

Fundraising Pack





Welcome

This Advent, we plant seeds of hope and share God's love.



Welcome to This year's Gingerbread & Generosity fundraising campaign "Hope Grows", developed in partnership between SAMS Ireland, the Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal, and the Board for Ministry with Children and Families.

Once again this Advent, we invite parishes, schools and families to journey together and think about others as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ and discover the hope that Jesus brings and how we can share that hope with others.

Hope Grows will help us all to discover how God can use small beginnings. Just as a tiny seed grows and produces fruit, small acts of faith, kindness and generosity can make a real difference.

This year, we are supporting ***Sowing for the Future***, an initiative in the Gran Chaco of Northern Argentina supported through SAMS Ireland. This wonderful project involves 4,500 Wichi children and young **people across 45 rural schools, helping them** learn to grow food, care for the soil and conserve precious water.

At the heart of the project are Green Classrooms; outdoor learning spaces where education and practical gardening come together.

Guided by Wichi educators, children prepare the soil, plant seeds and care for growing crops, while developing knowledge and skills they can share with their families and communities.

This year we are encouraging families and congregations to create Gingerbread Gardens reflecting the work of the project.

Some parishes suggest families create their Gingerbread gardens together at home and bring them in to show at a specific fundraising service during Advent. Other parishes organise a decorating station for all ages to create their gingerbread decorations together whilst learning about the project we are supporting.

In this pack you will find a ready to use talk that you can adapt for church services. Sunday Club sessions or school assemblies. Crafts, baking ideas, games and puzzles.

Over Advent, we encourage you to use this pack either in a Church Service, a social gathering, a Sunday Club, Toddler Group or Messy Church session in your parish. Or as a family take time together to learn about and support this wonderful project and to help raise awareness of the impact it has on local Wichi families.



Scan the QR code on any of the pages to donate



Gingerbread Gardener or Garden Competition



Get creative and make your own gingerbread garden or gardener and you could win one of two €50/£50 One For All vouchers!

Enter a photo of your creation by scanning the QR Code below



Scan this QR Code to donate what you can

You might choose to create a garden as a family, as a Children's Club, Messy Church, as a Parish or you might make one on your own.
Think about what you might use as vegetables for example creating them with marzipan or using jelly tots or other sweeties. You might like to also decorate a gingerbread gardener with your own personal flourish!
Remember, it is enthusiasm and creativity, not perfection that is the key.
Have fun with it!

PROJECT CONTEXT

Our theme this year, Hope Grows, explores how God can use small beginnings for great outcomes. Just as a tiny seed grows and produces fruit, your small acts of faith, kindness and generosity can make a real difference through the Sowing For The Future project.







In Argentina's Gran Chaco, Wichí families have lived in close relationship with the land for generations, passing on knowledge, skills and traditions.
Today, deforestation, industrial farming and insecure land rights threaten this way of life, contributing to displacement, river pollution and food insecurity.

MEET THE PROJECT LINK PERSON

Alejandro Deane, known as Alec, was born in Argentina to an Irish mother from County Cork. An agricultural engineer, he has spent more than forty years walking alongside Wichí communities, promoting dignity and lasting change through clean water, sustainable agriculture and food security. Through wells, irrigation and agricultural training Alec equips families and local leaders to grow nutritious food, develop sustainable livelihoods and shape initiatives within their own communities. His approach is rooted in local ownership and a patient commitment to walking alongside the Wichí with respect, humility and hope.

For more than 50 years, the Anglican Church in Northern Argentina has supported Wichí-led advocacy for land rights. Alongside this work, Alec supports locally led initiatives in education, healthcare and sustainable development, helping families strengthen livelihoods, create opportunities and build greater resilience for the future.

This year, we are supporting Sowing for the Future, an initiative in the Gran Chaco of Northern Argentina supported through SAMS Ireland.

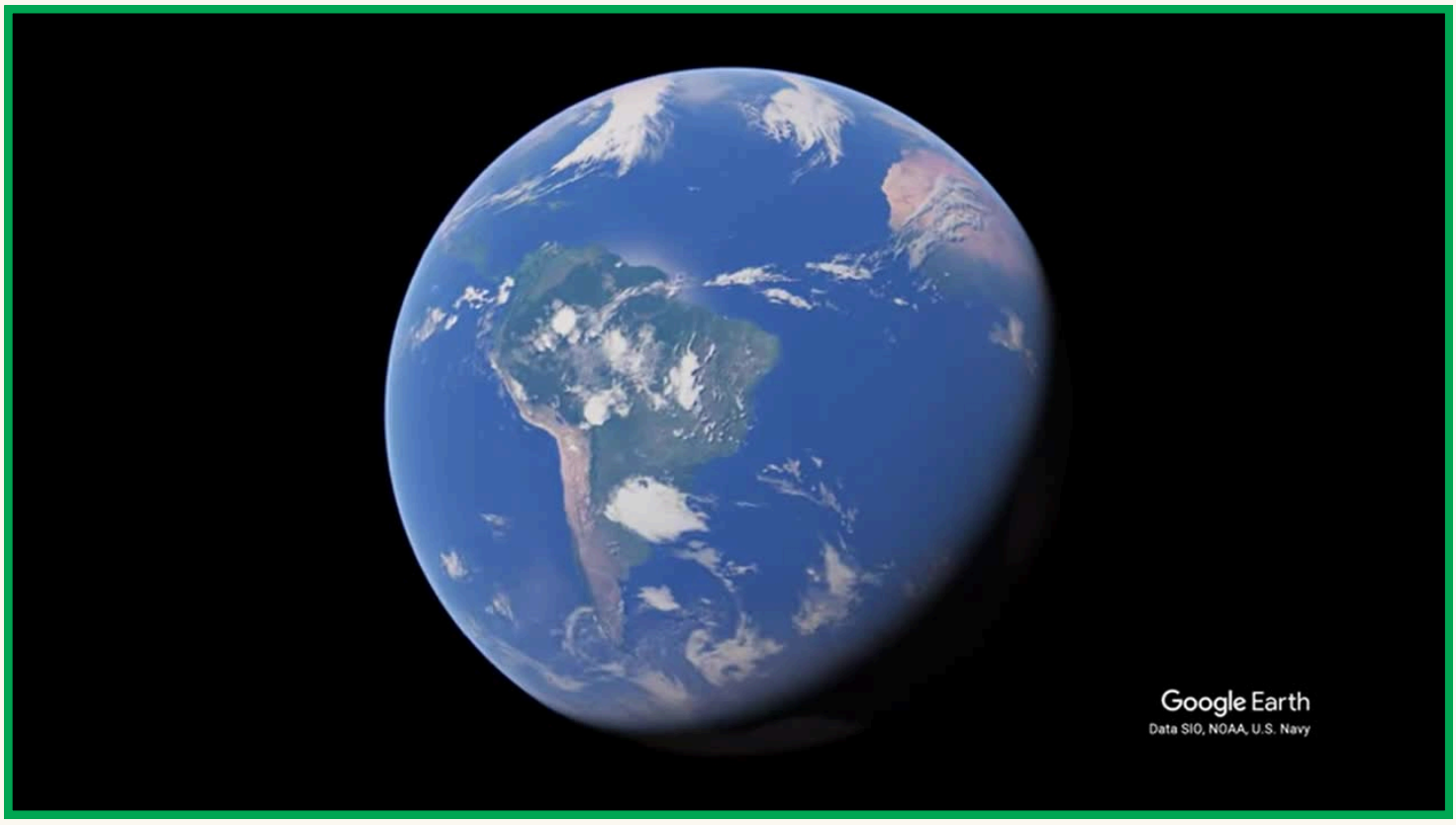
The project is part of the wide programme run by the SIWOK Foundation which is an established charity working to support this community through providing water facilities and agricultural initiative.

Sowing For The Future, involves 4,500 Wichí children and young people across 45 rural schools, helping them learn to grow food, care for the soil and conserve precious water. At the heart of the project are Green Classrooms; outdoor learning spaces where education and practical gardening come together.

Guided by Wichí educators, children prepare the soil, plant seeds and care for growing crops, while developing knowledge and skills they can share with their families and communities. Throughout Advent, children here will journey alongside Wichí children in the Gran Chaco.

