



ACTIVITY BANK

Welcome to the Harvest Activity Bank!

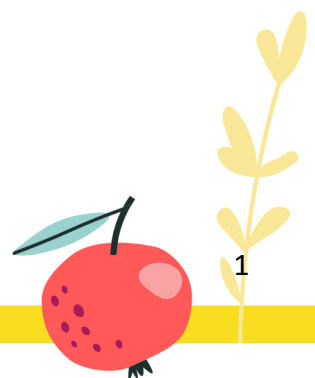
This collection of ideas will give you a range of options to engage with Harvest in a fun and creative way.

Remember to check out Teaching Ideas, Prayer and Worship, and Toddler Church for more inspiration that could be adapted for your Harvest celebration. Please browse through the document, or click the links below to jump straight to the section you need:

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Creative Ideas

Wildflower seed bombs

You will need:

- wildflower seeds
- soil
- flour or powdered clay
- water
- mixing bowl

Wildflowers are a great way to brighten up your garden or local area and reclaim a little bit of our local community for nature. Provide some wildflower seeds and encourage people to make their own seed bombs and release them somewhere as an act of worship to our Creator. Perhaps call out lines of Scripture on God's goodness as you throw or pray over the area.

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/how-to-make-wildflower-seed-balls>

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-make-seed-bomb>

Plastic planters and bird feeders

You will need:

- old plastic bottles
- scissors
- elastic band, muslin, soil, water, seeds / small plant (for the planter)
- wire and bird seed (for the feeder)
- permanent marker pens

Use old plastic bottles to make planters or bird feeders.

For planters, cut the bottle in half. Take the lid off the top half and secure some muslin over the neck of the bottle with the elastic band. Turn it upside down and half fill it with soil. Plant the seeds / small plant, then fill it up with soil to nearly an inch from the top. Put the top half of the bottle inside the bottom half.

For bird feeders cut a hole in the side big enough for a bird to pop in, and two holes at the top to attach wire through so it can hang. Make a drainage hole at the bottom, then put in the bird seed.

As we challenge ourselves to take care of God's creation, decorate the planters or feeders with a verse of Scripture, a prayer or your commitment to respond to God's generosity.





Make a bird feeder

You will need:

- twine
- apples or pine cones
- food appropriate for birds
- check web links for additional information

Help to encourage birds into your garden or outdoor space by making a simple DIY bird feeder. You can find instructions on the following websites:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/makes/bird-feeder>

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2019/01/how-to-make-a-bird-feeder/>

As you keep an eye out for the birds that will hopefully arrive, take a moment to reflect on how God provides for us and take joy in the world he has created for us.

Scratch doodles

You will need:

- scratch art doodle pads (available from craft and stationery suppliers)

The issue of air pollution is one that affects our towns and cities as well as people around the world. During

lockdown we saw air quality improve due to people driving and flying less. Using scratch art doodle pads, ask people to respond and create an image of beauty by 'removing the pollution'.

While doing so, encourage people to pray that God will help them translate this symbolic action into practical and sustainable change to our air quality beyond the pandemic.

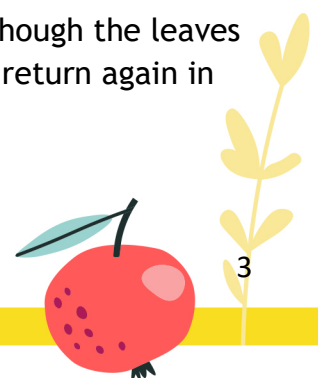
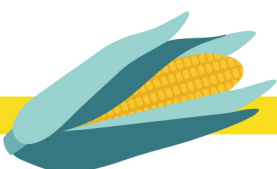
Leaf collage

You will need:

- dried leaves
- paper
- pencil
- PVA glue
- paintbrush

Rip the leaves into smaller pieces. Draw a simple outline picture or a word that reminds you of God's provision. Select leaf shapes to fill the shape or word and spread glue on the paper with the paintbrush. Work on sections at a time so the glue does not dry out on the paper. TIP - using different coloured leaves will help bring your collage to life.

