

## 2009 NORTH AMERICAN MISSIONS EMPHASIS CHILDREN'S SERMON

**Theme: Live with Urgency: Sowing Together for Harvest**

**Scripture:** John 4:35-37 (HCSV) *"Don't you say, 'There are still four more months, then comes the harvest?' Listen [to what] I'm telling you: Open your eyes and look at the fields, for they are ready for harvest. The reaper is already receiving pay and gathering fruit for eternal life, so the sower and reaper can rejoice together. For in this case the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.'"*

**Preparation:** Study the message and be prepared to tell it in your own words.

**Needed Items:** Bag of large seeds, enough to pass out to each child. Optional: Toy-sized rake, shovel, and hoe

As the children gather, ask if anyone has ever planted a garden. Ask the children to name things they might need to plant a garden. If you have items, show children the various gardening tools as they name them.

Say, "Planting a garden is hard work. Before you can plant your garden, you have to get the soil ready. You need to break up the ground and remove rocks and weeds. You'll need water from rain or from a sprinkler. But what do you think the most important thing is you will need? Seeds! You can't grow anything without seeds. So what happens once we put our seeds in the ground? They grow! And then, when they are ready, we pick the fruit or vegetable. That is called harvesting.

"When Jesus talked to his disciples and others, he liked to tell stories so people could understand what he was saying. In the Bible, in John 4:35-37, Jesus asked his disciples to look out to the field and see that it was ready for harvesting. In this story, the ground or field represents people who need to hear about Jesus. The seeds represent God's Word. So when you share God's love with someone, it's like planting a seed in the ground. That person has the opportunity to hear God's Word, give their life to Jesus, and grow in their Christian walk.

"Here in our country, there are so many people who need to hear about God's love and special plan for their lives. We must pray for the people who are telling people about God. Today, we especially think of the more than 5,500 North American missionaries who are sharing the love of Jesus Christ with people they meet. We can pray for these missionaries. We can give to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering so that they and more can work to share God's love. We —you and me—can tell others about Jesus, too, every chance we have.

“I want each of you to take a seed and keep it someplace you can see it every day. Let it remind you that God has given us a special task of telling others about His Son, Jesus. And if we work together, each one of us doing our job of telling the people we meet about Jesus, then we can celebrate together a good harvest.”



**Optional Activity:** Give children a small bag of seeds for them to plant. Encourage children to use their plant as a prayer reminder for missionaries this week.

**Optional Application:** Using brown or tan paper cut out oval shapes to represent seeds. On each “seed” write “God loves you and has a special plan for your life. Come learn more at my church.” Fill in the name and location of your church, along with service times. Give one (or more) to each child, noting it is a “seed” children can “sow” in their community by giving it to store clerks, neighbors or friends who don’t attend church.