

# How Does Your Garden Grow?

## Theme

Planting God's word in our hearts.

## Object

A shovel, rake, hoe, garden hose, fertilizer, seeds.

## Scripture

"But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown." Matthew 13:23 (NIV)

Have you ever lived on a farm? No? Have you ever planted a garden? Some of you may have planted a garden or watched your parents or grandparents plant a garden. There is a lot of work involved in the planting and caring for a garden. What are some of the things you will need to plant a garden? You'll need a shovel to break up the ground and a rake to remove the rocks and keep the soil smooth. You need a hoe to chop down the weeds that might try to take over your garden. You will probably need some fertilizer and, unless it rains a lot, you will need a hose to water your garden. Oh, I almost forgot the most important thing that you will need. Can you guess what it is? The seed! You can't have a garden without seeds. Now we have everything we need to produce a great crop of fruits and vegetables.

Jesus liked to tell stories to help people understand his teaching. One day he told a story about a farmer who planted some seeds. As he scattered the seed in his field, some of them fell on the footpath and the birds ate them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground. The seeds sprouted, but they wilted and died under the hot sun because they didn't have deep roots. Some of the seeds fell in areas where there were a lot of weeds and the weeds choked out the young plants. Ah, but some of the seed fell on good, fertile soil and that seed grew and produced a wonderful crop.

Do you think Jesus was really trying to teach people how to plant a garden? No. The story has a much deeper meaning. In Jesus' story, the seed represents the word of God and the soil represents the people who hear the word. Many times people hear the word of God, but they don't understand it. They don't take it in. That is like the seed on the footpath. The evil one comes and takes away the seed that has been planted in their heart before it has the opportunity to grow in their life.

The seed that fell on rocky soil represents those who hear the word and receive it with great joy, but when the newness wears off and the excitement fades, they drift away because they don't have deep roots.

The seed that fell among the weeds represents people who hear God's word and believe what it says, but soon the message is crowded out by the worries of life and the desire to get more stuff. If seed is planted in a bunch of weeds, the weeds will soon take over!

A person who hears God's word, tries to understand what it says and put it into practice in their daily life is like good soil. In good soil, the seed takes root and grows and produces a plentiful harvest. That is the kind of soil that Jesus wants us to be. What kind of soil are you?

Dear Jesus, we want to be like the good soil. Help us to listen to God's word and put it into practice in our daily life. Amen.