



# Vacation Bible School Overlay



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## Why choose Taking Root for your Vacation Bible School?

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There is a fundamental connection between our Christian faith and the injustice of hunger and poverty. The *Taking Root* curriculum was created to explore hunger and poverty with children. It helps children to understand the causes of hunger and imagine a world without hunger, and it fosters a deep commitment to solutions for hunger. Using *Taking Root* for Vacation Bible School (VBS) specifically is an incredible opportunity to help children make deep connections between growing in faith in God and practicing their faith in the world.

*Taking Root* is also a great tool for VBS because it has created truly fun and exciting ways for children to learn about the exciting work of serving our neighbors as we share God's love with the world. As children experience the energy and fun of VBS, they become passionate about loving God, growing in faith and working against hunger and poverty.

If you have any questions or concerns, or are in need of additional resources, please contact David Creech, director of Hunger Education, at [David.Creech@elca.org](mailto:David.Creech@elca.org).

## A Note for Leaders

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*Taking Root: Hunger Causes, Hunger Hopes* is an in-depth curriculum that is probably best suited for a more structured or formal setting like Sunday school. We recognize that working with the curriculum most effectively takes a lot of care and preparation. Non-professional educators will probably feel overwhelmed! With this guide we have tried to adapt the curriculum in a helpful way for the VBS setting and for leaders who have limited experience and preparation time. We hope to have created a resource that promotes ease, excitement and energy in working with *Taking Root*, but we also encourage taking on preparation with intention and care!

See pages 4-5 of the K-Grade 2 Leaders' Guide for more introductory information about *Taking Root*.



# Daily Theme Outline

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
<p><b>THEME</b>  <u>Recognizing Hunger</u>            Many people in the world are hungry. When we care for those who are poor, hungry, or in need, we care for Jesus.</p>	<p><b>THEME</b>  <u>Living Faithfully</u>            We can do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God in a hungry world.</p>	<p><b>THEME</b>  <u>Caring for Neighbors</u>            Being a neighbor means that we care for people in need.</p>	<p><b>THEME</b>  <u>Turning Right Side Up</u>            In a right-side-up world, those who are poor and hungry have what they need.</p>	<p><b>THEME</b>  <u>Learning to Seed</u>            God's kingdom is growing from small places. Ending hunger requires seeing and living in new ways.</p>
<p><b>BIBLE TEXT</b>            Matthew 25:31-45            Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry?</p>	<p><b>BIBLE TEXT</b>            Micah 6:8            Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.</p>	<p><b>BIBLE TEXT</b>            Luke 10:25-37            The Parable of the Good Samaritan</p>	<p><b>BIBLE TEXT</b>            Luke 1:46-55            Mary's Song,            "My soul magnifies the Lord..."</p>	<p><b>BIBLE TEXT</b>            Matthew 13:31-32            The Parable of the Mustard Seed</p>
<p><b>GIVING ROOT</b>            Women's Literacy Project in Kenya</p>	<p><b>GIVING ROOT</b>            Rakai Demonstration Farm in Uganda</p>	<p><b>GIVING ROOT</b>            Learning Center for Street Children in Peru</p>	<p><b>GIVING ROOT</b>            Brass City Harvest Community Gardens in Connecticut</p>	<p><b>GIVING ROOT</b>            Microlending Project in Bangladesh</p>

See K-Grade 2 Leaders' Guide pages 8-9 for additional information.

## Overview of Daily Activities

### What happens in Large Group Opening?

- Welcome and prayer
- Theme song
- Introduce daily theme and Bible text
- Talk about daily mission project: Giving Root and offering
- More songs
- Sending

### What happens during the rotations?

- Four different activities reinforce the daily theme and Bible text

- Small groups rotate between:
  1. Classroom/Bible/Story Time
  2. Mission/Garden/Science
  3. Craft
  4. Games
- You may choose to have snacks all together after the first two rotations, or have snacks in small groups during Classroom/Bible/Story Time

### What happens during Large Group Closing?

- Theme song
- Visit from Mr. and Mrs. Seed
- Talk about what was learned
- Prayer and Sending

## Sample Schedules

These schedules are two examples of how you might structure the timing of a three-hour VBS morning. Sample Schedule 1 outlines 30 minute rotations between four stations: Classroom/Bible/Story Time + Snack, Mission/Garden/Science, Crafts and Games. Sample Schedule 2 is similar to Sample Schedule 1, but includes a small group gathering at the beginning of the day and a 15-minute break in the middle of the morning for all rotating groups to eat snack together. You may add time to the rotations in Sample Schedule 2 by having a shorter (15 minute) Large Group Closing.

<b>Sample Schedule 1</b>	9:00–9:30	Large Group Opening
	9:30–10:00	Station 1
	10:00–10:30	Station 2
	10:30–11:00	Station 3
	11:00–11:30	Station 4
	11:30–noon	Large Group Closing
<b>Sample Schedule 2</b>	9:00–9:10	Gather in Classrooms/Small Groups
	9:10–9:35	Large Group Opening
	9:35–10:00	Station 1
	10:00–10:25	Station 2
	10:25–10:40	Large Group Snack
	10:40–11:05	Station 3
	11:05–11:30	Station 4
	11:30–noon	Large Group Closing



## For the Leader of Large Group Time

### Songs

Here are a few song suggestions. Feel free to supplement our music suggestions with your congregation's favorite children's music and camp songs! Get your children singing what they know and love! Make it fun!

<b>Day 1</b>	Recognizing Hunger	"Open the Eyes of My Heart, Lord" Paul Baloche, © 1997 Integrity's Hosanna Music
<b>Day 2</b>	Living Faithfully	"Lord of Justice" Larry Olson, © 1989 Dakota Road Music
<b>Day 3</b>	Caring for Neighbors	"I Can Be Your Friend" Phil Vischer, © 1995 Bob and Larry Publishing  "Takin' A Walk" Words by 1991 LCBC Summer Staff
<b>Day 4</b>	Turning Right Side Up	"Tear Down the Walls" Larry Olson and David Lee Brown, © 1990 Augsburg Publishing House
<b>Day 5</b>	Learning to Seed	"We Can Make a Difference" Luther Crest Bible Camp  "Go Make Disciples" Handt Hanson, © 1991 Changing Church Forum, Inc.

For questions or more song ideas contact David Creech at [David.Creech@elca.org](mailto:David.Creech@elca.org).



## How to introduce daily theme and Bible text

The leader sets the course for the day at VBS by introducing the daily theme and Bible text during Large Group Opening. This moment is essential to prepare the children before they scatter to different activities. Use the time to ensure that they will make connections between the Bible ideas and what they do throughout the day.

Below are some ideas and talking points to help explain how the theme and Bible text will connect to activities the children will do later on, and what to draw attention to about the day's theme and Bible text. This is a time to be positive, hopeful, energetic and excited!

