



## HERE WE COME!

Before the children arrive, spread objects on the table. Include crayons, blocks, books, plastic flowers, or other items with multiple parts. Gather the children in a circle. Talk about what it means to “gather.” Then move to places around the table. Ask the children to gather items that belong together and put them in one place.

The crayons go together because they are all crayons. We keep them in the crayon box so they are ready to use when we want to color or draw a picture. People also gather together for a reason. On Sunday families come to church to worship and learn about God. Introduce the scripture words.

## SCRIPTURE WORDS AND WORSHIP

Mount a picture of Jesus from a coloring book on stiff paper. Write the words on cutouts of people joined together. Read the scripture verse with the children several times. Using tape, connect both ends of the chain to either side of Jesus, completing the circle. It should be able to stand up. This could also be duplicated and used as a craft or something to take home.

## GATHER IN MY NAME

Make Jesus a part of everything you do.

### Scripture Words

Jesus said, “Gather in my name. I will be with you.”  
—Matthew 18:20 NRSV adapted

## STORY TALKING

Children learn how to get along with others from parents, siblings, other family, friends, and occasionally television cartoons. As a church dedicated to peace and reconciliation, we can help children learn and practice positive skills. This activity is based on the lesson “Talk to Each Other” in Peace Quest, available through Herald House.

When there is hurt between two people, the cause may not be fully understood. Each sees and feels it from their own side. But the responsibility to fix things falls equally on both.

- If you are the offender, go to that person and ask forgiveness.
- If you are hurt, first decide whether or not you choose to feel offended. Maybe the person didn’t mean to hurt you.
- If you decide you are offended, go to the person and tell them how you feel.

Set up some situations and walk the children through the responses. Give suggestions or let other class members offer ideas for solutions. Some scenarios include the following:

- Two children in a tug of war over the same toy
  - One child bumping another’s arm while coloring
- Two children wanting to sit in the only chair left
- Two children not letting a third child join them
- Child not responding when another child calls to them
  - Something spills and neither child admits responsibility

## UP AND AT 'EM

Play a game using the objects on the table at the beginning of the session. Place them on a blanket some distance from the children in an area where it is safe to run. Start the children behind a line. Name an object, count to three, and say “go.” Children run to the blanket, grab the required object, and return to the line. Have places to deposit each of the different items so they will be “gathered” by the time the game is over.

## LIVE AND LEARN

Matthew 18:15–20 is a passage which deals with steps in reconciliation. It was hard for the disciples to understand how they should get along with others, just as it is sometimes hard for children. Tell the story using props and actions. The principles will be practiced at the children's level in Story Talking.

- Jesus and the disciples had walked and walked. (Walk around the classroom or up and down the halls.)
- They were very tired and decided to rest. (Choose a relaxing place such as on a blanket.)
- But only their feet and legs were tired. (Have children shake their legs and then rub their feet and legs.)
- They still wanted to listen to Jesus talk. (Gather around a picture of Jesus and get comfortable.)
- “Jesus, what should we do when someone does something bad to us or hurts our feelings?” one of the disciples asked.
- “Yeah,” said another, “should we teach him a lesson or go tell on him?”
- Jesus shook his head. “Fighting and anger are not the answers. Go to that person by yourself and talk about the problem.”
- “You mean all alone—just the two of us?” asked one disciple in surprise.
- “Why not?” Jesus said. “If the problem is between two of you, who better to work it out than the two involved?”
- “So I take him aside and tell him about the dumb thing he did?” asked Simon.
- “How would you feel if someone talked to you like that?” Jesus asked. “Instead of putting the blame on the other person, describe how you feel about what happened. Talk about your feelings—your thoughts. Let the other person listen. You might be surprised.”
- “You mean if I said, ‘I feel sad because my coat is missing’ instead of ‘You took my coat, you dirty crook!’ it might make a difference?”
- “Try it and see. Maybe the other person will understand how you feel and offer to return the coat or help you look for it.”
- “And if he doesn't, then tell the law on him?” asked Philip.
- “Try this before you do that,” Jesus suggested. “Take a couple of friends with you and go talk to the person again.”
- “Right. And my friends can take the coat away from him,” said Simon.
- “No,” said Jesus, shaking his head. “The friends are there to listen with both of you. They can help you process your differences and work things out.”
- “And then we tell on him if he doesn't give it back!” said Philip.
- “That's always a possibility,” Jesus agreed. “But you will probably find that third step will seldom be necessary.”
- “It sure wouldn't if you were the one to go with us,” James insisted. “You always know what to say and do.”
- “Remember,” Jesus smiled at the disciples. “Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, I am there with you. Always and forever.”

## SENSE-A-TIONS

Give each child a copy of the picture of Jesus and the children. As they color the picture, add textures such as cloth, fur, cotton, or wood.

## MOVING MUSIC

- “Jesus Loves the Little Children” *HS 223*
- “Gather Your Children” *SP 3*. Practice music and words if this song is to be used in the congregational worship.
- “Make New Friends”

**Make New Friends** Traditional



Make new friends and keep -- the -- old; --

One is sil- ver and the oth -- er gold.

## THERE WE GO

Talk with the children about gathering for worship. What does that mean to them? What do they do to “gather” with their families? Where will Jesus be? How do they know? Ask them to share the picture they made with their families.

# Gather in My Name

