index.html>

# Seeds for Thought

*Additional Resources to Nurture Soil & Soul*

## Week 11: Circle of Life

What we give attention to expands.

Gardens that are neglected do not thrive. Weeds take over. Plants wither. At worst, the plants die. At best, these neglected plants yield a few small fruits.

But gardens that are regularly and lovingly tended are beautiful to look at, and produce a harvest beyond our wildest dreams.

People are like gardens. If we are neglected, we do not do well. We produce little or no fruit when we do not learn, when we are not inspired, and when no one supports and encourages us. When this happens, our bodies will likely continue to live and grow, but our insides suffer. We make poor choices. We do not love ourselves or others. We are not patient. We are not compassionate. We float aimlessly without purpose.

However, when we are nourished, just like the garden, we thrive and do very well. We feel loved and feel good about ourselves. We are able to love others. We are compassionate when others need help. We are better at being patient. We are able to see that our life has a purpose, and we are able to share this with others.

On the other side of this sheet are some questions for you to think about and talk about with your family to explore how you are growing on the inside and how you help others grow.

- What people in your life inspire, teach, encourage and support you? Talk about how you can express your gratitude to these people.
- How do you and how can you inspire, teach, encourage and support other people?
- We grow inside when we learn to be more loving, patient, and compassionate. Setting goals is a great way to work on growing more. What goal can you set for yourself for each of these areas?
  - Write it down.
  - Tape it up where you see it often (like the refrigerator, bathroom mirror, or next to your bed).
  - Each week ask yourself how you are doing achieving your goal.
    - § If you achieved your goal, set a new goal and start the process over.
    - § If you have not yet achieved it, that's OK. Think about one thing you can do this next week to work toward achieving the goal.