

# Harvest toolkit: Organic Food, Glorious ^ Food!

This toolkit takes pupils on a learning journey, based on values of justice, service, generosity, courage and hope.

The activities deepen their understanding of:

- the methods and benefits of natural farming
- the work of Christian Aid and our partners
- religious belief and practice associated with harvest.

The toolkit also helps pupils reflect on:

- inclusion and exclusion, hospitality and welcome
- what it means to be a supportive community.

These activities can be adapted to the needs of individuals and classes. They engage pupils in drama and research; they encourage them to complete tasks together and share their learning creatively.

Using the resource bank, pupils can develop their planning and presentation skills by creating an assembly/collective worship for their peers or the wider school community.

# Classroom Activities

Harvest 2019

## Season for change

These classroom activities introduce pupils to the themes of inclusion and exclusion, hospitality and generosity. They also increase their knowledge and understanding of organic farming.

Pupils will hear the true story of Kasthuri and Mathi; through this, they can discover how organic farming can support and transform people's lives in some of the world's poorest communities.

### Drama activity to introduce the theme

This opening activity explores inclusion and exclusion. It has three rounds, but the rules change each time.

**Round 1.** Play some music. Pupils move around the space in any direction they choose. They mustn't bump into other people, but when they come near to someone else, they should greet them - with a handshake or high five.

#### Discuss

Stop for a moment and ask pupils to share ideas about:

- different ways to greet and welcome people
- why greeting one another is important
- how they would feel if no one greeted them or welcomed them.

**Round 2.** Pupils now create their own method of greeting – maybe touching their nose, clapping their hands or jumping on the spot. Restart the music. The pupils move around the space and greet one another in their own unique way.

**Round 3.** Organise pupils into three groups. Ask Group A to wear sashes/bibs/stickers.

Quietly give separate instructions to each group. When the music plays:

- Group A continues to move around the hall/space greeting others as they meet them.
- Group B continues to move around the space and greets everyone except those wearing a sash/bib/sticker. When they meet someone wearing a sash/bib/sticker, they ignore them or turn away.
- Group C continues to move around the space to greet everyone they meet. If they see someone being treated rudely or ignored, they try to move towards them to offer a friendly greeting.

After a few minutes, stop the music and ask pupils to sit in their groups.

#### Discuss

In groups, discuss what happened when they greeted other people? Each group gives feedback to the class explaining how they felt during the activity and what they noticed? Did everyone behave kindly or fairly? How did they feel during the activity?

As a class, discuss how it feels to be excluded or included? How does it feel to offer friendship and welcome? How does it feel to see someone being excluded or treated unfairly? What can you do when this happens?

- Explain to pupils that you are going to tell them a true story about someone who felt excluded and alone.

## Storytime!

Tell the true story from Christian Aid about Kasthuri and Mathi. Use some props to unpack the story, if possible using a story box or bag.



Show a map of the world which clearly shows India and the region of Tamil Nadu

Our story takes place in southern India, in the region of Tamil Nadu.



Lay out the three photos to show Mathi and his mum

Meet Mathi. He lives with his mum, Kasthuri, on a farm in Tamil Nadu, in southern India. She works hard... but she's not alone. Together, Kasthuri and her four friends look after each other, learning new skills and sharing the money they save up. But it wasn't always like this. At one time, Mathi and Kasthuri's life felt very different and their future looked very bleak.

Mathi and Kasthuri – and millions of other people in India – are from a group of people sometimes called Dalits.

Many other people think they are more important than Dalits. They don't want to talk to them. They don't let them live in the same area. They don't think it's important to respect their rights. Sometimes, people are even violent to them.

Traditionally, Dalits are from poor communities. They are expected to do work that other people think is too hard or too unclean. Instead of being grateful, other people exclude Dalits from things they need.



Show a picture or artefact to represent school, health, work

It's harder for Dalits to get healthcare, go to school, or get a job that uses their real skills. It's wrong. But not everyone realises this. Dalits are made to live separately from other people.