<b>Day 1</b>	<p>Today is all about <b>Recognizing Hunger</b>. <i>Lead the children in a hand/body motion conveying "recognizing/sight," like creating binoculars around their eyes with their hands, for example, explaining that sometimes we need help seeing things.</i></p> <p>During Bible time we'll read from a story called <i>If the World Were a Village</i> that helps us understand how people in Jesus' family live all around the world, and we'll see (<i>motion</i>) how many of them are hungry.</p> <p>Today's Bible verse is from Matthew chapter 25. It says, "Lord, when did we see you hungry?" Jesus tells us that when we see people in Jesus' family who are hungry, we see Jesus hungry. And also, when we care for those who are poor, hungry or in need, we care for Jesus.</p> <p>Be on the look-out today (<i>with your binoculars!</i>) during crafts and games and the rest of the day for when you are <i>seeing</i> hunger and <i>seeing Jesus!</i></p>
<b>Day 2</b>	<p>Do a quick recap of what the children learned the day before. You may want to ask them what they learned from Mr. and Mrs. Seed at the end of the day yesterday and create some excitement about them visiting again later today.</p> <p>Today is all about <b>Living Faithfully</b>. Our Bible text is Micah 6:8, which tells us we can "Do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God." <i>Have the children stand up and learn hand/body motions for the verse. Try banging an imaginary gavel for justice, crossing hands over heart for loving kindness, and marching in place for walking humbly with God. Chant the verse, have them do the hand motions.</i></p> <p>During Bible time we're going to read a story about a woman who was just, kind, and humble. She lived faithfully by feeding lots of hungry cats! As you play games and make crafts and do other activities today, you'll learn even more about doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with God!</p>

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## How to introduce daily theme and Bible text *(continued from page 7)*

<p><b>Day 3</b></p>	<p>Do a quick recap of what the children learned the day before. Ask the children what they learned from Mr. and Mrs. Root at the end of the day yesterday, and create some excitement about them visiting again later today. What will they look like today?</p> <p>Today is all about <b>Caring for Neighbors</b>. Our Bible text today is the Parable of the Good Samaritan. In the parable, the Samaritan is a good neighbor because he cares for people in need. Jesus said, “Be like the Samaritan.” <i>Ask the children to turn to their neighbors and extend their hands. The body motion for Caring for Neighbors can simply be holding hands with one another.</i></p> <p>We’re going to do some fun activities throughout the day today that help us learn how being a neighbor means that we care for people in need!</p>
<p><b>Day 4</b></p>	<p>Do a quick recap of what the children learned the day before. Ask the children what they learned from Mr. and Mrs. Sprout at the end of the day yesterday. How did Mrs. Sprout help Mr. Sprout? By extending her hand to help him up! <i>Do yesterday’s hand-holding motion to demonstrate Caring for Neighbors.</i> What will Mr. and Mrs. Sprout look like today?</p> <p>Today is all about <b>Turning Right Side Up</b>. <i>Have the children bend over to turn “upside down” and then pop back up to turn “right side up.”</i></p> <p>Our Bible text today is from Luke chapter 1. Jesus’ mother, Mary, sings good news that in a <i>Right Side Up</i> world, those who are poor and hungry will have what they need. She says, “the Lord has filled the hungry with good things.” Mary has a hopeful vision of what the world can be like!</p> <p>Today at VBS we’ll also learn about things we can do to help turn the world <i>Right Side Up!</i></p>
<p><b>Day 5</b></p>	<p>Do a quick recap of what the children learned the day before. Ask the children what they learned from Mr. and Mrs. Bean at the end of the day yesterday. Lead them in wondering what they will learn from Mr. and Mrs. Bean today!</p> <p>Today is all about <b>Learning to Seed</b>. Our Bible text is the Parable of the Mustard Seed. In Matthew chapter 13 Jesus says, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs.” Jesus said that something small can grow until it is very big! <i>Lead the children in a body motion to demonstrate growing from something small into something big. For example, start with clasped or cupped hands representing a small seed, and then spread your fingers wide and extend your arms and hands in a big arcing motion above your head.</i></p> <p>During Bible time we’ll also read a story called <i>The Tin Forest</i> about a man who lives in a garbage dump but dreams of a beautiful forest. <i>Little by little</i>, his garden grows until he lives in a <i>big</i>, colorful forest.</p> <p>Keep a look out today for other ways we learn about <i>big</i> things growing from <i>small</i> places!</p>

**Note for Day 5:** The last day of your VBS will likely involve the participation of the parents of the VBS children in some way. One of our hopes for the curriculum is that the children share what they learn with their parents and start to lead the parents. Any way you can encourage that sharing, involve the parents in VBS, and show them all the wonderful things that go on during VBS would be really helpful!

## How to talk about Giving Root and collect the offering

One of the goals of *Taking Root* is to help children understand the importance of faithful stewardship. Giving Root is an opportunity to talk with children about five specific development projects supported by ELCA World Hunger, and examine the ways they contribute to the goal of ending world hunger. Find more information on page 7 of the K-Grade 2 Leaders' Guide.

One way to engage through Giving Root is to collect an offering for ELCA World Hunger during VBS. Take five to seven minutes in the Large Group Opening session to describe the Mission Project of the day, talk about how these projects happen because the people in the ELCA care and help, and collect the offering. This time should be about building energy and excitement, and giving the children a vision for helping to make the world a better place. Have fun with it!

Try setting a goal from ELCA Good Gifts Catalog. Visit [www.elca.org/goodgifts](http://www.elca.org/goodgifts). It's fun for children to work together toward raising enough money to purchase sheep, a hand water pump or a microloan, for example. The ELCA World Hunger God's Global Barnyard barn-shaped coin boxes are a fun way to collect the offering, too!



**GREAT IDEA!** The *ELCA Good Gifts Fair Planning Guide* has wonderful crafts, activities and ideas to make ELCA Good Gifts or even a Good Gift Fair a part of your VBS. Page 6 has Sunday school ideas, pages 13 and 15 have VBS ideas and bulletin announcements, and activities and crafts are scattered throughout the guide. For a copy of this guide, contact David Creech:

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It's also helpful to use a visual like the *Taking Root* Garden Plot posters and carrot stickers to keep track of progress toward your goal throughout the week, or to provide some kind of silly incentive for the children if the goal is reached (like dumping water on a grown-up!).

Try leading the children in a cheer at the beginning and end of talking about Giving Root everyday. For example:

Leader: "God is TAKING ROOT in our lives!"

Everyone: "We're GIVING ROOT in the world!"

The following notes are some ideas and jumping off points for how to talk about the Giving Root projects during the large group opening. You may wish to project photos from the projects on a screen for everyone to see while the project is described.