We know that even though the leaves are falling, they will return again in the spring.





And even though this year has been affected by hurt, pain, stress and confusion, we know that God is faithful to us and will help us through it.

Thankful tree

You will need:

- brown poster board paper or a display board
- hand cut-out templates on different coloured paper
- pens
- sticky tape

Create a tree trunk using brown poster board or draw on a display board. Hand out the paper hands and pens. Ask people to write or draw things that God has created and/or provided for them. Take time to say thank you to God for these wonderful things. After all the handprints are completed, add them to the tree trunk with sticky tape. This could be done as a display on a bulletin board or a wall.

Harvest hands

You will need:

- hand cut-outs on white paper
- pens or pencils

‘What a huge harvest! And how few the harvest hands. So on your knees; ask the God of the Harvest to send harvest hands’ (Luke 10:2 MSG).

Ask people to draw on their hands their favourite animal, person, colour, food - challenge them to be creative.

Use these hands to reflect on the fact that the way we act with our hands allows people to see Jesus in us and through us.

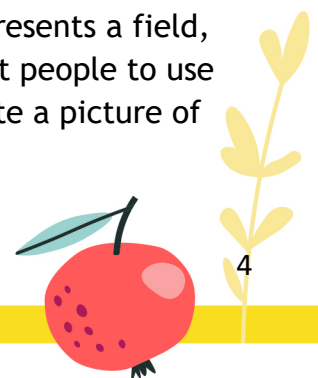
As a commitment to using our hands in a way which honours and serves God, encourage people to ‘high five’ each other and give a ‘high five’ to the God of the Harvest who is our hero!

Potato printing

You will need:

- green paper, A4 or larger
- potatoes, cut in half
- cut into some of the potatoes to make simple shapes for printing
- a range of paint colours on paper plates

The green paper represents a field, our harvest field. Get people to use the potatoes to create a picture of





somewhere they go regularly - such as school, work, home, shops, nursery. Or make a giant image all together of your church building or key landmark of your community.

Spend some time thinking and praying about how we can serve God just where we are.

Prayer beads

You will need:

- cord or strong thread
- assorted beads
- rings to make key chains (can be bought from retailers that cut keys)

Ask each person to think about people they know who have not yet heard about Jesus, or who do not come to church. Choose a different bead to represent each person. Thread the beads on cord to make a bracelet, a necklace or a keychain.

Talk about how we can tell the people we know about Jesus and invite them along.

A perfect world

You will need:

- large paper or cardboard circle
- collage material - magazines, fabric, newspapers, photos
- pens, pencils, glue and scissors

Get people into groups and ask them to create a perfect world with the collage material. Ask them to include what it would look like, what would be in it, the jobs people could do, as well as any other creative ideas.

‘God saw all that he had made, and it was very good’ (Genesis 1:31)

Discuss how our perfect world compares with what God thought was very good.

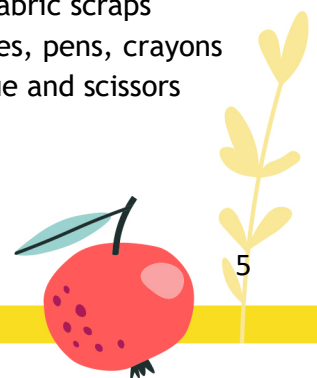
Read Colossians 1:16 *MSG* and compare with Colossians 1:16 *NIV*.

What does it mean when the Scripture says, ‘*Everything* got started in him and finds its purpose in him’ (*MSG*) or ‘All things have been created through him and for him’ (*NIV*)? Does this have a significant meaning to you? Consider what God is saying to you about how you can live for him in your life.

