

# Blessing of Soil



*This can take place during the service for Plough Sunday. Otherwise it would be appropriate to have the blessing at an environmental or farming service. Arrange for a container of earth to be brought in, either from a local field or from a garden. Put ready a table or low platform, covered with a cloth. If there is a Sunday School, the cloth can be decorated by the children with pictures of plants and creatures that live in the soil. The container should be brought to the front, either at the beginning of the service or during the service with the following words:*

O Lord, we bring before you this soil,  
teeming with the life of tiny creatures,  
full of nutrients and goodness.  
Without soil no life would exist upon the earth.  
By it we are nourished and to it we will return.

## **Reading** (based on Matthew 13: 1-9)

- A Where the soil is hard, neither ploughed nor forked,  
the seed cannot take root and is eaten by the birds.
- B Where the soil lies over rock with little depth,  
the seeds fail to develop deep roots.  
Plants spring up quickly but soon wither away.
- A Where the soil is deeper but impoverished,  
the seeds take root but the weeds grow more quickly  
and choke the plants.
- B Where the soil is well-tended and fertile, in good heart,  
the seed puts down deep roots, the plants grow tall  
and strong and yield a rich harvest.

## **Prayer**

- A O Lord, save us from hardness of heart,  
where your word cannot take root.
- B O Lord, save us from shallowness of mind,  
where your word withers away.
- A O Lord, save us from the deceitfulness of riches,  
where your word is choked by everyday cares.
- B But Lord, grant that our hearts may be fertile soil,  
where your word flourishes and yields a harvest,  
bringing salvation to ourselves and those about us.

**Amen.**

*or*

We give thanks for those who down the ages

have studied plants and soil,  
giving us a better understanding.  
O let the earth bless the Lord  
**Let it praise him and magnify him for ever.**  
We give thanks for the satisfaction  
of growing good crops for feeding beasts and people.  
O let the earth bless the Lord  
Let it praise him and magnify him for ever.  
We give thanks for all growing things  
which provide us with remedies and medicines.  
**O let the earth bless the Lord**  
**Let it praise him and magnify him for ever.**  
We give thanks for all plants and trees  
which give us scent, colour and beauty.  
O let the earth bless the Lord  
**Let it praise him and magnify him for ever.**

### **Blessing of the Soil**

*The Leader faces the congregation, scoops up a handful of soil in a glass container and holds it up so that all can see it.*

O Creator God, Maker of all that is,  
we offer to you this soil;  
we praise you  
for this marvellous and intricate creation.  
Help us to we reverence and respect  
the humble soil  
as your chosen means of feeding  
and providing for us.  
Bless this soil and all the soil around us,  
the soil in our fields and gardens,  
the soil on the hills and in the woodlands,  
so that the whole earth gives glory to you,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

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authors: The Staffordshire Seven  
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