<b>Day 1</b>	<p><b>Women’s Literacy Project in Kenya</b></p> <p>God is <b>Taking Root</b> in our lives! We’re <b>Giving Root</b> in the world!</p> <p>Raise your hand if you know how to read! What can you do if you know how to read? (Go to school, read labels in the store, use a computer...)</p> <p>In Kenya, the Women’s Literacy Project helps women learn to read, write and do math. They also learn about the Bible and how to be healthy. Learning to read helps them to be able to work and buy food for themselves and their families.</p> <p>These things happen because the people in the ELCA care and help. When we give to <b>ELCA World Hunger</b>, we care about and help the women in Kenya.</p> <p>God is <b>Taking Root</b> in our lives, We’re <b>Giving Root</b> in the world!</p>
<b>Day 2</b>	<p><b>Rakai Demonstration Farm in Uganda</b></p> <p>God is <b>Taking Root</b> in our lives, We’re <b>Giving Root</b> in the world!</p> <p>Who’s been to a farm? In Uganda, there is a farm that helps people who are sick with HIV and AIDS to grow their own food. It is a demonstration farm that helps people learn how to carefully water their plants, get rid of weeds and help plants to grow. There are important links between being hungry and being sick. The teachers at this farm in Uganda help people get well by teaching about and providing good, nutritious food. Then people bring what they learned back to their own communities. Farms are an important way to end hunger.</p> <p>These things happen because the people in the ELCA care and help. When we give to <b>ELCA World Hunger</b>, we care about and help people who are sick with HIV and AIDS and growing food in Uganda.</p> <p>God is <b>Taking Root</b> in our lives, We’re <b>Giving Root</b> in the world!</p>

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**Day 3****Learning Center for Street Children in Peru**

God is **Taking Root** in our lives!  
We're **Giving Root** in the world!

Repeat after me: "Huch'uy," "**ooh-TSCHOO-eeh.**" "Runa," "**ROOH-nah.**" "Huch'uy Runa."  
"**Huch'uy Runa.**" In the Quechua language of people who live in Peru, Huch'uy Runa means "small, important person." Do you think that you are a small, important person? Does God think you're a small, important person?

Huch'uy Runa is also the name of a learning center for children in Peru. At this center, children who are homeless, who don't have a place to sleep, eat or learn can get hot food, sleep safely at night, get health checkups, learn things like how to make pottery, bake bread, or tend a garden, and they get to be with people who care about them. How about the children in Peru? Are they small, important people?

These things happen because the people in the ELCA care and help. When we give to **ELCA World Hunger**, we care about and help the children in Peru who have hope because of Huch'uy Runa.

God is **Taking Root** in our lives,  
We're **Giving Root** in the world!

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**Day 4****Brass City Harvest Community Gardens in Connecticut**

God is **Taking Root** in our lives,  
We're **Giving Root** in the world!

Who knows what a farm looks like? Who knows what a city looks like? Are there farms in a city? YES! Sometimes people turn vacant land in a city into an urban garden. Urban gardens are very helpful. They grow healthy food like fruits and vegetables right in the city, in places where it is hard for people in need to get those important foods.

The Brass City Harvest Community Gardens in Connecticut allow people to grow healthy food that helps end hunger, gives them good work to do, and helps the environment.

These things happen because the people in the ELCA care and help. When we give to **ELCA World Hunger**, we care about and help people in cities who need better access to fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables from urban gardens.

God is **Taking Root** in our lives,  
We're **Giving Root** in the world!

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<b>Day 5</b>	<p><b>Microlending Project in Bangladesh</b></p> <p>God is <b>Taking Root</b> in our lives! We're <b>Giving Root</b> in the world!</p> <p>Today we're going to learn about small things that grow into very big things. In Bangladesh, grownups can borrow small amounts of money to help them start a business. The businesses help them earn money so they can buy food. This is called "microcredit." Micro means small, and credit means money people can borrow and pay back. A very small amount of money can grow and do big things to help end hunger in Bangladesh.</p> <p>These things happen because the people in the ELCA care and help. When we give to ELCA World Hunger, we care about and help people in Bangladesh who get microcredit and then can help feed their families and villages.</p> <p>God is <b>Taking Root</b> in our lives, We're <b>Giving Root</b> in the world!</p>
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See each Session's Giving Root section in the Leaders' Guide for more information about these projects.

## Drama Ideas

VBS is a fun setting to use drama to communicate and reinforce a message. In this drama, each day's theme is drawn out and summarized for the children through conversation between the characters Mr. and Mrs. Seed. Mr. and Mrs. Seed start out as seeds on the first day, and each day after that they grow and change, becoming Mr. and Mrs. Root, Mr. and Mrs. Sprout, Mr. and Mrs. Bean, and finally they have Baby Seeds.

## CHARACTER NAME AND COSTUME CHANGES

Day	Character name	Character/costume description
Day 1	Mr. and Mrs. Seed	Seeds
Day 2	Mr. and Mrs. Root	Seeds with Roots
Day 3	Mr. and Mrs. Sprout	Stem and Leaves
Day 4	Mr. and Mrs. Bean	Bean Pods
Day 5	Mr. and Mrs. Bean have Baby Seeds!	Beans Pods + Little Seeds

## STAGES OF BEAN GROWTH

Bean plants start as seeds, grow roots, sprout a stem and leaves, flower and grow fruit: bean pods which are harvested and then eaten. Some pods are not harvested so that the bean plant life cycle will continue. These pods dry up and burst, letting the seeds fall on the ground. These beans start the life cycle of a bean plant all over again!

## MR. AND MRS. SEED SCRIPT

The following script provides ideas and a general flow for the Mr. and Mrs. Seed drama. Feel free to adapt it and improvise as you wish. Don't feel bound to every word!

### DAY 1: RECOGNIZING HUNGER

Mr. and Mrs. Seed come running into the room and onstage, stumbling around and running into things (their heads and bodies are covered with brown sacks so they cannot see very well). Eventually they bump into one another.

**Mr. Seed:** Whoa!

**Mrs. Seed:** Whoa!

**Mr. Seed:** Who are you?

**Mrs. Seed:** I don't know, who are you?

**Mr. Seed:** Well I don't know either, but you look like a seed to me.

**Mrs. Seed:** Huh, you kinda look like a seed to me too!

**Mr. Seed:** Wow, I'm glad I ran into you. I've been discovering all kinds of things today. And now I just learned something about myself!

**Mrs. Seed:** Hey, me too! I just recognized that I'm a seed! Now, you said you've been discovering things today. What else have you learned?

**Mr. Seed:** Today I learned about **Recognizing Hunger**. There are many people in the world who are hungry.

**Mrs. Seed:** Whoa! I learned about that too! I also learned about recognizing Jesus. Jesus is in the world even though we can't see him in the same way we see each other. I learned that when we care for people who are hungry, we care for Jesus.

**Mr. Seed:** Yeah! We read a Bible verse today. It was, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry?" from Matthew chapter 25.

**Mrs. Seed:** The Bible tells us that when we see people who are hungry and thirsty and take care of those people in Jesus' family, we take care of Jesus.

**Mr. Seed:** Cool! We both learned about hunger, about our faith, and about ourselves! I can't wait to see what we learn about in VBS tomorrow!

### DAY 2: LIVING FAITHFULLY

*Mr. and Mrs. Root come in with roots growing from their seed bodies. It is easier for them to see today. They walk around and look at each other quizzically.*

**Mrs. Root:** Hey, didn't I meet you yesterday? I think you're the one who told me I was a seed.

**Mr. Root:** Yeah, that's right. We both figured out that we were seeds. But I think something funny is going on. I think you've been growing.