Kasthuri has experienced the bad side of people's attitudes. But she's also been treated with hospitality, respect and kindness – which has transformed her life and Mathi's too.

There has also been something else which has transformed her life:



Take an organic vegetable or a picture of organic vegetables from your storybag/box

This vegetable is organic. Learning about organic farming has transformed Kasthuri and Mathi's lives

Explain to pupils that they need to grow their understanding about organic farming and gardening before they hear the end of the story....

## organic Food, glorious ^ food!

### Research activity

Invite the pupils to act as detectives and find out some facts about organic farming. Set up a research activity using the information sheet. The Soil Association has more detailed information which might be useful for teacher planning.

Once pupils have found some facts, set up a creative task in which pupils are asked to design an organic fruit, vegetable and flower garden for the school. They will need to draw up plans, identify costs and then pitch their idea:

- First make a mind map to show what children think they already know about organic farming and organic food.
- Provide information about organic farming. You could use the factsheet in this pack or find a short, age-appropriate video clip
- In groups, pupils look again at the class mind map. What new information needs to be added? Are there things that should be removed or changed because they aren't correct? Discuss some of the pros and cons of organic farming versus chemical farming.
- Children now develop their learning through a practical task. If you use Mantle of the Expert as a teaching and learning approach in your school, this activity would lend itself to this. More information can be found here: [mantleoftheexpert.com](http://mantleoftheexpert.com)

Ensure pupils understand that this is a creative and imaginative task, using the accurate information which they have gathered. They will need to find out further information along the way.

## Set up the challenge

Produce 'an email' to the class from your school's headteacher and read it to the children. Explain that when the School Council last met, they discussed that part of the school grounds and garden had become overgrown. The School Council decided that this area should become a garden for growing vegetables, fruit and flowers; it should be looked after by the school gardening club or a group of pupil volunteers. The School Council think that the produce could be sold to members of the school community – parents and carers – to raise funds for the PTA or a charity chosen by pupils.

The headteacher is inviting groups of pupils to create a plan for the garden. It should show:

- which plants or crops will be grown at different times of year
- how the soil will be prepared
- how the crop will be harvested, packaged and sold
- what tools will be needed
- what possible problems there might be
- what the costs and income might be.

## Prepare the pitch

Pupils work in groups to design their garden. Then, ask them to prepare a 'pitch' - 'Dragon's Den' style - that explains their plan. They then present it to the rest of the class or, if possible, to your headteacher/senior leader/governor/PTA representative. Ask pupils to think about how they can apply their learning about organic farming and gardening to this task.

Designs and plans could be made into a display for other pupils to look at. Provide feedback about each plan and invite pupils to question one another about the details presented. If appropriate, the class can select one plan which would work best.

- If your school doesn't have garden areas, create a similar task, suggesting that some raised flower beds will be placed in the school playground to create a small garden area.

## The story continues...

Gather the pupils into a circle to hear how the story of Mathi and Kasthuri ends.

When Mathi was a baby, Kasthuri needed somewhere safe to live. Without a family to look after them, Kasthuri felt really alone.

Then she met Selvi.



Show a photo of Selvi

Selvi had been told about Kasthuri and Mathi, and that they needed a home. Would she help?

Amazingly, Selvi said 'yes'!

Selvi is from a Thevar family – a totally different group. Kasthuri said: 'Normally, someone from her community wouldn't even hand a cup of water to a Dalit person.' Sharing a home with them would be unthinkable. She was amazed by Selvi's generosity.

Selvi is determined to change the world around her for the better. So she made a plan.

She understood how hard it is for Dalits to earn enough money. With the help of Christian Aid and its partner ADISIL, she helped Kasthuri and other women set up their own EcoVeg business project. This helped Kasthuri and her friends to grow their skills and work for themselves. This means they can decide how to save and spend for their families.