God made all things good

You will need:

- large pieces of blue and green paper to make an image of sky, land and sea
- tissue paper, animal textured card, felt and fabric scraps
- animal templates, pens, crayons and pencils, glue and scissors





Cut out shapes of birds, animals, fish, insects, plants to stick on to each part of your landscape. Talk about the food harvests we get from the sky, land and sea. Thank God for his abundant provision for us and all living things. Pray that we will do what is required to serve and preserve his creation.

Potato cress heads

You will need:

- one potato per person
- cotton wool balls, cress seeds, a jug of water, a sharp knife and teaspoons
- felt-tips, stick-on googly eyes, sticky squares and foam bits for face details

First cut off the top and bottom of the potatoes so they can stand unsupported and have a flat top. With a teaspoon, each person then carves out a small dip in the top of their potato. Use the craft resources to turn each potato into a face.

Next place a cotton wool ball into each dip on the top and moisten with a couple of teaspoons of water. Sprinkle on some cress seeds and monitor how they grow to create hair!

Illustrations

All good gifts

You will need:

- SASB 70 'We plough the fields, and scatter'
- Images to support the adapted hymn (optional)
- Make a mini-movie by asking volunteers to film themselves reading sections of the adapted hymn (optional)

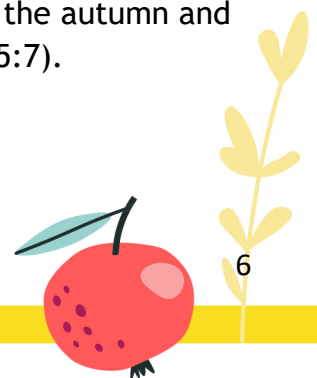
We know that it is the tilt of the Earth's axis as it revolves around the sun that causes the seasons, but we still recognise it as part of God's provision.

As the hymn reminds us:

'The seed time and the harvest, our life, our health, our food.' SASB 70

God has arranged the means for supplying us and we have responsibility to use it wisely.

'See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains' (James 5:7).





Agriculture has come a long way from sowing and reaping by hand. Restoring nutrients has moved from animal manure to chemical fertilisers. Pesticides are frequently employed and some crops are genetically modified. Matthias Claudius wrote his hymn in the 1700's, but it might read differently today:

We make the wastes that poison
The water and the air,
Polluting earth and oceans,
And all without a care.
Impacting on the forests,
And using fossil fuel,
We've added to the danger
Of climate change for all.

*All God's gifts we're spoiling,
And we don't seem to care.
Let's take a stand, take this in
hand, And keep our country fair.*

We're spoiling God's creation
With pesticides on turf
That harm and kill the insects
And species of the earth,
With melting ice-caps rising
The level of the seas,
Disrupting nature's outlets -
It brings us to our knees.

Our 'footprint' needs reducing
And our behaviour changed,
Recycling our resources
Can all be re-arranged
If future generations

Are to be safe at last.
Environmental damage
Must be a thing that's past.

We celebrate that God has provided a world that he declared good. We are called to inhabit and care for it. Let's sing the harvest song, let's play our part and let's be part of bringing Heaven to Earth this Harvest.

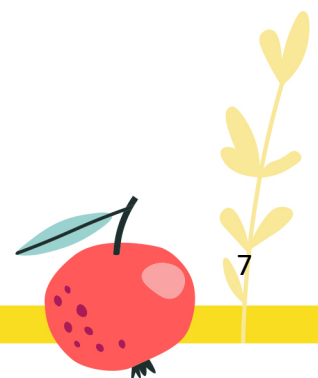
'All good gifts around us ARE sent from Heaven above,
Then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord for all his love!'

Banana goodness

You will need:

- five bananas and felt-tip pens or markers
- five volunteers
- this activity can also be filmed or done as a sequence of photos if needed

Ask the volunteers each to decorate a banana. Once everyone is finished, ask them to peel open the bananas. Explain how quite often what we see on the outside of someone's appearance is different from what is inside. God can create goodness in our heart. Let the participants enjoy eating their tasty banana if they wish!





