



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

Questions:

- 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

🕒 3 minutes

- Going around the circle, ask each child to share their name and something they like that starts with the first letter of their name.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LESSON

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YOUR FIELD EXPERIENCES: FEEDBACK AND NOTES

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**PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE
STONE SOUP**

🕒 20 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 (especially for the younger kids, note that not everyone will be confident readers yet):
 - In a circle, have each child read as much as they care to. When one child stops, the next child can pick up. Passing is welcome.
 - 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. Passing is welcome.
 - 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 prefers not to read, but rather 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**

🕒 25 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.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LESSON

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- Ask the children if they enjoy making up stories. Who is good at inventing 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 their name and a title on the cover. They write and draw on the first page.
- After a few minutes, books can be passed around the circle or initialed and put in a pile 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.
- Teachers can decide how much prompting or freedom authors have in creating their stories. Before beginning, lay some ground rules: UUs value stories that reflect our values of equality 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