The farm works because of the EcoVeg project. Its experts train people from excluded communities in organic farming skills, and help them to start a business. Kasthuri and Selvi have made a place where people from different communities can work together and build a better future.

The project provides the opportunity to earn money. But Selvi provides something just as important. She treats people with respect and dignity. She shows confidence in them and trusts them to make good decisions.

'Alone as a woman, I couldn't do this farming business,' says Kasthuri. 'But together, we can be successful. I feel very confident!'



Show a picture of Kasthuri and her community with their produce

## How do good changes happen?

Three activities to end with

- How much have you learned about farming, and how much can you remember? In groups, give pupils a set of the sorting cards. These show pictures of Kasthuri and her friends growing crops. Can pupils put the pictures in order, to show the process of planting, growing and harvesting?
- Pupils discuss what they have learned from Kasthuri and Mathi's story. As a group, ask them to choose one key piece of learning that they think is most important – share this with the class.
- In groups or as a class, create some Steps To Change, to show how Kasthuri and Mathi's lives have been changed by organic farming and the offer of friendship. Here is an example:

Problem	Opportunity	Change
Lots of people in India – especially children – don't get enough good food. They can get ill easily and don't have enough energy.	EcoVeg gives people farming skills. EcoVeg helps them to sell fruit and veg to the supermarket for a fair price.	People in the village and the city get tasty, healthy food.
Some people in India are unfair to Kasthuri's community, and won't help them to get a job they like.	EcoVeg lets people from different communities work together.	People can earn money, learn to trust and work with each other, and feel more confident.

# Taking the theme further

Assembly/collective worship and curriculum links

Harvest 2019

## Season for change

The teaching and learning activities could be used in preparation for a school Harvest Festival or assembly/collective worship on the theme of:

- **food and giving thanks for our food** or
- **the work of Christian Aid and our partners** or
- **caring for our world and for one another.**

Pupils could be given an outline structure to follow and asked to plan and lead the celebration (which might include music, hymns, readings, prayers and follow a pattern of gathering and introduction; main development; time for reflection; ending and a possible point of action.) Parents or carers could be invited to attend. Use the bank of photos and the story of Mathi and Kasthuri as a resource to support your planning.

### Links across the curriculum:

RE/RME: potential RE or RME topics could include:

- Finding out about traditions associated with Harvest Festival and the Christian celebration of Harvest
- Learning about the Jewish festivals of Sukkot and Shavuot
- Exploring religious teachings and practices about welcoming the stranger, giving to the poor, sharing our resources, for example:
  - the giving of Zakat in Islam.
  - The Sikh practice of sharing a meal in the langar following worship in the Gurdwara. Emphasise the teachings related to this which focus on all humans being equal in the sight of God.

- In Judaism, the importance of laws about showing hospitality and welcoming the stranger; the Year of Jubilee.
- In Christianity, the early church practice of living in a community and holding all things in common (Acts 2: 44-47). The key teaching of Jesus about 'loving God and our neighbour as ourselves' and its importance for Christians today (Luke 10: 25-37; Matthew 22:37-40) – and how this teaching inspires the work of many Christian charities, including Christian Aid.

Use the photo below as a discussion starter - what do you notice? What questions do you want to ask?

In Tamil Nadu most families are Hindu. Learn about the Hindu Puja ceremony and why it is important for believers.

Thai Pongal is an important time for Tamil families - this is a festival of giving and harvest. The fragrant pongal rice pot symbolises harvest-time, blessed and filled to overflowing.

It's also the festival of renewal and hope - the season for change. People exchange the traditional wish: "May it bring new opportunities". Can you find out what happens during the Thai Pongal festival?