To help you understand more about the challenges faced by the Wichí community and the ways in which your fundraising will help make a difference you can watch the video on the following page.

PROJECT CONTEXT



Click the image above to open and watch the project video on YouTube





TEACHING SESSION
(ADAPT AS REQUIRED)

Bible reading
Mark 4:26-29 The Parable of the Growing Seed

Have you ever planted a tiny seed? You make a little hole in the soil, carefully drop the seed in, cover it over and perhaps give it some water.

Then you wait. And wait. You might come back the next morning and look at the soil. Nothing! You could come back the next day. Still nothing! You might even begin to wonder, is anything happening down there? But something wonderful is happening. Hidden beneath the soil, where you cannot see it, the seed is beginning to grow.

This interactive talk focuses attention on the things that change even when we can't see them, and how hope and faith are so important. It will help children and families to consider how their support of the Sowing for the Future project will have an impact, even if they cannot see it themselves, and ties it to the theme of Advent waiting.

We also have PowerPoint slides you can **download HERE** to use in the service.





Props:

- **A plant pot**
- **Soil**
- **A small trowel/spade**
- **A pack of vegetable seeds - ideally a range of sizes.**
- **A small watering can with a bit of water in it**



You can either have one pot/seed each for the children or just one as an example that you use to show the children. Try to get them physically involved in the process if just using one at the front.





You might like to invite children to the front.

Have you ever planted a tiny seed?
Hold up a seed or show the PowerPoint slide

Look how small it is! Do you think something this tiny could really become a big plant?
How? ...Let's see.

First, we make a little hole in the soil, then we pop in our seed.

Wait in silence, looking at the pot, then start tapping your fingers, then your foot as though you are growing a bit impatient.

Ask the children: "Anything growing yet?"

Wait again... don't be scared of silence; it helps the tension to grow - but try to give exaggerated signs of boredom or impatience.

"Anything growing yet?"

Slowly move really close to the pot and loudly say:

"Come on, little seed... GROW!"
Encourage everyone to say it together

Can you make a seed grow by shouting at it?
NO!

What do we need to do then?

Cover it with soil...and give it some water, put it in the sunshine...
And then comes the really difficult part.
Can anyone guess what we have to do?

Yes, we have to WAIT!

You might be tempted to dig it up and have a look.
But don't do that! Because something amazing is happening.

Speak more quietly. Down underneath the soil, where nobody can see, the little seed is changing.

The actions below are optional, but especially if you have little ones they will love the chance to move and wriggle

A tiny root begins to grow down.
Point your hand down to the floor maybe giving a little wriggle

A tiny shoot begins to grow up. *Reach up as high as you can*

And then, one morning… POP!
Everyone jumps or throws their hands in the air - or you could see who can make the "pop" sound using their fingers in their cheek

A little green shoot appears!

You couldn't see it growing.

You couldn't make it grow.

But while you were waiting, God's design for that seed was quietly coming to life.

So, why on earth am I talking about sowing seeds when we are in the middle of winter?!

Well, in the Church, the season building up to Christmas is called…does anyone know?

Advent.

And just like us waiting for the seed to grow, Advent is a time of waiting too.

In the Bible, we read many stories about how God's people waited a very long time for the Saviour He had promised.

And while they waited, God hadn't forgotten them. God's plan was quietly at work. Then, at the right time, Jesus was born.

Jesus is the Saviour of the world, the one God's people were waiting for: "Emmanuel", which means God is with us..

In this service, we're thinking not only about Advent but also about a project in South America, where life can be very difficult for families in the Wichí community.

This Advent, children your age in the Gran Chaco region - thousands of miles away - are also learning about planting and waiting.

The project is called Sowing for the Future. It helps Wichí children create "green classrooms." That doesn't mean they get a pot of green paint for their classroom! Green classrooms are outdoor spaces where children prepare the soil, plant seeds, conserve precious water, and patiently watch their gardens grow. They learn how to grow nutritious food and develop skills they can share with their families and communities.

Let's think back to our seed. It's tucked up cosy in the soil now, but would it grow if we didn't give it any water?
No. Eventually, it would die.

In the Gran Chaco, Wichí families used to fish in local rivers and grow and sell food. But many large companies and landowners have moved into the area and cut down many of the forest trees. Without the trees, the ground becomes dry, making it very difficult for anything to grow. Many rivers are polluted and drying up, so life can be very hard.

Imagine a child placing a tiny seed in dry soil. It may not look like much, but that seed reminds us that small beginnings can grow into signs of hope.

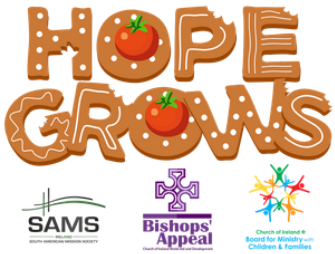
The Sowing For The Future project is bringing hope to families by helping communities access new sources of water through solar-powered wells. In their green classrooms, children learn to care for water, use it wisely to grow fruits and vegetables, and plant trees.

Wichí children in the Sowing For the Future project are learning to prepare the soil, plant seeds, conserve precious water, and care for their gardens. They cannot make the seeds grow any more than we can. But with the project's help, they can plant, water, tend, and wait. When the time is right, they can harvest and enjoy the beautiful fruits and vegetables they have grown.

The money raised through our Hope Grows service will help bring water supplies and green schools to more families in the Gran Chaco region. Isn't it wonderful that we can partner with these families, sharing and helping one another learn and grow?

Let us pray.

PRAYER



Dear God,

Thank you for Wichí families in the Gran Chaco

and for the gardens where they grow food.

Thank you for tiny seeds, precious water,

strong plants and tasty food to eat and share.

Please bless the families as they prepare the ground,

plant their seeds and care for their gardens.

Send the rain they need

and help every drop of water to count.

Thank you for Wichí tutors

who travel to help families learn and grow.

Keep them safe on their journeys

and give them wisdom as they teach and encourage others.

This Advent, help us to remember

that even a little gift can make a BIG difference.

Help us to give generously,

share gladly,

care for others

and thank you for all that we have.

And as we get ready for Christmas,

help us remember your greatest gift of all;

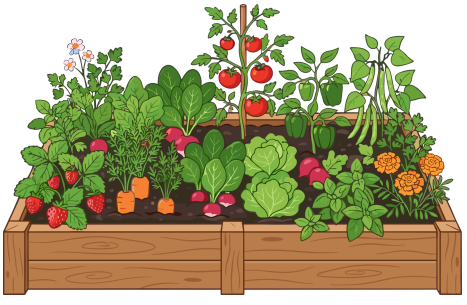
Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us.

Amen.





Joe has forgotten the way to his garden – can you help him?





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HIDE & LEEK!



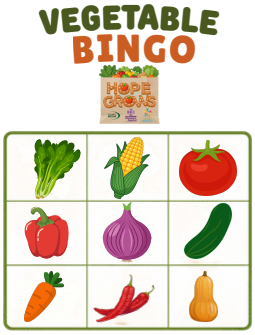
On the next few pages you will find a variety of clever vegetables that are full of facts about the project in the Gran Chaco region.

You can use these veggies in a few ways:

Hide and Leek!

Print out the veggies and hide them around your church or hall.

Ask the children to find them all - as they bring them to you can ask them to read out the fact on their veggie for the rest of the group to hear.



Veggie Bingo

You will also find some bingo cards with the veggies on.

Again hide the veggies and as each veggie is found, call it out and read the fact (if you haven't done so already) and those with a bingo card can mark that veggie off their board.
First one to get all the veggies on their board wins!



Veggie Advent Wreath

Once you have used all the veggies for the games above and heard all the project facts, encourage your group to stick them onto a paper circle to create a Veggie Advent Wreath of Hope. We have paper candles you can cut, stick and attach to the wreath, and if you wish you could put battery powered tea lights in each as the advent weeks go by.

