

## ACTIVITY Ideas: The First Farmers

### Conduct an Experiment (Subject Area: *Science*)

Your class can try an experiment to show how constant irrigation, with repeated evaporation of water that left salts in the soil, eventually ruined much farming land in southern Mesopotamia. Students can fill a clear glass with tap water. Set the glass in the sun to let water evaporate; repeat the process several times; and then write a description of what has happened to the glass by the end of the experiment.

### Have a Discussion (Subject Areas: *Geography, Social Studies, Science*)

Discuss with students the idea that with the development of irrigation people changed from being controlled by their environment to becoming capable of changing that environment.

- Was the development of irrigation a positive or negative change? Was it both?
- In what ways are we changing the environment today? Do these changes have both positive and negative aspects? (Examples could be local - e.g.: As recently as the last century the spot on which the students' school now stands was part of the nation's richest farming land, a use for which it can never be reclaimed now that it has been paved over and built upon. Examples could also be global—e.g.; the rapidly disappearing rain forests.)
- What can we do to continue growth without damaging the eco-systems around us?

### Make Some Ancient-Style Bread (Subject Areas: Math, Social Studies)

Buy some wheat berries from a health food store, bring in a mortar and pestle, and have students try to grind the grains to discover the amount of time it took the ancient Mesopotamians to make flour for their bread. See the *Daily Life* section of our website for an ancient-style bread recipe.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

*The First  
Farmers*