## Literacy

The Biblical stories of Ruth or of King David welcoming Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9) could be used as a stimulus to discuss the theme of welcoming the stranger and showing hospitality. (read the story of Ruth from an age-appropriate Children's Bible)

Explore a range of stories around the theme of welcome, for example:

- 'The Frog and the Stranger' by Max Velthuijs
- 'Daft Bat' by Jeanne Willis
- 'The Colour of Home' by Mary Hoffman
- 'Something Else' by Kathryn Cave

## Persuasive writing

Write to a local supermarket, explaining why you think it is important that they stock some/more organic food ranges.

Create a garden leaflet to help people garden organically –

organic  
'See how your ^ garden grows...'

Read books, poems, songs about harvest and autumn.

## Geography and Maths

Pupils create a food map to show which parts of the world their favourite foods come from. Can they calculate the mileage that each food has travelled before it reaches the UK? Pupils choose their favourite school lunch and track the miles travelled for each element of the meal.

## Music

Using tuned and percussion instruments, create a piece of music to depict the growing process - preparation of soil, digging, sowing, growing, harvesting, etc.

**Possible Harvest songs and hymns** - see *The Complete Come and Praise (BBC Active)*

*Autumn Days*

*Cross over the road*

*For the beauty of the earth*

*He made me*

*Lord of the harvest*

*O Lord all the world belongs to you*

*Out of the Ark Music* also has a range of harvest songs **outoftheark.co.uk**

## Science

Pupils choose seeds/bulbs to plant and grow. They learn about the elements needed for growth. Once the plants are grown, pupils could either give them to someone as a gesture of friendship or the class could organise a plant sale to fundraise for Christian Aid.

## Fundraising event

**Can pupils plan some activities to help fundraise for Christian Aid projects this Harvest? Many communities hold a Harvest Supper at this time of year - can pupils plan a food or meal-based Harvest event for your school community?**

**To give a donation, please visit [caid.org.uk/harvest19](http://caid.org.uk/harvest19)**

# Factsheet: Organic farming

Harvest 2019

## Season for change

Over the past few centuries, the world's population has got bigger and bigger. Farming methods have changed to produce greater quantities of food; technology has changed to transport food from country to country, as quickly as possible. Often, this happens so supermarkets in richer parts of the world can sell a wide choice of goods.

Many people have started asking questions about farming methods, and weighing up the differences between chemical and organic farming. They are thinking more about the way we farm food and transport it across great distances, and what this does to our environment and health. Fair trade has also become very important for many people – it encourages better prices and decent working conditions for farmers in developing countries.

[fairtrade.org.uk](http://fairtrade.org.uk)

The story of Kasthuri and Mathi focuses on organic farming methods. The information on this page might be helpful as you explore this with pupils.



The Soil Association also provides information about organic farming: [soilassociation.org/organic-living/organic-farming](http://soilassociation.org/organic-living/organic-farming)

### What is organic farming?

Organic farming – also called 'natural farming' – aims to protect wildlife and the environment.

Non-organic food production makes wide use of pesticides and chemicals. These can pollute water, affect ecosystems and make their way into our food chain. All this can upset the natural balance of our environment.

Organic farming relies on natural methods to control pests and disease. These include:

- growing foods without man-made chemicals that can harm the environment or wildlife
- carefully designing the way crops are grown in different spaces, year by year – known as 'crop rotation'
- encouraging natural predators to get rid of crop pests
- developing good soil and healthy crops with a natural resistance to pests and diseases.

### Organic farming and climate change

Because of the natural methods of farming, organic farms attract wildlife and provide homes for bees, birds and butterflies.