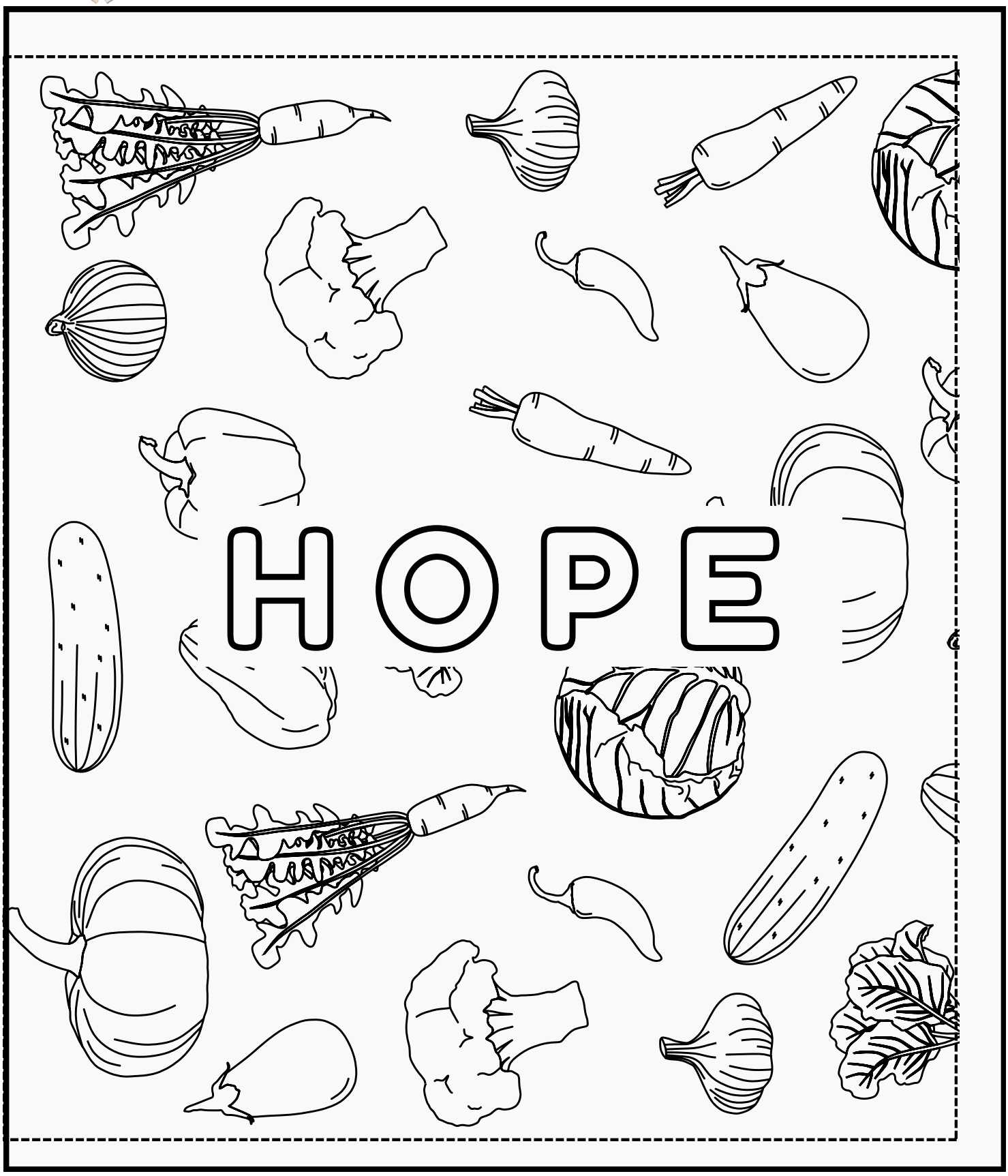




Cut out the rectangle, colour, roll into a cylinder fold the ends over and stick.
Make small cuts to the bottom and flare out so the candle can stand/be stuck to the wreath.

Cut out the flame and attach to the top of the candle.



