

JOURNEY IN... YEAR ONE

COMMUNITY STORY

This lesson's Big Ideas:

- In a Beloved Community, every individual both brings to and takes from the community something unique and valuable.
- We are more together than we are separately.

Lesson Materials

- Classroom set of the book *Stone Soup* by Jon J. Muth. Available through Scholastic Books.
- Blank books (fairly large ones are best)
- Pencils, pens, markers and colored pencils

TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

🕒 Ahead of time

Unity is not something we are called to create; it's something we are called to recognize.

- William Sloan Coffin

The moving finger of God in human history points ever in the same direction. There must be community.

- Howard Thurman

Our lives extend beyond our skins, in radical interdependence with the rest of the world.

- Joanna Macy

...it starts when you say We and know who you mean, and each day you mean one more.

- Marge Piercy

- What do you bring to your church community? What parts of yourself do you offer up?
- What do you take away when you leave church? What are the blessings of this place and its people?

GATHERING AND FOCUSING

🕒 2-3 minutes

- Sharing of Names – Going around the circle, ask each child to share his or her name and something that they're good at or enjoy doing.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LESSON

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YOUR FIELD EXPERIENCES: FEEDBACK AND NOTES

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**PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE
STONE SOUP**

🕒 10-15 minutes

- Lead into the story by asking if the stones in your hand would make a good dinner.
- Using the classroom set of story books, read the story *Stone Soup* in one of the following communal fashions:
 - In a circle, have each child read as much as she or he cares to. When one child stops, the next child can pick up.
 - Read ‘popcorn’ style, where children read a set amount or as much as they care to read, and when they finish, they name a new reader.
 - Read the story to the children. Select one word or phrase that the group can chime in on, reading chorally.
 - Allow any child who chooses to pass to do so comfortably and gracefully *before* beginning the story. Ask if anyone is good at things other than reading and prefers to simply listen to the story. Make it clear to the group that in a Beloved Community, we respect other’s needs and decisions. Give examples from church life to illustrate, if you’d like.

Wondering Together:

Begin a discussion with some open-ended questions like the following:

- I wonder what you noticed about the illustrations?
- I wonder why the people of the village weren’t such a good community at first?
- I wonder why everyone had different jobs? I wonder how they got those jobs?
- Why do you think the monks were different from the village people? What do you think they knew that the villagers didn’t?
- I wonder why everyone brought a different ingredient for the soup?
- I wonder what life in this village was like the next day?

**PRIMARY ACTIVITY TWO
COMMUNITY STORIES**

🕒 20 minutes

- Start this activity with as many blank books as there are children in the group. Each child will start a story, which will be passed from child to child as they build and add on to the story with more text or more drawings.
- Ask the children if they enjoy making up stories. Who is good at in-

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LESSON

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venting characters? Who is good at writing silly stories? Scary ones? Who enjoys making the drawings for stories? Today, each child will bring their own ideas and abilities to a story that someone will take home with them.

- The stories will parallel the central themes of *Stone Soup*. Invite the kids to select one of the following story prompts or create a similar one, themselves:
 - A community builds a house
 - A community creates a park
 - A community starts a school
 - A community makes a pizza
 - A community helps a family in need
 - A community throws a birthday party
- Give the book owner a chance to write his or her name and a title on the cover. They then write and draw as much as they care to on the first page.
- The workshop leader can facilitate the sharing of books in one of two ways: books can be passed around a circle, or they can be initialed and put in a tub in the middle of the circle. When one child finishes their contribution to a story, they should be able to get a new story to continue.
- Try to have each child contribute something to each book, ideally a page. At the end of the class, connect each book with its owner.
- Workshop Leaders can decide how much prompting or freedom authors have in creating their stories. Before beginning, lay some groundrules: UUs value stories that reflect our values of fairness and kindness. Violence and vulgar language don't embody our faith very well.

Give the class an opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to the stories.

CLOSING AND LEAVE-TAKING

🕒 2 minutes

Hold hands, forming a circle. Have the children repeat each line after you, chorally.

In this community, we give and we receive.

May we go forth, now,

to share the bounty of our love.

- Sydney Kay Wilde