

Ethos Group Worship: Sow Seeds of Support for Ukraine

March, 2022

Sunflowers on the alter

Songs: Here comes the Sun, The Beatles and Think of a world without any flowers

Welcome

Candle time

The Sunflowers by Mary Oliver

Come with me into the field of sunflowers. Their faces are burnished disks,
their dry spines creak like ship masts, their green leaves, so heavy and many,
fill all day with the sticky sugars of the sun.

Come with me to visit the sunflowers,
Their bright faces, which follow the sun, will listen, and all those rows of seeds -
each one a new life!
hope for a deeper acquaintance; each of them, though it stands in a crowd of many,
like a separate universe, is lonely, the long work of turning their lives into a celebration is not easy.

Come and let us talk with those modest faces, the simple garments of leaves,
the coarse roots in the earth so uprightly burning.

Engage

Show a picture of a sunflower. What do you think when you see this picture? **Record children's responses.**

The sunflower or sunyashniki in Ukrainian is the national flower of Ukraine and it is deeply rooted in the country's history.

Ukraine is a Christian country. During Lent most people in Ukraine stop eating meat and other animal products. However, oil made from sunflower seeds can be eaten and used in cooking. So the flower became important.

Sunflowers can be found growing in gardens, farmers' fields and woven into headdresses worn during celebrations.

Sunflowers are a symbol of peace. This flower was chosen back in 1996 in order to represent a world of peace and one that is free of any harmful nuclear weapons. New varieties and seeds were planted on former missile bases and at the Chernobyl power plant site,

The flowers have been shown to absorb harmful toxic elements and radiation from the soil and clean up the environment. Being so good for the environment as well as beautiful to look at, it is no wonder that the sunflower has now truly become a symbol of peace and also hope for the future of humankind.

Since the crisis began in Ukraine the sunflower has once again become an important symbol of hope and peace. At school, we have been thinking about what we can do to support the people who are suffering in Ukraine. Tomorrow after school, we will be selling sunflower seeds in pots on the playground. For just a £1 you will be able to buy a sunflower seed in a pot and get the chance to grow a beautiful sunflower of your own.

Show example of what is being sold on ppt.

We will also be having a non-uniform day. You can make a donation and wear blue and yellow – the colours of the Ukrainian flag. All the money we get from the sunflower sale and the non-uniform day will be sent to help and support the people in Ukraine. When we see things happening in the world that frighten and worry us remember to look for the helpers. There are always people there helping. By paying to wear blue and yellow or buying a sunflower tomorrow you can help. You have the power to make a difference.

Show on a slide: Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadows. It's what the sunflowers do. – Helen Keller

Respond

We will now sing Say Hello to the Sun. Please join in with the actions.

Let us Pray.

Dear God,
Sunflowers follow the sun in the sky, their faces toward the light. In the same way, may we be ever turned towards God, facing him and following to receive and reflect his light.

Loving God,
We pray for the people of Ukraine,
for all those suffering or afraid,
that you will be close to them and protect them.
We pray for world leaders,
for compassion, strength and wisdom to guide their choices.
We pray for the world, that in this moment of crisis,
we reach out in solidarity to our sisters and brothers in need.
May we walk in your ways, so that peace and justice
become a reality for the people of Ukraine
and for all the world.
Amen.

Send

So don't forget tomorrow is your chance to make a difference, to send support to those who need it. What can you do to help?

And don't forget the power of prayer. The prayers you have written for Ukraine are on display in the foyer but don't forget you can have a chat with God anytime, anywhere. Use the time as you wait to leave worship to have your own chat with God. Thank you.