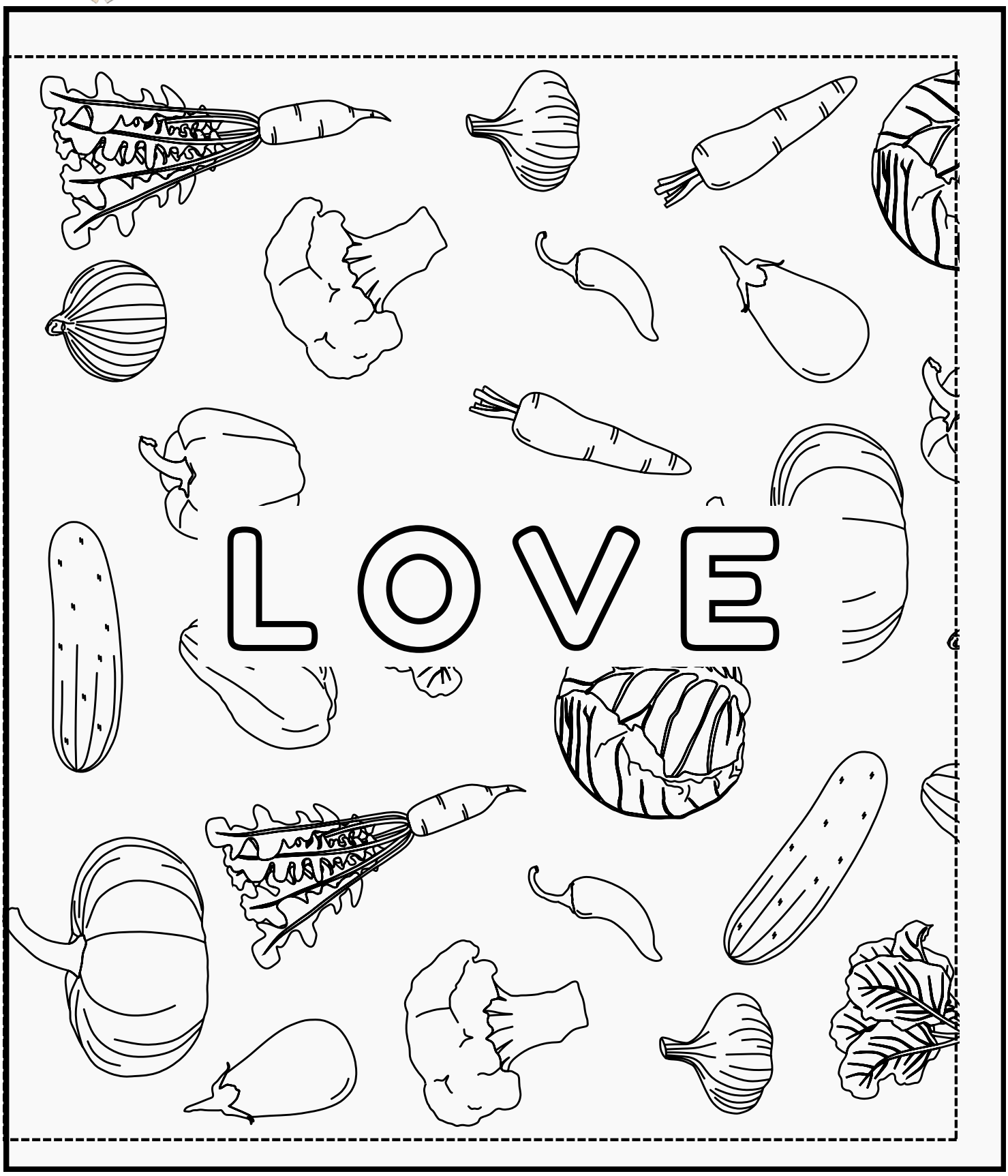




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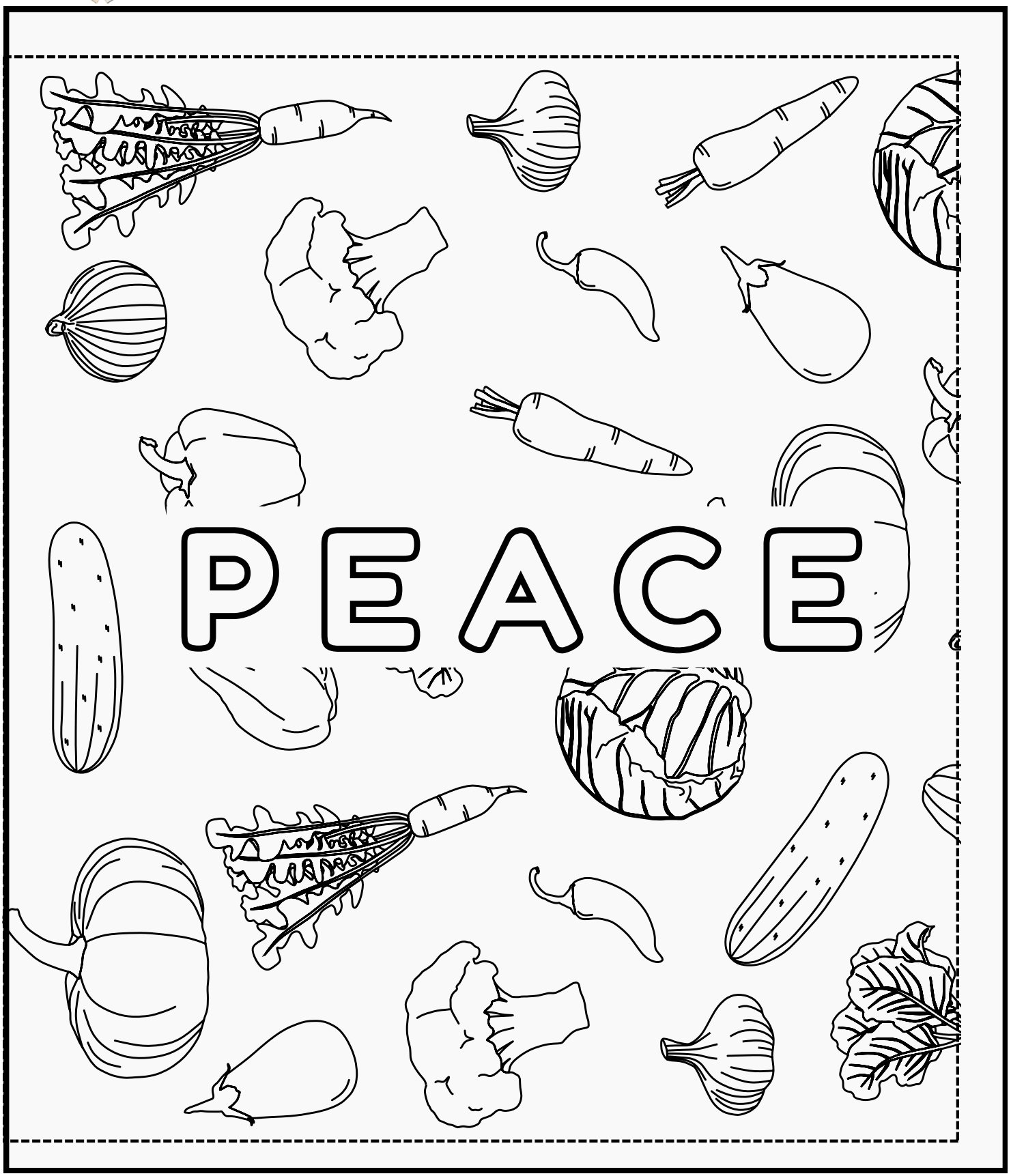




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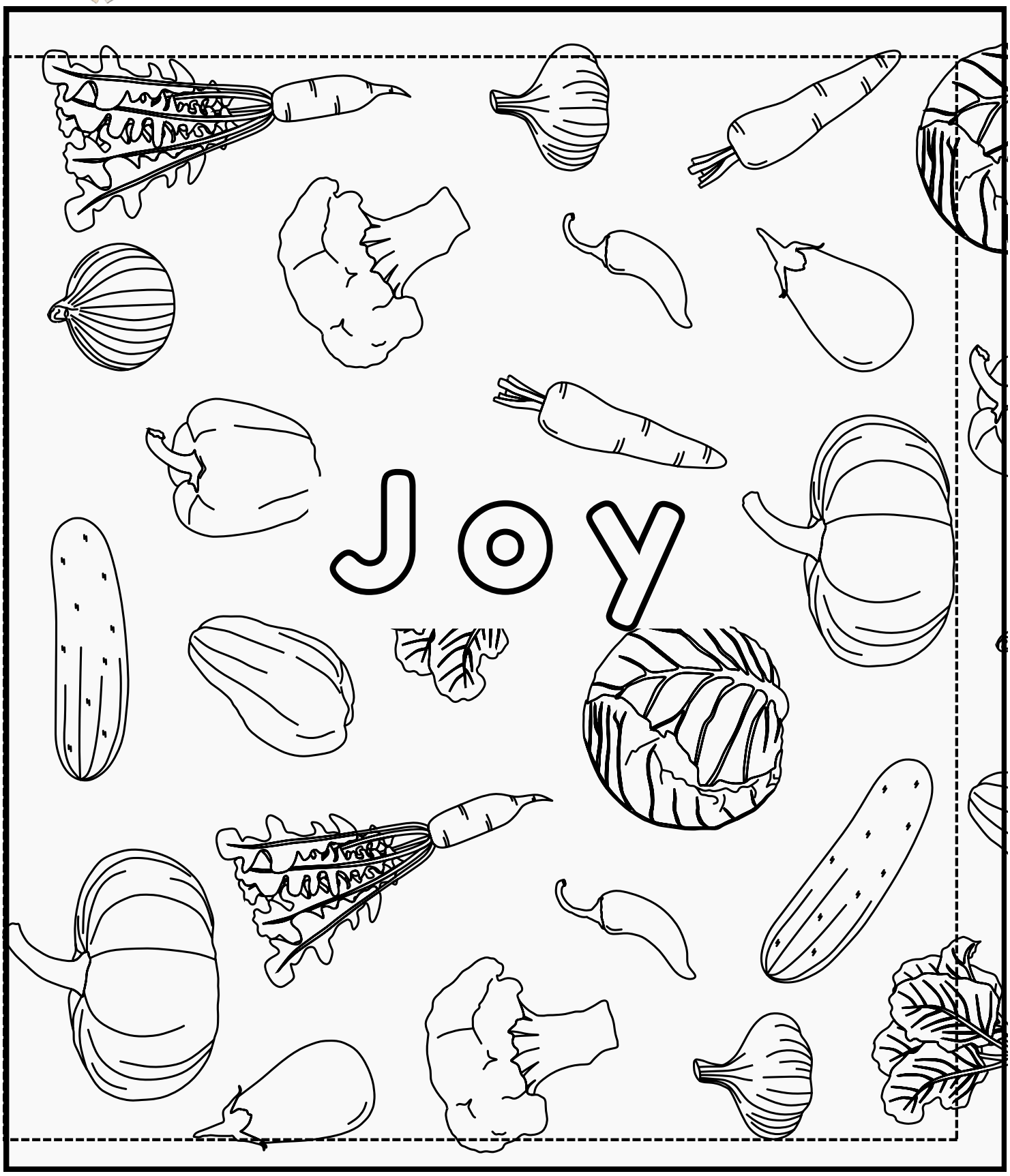