**Mrs. Root:** Hey, you're right! I'm growing roots! And so are you!

**Mr. Root:** Oh wow! That's so cool! Here I am at this *Taking Root* VBS, and I'm actually growing roots!

**Mrs. Root:** You know, that is really cool. Earlier today we were talking about being rooted in

God's love. And about how God is taking root in our lives and we're giving root in the world!

**Mr. Root:** Yeah, I remember that! I also remember talking about how God wants us to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God in a hungry world.

**Mrs. Root:** That sounds like Micah 6:8 to me. "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" I learned that's what **Living Faithfully** is all about.

**Mr. Root:** Yes! We can live faithfully and help others even when it seems like a really big job, and even though there are a lot of people in the world who are hungry.

**Mrs. Root:** Awesome! It was a great day at VBS! I can't wait to come back tomorrow! Maybe I'll see you again then!

### **DAY 3: CARING FOR NEIGHBORS**

*Mr. and Mrs. Sprout have green stems and leaves today. Their arms are free to move around, and they come in excited, moving around and waving their arms, looking at everything around them. Eventually they notice each other and are happy to see one another.*

**Mrs. Sprout:** You again! Wow, I'm glad to see you! You look GREAT!

**Mr. Sprout:** You too! We are just growing like crazy, don't you think? We're green and we can see and move around. Just look us! We're sprouts!

*Mr. Sprout is so excited that he trips and falls down. Mrs. Sprout shoots out an arm to help him up.*

**Mr. Sprout:** Hey, thanks!

**Mrs. Sprout:** No problem! That's what neighbors do! You know, I don't think I would have been able to do that yesterday without these sprouts growing (*referring to her arms*).

**Mr. Sprout:** I guess not. It's a good thing we're learning and growing and changing during this week at VBS.

**Mrs. Sprout:** Definitely! We're growing in our faith in God and learning more about hunger and poverty every day. Today we learned about **Caring for Neighbors**.

**Mr. Sprout:** Oh yeah! That's why you said that thing about neighbors when you helped me up.

**Mrs. Sprout:** It sure is! I learned that from the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Jesus says to be like the Samaritan. Being a neighbor means that we care for people who need help. Some people who need help are close by, like you were when you fell down, and some people who need help are far from us.

**Mr. Sprout:** You know, I learned that my church helps people in need. Caring for my neighbor is not just something I do all by myself.

**Mrs. Sprout:** You mean like how the church supports food pantries and gives offerings to support mission projects around the world?

**Mr. Sprout:** Absolutely! And a whole lot more, too! Well, I'll see you tomorrow! Keep using those awesome new sprouts to help out people in need.

**Mrs. Sprout:** I will!

#### **DAY 4: TURNING RIGHT SIDE UP**

*Today the characters are Bean Pods. They come in and look at each other, at themselves, and then back at each other. They are excited and amazed.*

**Mr. Bean:** Whoa!

**Mrs. Bean:** Whoa!

**Mr. Bean:** Look at us! So this is what we've been growing into! Bean pods!

**Mrs. Bean:** This is so cool. We started out as seeds, and then we grew roots, and then we were sprouts with stems and leaves, and now this!

**Mr. Bean:** God is good! It's pretty awesome that we've grown into a good thing for people who are hungry.

**Mrs. Bean:** And all this time we've been learning about what kinds of things are good for people who are hungry, like nutritious food, clean water, medicine, homes to live in and schools to go to.

**Mr. Bean:** In the Bible verse we read today Jesus' mother, Mary, was singing that the Lord has filled the hungry with good things.

**Mrs. Bean:** Yes! Mary sings good news about a right-side-up world. God will give food to people who are hungry, and we can help make sure that people who are hungry have enough food.

**Mr. Bean:** That's part of **Turning Right Side Up**. I feel like I know a lot more about what a right-side-up world is like after being here at VBS this week.

**Mrs. Bean:** Yeah! I'm getting so excited about God's love, and it sure is fun to be a bean! See you tomorrow!!

#### **DAY 5: LEARNING TO SEED**

*On the final day of VBS, the cast has two special additions: baby seeds. Choose two VBS children to dress as seeds and join Mr. and Mrs. Bean in the drama.*

**Mr. Bean:** Hey Mrs. Bean! I have someone special with me today to introduce to you!

**Mrs. Bean:** Wow, great! Me too!

**Mr. and Mrs. Bean (in unison):** Baby seeds!

**Mr. Bean:** Awesome! These baby seeds will grow just like we did this week!

**Mrs. Bean:** Yeah, they're definitely bean seeds, 'cause they look just like we did when we were seeds. Except, hmm, something's different about them.

**Mr. Bean:** You're right. They're quite a bit smaller than we were, aren't they?

**Mrs. Bean:** That's it! They're tiny compared to us! But you know, today we talked about a seed even smaller than these guys. We listened to Jesus telling the Parable of the Mustard Seed.

**Mr. Bean:** Jesus said the mustard seed "is the smallest of seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs." Jesus said God's kingdom is growing from small places.

**Mrs. Bean:** I don't think we should be worried about these seeds just because they are small. Small things can grow into big, important things.

**Mr. Bean:** Absolutely. Also, small actions we take to fight hunger make a big difference.

**Mrs. Bean:** And small offerings we give make a big difference too!

**Mrs. Bean:** That's definitely a different way to think about things. Sometimes I think that small things can't possibly be important or helpful. But ending hunger requires that we think differently, and learn to see and live in new ways! I'm glad we've been **Learning to Seed** today.

**Mr. Bean:** Me too. I'm glad we were here at VBS all week long! It was AWESOME!

## Sending Prayers for Large Group Closing

These prayers are ideas for ways to close out your time together each day. As always, they are only suggestions!

### DAY 1: RECOGNIZING HUNGER

**Leader:** The Lord be with you.

**Group: And also with you.**

**Leader:** Let us pray. Loving God, Jesus knows what it is like to be hungry and cold and lonely. Help us to know how to give him food and shelter and friendship. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 2: LIVING FAITHFULLY

**Leader:** The Lord be with you.

**Group: And also with you.**

**Leader:** We hear your words, O God. You want us to be just, and kind, and walk in your way. Remind us of people who are hungry. May we and our families and our church take care of them. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 3: CARING FOR NEIGHBORS

**Leader:** The Lord be with you.

**Group: And also with you.**

**Leader:** Let us pray. God who heals, you want us to care for people who need help. Guide us so that we may be a good neighbor to all those in need. We pray in the name of Jesus, who went village to village, town to town, caring for and feeding people. Amen.