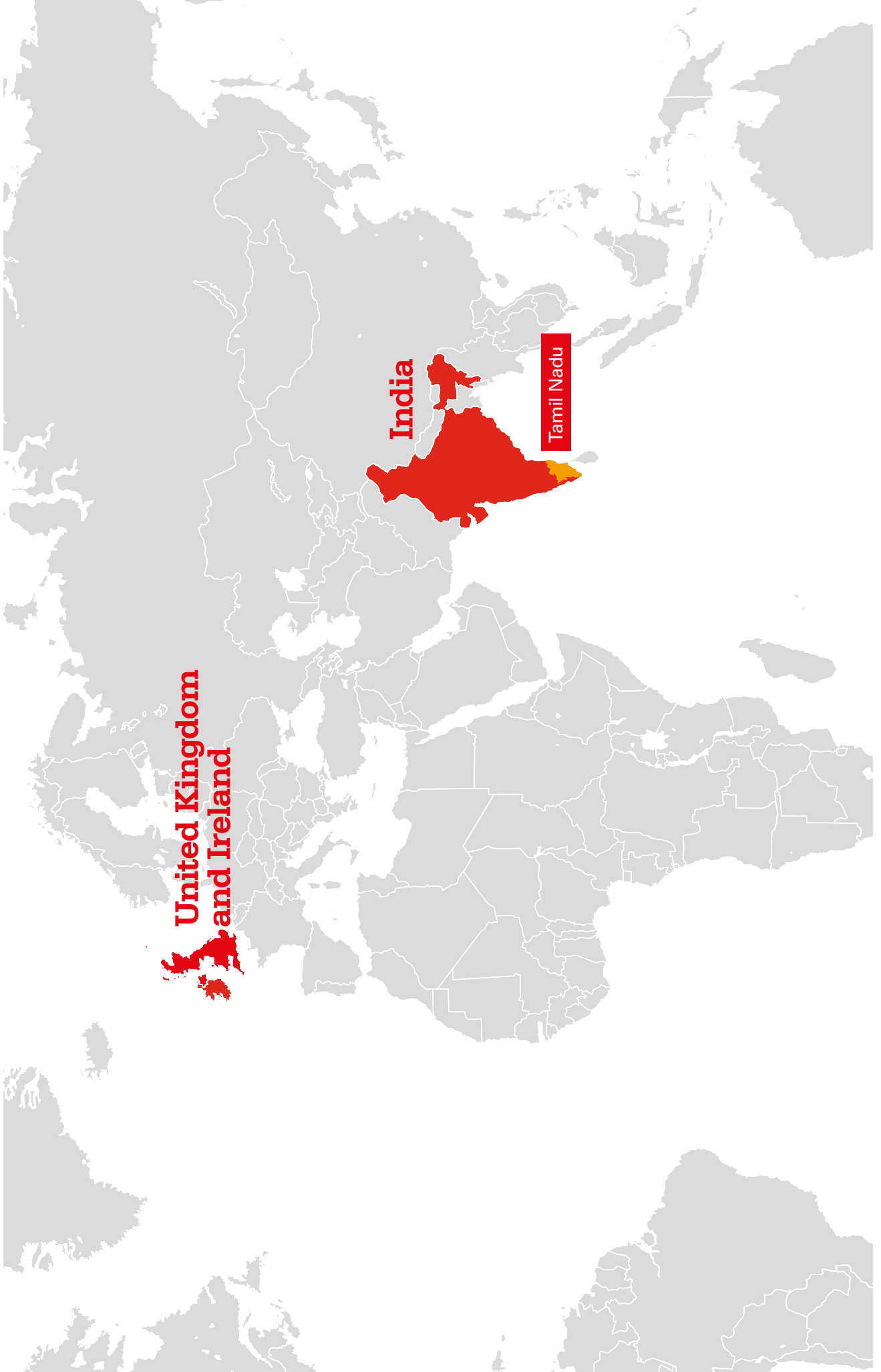
Organic farmers use manures rather than man-made chemical fertilizers to enrich the soil. This can help the environment by improving soil quality and reducing energy use, carbon emissions, pesticides and nitrate pollution.

It's not only farmers who can use organic methods: gardeners can also grow organic food or other plants.





Map showing India and the region of Tamil Nadu





Photos of Mathi and his mum





Pictures representing school, health, work



**School**



**Health**



**Work**



**School**



**Health**



**Work**





Selvi



Kasthuri and her community with their produce





Sorting cards



Sorting cards