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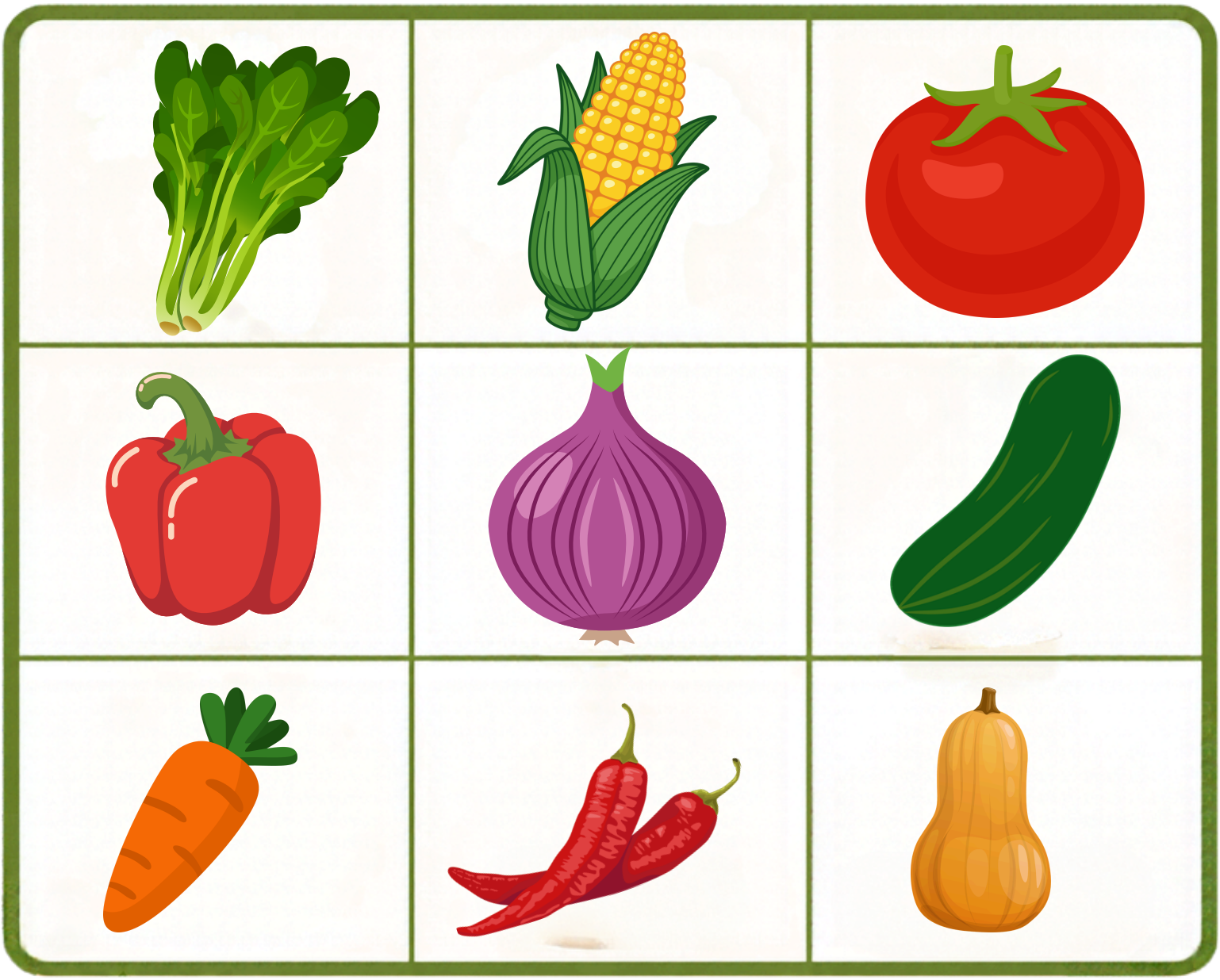
VEGETABLE BINGO

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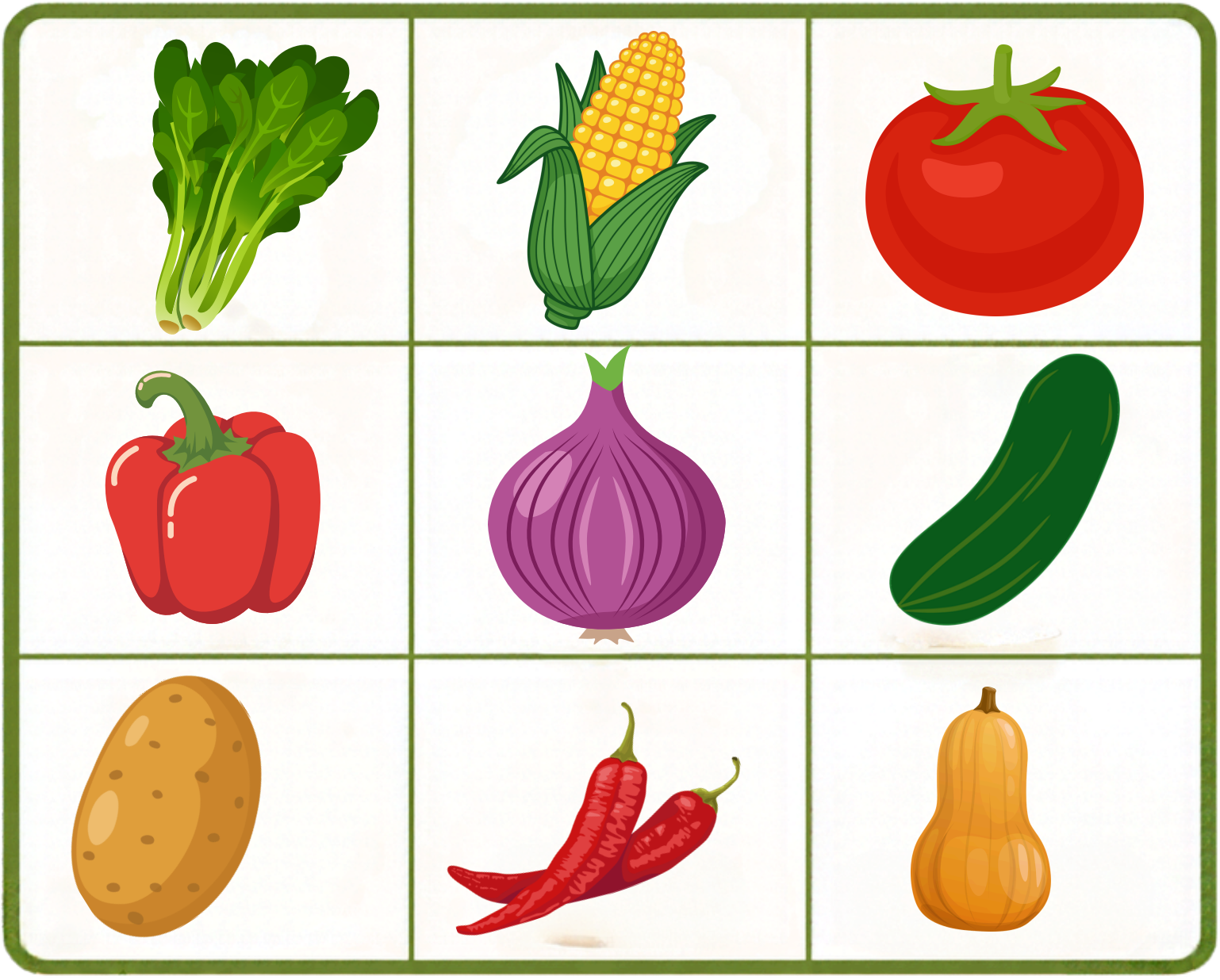