### DAY 4: TURNING RIGHT SIDE UP

**Leader:** The Lord be with you.

**Group: And also with you.**

**Leader:** Let us pray. God, we can see so many things! Help us see how we can help other people. Help us live as you want us to live. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 5: LEARNING TO SEED

**Leader:** The Lord be with you.

**Group: And also with you.**

**Leader:** Let us pray. We pray O God, for people who are hungry. Help us to see in new ways. Help us bring food, clean water, education and better lives to those who need them. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

## Classroom/Bible/Story Time Lesson Plans

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The following pages are Lesson Plans for Classroom/Bible/Story Time. This time is an opportunity to explore and dig deeper into the day's theme and Bible text that were introduced in Large Group Opening. Each lesson is planned for 25 minutes and includes the Bible text, a story and activities in the Hunger Workbooks. The specific activities were chosen from the curriculum based on their reinforcement of the day's theme and the specific setting of VBS (keeping in mind time and children's ages, interest and attention span). Feel free to use any of the *Taking Root* material and Hunger Workbook activities you would like; these are suggestions!

Note: Older children may use the Hunger Newspapers for Grades 3-6 instead of the Hunger Workbooks for Kindergarten-Grade 2. The Bible Text and Lesson Focus are the same, but the Newspapers have slightly different activities than the Workbooks. Feel free to use the Newspapers for the older children, and choose which activities you think will work best!

Also, the Hunger Workbooks and Newspapers are excellent tools for teaching parents! Encourage children to take the Workbooks and Newspapers home, show them to their parents, and try at home the activities that they didn't do during the day at VBS.

It is important to prepare and spend some time with these Lesson Plans before the Bible/Story rotation each day of VBS. This curriculum is about building energy around and getting children excited about working against hunger and poverty, and casting a vision for a world without hunger and poverty. We encourage preparation to help infuse this excitement and energy. Your children will get a lot more out of VBS if you invest in it and spend time in preparation!

The Leaders' Guides have even more great information, including Hunger Background for Leaders and additional Lesson Plan ideas.



## Day 1: Recognizing Hunger

**Bible Text:** Matthew 25:31-45

**Lesson focus:** Many people in the world are hungry. When we care for those who are poor, hungry or in need, we care for Jesus.

**Bible memory verse:** “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry?”

### BIBLE TEXT (5 MINUTES)

Read Matthew 25:31-45. Explain that the Bible tells us that when we help and take care of people in Jesus’ family, we take care of Jesus. When we feed people in Jesus’ family, we feed Jesus.

### HUNGER WORKBOOKS (15 MINUTES)

Today’s theme is about recognizing that hunger is a big problem in the world. Hand out the Hunger Workbooks and pencils or markers. Lead the children in the activity **“How many people are hungry?”** on page 2 and **“Set the table!”** on page 3 of the Workbook. Each shows that some people have more than they need to eat, some people never have enough to eat, and some people sometimes have enough to eat and other times go hungry.

**What is on the menu for the people who will sit at the green placemats? The purple ones? The red ones?**

**If you were sitting at a green placemat, what would you say to the people at the red placemats?**

**Do you think the people at the purple placemats have enough? Why or why not?**

Turn to page 7 of the Workbook and read the African proverb found there. Have the children complete the two mazes.

**How many fish will the boy get?**

**How many fish can the girl get?**

### STORY (5 MINUTES)

Read the Food page of *If the World Were a Village* (page 17). Explain that the story helps us understand how people in Jesus’ family live all around the world. The author imagines that the world is a village of 100 people, and shows how many of those 100 people have enough food.

## Day 2: Living Faithfully

**Bible Text:** Micah 6:8

**Lesson focus:** We can do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God in a hungry world.

**Bible memory verse:** “Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.”

### BIBLE TEXT (5 MINUTES)

Read Micah 6:8. Explain that Micah was a prophet. He spoke God’s words long ago so people could hear them. Micah said God wants us to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God. “Justice” means that things are fair and right for everyone. “Kindness” is doing something nice for someone. Being “Humble” means not having to be first all the time and listening to other people.

### STORY (15 MINUTES)

Today’s theme is about being faithful even in the midst of tremendous need. In *All the Cats in the World* a woman named Mikila faithfully feeds many hungry cats who live by the sea. As she works she is teased by the lighthouse keeper who wonders why she feeds the cats since she could not possibly feed all the millions of hungry cats in the world. In her frustration Mikila compares feeding the cats to tending the lighthouse. In time the lighthouse keeper changes his mind and joins Mikila in her work. This story is rather long for a 25-minute rotation, so you may choose to simply summarize the book and show page 17, when the old man asks, “Can you feed all the cats in the world?” and page 26, when he tells Mikila, “I can at least feed those close at hand.” The story can help children think about staying faithful even when other people don’t understand, and how even though it seems like a really big job, we can still be faithful and help others.



**There were lots of hungry cats in this story. Do you think Mikila could possibly feed them all? Why or why not?**

**Why did the lighthouse keeper decide to help Mikila feed the cats?**

### HUNGER WORKBOOKS (5 MINUTES)

Ask the children to draw a picture of kindness. You might talk about examples of being kind, what justice means, and how we can be humble.

## Day 3: Caring for Neighbors

**Bible Text:** Luke 10:25–37, the Parable of the Good Samaritan

**Lesson focus:** Being a neighbor means that we care for people in need.

**Bible memory verse:** Jesus said, “Be like the Samaritan.”

### BIBLE TEXT (10 MINUTES)

Try telling the Parable of the Good Samaritan using a story glove! It is a fun way for children to understand the story. Refer to the instructions on page 46 and the template on page 55 of the K-2 Leaders' Guide.

Talk with the children about how Jesus was a good storyteller and when he told a story, many people would gather around to listen. Pretend you are listening to Jesus tell a story. Read the Parable of the Good Samaritan. The front page of the Hunger Workbook has a simple, straightforward retelling of the Parable.

**What does it mean to be a neighbor, like the Samaritan?**

**Can you think of one way you can help someone who needs help?**

**Why is it important to be a helper?**

### HUNGER WORKBOOKS (15 MINUTES)

“Who is in this picture?” page 4: Invite the children to draw a face in the blank oval, cut out the faces on the page, and place them on the people in the picture.

**Draw your own face. When can you be like the Samaritan? When do you need help?**

**Draw Jesus' face. Where would you put him in the picture? Why? Help the children realize that Jesus can be either in the place of the Samaritan or the hurt man.**

African Link: Play “A Finding Game” on page 7 of the Workbook. (For tech savvy groups, the finding game is also available online at [www.elca.org/takingroot](http://www.elca.org/takingroot).) Encourage the children to color the drawing of the African village. Help them notice and circle all the things that can help end hunger and help produce food to eat. You'll find:

A good road	Farmers	A fish pond for food and fish to sell
Land for farming	Bikes	Parents taking care of their children
Farm tools	Fruit or nut trees	Mosquito nets to prevent disease
A well	Homes	A school, with teachers and books

## Day 4: Turning Right Side Up

**Bible Text:** Luke 1:46–55 (emphasis on 1:46a; 52–53a), Mary’s Song

**Lesson focus:** In a right-side-up world, those who are poor and hungry have what they need.

**Bible memory verse:** “He has filled the hungry with good things...”

### BIBLE TEXT (5 MINUTES)

Page 1 of the Hunger Workbook translates ideas in Mary’s Song into words children can consider. Read the Bible text in the two different voices suggested. Mary sings that she is so happy that God chose her to be Jesus’ mother. Mary sings that God will give food to people who are hungry. This is very good news! We can help make sure that people who are hungry have enough food.

