

# Sharing the Harvest

*Harvest Festivals have been celebrated since ancient times, and are still a regular fixture in community calendars. Whether or not your school participates in one, they provide an accessible way for pupils to tackle questions about charity, obligation and sharing*



Invest a few minutes in setting the scene for this 'Philosophy in Role' activity. The pupils are farm-workers, preparing to collect the Autumn harvest. Take on the role of the farmer, dishing out instructions. Some could dig the ground for potatoes, others picking apples, etc. Blissfully ignore the fact some of this would be done by machinery these days! Encourage them to improvise within their roles – chatting to each other, for example. Wrapping up a scenario in even the thinnest layer of imagination deepens engagement in the subsequent discussion.



Form small groups and give each a set of baskets cut out in advance. 10 works well, but 5 may be better for younger pupils. This represents the entire harvest for the season. As farmer, you have decided to put them in charge of deciding how the harvest is divided and distributed. If they're unfamiliar, this could be a good point to explain the tradition of Harvest Festivals, perhaps through a teaching assistant in role as the local vicar.

You could provide potential destinations and beneficiaries – paying customers, charities, the farm workers. You can also give further scaffolding by asking for reasons why each deserve a portion of the harvest, first. For added challenge, pupils could come up with their own destinations within their groups.



Each group should divide the harvest as they see fair. Next, invite groups to explore how others have shared out the cards, and to exchange reasons. This can be done one at a time, so all can hear, or in smaller groups at once. To add a competitive element, ask groups to put forward their plan as a pitch to convince the rest. Give up your role as facilitating-farmer to a volunteer.

Some groups may change their decisions in light of what others say. You might find some pupils asking to join other groups whose decisions align closer with their values!

There's a couple of options for concluding the activity: you could put any duplicates/similar plans together, and present a smaller number of different proposals to be voted on. In the event that all suggestions are largely the same, ask them to test the scope of their decision: will this way always be the best? Could it change in the future? Would someone from a different culture or time period agree with them?

Alternatively, seize upon the reasons the children give and turn them into new, wider questions, for example:

- Could giving to charity be a bad thing? If so, when? And why?
- Do some causes deserve more help than others?
- Should giving to charity be made compulsory?

## NEXT STEPS



Next steps will depend on the direction of your enquiry. You could ask them to come back the next day with a suggestion of which charity/charities should receive some of the harvest. This could lead to a discussion about if we are more responsible for the poor closer to home, or those who may be in greater need, but further away?





# SHOPS



# US



# CHARITY