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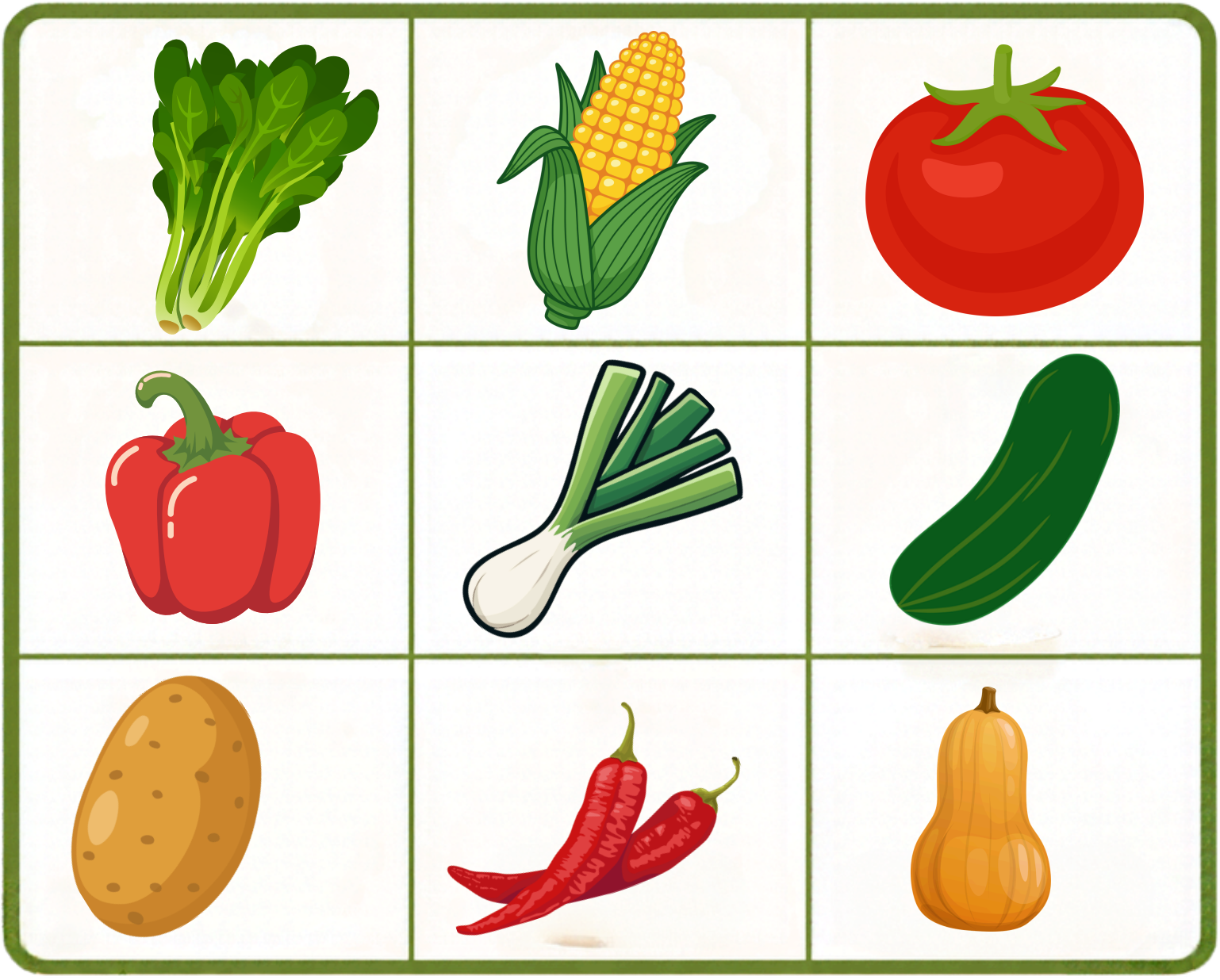
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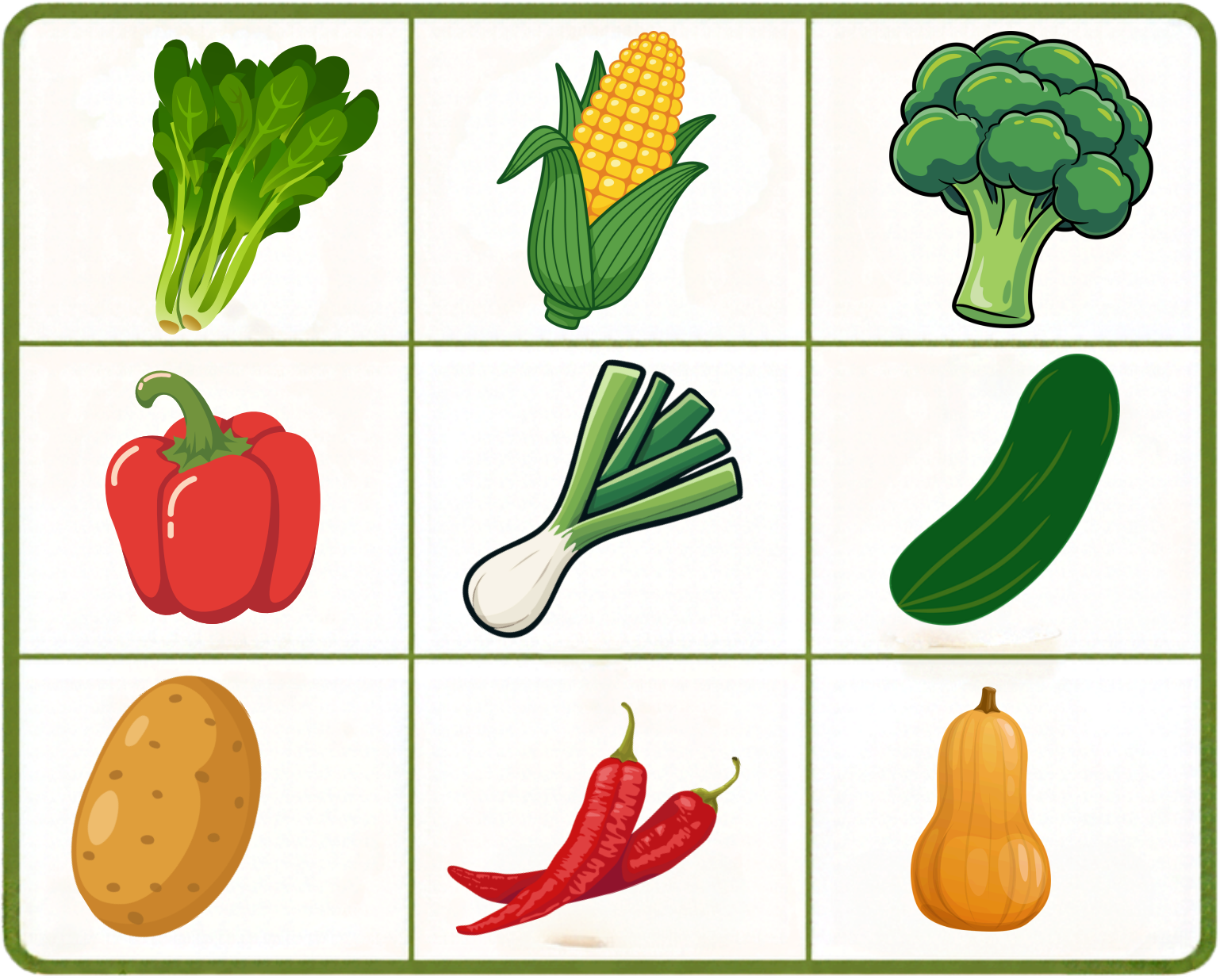


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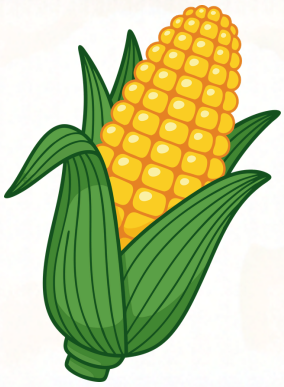
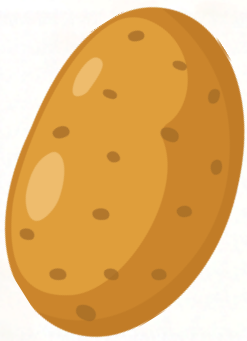