Goodness

You will need:

- Print out or show each letter to spell out the word GOODNESS.
- Ask eight volunteers each to hold a letter. Ask people to share how many words they can spell using these letters, for example: God, send, dog, den, dense...
- This activity can also be done with a photo of each volunteer holding the letter.

Share a thought about each one of the letters:

G - Stands for Grateful. With so many people in the world going without food and basic provisions, we can be grateful to God, through prayer or actions towards others, for everything he's given to us.

O - Stands for Obedience. God wants us to be obedient to his teachings found in the Bible. A lot of the verses talk about praising him, or looking after others, or saying sorry when we've done something wrong. It is important that we follow these instructions, for this pleases God!

O - Also stands for Opportunity. Each day God gives us opportunities to share what we have with others, to be kind and loving. Let's not waste these opportunities, these moments to show goodness to others.

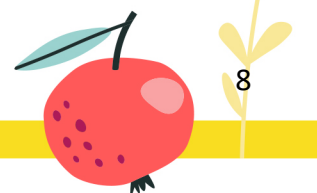
D - Stands for Donate. I'm sure we all have many things in our house that we no longer need! We can be challenged to donate what we have to others, whether it be material things, or our time, or our money.

N - Stands for Nourishment. This is a long word! It basically means providing people with food which is necessary for life, for them to grow strong and healthy. Let's be thankful for all the good things that nourish our lives.

E - Stands for Earth. So much of our food comes from the ground. This is why it is so important for us to look after all of creation, from the soil right up to the animals and humankind.

S - Stands for Sharing. Some of us may find it easier to share what we have than others, but it's such an important thing to do: whether it's a toy with a friend, food for someone in need or simply a tool for our neighbour to finish their DIY project!

S - Also stands for Special. In Genesis we read that when God created everything he had made he said that it was good. He made each living creature special and unique, with life and a purpose. May we never forget how special we are to him, for he made us good!





The grapes of joy

- an ancient story by an unknown author

You will need:

- an image or a bunch of grapes (optional)
- you may wish to adapt this into a mini play or, if on Zoom, film volunteers at home passing grapes 'offscreen' to someone else

The monk who opened the monastery gate was presented with an enormous bunch of grapes from a grateful countryman. The monk was reluctant to receive the gift as he didn't think he deserved them. However, not wanting to offend the countryman, he took them and thanked him.

When the man had gone, the monk decided to give the grapes to the abbot who had encouraged him. It gave him an inner glow to present them to the man who wisely oversighted the community. The abbot was grateful, but he thought of the sick brother in the monastery and, with a warm feeling, sent the grapes to him.

The sick brother was delighted to receive them. But he wanted to thank the cook for his care, so he happily gave them to him. The cook knew that the holiest man in the monastery would appreciate this marvellous

example of God's goodness, so cheerfully he offered them to him.

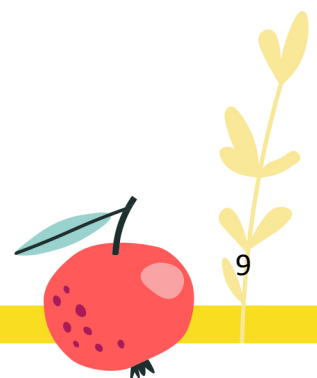
The revered monk considered that the youngest novice would benefit from seeing God's hand in creation, so with pleasure sent the grapes to him. The novice remembered the kindness of the monk who had first opened the monastery gate and allowed him to join this community of people who knew how to value the wonders of life.

So, with a joyful heart, he took the grapes to the monk at the gate. This time the monk appreciated that the grapes really were for him and accepted the gift with joy!

As Paul the apostle wrote:

'The more you are enriched by God the more scope there will be for generous giving, and your gifts... will mean that many will thank God' (2 Corinthians 9:11 *PHILLIPS*).