### STORY (10 MINUTES)

Read *Being Poor*, a story about some of the people Mary sings about—those who do not have enough. The story will help us imagine what it is like to be poor. This is a hard but important story.

**What do you think it would be like to be like one of the children in the story?**

**God loves all people because all people belong to God. How do you imagine God feels when people are hungry?**

(For older children): The story *Being Poor* and Mary’s Song show two different visions of what it means to be poor. **How do the story and our Bible text for today relate? Do they seem different?**

### HUNGER WORKBOOKS (10 MINUTES)

Pass out the Hunger Workbooks. Today’s theme is about turning things right side up. Mary’s Song promises that God will fill the hungry with good things. Invite the children to draw pictures of or write down “good things” in the jar on page 2 of the Workbook. You might come up with things like nutritious food, a house, medicine and clean water.

Color the spaces in the activity on page 4. What picture do you see when you turn the page right side up?



## Day 5: Learning to Seed

**Bible Text:** Matthew 13:31-32, the Parable of the Mustard Seed

**Lesson focus:** God's kingdom is growing from small places. Ending hunger requires seeing and living in new ways.

**Bible memory verse:** "It is the smallest of seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs."

### BIBLE TEXT (5 MINUTES)

Today's Bible text is another parable, a story Jesus told to help people learn. We'll think carefully and use our imaginations because this parable is about more than seeds and plants! Read Matthew 13:31-32 on the front page of the Hunger Workbook.

**Are important things big or small? Why?**

**Jesus told this parable to help people understand how the world will change to be as God wants it to be. Jesus said that something small can grow until it is big. What things can you do that might seem small but help make the world as God wants it to be?**

### HUNGER WORKBOOKS (10 MINUTES)

Point out the baby footprint on the front of the Hunger Workbook. Ask the children to compare it to the size of their feet right now, or to trace their foot if you wish. Small things really do grow into big things! Look at the pictures on pages 2 and 3 of the Workbook. Ask the children what they see.

**How will all these small things become big things?**

**What Bible stories do these pictures remind you of?**

### STORY (10 MINUTES)

Read *The Tin Forest*. A man who lives in a garbage dump dreams of what it could become. Little by little, he creates a new forest, birds come to scatter seeds, and new things grow. Connect the story to the Parable of the Mustard Seed and the idea of big things growing from small places.

What did the old man dream about? Did the man think the dump would always be a dump? What if we think people who are hungry will always be hungry?

**How did the forest start to grow?**



## Craft Ideas

The materials and directions for the crafts suggested here are described in the *Taking Root* Kindergarten–Grade 2 and Grades 3–6 Leaders’ Guides. The crafts in **green bold print** are particularly well suited to younger children.

Day	Craft	Page Number
<b>Recognizing Hunger</b>	Felted Earth Balls	K-Grade 2 page 18
	<b>Hunger Footprints</b>	K-2 pages 19–20
	<b>Handprint Globes</b>	K-2 page 20
<b>Living Faithfully</b>	<b>Give Thanks Placemat</b>	K-2 page 33
	<b>Make Play Dough</b>	K-2 pages 33–34
	Micah Bell Pulls	Grades 3–6 page 36
<b>Caring for Neighbors</b>	<b>Hand Puppet</b>	K-2 page 50
	<b>Neighbor Paper Quilt</b>	K-2 pages 50–51
	<b>Marble Painted Neighbors</b>	K-2 page 51
	Who Is My Neighbor? Banner	3–6 page 53
	Good Samaritan Sandpaper Prints	3–6 pages 53–54
<b>Turning Right Side Up</b>	<b>Upside Down and Right Side Up Bird Feeders</b>	K-2 pages 72–73
		K-2 page 74
	<b>Stained Glass Windows</b>	3–6 page 70
	Foam Prints of the Annunciation	
<b>Learning to Seed</b>	<b>Junk Art Sculptures</b>	K-2 page 86
	<b>Paper Birds</b>	K-2 page 86
	<b>Vases from the Recycling Bin</b>	K-2 page 87
	New Instruments from Old Stuff	K-2 pages 87–88
	Crayons: New from Old	3–6 page 79

Feel free to come up with your own craft ideas, too! One idea is to decorate reusable tote bags. See what creative crafts you can come up with to use extra supplies you already have on hand.

## Mission/Garden/Science Ideas

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This rotation is an opportunity for children to participate in fun, hands-on learning and serving activities. The following is a list of ideas for how you may wish to spend this rotation time. You may want to spend every day in your congregation's community garden, doing a different garden activity each day, or maybe you'll choose to have the children prepare a snack each day. Feel free to tailor this rotation to your needs and draw on the resources and people available to help you!

**Spend time in your congregation's community garden.** If you do not have a garden available to you, consider creating a different way for children to get hands on experience with planting and growing. Try using pots, a large tub or basin garden, or a raised-bed garden box!

- Learn about gardening and farming
  - Learning about growing food can help children with **Recognizing Hunger**
- Tend and care for plants: water and pull weeds
  - These are examples of **Living Faithfully**, like Mikila feeding the cats
- Harvest fruits and vegetables, pack them to be brought to a food pantry
  - Sharing food from our garden with people in need is a way of **Caring for Neighbors**
- Prepare soil by turning it with shovels
  - Getting the garden ready involves **Turning Right Side Up**
- Plant new seeds
  - Children are **Learning to Seed**; small seeds will become big plants
  - Radishes grow very quickly so they are a great option for young gardeners. The children will likely see sprouts within three days!

Pages 35 and 74 of the K-Grade 2 Leaders' Guide have some good ideas about gardening and farming to talk about with the children.

### Involve all the children in preparing Snack for the day

- Example: bake bread – find a recipe on page 8 of the K-2 Session 5 Hunger Workbook
- Children can learn about sharing and serving others even through simply helping to fill cups with juice and snacks!
- Experience the joy of preparing and sharing food

### Try a recycling activity/demonstration

- Enlist help from your congregation's Creation Care Team
- Visit [www.elca.org/caringforcreation](http://www.elca.org/caringforcreation)
- Explore ideas about sustainability and the environment
- A great activity for Day 2: Living Faithfully
  - We can be faithful through good environmental stewardship

### Pack Health Kits or School Kits

(Note that this activity is a bit more involved and requires preparation)

- Visit [www.lwr.org/beinvolved](http://www.lwr.org/beinvolved) for information
- Explore the connections between health care and hunger, and education and hunger
- A great activity for Day 3: Caring for Neighbors

### Tie Dye

- Illustrate that it is possible to make something new and beautiful from something old
- A great activity for Day 4: Turning Right Side Up
  - Draw connections between transforming an old white shirt into a new colorful tie-dyed shirt and how we can make a different reality, we have the power to envision something different, new and beautiful!