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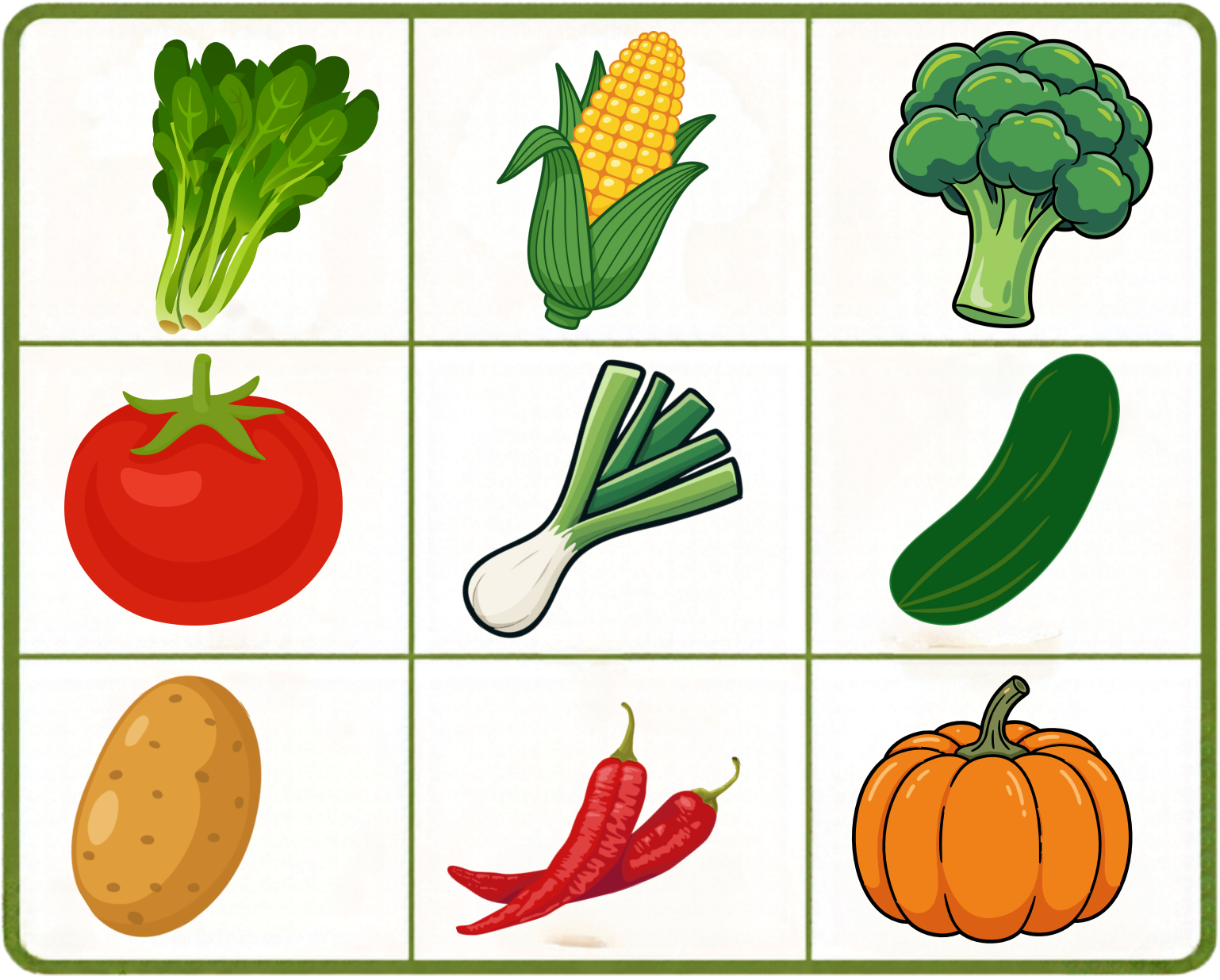
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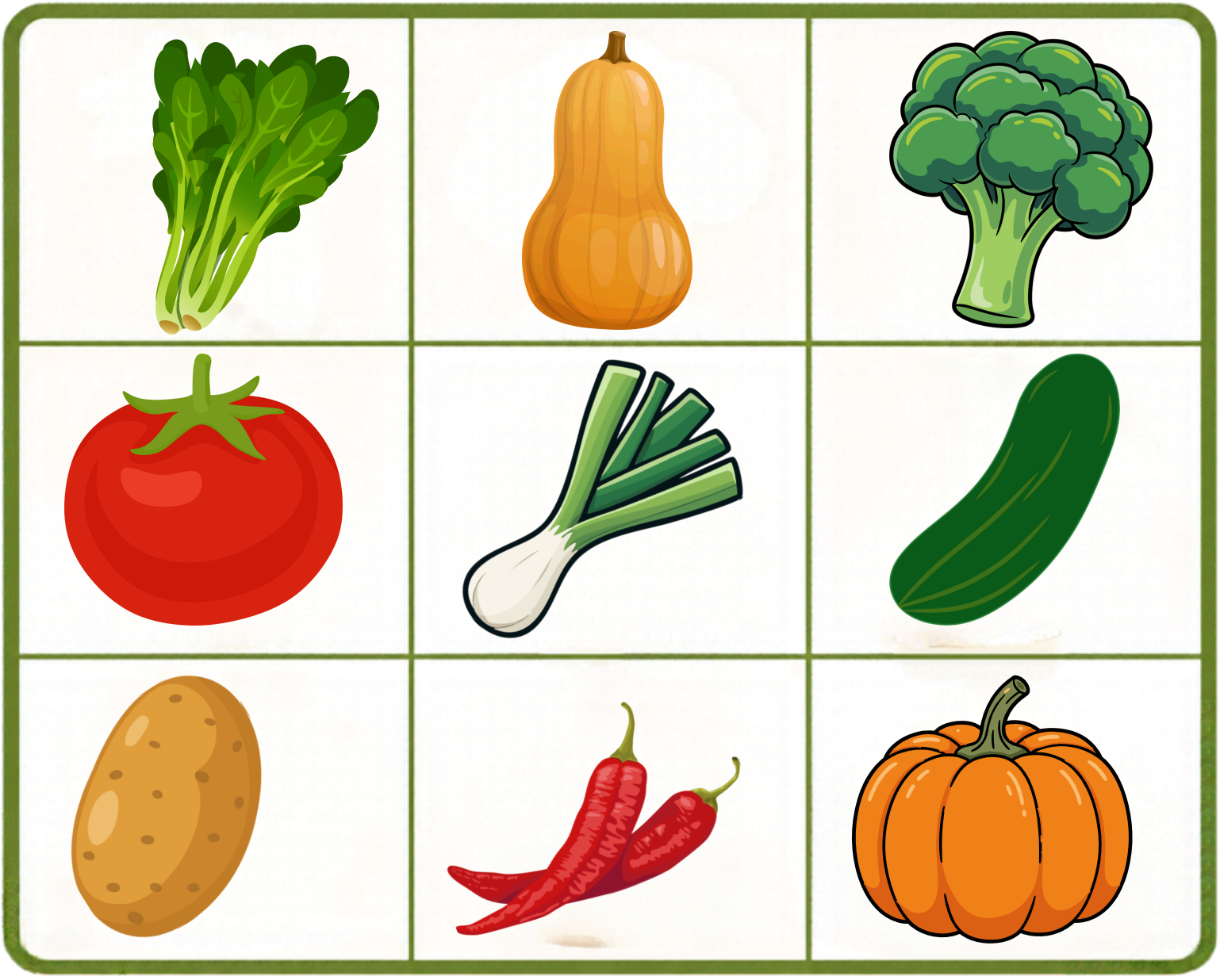
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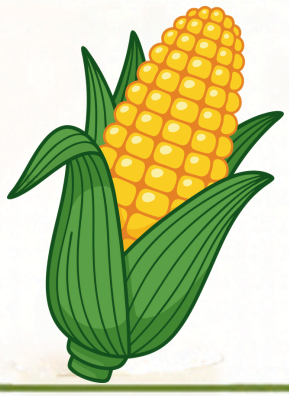
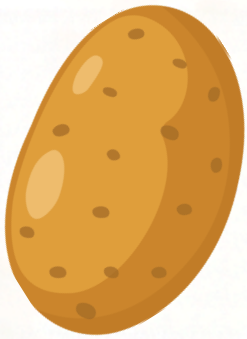