And who's to say where that harvest will stop?





A farmer went out...

You will need:

- images of plants growing in impossible places, for example in rock faces, sides of building, in roads...

In Luke 8:5-15 Jesus explained that the word of God is like a seed that must not only be sown, but also allowed to germinate, be nourished and cultivated.

The seed has the capacity to produce a wonderfully fruitful crop. However, in scattering the seeds they fell on to different types of soil.

1. 'Some fell along the path...' (v5) - A closed mind and a hard heart
2. 'Some fell on rocky ground...' (v6) - The unthinking mind and shallow heart
3. 'Other seed fell among thorns...' (v7) - The preoccupied mind and crowded heart
4. 'Still other seed fell on good soil...' (v8) - Those with an open mind and ready heart

The good seed grew wonderfully well in the good soil - a huge harvest. As John F. MacArthur put it: 'Fruit-bearing is the whole point of agriculture and the ultimate test of spirituality.'

And yet, knowing this, the farmer still scattered his seeds everywhere.

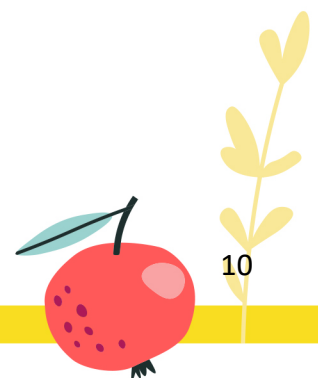
Sometimes life can grow and flourish in the most unexpected places, in the hardest places imaginable. (Share images.) And do we not wonder in awe at it!

When we encounter closed minds and hard hearts, do we still share our love and passion for God?

When we meet the unthinking mind and shallow heart, do we still demonstrate love and compassion?

When we come across the preoccupied mind and crowded heart, do we still share the joy and peace in accepting Christ as Lord?

Or do we stick only to the fertile soil, where we know the crop will be bountiful and easy? Should we also go to the hard places and try and grow an unexpected crop for Christ?





Harvest unscramble

You will need:

- seven volunteers, each holding a letter that spells out HARVEST
- an eighth person, who is given an object to hold that represents each answer as the clues are solved
- teapot and mug
- cereal box, bread and chocolates
- globe and flowers
- rubber ring and fishing net
- blanket and hot water bottle
- vest or a jumper as a substitute
- pillow
- plastic or paper-made ears

Ask the volunteers to rearrange themselves into the answers to the following questions:

1. A drink we can thank God for - *TEA*
2. Something we can do with our mouths - *EAT*
3. Thank God for the Earth, for the land and for the - *SEA*
4. We thank God for shelter and for the warmth of - *HEAT*
5. For the clothes we wear including a - *VEST*
6. We thank God for the life and energy he gives us, and also for times of - *REST*

7. We thank God for our bodies, and that we can hear with - *EARS*
8. Thank God for what we live on - *EARTH*

THANKS is an important part of harvest. The other part is GIVING. There are three words hidden within the word HARVEST that show us how we can give. Ask the volunteers to make each of these words as you share them.

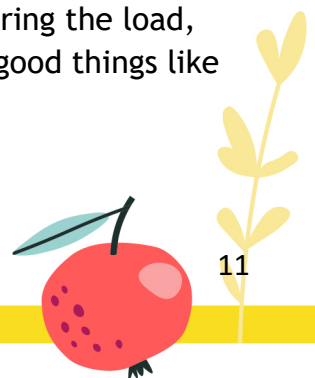
Luke 6:38 says: 'Give, and it will be given to you.' This is the nature of our God.

So how can we give back to God? - The first word is *SAVE*.

As Christians we need to be more environmentally friendly and we shouldn't waste resources when so many in the world don't have as much as we have. So *SAVE!*

The second word related to our giving is - *SHARE*.