# Game Ideas

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## One Wild Game

The description of One Wild Game is on pages 18 and 19 of the Grades 3–6 Leaders' Guide. Here the game is simplified and adapted for younger players. Try this game on Day 1: Recognizing Hunger.

Divide the children into two equal teams. The goal of the game is to play volleyball and reach five points. Set up a net and explain the rules. One team can hit the ball as many times as they wish, however they wish. Basically they can do whatever they want! The other team may only use one hand to hit the ball. (You may need to further adapt the game if players are having trouble.)

One Wild Game illustrates how some countries have more advantages than others.

Reflect on the game after playing: What was it like to play the game? Was it fair? How could the rules of the game be changed?

## Taking Root Board Game

This game introduces children to the causes of and solutions to hunger. See page 32 of the K-Grade 2 Leaders' Guide and page 2 of the Session 2 Hunger Workbook for directions and the game board. The game board is also available in a larger, poster-size version.

Try making the game life size! Turn your playing space into a huge game board with a start and finish, the stone direction spaces, planks, and slides. Children can be embodied game pieces! For ease you may wish to simplify the game board and eliminate some of the spaces. Children can move through the game in pairs or teams. Try using a large spin board instead of small dice to determine how many spaces the players move. The leader can call out directions for the spaces the children land on, instead of setting up signs at each space or requiring the children to read the instructions.

## Global Four Square

Visit [www.elca.org/hunger/education](http://www.elca.org/hunger/education) to find instructions for Global Four Square. Try this game on Day 4: Turning Right Side Up!

## Water Bucket Relay

In this game, children use different tools to explore the idea of appropriate technology and which tools are right for the job at hand. See page 48 of the K–2 Leaders' Guide and pages 3 and 5 of the K–2 Session 3 Hunger Workbook for ideas. This is a great activity for the final day of VBS, Day 5: Learning to Seed, and an opportunity to talk about the connections between water and hunger.

## Other fun game ideas

### MINGLE MINGLE MINGLE

Children walk around mixing and mingling while singing “mingle mingle mingle.” The leader shouts and number and the students have to get in a group of that number. So if the leader says “Four” then the students have to get into a group of four. Any students without a group are out and can play in the next round. Good for Grades 2–4. Try this game on Day 3: Caring for Neighbors.

### HAVE YOU SEEN MY CAT LATELY? (CIRCLE GAME)

Similar to Duck Duck Goose. One child walks around the circle and says “Have you seen my cat lately?” The group responds “No, what does it look like?” The child describes his/her “cat,” who is really another child in the circle. When the “cat” realizes it is him/her, he/she chases the describer around the circle while that child runs around the circle and tries to make it to the chaser's seat. Works well for K-Grade 2. Try this game on Day 1: Recognizing Hunger.

## SHEPHERD SHEEP (CIRCLE GAME)

In this game, one child goes outside of the room (accompanied by an adult). Meanwhile, the group chooses a leader or “Shepherd.” The Shepherd does random motions and everyone in the group follows. For example, the Shepherd might clap, touch her toes, pat their lap, etc. Then the person who went outside the room comes back in and tries to guess who the Shepherd is. The Shepherd tries to be sneaky while changing motions. Works well for K-Grade 4.

## FISHY FISHY

Pick two people to be the “sharks.” The sharks can go anywhere and tag all they want. The sharks stand in the middle of the playing space and yell “fishy fishy come swim in my sea.” Everyone else runs from one side of the space to the other. If they are tagged by one of the sharks they become seaweed: they stand in one spot and can only tag with their hands. Works well for K-Grade 4. This game can be adapted to many other games. The leaders may call out colors or fruits and children run when their color or fruit is called, for example.

## TAG GAMES

**Blob Tag:** To begin, one child is “it.” As more children are tagged they must link arms or hold hands and run around tagging others together. Once the “blob” reaches four children, it splits and everyone continues to tag others separately. Try this game on Day 5: Learning to Seed.

**Turtle Tag:** Children can avoid being tagged by assuming the turtle position (laying on their backs with their legs in the air). Try this game on Day 4: Turning Right Side Up.

**Everybody’s It:** Like the name, everyone is it. Once someone else tags you, you sit down. To get back up and tag others, you must be tagged again.

## WACKY OLYMPICS

For Wacky Olympics get creative with relay games and fun obstacle courses. Divide the students into equal groups and let the fun begin! With relays you can get really creative and use anything you have for supplies like scooters, pool noodles, dress up clothes, balls, etc. This works for all ages!



# Snack Ideas

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Snack Time is a wonderful opportunity for conversation and building relationships with the children. The time can be used to talk about what everyone has been learning and doing so far, and is a chance to talk about world hunger and the ways that we eat.

Be aware of any allergies children or adult helpers may have as you choose foods for Snack Time.

**IDEA:** This exercise will help children remember that food is an amazing gift. Pass out a piece of food to each child. Don't allow the children to eat it just yet! Have them sit with it, listen to the instructions and be with their food for just a moment.

Invite the children to look at the food, examine it with their eyes: What is the shape of the food? What colors do you see? Are there any surprises?

Invite the children to feel the food: **What does it feel like? Is it hard or is it squishy? What is its texture? Do some parts feel different from other parts?**

Invite the children to hear the food: **Shake it. Does it make a noise? What kind of noise? What does it sound like?**

Invite the children to smell the food: **What does it smell like? Sweet? Sour? Something you want to eat?**

Invite the children to taste the food: **What does it taste like?**

Marvel at the gift of food. Not only does it sustain us, but we can enjoy it in so many ways!

**Here are some conversation starters for leaders to talk about with their children:**

**Consider the miracle of food. What did it take for the food to get from a field to your plate?** (Seeds, soil, sun, water) **What kind of work is involved?** (Think about the people involved – farmers, laborers, drivers, stockers, store clerks, those in the kitchen today – and the processes needed for planting, growing, harvesting, packaging and shipping food. It's a lot of work!)

**Think of foods that are healthy to eat.**

**What are some of your favorite foods?**

**How do other people around the world eat differently from you?**

**What would you want to grow in a garden?**

**What is it like to make the food that we eat?**

**What is it like to share our food with others?**

**What is it like to serve snacks to our friends?**

**What have we learned about today?**

**What is your favorite thing that we've done today?**

**What do you think Mr. and Mrs. Seed will look like today?**

Get creative with snacks! These ideas can be quite involved, but can be fun to try if you're interested!

