

Growing Point

Garden lessons in the Bible

Week 9: Feast and Famine

Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream: "There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt. After them, there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; the famine will consume the land."

- Genesis 41: 29-30 NRSV

Many things are needed for a garden to produce many fruits and vegetables. The garden needs just the right amount of rain, just the right temperatures, plenty of sun, fertile soil, few weeds, and no rabbits or other veggie-loving critters. Sometimes it seems like a miracle that all these things can go right. But luckily it happens quite often and we are able to harvest many yummy fruits and vegetables from our garden. Unfortunately, sometimes conditions aren't so good and the garden doesn't do so well. This year, there has been too much rain in some areas and crops have not been able to grow. In the MCC garden we had to replant some crops such as the squashes because the ground was too wet for the seed to germinate after we planted them the first time.

In our Bible lesson for today, Joseph helped Pharaoh to interpret a dream. In the dream, Pharaoh was standing on the banks of the Nile. First, seven fat, healthy cows came out of the river. Then, seven very skinny, hungry cows came out of the river. Joseph told Pharaoh that the dream meant that first there would be seven good growing years and the harvest would be very good. But then Joseph said these good years would be followed by seven bad years. The harvest would be very poor and people would not have enough food to eat.

If the Egyptians had simply eaten all of their harvest during the good years, they would have been in trouble when the bad years arrived. But, luckily Joseph helped people to save part of their

harvest during the good years. They stored the grain so it was available for them to eat when their crops didn't grow well.

This story teaches us about planning for more than just today. Bad things won't be so bad if we plan ahead and are prepared. This story isn't just about saving for bad times though. Significantly, Joseph shared the stored grain. If he would have stored the grain to be prepared for bad times, but then not shared it, Joseph's planning ahead would not have done any good.

Soul Water

Nurturing your soul through prayer

Week 9: Feast and Famine

Dear God,

Thank you for the rain, the sun and the fertile soil that helps our garden to grow.

Thank you for all the yummy food that we have already harvested and will harvest in the weeks to come.

We have enjoyed radishes, lettuce, chard, basil and cucumbers.

Soon peppers, peas, broccoli, tomatoes, cabbages, squash, watermelon and more will be in our tummies.

Help us to share our bounty with others who are less fortunate than we are.

Amen

Earth Explorations

Nurturing Connections to the Soil

Week 9: Feast and Famine

How do seeds know when it's time to grow?

A seed that is alive but asleep is said to be dormant. There are many plants which produce seeds in the fall. But for some plants, the fall is not the best time to germinate. So many plants have built-in mechanisms to make the seed wait until the time is right. The seed has a time clock inside of it, which permits the seed to germinate only when conditions are best not only for germination but also for the survival of the plant.

Some seeds require enough moisture, the right soil and air temperature, the proper amount of oxygen, and the proper amount of light in some plants, to germinate. Seeds that need these requirements to germinate are dependent on favorable outside conditions.

However, some seeds contain chemicals, special coatings or other internal factors that prevent them from germinating. Sometimes seeds need to be frozen, sometimes they need to lie out in the light, or sometimes they even need to be burned before they will germinate and grow. For example, the seeds of the lodgepole pine are only released from the cone after being exposed to fire.

Some seeds can stay dormant for a very long time. According to Wikipedia, the oldest seed that has been germinated into a viable plant was an approximately 1,300-yr-old lotus fruit, recovered from a dry lakebed in northeastern China.

Dormancy and Seed Germination Activities

<http://www.sproutpeople.com/kids/seedpower.html>

http://www.science-experiments.info/Seed_Germination.html

http://herbarium.desu.edu/project_1/page1/page2/page2.html

Seeds for Thought

Additional Resources to Nurture Soil & Soul

Week 9: Feast and Famine

Questions to Ponder

- Are there any things that you gather and keep?
- What are three things that you could be better at sharing?
- Is it easy or hard for you to put something away so that you can enjoy it another time?
- When you are saving things for the future how do you think you can decide how much is enough? Is it possible to save too much?
- What things can be stored for the future? What things can't be stored?
- Today's Bible story is about storing and sharing food. Could this story apply to money as well?
- What do you think would have happened to the grain if Joseph would have stored it and kept it all for himself rather than sharing it with others?

Opportunity to Share with Others

Several times each year, a group of volunteers from MCC help to collect vegetables from vendors at the Farmer's Market. These vegetables are then distributed through the Community Action Coalition to area food pantries. Watch the MCC newsletter or contact Howard Kanetzke (238-6567) for more information about upcoming opportunities.