Jesus' whole life was about sharing and caring. (*Now ask a few people to help with the items that our overburdened helper is holding.*) By doing this we are sharing the load, and also sharing the good things like the chocolates!





We live in a really unjust world and we need to share with those who don't have enough - it's what Jesus would do.

The third word, and probably the most important area of giving, is that we need to give to God our - *HEARTS*.

Getting your hands dirty

You will need:

- a large plastic tub filled with compost and small potatoes
- trowels
- plastic gloves
- several smaller tubs labelled 'jacket potatoes', 'mash', 'boiled', 'chips', 'wedges', 'crisps'

Encourage people to dig up (harvest) a potato from the large tub.

Talk about what would happen if the vegetables were not dug up. They would be spoiled, wasted, would not fulfil their purpose, would not be given the opportunity, would not be made into yummy chips! They need to be harvested to be used and to produce more.

Use the potatoes to allow each person to vote for their favourite use for potatoes, by placing their potato in the appropriate container.

Touch/feel/taste

You will need:

- a display of fruit and vegetables of all shapes and sizes
- pictures (or real examples) of odd-shaped fruit and vegetables
- prepared fruit and vegetables to taste - PLEASE BE AWARE OF ALLERGIES

Allow people to taste, smell and feel the produce. Talk about how the produce comes in all different shapes, colours, sizes and tastes, but they are all good for us and help keep us healthy and fit.

Link this with how we are all different but we all have a job to do for Jesus.

Harvesting in a messy world

You will need:

- a large bowl or bucket full of green jelly
- lots of chopped-up vegetables
- straw or hay
- some wrapped sweets or some other 'treasure'

Before your gathering, make up the jelly with the vegetables and straw mixed in, and the wrapped sweets or treasure at the bottom.





Ask people to put their hand in the jelly to 'harvest' something (their reward) from the bottom. Yuck! Talk about how our world is a messy place, where things aren't always lovely, but we still need to tell others about Jesus, even if we are reluctant to. The rewards of doing what Jesus wants and of seeing others following him are amazing!

Games

Five rainbow games

The promise of a regular harvest is first given by God to Noah following the flood and is sealed by the sign of the rainbow (Genesis 8:21-22; 9:8-13).

Use the colours of the rainbow as names for mixed-age team groups and set them one of the following challenges:

- Find as many objects of their colour as they can in the room/church/hall.
- List as many items of food and drink with their colour as they can think of.
- Create a collage of items in their colour cut out from a pile of magazines.
- Use the letters of their colour word to make up an acrostic

that gives thanks to God for the variety in this world.

- Work together to spell out the letters of their colour in body shapes made from the people in the team.

TIP - indigo and violet are tricky! Perhaps ask them to include things that are dark blue (indigo) or purple (violet).

Balloon relay race

You will need:

- paper or plastic cups for each person
- inflated balloons

Put the group into teams. Create a relay race - the balloon has to travel the length of the room a set number of times. TIP - make the number of lengths the same as the number of people on each team. But instead of holding the balloon as a baton, it must be balanced on their cup like an egg and spoon race - no touching of the balloon is allowed. This should hopefully prove really tricky - you may want to abandon the race early!

Now try the race with two people from each team, with the balloon held between their two cups. It should be easier though slower. Celebrate as each team finishes the race.





This year many things have been trickier to do, taken a longer time to complete or we've had to do them at a distance from each other. But with help from each other - and God's help - we have made it through to the other side.

Kingdom seeds

You will need:

- seeds - such as mustard, cress, sunflower, beans and carrot
- pictures of the plants that match the seeds
- pots, blotting paper or cotton wool, table covering, water, a watering can, something to stand the pots on after watering
- paper and pens

Show the seeds you've brought. Ask people to guess which seed goes with which picture.

- What do they think are the conditions that will be needed to grow these seeds?
- What would be the conditions that were unhelpful to seeds' growth?
- What can you do to help yourself grow into a strong helper of Jesus?