- Eat vegetables harvested from your congregation's community garden
- Have a tasting party to try different fruits and vegetables
- Try the bread you baked during Mission/Garden/Science Time
  - Find a bread recipe on page 8 of the K-2 Session 5 Hunger Workbook
- Have a snack comprised completely of local food
  - Visit [www.localhavest.org](http://www.localhavest.org) for ideas
- Try a recipe from another part of the world
  - Visit [www.elca.org/globalmission](http://www.elca.org/globalmission), click on Where We Work, and then click on a region and country for recipes from our ELCA companions around the world
- Choose one of the recipes from the *Taking Root* curriculum
  - Neighbor Cookies (K-2 Leaders' Guide, page 50)
  - Banana Right Side Up Cake (K-2 Leaders' Guide, page 73)
  - Carrot Muffins (K-2 Hunger Workbook Session 3, page 8)

## Decorating Ideas

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Decorate your church for your *Taking Root* VBS! Some ideas:

- *Taking Root* Art  
For any *Taking Root* art contact:  
David Creech  
Director of Hunger Education  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
8765 W Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631-4101  
Phone: 800-638-3522, ext. 2585 or  
773-380-2585  
[david.creech@elca.org](mailto:david.creech@elca.org)
  - Use *Taking Root* Banners and Posters to advertise for VBS
  - Use *Taking Root* and ELCA World Hunger logos and photos. All art is available from ELCA World Hunger.
- Agriculture or Garden themed decorations: fruit trees, vegetables, plants, wells, water pumps
- God's Global Barnyard themed decorations: animals like cows, fish, chicks, pigs, ducks, sheep and goats
- Global themed decorations: use art from the Giving Root and African Link *Taking Root* materials, create decorations that help children experience the places they learn about through Giving Root: Kenya, Uganda, Peru, the United States and Bangladesh
- Display the Garden Plot poster with the carrot stickers as you measure progress toward your offering goal. Try turning this into a larger display by enlarging the art from ELCA World Hunger or using a PowerPoint projection.
- Choose fun fruit, vegetable or animal names for the small groups of children. For example: preschoolers are the Sweet Peas, kindergartners are the Grapes, first-graders are the Pumpkins, second-graders are the Cows, etc.



# Training your Vacation Bible School Leaders in the Taking Root Curriculum

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We believe it is essential to prepare your leaders for facilitating a wonderful VBS by training them in the *Taking Root* curriculum. A thorough training can help ensure that leaders feel prepared and excited for VBS, and that children get a full experience as well!

## Goals of Leader Training:

- Leaders will understand the themes and message of *Taking Root*
- Leaders will feel comfortable with and excited about engaging children in the ideas and activities
- Leaders will learn how to lead Classroom/Bible/Story Time

## Needed Resources for Leader Training:

- Kindergarten–Grade 2 and Grades 3–6 Leaders' Guides
- Kindergarten–Grade 2 Hunger Workbooks and Grades 3–6 Hunger Newspapers
- *Taking Root* Story books
- Lesson Plans
- Outline of Daily Themes
- Schedule
- Materials for any crafts or activities you want to explain or demonstrate

## Introduction

Provide a brief introduction to *Taking Root*. Include the following points in your discussion:

- *Taking Root* explores the root causes and the root solutions of hunger with children. It helps children to understand the causes of hunger and imagine a world without hunger, and it fosters a deep commitment to solutions for hunger.

- The guiding principle that supports *Taking Root* is this: hunger will not end simply because people are told that it must end. Instead, we hope that these materials will contribute to a transformation in the minds and lives of young people so they see that hunger is both unacceptable and solvable.
- As such, *Taking Root* tries to help children gain a new perspective of the world, specifically hunger and poverty. The experiences, projects and activities center on understanding the root causes of hunger and effective strategies for ending hunger.
- Explain why you chose *Taking Root* for VBS: **There is a fundamental connection between our Christian faith and the injustice of hunger and poverty.** Using *Taking Root* for VBS is an incredible opportunity to help children make deep connections between growing in faith in God and practicing their faith in the world. As children experience the excitement, energy and fun of VBS, they become excited about loving God, growing in faith, and working against hunger and poverty.

## Biblical Study

- First and foremost, *Taking Root* is a Christian education curriculum.
- Each day focuses on a specific biblical text.
- Daily themes and biblical texts are reinforced through the different elements of VBS: Bible study, the workbooks and newspapers, crafts and activities, music, drama, and the Giving Root stewardship response.
- Go through each day's theme, Bible text and lesson focus on the Outline of Daily Themes chart.

- Look at the Classroom/Bible/Story Time Lesson Plans together. Explain that this time is an opportunity to explore and dig deeper into the day’s theme and Bible text that were introduced in Large Group Opening. Each lesson is planned for 25 minutes and includes the Bible text, a story and activities in the Hunger Workbooks.
  - The children’s literature explores the theme set by each day’s biblical text.
  - The book *Being Poor* gives words to the experience of poverty—words that talk about having to wear shoes someone else didn’t want, or not being able to afford toothpaste.
  - Another book, *All the Cats in the World*, tells the story of a woman who faithfully feeds hungry cats in spite of the mockery of an old lighthouse attendant. In the end, her dedicated feeding inspires the man to feed the hungry cats as well.
  - *The Tin Forest* tells the story of a man who took what he had and used it. Miraculously, something new, vibrant and beautiful emerged.
  - The Hunger Workbooks and Newspapers follow each session’s theme. They present ideas, information, images and activities specifically related to hunger. The specific activities outlined in the Lesson Plans were chosen from the curriculum based on their reinforcement of the day’s theme and the specific setting of VBS (keeping in mind time and children’s ages, interest and attention span). Leaders should feel free to use any of the *Taking Root* material and Hunger Workbook activities they would like; these are suggestions!

## Projects and Activities

- All of the projects carry through the session’s theme in content and/or process. For example:
  - Students will make felted Earth Balls when learning how many people in the world experience hunger.
  - Students will make new bowls out of old records or new vases out of old jars when the theme is learning to see in a new way.

- Instructional videos that demonstrate how to make some of the crafts are available on the *Taking Root* Web site: [www.elca.org/hunger/takingroot](http://www.elca.org/hunger/takingroot).
- This would be a great time to explain or demonstrate any crafts or projects from the Mission/Garden Time you would like to highlight for the leaders.

**The Kindergarten–Grade 2 Leaders’ Guide has advice for working with young children and exploring hunger and poverty with this age group through developmentally accessible ideas. This information is scattered throughout the guide in red-outlined boxes marked with a red crayon icon. The information on page 6 (“Younger Children and *Taking Root*”) and the boxes on page 15 (“The following ideas...”) and 66 (Domestic hunger and young children”) may be particularly helpful to look at with your leaders during training.**

## PREPARATION

- Be upfront with your leaders about preparing for VBS. Explain how *Taking Root* is an in-depth curriculum that is probably best suited for a more structured or formal setting like Sunday school, and that working with the curriculum most effectively takes a lot of care and preparation. Non-professional educators will probably feel overwhelmed! Equip them with resources from this guide that we hope promotes ease, excitement and energy in working with *Taking Root*.
- Encourage taking on preparation with intention and care. The program will be more successful and the children will get a lot more from it if leaders spend time preparing and are invested!

## GET EXCITED!

- *Taking Root* helps children imagine a world without hunger. Emphasize the leaders’ role in casting a hopeful vision, building energy and excitement and having fun!

**Make sure to include time for questions during the training.**





**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.