

OUTREACH

Experience Harvest: for Schools and Soul Food

Tracy tells us about the Experience Harvest, but first Alan writes, "On Monday 30th September, we welcomed pupils from Hertford St Andrew School to Experience Harvest. Around the church were different stations exploring the wonderful harvest of our world; The Harvest of the Garden, the Flock, the Ocean, the Earth and the Grain. At each station the children were invited to think about what the Bible calls the Fruit of the Spirit; those things we can grow and give back with our own lives – peace, joy, generosity, faithfulness, humility. All the groups then gathered at the last station where we explored together the Jewish festival of Sukkot. It was a wonderful and rewarding time and huge thanks go to the amazing team who made it possible (Sue, Martin, Tracy, Kim, Rosemary, Nick, David, Kay, May, the Cohen family, Wendy and Jan)."

We had the great privilege of hosting Experience Harvest in St Mary's Church, Hertingfordbury and here at St Andrew's Church. Reception through to Year 6 from Hertingfordbury Cowper joined us at St Mary's and the same school years joined us from St Andrew's School here at St Andrew's Church. It was a week full of many blessings. It's always lovely to have the schools come and share our space. So, what is 'Experience Harvest?' It is a journey around five stations to explore the many blessings from the earth that we



can be thankful for. We finished our time around a Sukkah, a Jewish dwelling, where we drew the whole experience together thinking about the Jewish festival of Sukkot.

Station 1: The Ocean - we looked at the harvest of fish and seafood from the ocean and the risks taken by fishermen to provide these. There was a chance to make a small paper boat and reflect on these risks but also to remember Jesus with us in the storms of life.



Station 2: The Flock - where we looked at the harvest from sheep but majored on wool. We looked at the many processes from a sheep in the field to a warm woolly jumper that we can wear. At Soul Food we thought about the many people involved in this process and related that to the Bible passage about 'The Body'. We had a chance to weave or knit to show that it takes many stitches/threads to make a garment.



Station 3: The Grain - we got to look at ears of wheat, flour, pasta and many types of bread. We got to think about the process from grain to products in the shops and again, about the many

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people that it takes. A chance to share in bread together was a winner.

Station 4: The Garden - a beautiful display of fruit and vegetables was a true feast for the eyes. It was



great to hear about their favourite fruit and veg. A chance to plant a bulb and think about the fact that what they had the good fortune to eat was once planted and needed

looking after and gathering in.

Station 5: The Earth - there was a lovely display of earthenware pots and goblets



and plates. Here the children had the opportunity to take some clay and press their thumb print into it. When we harvest from our precious earth we

make a mark just as when we press our thumb into the clay we make a mark, a unique mark as each one of us is unique.

We finished all together around the Sukkah, a dwelling of thanksgiving, a beautiful shelter with a gap left in the roof to see the beauty of the



stars above. Here we heard about the escape from Egypt by the Israelites, led by Moses. We heard about the journey and the struggles but the thankfulness at God leading and providing.

We then focused on the beautiful symbolism of the Jewish 'Four Species'.



A palm branch to represent the spine was bound with a branch of Myrtle to represent the eyes, a further branch of willow to represent the mouth. An Etrog (Citrus fruit) is then taken and held with the branches to represent the heart. Together they are shaken North, South, East and West to represent the giving of our whole body to God.

It was a very special week and one that culminated in a time of reflection at Soul Food where we journeyed around the stations and shared time together reading and contemplating various Bible verses fitting with each station.

Tracy Plumpton (St Andrew's Church Children and Youth Worker).

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