

Gratitude for Community - Children

This guide contains many resources. We recognize that each community's needs are different, so feel free to pick and choose what works best for you.

Preparation

Gather a book (see options below) and other materials suited to the activities you choose, like a physical puzzle or craft materials. Explore the Other Resources (below) for more opportunities.

Read guidance for [Wondering with Children](#).

Gathering (Building the community/circle)

Choose a question related to the topic like below, or a song, or do a check-in (pluses and minutes, roses and thorns) to help welcome everyone into the space.

- What is a community that is important to you, and what is one thing you appreciate about it?
- What is one of your favorite things to do with your friends?
- What makes someone a good friend?
- Share a time that someone said “thank you” to you

For a more hands-on gathering, prepare the materials for [a woven mat](#) (the paper with scissor cuts made through it, and strips of paper to weave into it). Ask children to weave in a strip of paper to the mat as they respond to the chosen question. As each child responds, they can watch the paper mat grow. You can observe how all of their responses “stay together” in that community.

Introduction

A community is a lot like a tapestry, or something woven together out of thread or wool. Many individual people thread a community together. The different colors and patterns show the different kinds of people and their gifts that are in a community. And coming together they make something beautiful.

[Tapestry weaving](#) has a long history in Guatemala, where Right Sharing of World Resource works with women's groups. The tapestries present stories from the past and hopes for the future. This shows what is important to a community. Tapestries as clothing help protect our bodies, like our community supports us and keeps us safe.

Read a book (suggestions below)

[The Invisible Web by Patrice Karst](#) ([read aloud](#))

[I Am We: A Book of Community by Susan Verde](#) ([read aloud](#))

[You Hold Me Up by Monique Gray Smith, Illustrated by Danielle Daniel](#) ([read aloud](#))

[The Sharing Book by Dianne White](#) ([read aloud](#))

[We Are Together by Britta Teckentrup](#) ([read aloud](#))

[Abuela's Weave by Omar S. Castañeda](#) ([read aloud](#))

Possible hands-on activities that can be done during reading

Drawing - If you want to suggest possible themes, it might be to draw your community however you envision it, or to draw the meeting house and the community of Friends

Coloring pages - You might use [some of these](#) on tapestries from around the world

Play-Doh

[Potholder making](#)

Pipe cleaners

Wondering Questions for during and after the reading

I wonder what part of the story you like best?

I wonder what part is the most important for you today?

I wonder where you are in the story or what part of the story is about you?

I wonder if there is any part of the story that we can leave out and still have all the story we need?

I wonder...

Reflection

Choose a question to respond to that's connected to the theme:

If you could change something about our community, what would it be?

What is something you'd like to do with others in your community?

Other Resources / Extending the Lesson

Scripture Verses, Quotes, and Media

"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

Matthew 18:20

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

Galatians 6:2

[The Invisible Web Activity Kit](#)

[Magic Penny](#) (song)

[The More We Get Together](#) (song)

[We are a Patchwork Quilt](#) (song)

Games and Activities

Yarn Toss - Toss yarn and have each person hold onto string. As you toss it to someone (so that everyone gets it) say some way you're connected to the person you're tossing to, or something about them that you like. If the participants don't know each other well enough to do this, they can instead say someone in their community that they appreciate and why. After everyone has tossed the yarn, you can point to the complex patterns that connect each of us together as a community.

Just Keep it Up - Gather in a circle and hold hands. Throw one or more balloons into the air, trying to keep them up using different body parts, not trying to re-use the same body part. This will prompt everyone to be involved, and to support one another to keep the balloon in the air as long as possible. How long can your group keep it from touching the ground?

Letter Writing - Who could you write a letter to to strengthen your community? Have kids write, or speak out, who they would write to and what they would say to them. Written letters could be sent to the person, or they can remain private.

Discussion question - If you had \$100 and you had to give it away, who in your community would find it most helpful and why?

Create a community coat of arms using objects, colors, symbols, and mottos to describe a community that is important to you.

[Paper Weaving](#) (different examples of the woven mats mentioned above)