Share the parable of the mustard seed (Matthew 13:31-32).

Give each person a seed to hold in their hands. Discuss how it needs to be nurtured to grow. Draw parallels to using the Bible, prayer and developing our friendship with God. This nurturing helps us to grow into a stronger, healthier friend of his, so he can use us to make a positive difference in other people's lives.

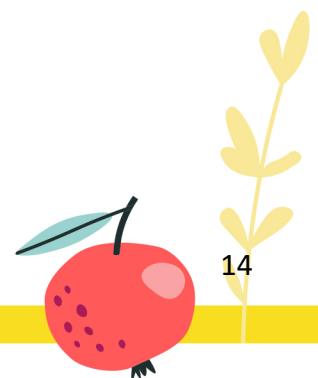
Finish with a time of seed planting. Encourage people to look after their plants at home and to bring them back at a later date to compare how they have grown.

A closer look

You will need:

- high-resolution photographs of different animals/objects
- suggested images: bugs, a spider's web, the Earth

First show a tiny section of the photograph zoomed in and ask people to guess what it might be. Then show the original image so that people can see what it really is. Do the same with each image you have selected. Share that God's creation is perfect and detailed and that he is worthy of our praise.





Being grateful

You will need:

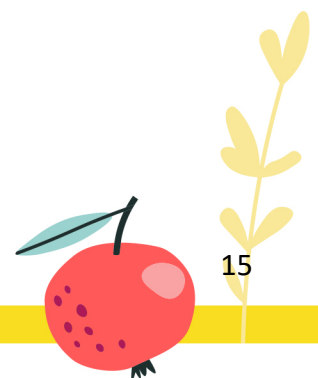
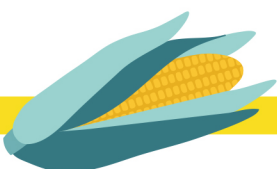
- two large sheets of paper and pens

Form two teams and give them five minutes to write down as many things as they can think of that they are thankful for - they must be things that they are genuinely thankful for. At the end ask each team to read out what they've written. Give a point for each thing they've listed, but the other team, or anyone watching, can challenge them to justify what they've written if they don't think it's genuine.

Recent scientific studies have suggested that people who are more grateful have higher levels of wellbeing and happiness and lower levels of stress and depression. In fact, showing gratitude has been said to have one of the strongest links with good mental health, more than any other character trait. Scientists have also discovered that gratitude not only increases wellbeing and happiness, but has also been shown to improve a person's altruistic tendencies. That means that people who are grateful are more likely to give, to share what they have with others and to sacrifice their own profit for the benefit of the wider community.

The green quiz

1. A well-known saying - what is always greener on the other side? (Grass)
2. What is the permit needed to work in USA? (Green card)
3. Name a fruit related to the plum. (Greengage)
4. What is a greenback? (US dollar)
5. Name the famous novel by Lucy Montgomery. (*Anne of Green Gables*)
6. 'The Green Door' was a 1981 number one UK hit for whom? (Shakin' Stevens)
7. Where do celebrities relax before they appear on TV? (Green room)
8. The 'green-eyed monster' is a phrase well known for jealousy - in which Shakespeare play does it play a central role? (*Othello*)
9. Name a precious green stone. (Emerald)
10. Where is the Emerald Isle? (Ireland)
11. Who turned green when he got angry? (The Incredible Hulk)
12. What product was advertised by the Jolly Green Giant? (Green Giant sweetcorn)





13. Name two or more London Tube stations containing the word 'Green'. (Bethnal Green, Bounds Green, Golders Green, Greenford, Greenwich, Green Park, Kensal Green, North Greenwich, Parsons Green, Stepney Green, Turnham Green, Willesden Green, Wood Green)
14. A gardener is often referred to as what? (Green-fingered)
15. Someone who is said to be 'green around the gills' is feeling what? (Sick)

