

THE GARDEN CLUB

A story about how one girl's desire for perfection prevented her from participating in the big event.

TOPICS:

Believing, Doubt, Witnessing, Works, Worthiness

DURATION:

Approximately 10 minutes



Jenny was new at her school. She sat alone in the cafeteria while she looked curiously at a small group of girls who were admiring some potted plants. Some had pretty flowers, but others appeared to be newly planted.

Suddenly one of the girls waved at her to join them, and as Jenny approached, a girl named Christy smiled at her. "Hi, I think I know you, Jenny right?"

"Yeah," Jenny replied. "What's going on here, is this for a science class or something?"

Lisa spoke up, "Oh no! It's for our garden club. We grew these plants from the kit we received after becoming a member. Do you like gardening?"

"A little bit," Jenny admitted. "So you're all in a garden club? Isn't that a little lame? I could see being in an art club or playing sports or music, but growing flowers?"

"This is not an ordinary club," Lisa continued. "First of all, it's free, not like some clubs that cost a lot of money. Secondly, there is no competition like in sports. We just get to admire what becomes of the seeds we plant, and see what kind of flowers they produce. Some turn out beautiful, others not too great, but you don't have to feel bad if your plants don't grow well. You never know what kind of seeds you planted in the first place. The kit says if you follow the instructions, they will grow."

"Well it sounds intriguing. How much would it cost me to join?" Jenny asked.

Everyone turned and replied at the same time, "It's free!"

Christy continued talking about the club. "The headquarters for the club is somewhere out of state. The president of the club lives there. It is said he has a beautiful place, and a magnificent garden. Occasionally he will invite members to see his wonderful garden and they get to travel first class, free."

"Well, I think I'm interested. How can I join?" Jenny asked.

"I just happen to have a membership application here, answer all questions sincerely and you're in."

After sending in her application, Jenny received her kit. She read the instructions over and over to make sure she did everything just right. She was determined that her seeds will grow and produce beautiful flowers. Occasionally, she would take her plants to school and talk with the others about gardening.

After a few weeks, she noticed that some of her plants weren't growing as fast as she expected. She felt she might be doing something wrong, so she decided to go to some nurseries and ask questions. Then she went to the library and read all kinds of books about plants and gardening. Once in a while, she would even go with some friends to seminars. She was becoming an expert on how to grow flowers.

One day, a big announcement came to the club. The president was very pleased that new members were being added to the club, and that the joy of gardening was spreading. So he wanted to have all members come to visit his magnificent garden, all expenses paid. Brand new members were also invited, even if their plants weren't fully grown. There was a lot of excitement among all the members. They gathered after school to talk about the big event.

"Is the president really that rich to pay for everyone to come to see his garden?" Jenny asked. "How can he really be that wealthy?"

"Well, I love the club and everything it has done for me," Christy admitted. "I have so many new friends now who care about the same things I care about, and who love gardening! If he says the trip is free, then I believe it. Maybe he'll even give me a prize when he sees some of the beautiful plants grown from my kit. But that's really not important. Just going will be fun."

"You mean we will have to bring our plants?" Jenny asked a little surprised.

"Well of course," Lisa piped in. "After all, this is a gardening club. Naturally you would want to bring your plants. You were given the seeds, so you wouldn't want to show up with nothing. Even if it were not mandatory, as a member you should want to show how you did."

Jenny shook her head, "Well, I'm sorry to tell you this Lisa, but your plants didn't bloom too well."

"I know. I followed the instructions and everything. There is only so much I can do. I can't be blamed for something I can't control."

"I wish I could have helped you," said Jenny. "I went to seminars, read several books and studied hard about plants. But the truth is, I can't seem to do it right either. I really like gardening, but sometimes I feel so hopeless. Some of my seeds grew into beautiful flowers, but others just so-so, and still others hardly grew at all. I must be doing something wrong, I just don't know what it is. It's so embarrassing when your plants don't grow well."

Lisa shook her head and replied, "What you have is more than acceptable Jenny. You can still go. I didn't hear anyone say you had to have perfect plants before you could go. Like you said, look at mine! They aren't anywhere near as pretty as yours, but I'm going."

"I just don't know," Jenny replied. "I was always taught to do things the right way. I can't accept anything for something I didn't work hard for, much more this free trip. I can't bring these plants."

They're not perfect. I joined the club because I thought I could do it, but now I just feel like a failure. As for the trip, I'm not really sure I believe it is free either. Somehow, somewhere, it may turn out that it will really cost me something. Maybe I can save up for the plane fare so I can enjoy seeing the garden without any worry or doubt."

"You are too hard on yourself Jenny. The announcement didn't say bring perfect plants! As for me, I'll take my chances and go. Maybe when I am there, I can learn the real story about the seeds."

When the big day came, everyone in the garden club was ready to board the plane with all of their plants and fly to the magnificent garden, everyone, that is, except for Jenny. She never did save enough to pay for the flight on her own, and on the big day she was still feeling inadequate because not all of her plants grew into beautiful flowers. However, what Jenny didn't know was that all of her plants grew exactly as they were supposed to grow.



The members of the garden club are like many people who become Christians. They have joy and enthusiasm in their heart, and sincerely love the Lord. The seeds represent the Word of God, planted to grow in each Christian's life. They also show how the Word of God can be shared with others, but the growth depends on God. Unfortunately, like Jenny, some Christians receive God's Word, but tend to rely on their own efforts for growth and salvation, so doubt creeps into their faith.

SOW THE WORD

Planting God's Word is important. Sung to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat."

TOPICS:

Witnessing, Gospel

MATERIALS:

Song sheet [ATTACHED]

DURATION:

Approximately 5 minutes



SOW THE WORD



Sow, sow, sow the Word,
Precious seeds of Faith;
Some that fall along the path,
Are quickly snatched away.

Sow, sow, sow the Word,
Precious seeds of Truth;
Some that fall on rocky soil,
Won't last the whole day through.

Sow, sow, sow the Word,
Precious seeds of Hope;
Some that fall among the thorns,
Grow weak from fear and woe.

Sow, sow, sow the Word,
Precious seeds of Life;
Some that fall into good soil,
Will live a life for Christ.