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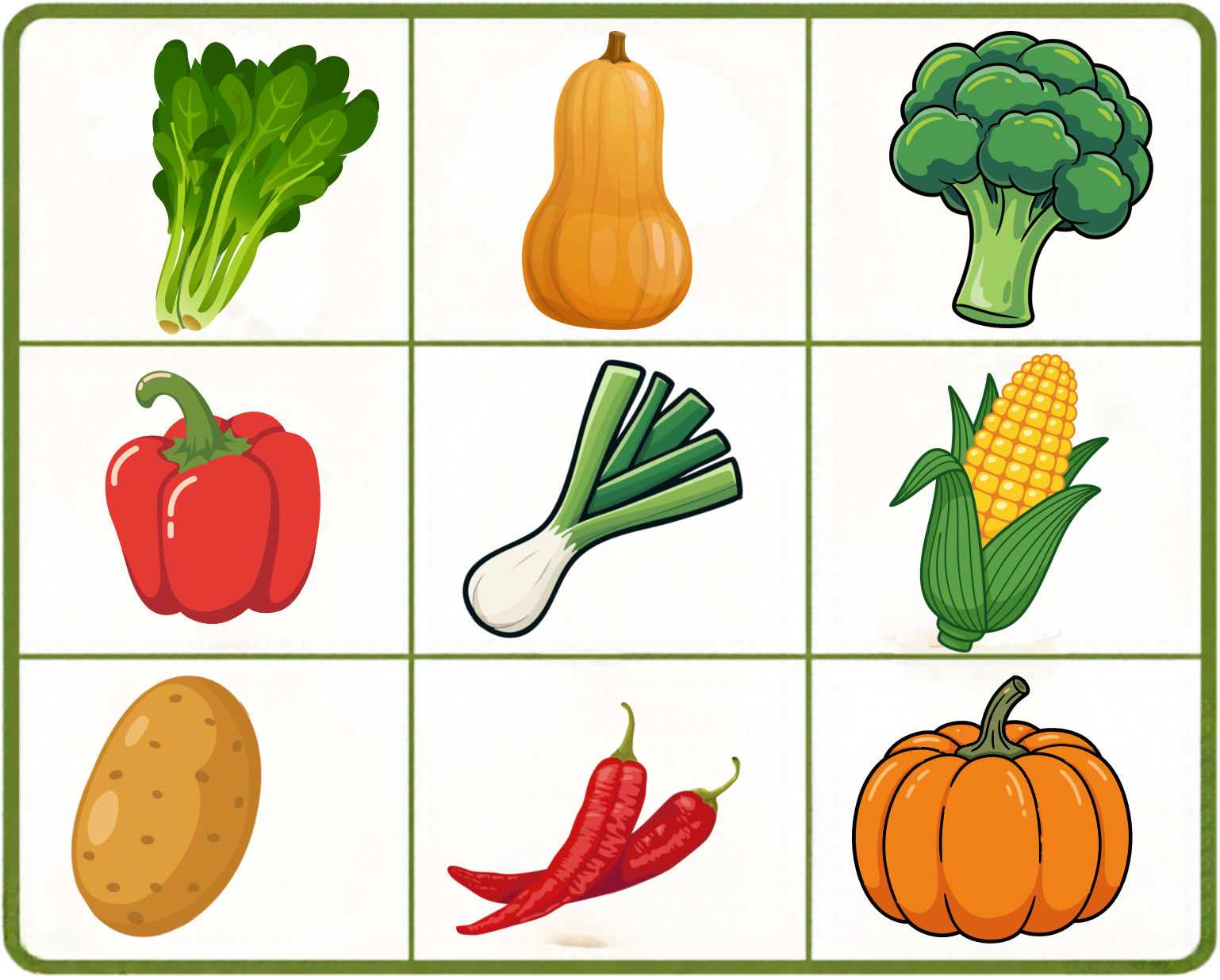
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The Wichí people are indigenous people who have lived in Northern Argentina for many years. Their land was once covered with forests and grasslands. But many trees have been cut down, and the land has become dry. Now it is hard for people to grow food and find water.



In Argentina's Gran Chaco, Wichí families have lived close to the land for many generations. They share their knowledge, skills, and traditions with their children.

Today, trees are being cut down, new landowners are changing the land, families don't always have secure rights to their homes, access to the rivers to fish or water to grow crops. These changes can force families into poverty.



"Sowing for the Future" is the name of a project run by the SIWOK foundation who support Wichí families through sustainable agricultural programmes.

Sowing For The Future involves 4,500 Wichí children and young people across 45 rural schools, helping them learn to grow food, care for the soil and conserve precious water.



Sowing for the Future runs Green Classrooms these are outdoor places where children learn to grow food.

With help from Wichí teachers, children get the soil ready, plant seeds, and care for the plants.
They learn new things they can share with their families and community.d skills they can share
with their families
and communities.



Alejandro Deane, known as Alec, runs the Sowing for the Future project.

He was born in Argentina to an Irish mother who was from County Cork.

An agricultural engineer, he has spent more than forty years walking alongside Wichí communities, promoting dignity and lasting change through clean water, sustainable agriculture and food security.



‘Sowing for the Future’ helps families grow healthy food. They provide wells, water for crops, and farming lessons.

This helps families earn a living and make choices for their communities.


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Summers in the Chaco can be extremely hot, with temperatures sometimes rising above 40°C. Water and shade become especially important for people, animals and plants.



The Wichí have their own language, called Wichí.

Many Wichí people also speak Spanish, and some children learn to speak both languages at school.



Christians in Ireland can walk alongside Wichí Christians through prayer, friendship and practical support.

Partnership means standing with people rather than simply doing things for them.



The Anglican Church has been present among Indigenous communities of the Chaco for generations. Today, Wichí Christians lead churches and serve their own communities.



The Gran Chaco is a huge region of forests, rivers, scrubland and open countryside stretching across several South American countries.



Water is precious in the hot Chaco. €20 (£17) can provide drip irrigation equipment for a 30-metre row of crops, bringing small amounts of water directly to the plants.



Wichí craftspeople are famous for making strong, colourful bags called yicas. They use fibres from a plant called chaguar, which are prepared, spun into thread, dyed and woven into patterns. Making one bag can take many hours of careful work.



Example of what your wreath might look like.

Ginger & Carrot Cake with Butterscotch Frosting

Ingredients

300 gm coarsely grated carrot (about 2 carrots)
200 gm (1 1/3 cups) plain flour
160 gm each caster sugar and brown sugar
120 gm shredded coconut or coconut flakes
100 gm oats, blitzed in a food processor
2½ tsp baking powder
2 tsp each ground cinnamon and ground ginger
½ tsp finely grated nutmeg and ground cloves
Finely grated rind of 1 orange and 1 lemon
200 gm sour cream
100 ml almond oil
3 eggs

Salted butterscotch frosting

30 gm butter, coarsely chopped
30 gm brown sugar
2 tsp golden syrup
100 gm sour cream
450 gm pure icing sugar, sieved



Method

1.Preheat oven to 180C. Butter two 22cm-diameter springform cake tins and line bases and sides with baking paper. Stir carrot, dry ingredients, rinds and ½ tsp sea salt in a large bowl to combine and make a well in the centre. Whisk sour cream, almond oil and eggs in a separate bowl until smooth, add to well and stir to combine. Divide among prepared tins, smooth tops and bake, swapping tins halfway through cooking time, until golden brown and a skewer inserted withdraws clean (45–50 minutes). Cool in tins for 15 minutes, then cool completely on a wire rack.

2.For salted butterscotch frosting, melt butter in a saucepan over low heat, then stir in sugar and golden syrup until smooth and sugar dissolves. Bring to the simmer and stir continuously until slightly thickened (1–2 minutes), stir in sour cream to combine, then remove from heat and stir in icing sugar until smooth. Stir in 1½ tsp sea salt flakes and set aside to cool to spreading consistency (15–20 minutes).

3.Spread half the frosting over the top of each cake, then stack one cake on top of the other. Scatter with roast hazelnuts and the shaved carrot to serve.

Oroginal recipe can be found: https://www.gourmettraveller.com.au/recipe/dessert/ginger-carrot-cake-with-salted-butterscotch-frosting-13991/

Gingerbread Scented No Bake Play–dough

The smell of gingerbread is so warming and comforting and it makes for the perfect sensory scented play-dough.
Below is a simple no bake recipe that you can use - this will make a ball of dough big enough for 2 children to play with...or three if they have very small hands!

As always with any messy play, make sure that children are supervised at all times - especially as this smells quite edible!



150g plain flour
100g salt
2 tsp. cream of tartar
2 tbsp. vegetable oil
200ml water
1 Teaspoon ground nutmeg
2 Teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 Tablespoon ground ginger

Mix all the dry ingredients together in a large bowl.

Add in the oil.

Then gradually mix in the warm water and knead until the dough comes together to form a lovely ball of sensory squishyness!

Messy Play Ideas

If you run a toddler group or have a Messy Play area in your Church, here's some ideas of ways to bring some messy fun and warming spice to your event.





Firstly, just to say, if you are new to Messy Play and fancy trying it, make sure you choose a place that is easy to clean, not carpeted and you consider all choking hazards. Parents should always supervise their children during Messy play activities.







photo credit Bjarni Baby

The images here show Messy Play in Tuff trays which are fabulous resources if you have them - if not you can always use large shallow plastic boxes or individual trays. Choose from a selection of sensory items - ideally only one or two per station particularly for the wetter items. Some ideas of what you can use include:

- Green Coloured Rice (uncooked and dried)
- Flour
- Oats
- Vegetables with green leaves attached
- Compost
- Playdough (see recipe in this pack)
- Rice Krispies or Weetabix
- Toy animals and Tractors

You can go either with the Gingerbread theme or the vegetable growing theme - or maybe even trays of both.

If you're up for paint based Messy Play - you can try the old classic art of potato printing - but be sensetive to food scarcity in your area, if families are struggling to provide food for themselves, seeing food being used for art and play may seem wasteful.