



CHICKENS

The Real Gift of chickens gives a family a nutritious supply of eggs and extra income. Although chickens are relatively easy to keep, our partners work with families to make sure they have the knowledge and skills to look after their chickens to a high standard.

Some families choose to breed chickens and they sell the chicks. It becomes a business to them and helps them to earn money.

An amazing bonus from having chickens is that their poo is a great fertilizer and when mixed into the soil, helps crops produce more fruit and vegetables. We applaud the humble chicken. A gift that keeps on giving!

Facts:

- Chickens can lay 4-7 eggs per week. Each egg contains over 70 calories and provides essential calories and nutrition for families who eat one meal a day.
- Last year you bought over 1,300 Real Gifts of chickens!
- Keeping chickens uses less water and land than other animals, which is better for the environment.

Reflection:

In the Gospel of Matthew (Mt. 23:37), Jesus speaks to the crowds and shares the image of a hen gathering her chicks under her wing. Why? It gave the crowd then, and it gives us now, the perfect picture of God. A God that protects and provides, a God that cares for His children.

Dear God,
As a hen gathers in her chicks,
we thank you that your loving arms
wrap around us to protect and provide.
We thank you for the many blessings that
we receive from you.
We pray for people who are hungry and
continue to suffer from a changing climate.
Help us to show love through our actions
and provide for the needs of our sisters and
brothers.
We pray these things in the name of Jesus.
Amen





VEGETABLE GARDEN



The Real Gift of a Vegetable Garden will give people the seeds and training to grow food in their small gardens at home. Families are able to eat healthy, nutritious and chemical free food which they've grown themselves. With the right support and a little investment, vegetable gardens are easy for families to set up.

Our partners train farmers in setting up and looking after their vegetable garden including:

- * Choosing the best location (near the house and close to a water source)
- * Preparing the soil (creating raised beds and using homemade fertiliser)
- * Planting their seeds (spacing them out and placing into the soil)
- * Watering (when and how much to water)
- * Managing the garden (getting rid of fungus or insects in a natural way)

Facts:

- Globally 2.37 billion people are going hungry - that's about 3 people out of every 10 around the world. The largest proportion of people going hungry live in Africa, Asia and Latin America.
- Larger crops grown in a field can provide a good variety to sell. However, a vegetable garden can provide enough food for a family to eat, uses less water and is much easier to maintain.
- Vegetables like sweet potato, carrot, onion, cabbage and varieties of cucumbers and spinach are common in vegetable gardens in Africa and Asia.
- Last year you bought 600 Real Gifts of Vegetable Gardens!

Reflection:

Advent is a wonderful time for us to praise the Lord for all He has created. In the Christmas story we hear of when the angels who tell of Christ's birth visit the shepherds and sing praises to God. (Luke 2:8-14). It's a time to 'praise Him from the heavens, praise Him all his angels' (Psalms 148:1-2) and thank God for everything he has created. Every person, unique and in his image. Every grain of soil, from which vegetables and fruit trees grow. Every drop of water, which feeds plants, animals and people. Every creature, on the ground and in the sky. Creation sings of God's qualities and magnitudes.

Your gift of a Vegetable Garden will help families to grow their own healthy and nutritious food, without the use of chemicals, and in a way that cares for all of Creation.

**Lord our God,
We thank you for the gift of Creation,
for the earth, and all who live here.
We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks, Lord of Creation.
Amen**



RUGBY FOR PEACE

Chocó is one of the poorest regions in Colombia. Climate change is making it difficult for families to grow food and earn a living in traditional ways like farming and fishing. Young people, especially those in indigenous communities, often miss out on school and may not learn the skills they need to thrive. Opportunities are limited. And, as a result, many young people get caught up in the illegal drug trade as a way to make money for their family. But it is dangerous, uncertain and brings conflict to their community.

But, thanks to the power of sport, things are starting to change. The Real Gift of Rugby for Peace is teaching young people, and their families, the skills they need to survive – from teamwork and respect, to discipline and perseverance. So, when the challenges of life tackle them to the ground, they have the resilience to get back up and play!

Colombia facts:

- Has a population of 49 million, of which over 1 million are indigenous people
- Is about 4.5 times bigger than the whole of the UK
- Bordered by 5 countries - Brazil, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela. Has a long coastline to the north west of the country
- Spanish is the official language and over 60 indigenous languages spoken
- Over 90% of the population is Christian, mostly Roman Catholic
- Capital city is Bogota

Reflection:

Around 700 years before Jesus was born, Isaiah prophesied that a child would be born. "For a Child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6

At Jesus' birth the Angels sang "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom He favours." Luke 2:14

Jesus spoke to his disciples in the Gospel of John 14:27 and said "Peace I leave you; my peace I give to you."

In all these verses we are not promised a trouble-free, perfect life but we are promised a peace in Jesus that goes beyond our earthly problems. A peace that comforts our heart and soul.

God does care about the whole person including the physical and mental and that is why SCIAF, through our partners in Chocó, are working to bring peace.

Dear God,

We thank you for the greatest Christmas gift of all, your Son Jesus.

We pray this Advent for the people of Colombia. Show mercy, oh Lord, and bring healing to their land.

May they find peace with each other and in their hearts with you.

Bless the work of SCIAF in the region of Chocó. We pray this in the name of the Prince of Peace. Amen