

Held together

Matthew 18.15-20

Jesus says that those who live in a kingdom community should watch over one another in love, gently pointing out when a brother or sister fails to live by the values Jesus teaches.

This week's resources explore: finding patterns for building community.

 Look out for ways to connect faith with everyday life.

Bible notes

Old Testament

Ezekiel 33.7-11

The prophet has been called to be a watchman for Israel, someone who sees and points to the nation's failings so that they can mend their ways. It was the call spelled out in chapter 3 and it is repeated here like brackets around the first half of the book. God reminds Ezekiel that however unpalatable it is to point out another's wrongdoing, that is the prophet's call and it is the way that both will receive God's blessing. But Ezekiel is also to remind the people that God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather wants all of them to turn and live.

New Testament

Romans 13.8-14

Paul draws the threads of his argument in Romans 12 and 13 together by pointing out that the Christian ethic is love of neighbour in action. It is this that fulfils the Law, that does what God wants. Earlier in the chapter Paul has claimed that Caesar's empire rules by fear and violence. Here he stresses that God's kingdom is marked by love. The second half of the reading is couched in apocalyptic language highlighting the coming of the dawn of the new age, where the empire's deeds of darkness have no place. Rather, we are called to be like Christ – using the bold image of putting him on like an outer garment – so that we fulfil the Law as he did.

Gospel Matthew 18.15-20

What happens when someone in our circle is living in such a way that they deny their confession? Jesus' teaching here follows on from warnings about not putting stumbling blocks in the path of the weak or the young (18.1-14).

The words 'another member of the church' (NRSV) are not in the original; this section is more about interpersonal relationships than church discipline. Jesus says we each have the responsibility to gently correct one another (taking due note of the warning in 7.1-4). When disciples stray because of sin, we need to name it in the hope that the one straying will see that their actions violate the values of the kingdom and repent. If they will not listen to us, then we should take someone else so there are witnesses of our concerns and the brother/sister's response. Perhaps the witness will decide that we are wrong, not our brother/sister! Only if someone persists in blatant sin do we tell the rest of the community. The picture is of the community gathered together for fellowship and teaching.

Verses 18 to 20 put this in context. The community we are part of is not just a club, it is the kingdom of God; Jesus is at the heart of it – so how we live matters. Jesus' words echo the language previously used of Peter (16.19): every disciple is equally able to discern the mind of God in Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 2.15). Here the passage comes full circle and picks up the question about status: we are all equal.

'Binding' and 'loosing' are about things and issues, not people (the words are gender-neutral), so probably refer to the actions of the straying brother or sister. Jesus says that we are able to discern right and wrong behaviour (because we

have heard his teaching; see Matthew 28.20) and have a duty to point it out. The clue to how this works is in the tense of the verbs relating to heaven (v.18). They are future perfects, indicating that we are let in on what God has already decided – that is, through prayer and the Scriptures, we discern God's mind and communicate that to each other and God, asking him what he wants us to ask him (v.19). This is possible because we are the community of Christ (v.20). Jesus looks beyond the resurrection to when he will truly be our Immanuel, God with us all the time, at the heart of all our gathering, however small (cf. Matthew 1.23; 28.20).

The links between the lectionary readings

God is committed to drawing disparate people into a community founded on his values. For Ezekiel and Jesus in Matthew's Gospel, this is about calling out sin where we see it in the hope that an individual will turn and mend their ways. For Paul it is about embodying love of neighbour; in doing that, we start to look like Jesus – not just as individuals but as churches.

WEB Notes on Psalm 119.33-40 and ideas for using it together.

See www.rootsontheweb.com

With very young children: resources on the reading to use with under 5s.

Children's Sheet and **Colouring Sheet** (Welsh versions available).

NEW Drama: *Building community*

Bible study: a selection of this week's resources to print out.

Prayers

WEB Welsh translations.

Call to worship

Do you have a desire, a deep desire
to worship and to know the Lord God,
and to understand the values of the kingdom?
Come, then, and worship – for Jesus says,
where two or three are gathered in my name,
I am there among them.

A gathering prayer

Together we come to worship,
individuals gathered as one
in the name of the Lord.

Amen.

A prayer of approach

O Lord our God, we sometimes tremble as we think of who we
are and who you are. Bring us now, in this moment, to know
you. See us as we are, and see our yearning to be more like you.
May we lay aside anything that hinders our journey with you,
and with our friends and neighbours. **Amen.**

A prayer of confession

In the higgledy-piggledy ways of life, Lord,
with challenges and changes pulling us this way and that,
we sometimes find it hard, in the heat of the moment,
to know what is right and what is wrong.
Forgive us for our failings and wrongdoings.
Forgive our insensitivities to the ways of others.
Forgive anything that cuts us off from each other or from you.
Amen.

A prayer of adoration and praise

God of the vastness of all that is, of all peoples and communities,
here we are, part of this place; gathering to worship and adore
you, marvelling at your love and care and your persistence with
us. You are beyond our imagining. Again and again, we are
engulfed in your vastness and love. How can we do anything but
praise you, again and again?
Amen.

A reflective way into prayer

Think of the tiny space you occupy right now – the floor you
are standing on, the chair you are sitting on, or the cushion
you are kneeling on. Think of that space in the context of the
community you are with right now. Think of the vastness of
earth, of space, of the universe, and beyond. Now think again of
where you are right now, and let yourself just be in that space
with God.

Prayers of intercession

Eternal, ever-living God,
we pray for those who this day need our prayers:
those we see around us...
those we have left at home...
family and friends near and far...
strangers and communities we will never meet or know,
but whose peril we hear of and see on our screens...
those whose life is ebbing away
consumed by old age, frailty, illness or neglect...
those who grieve deeply for lives and loves lost...
those who cause grief and chaos in society
and who live seemingly with different values from ours,
for them and their victims and their families...
those who are forgotten, unnoticed, unloved, unmissed...
Lord God, in your abundance of mercy,
hear these and all our prayers.

Amen.

A prayer for all ages together

Here we are not alone, O God. Here we are together.
Here we are together. (*look around at each other*)
Young and old, good and bad, well and ill,
new to the journey or old hacks in this prayer thing,
here, we are together in community.

Here we are together. (*look around at each other*)

We are not alone in the world,
but we are joined together in your name.

Here we are together. (*look around at each other*)

Amen.

A sending out prayer

Being Christian, O God, is not just about 'me and you',
not just about our conversations and our love.
Help us to see those we meet beyond these doors
in the way that you see them.
Help us to offer support from what we know of you.
Send us out from here to be a shining light for you,
a guiding light for those in confusion, aloneness and darkness.
Amen.

A personal prayer

Sometimes, O God, I wish I was on my own, not troubled and
disturbed by those around me, not jostled and tussled this way
and that, but just left to my own devices. But I am not just me,
I am part of the community in which I live. Give me patience
with those around me, give me love and compassion for those
in need, give me understanding of people who are so different
from me and give me, above all else, a yearning to do your will.
Amen.

Gather

All-age introduction

A way to begin worship when all ages are present.

Instructions

You will need a LEGO™ set in its box, with instructions. Who likes LEGO™? Can you make this (show the box)? Do you need the instructions? Invite one or two volunteers to make the model. Continue with this introduction while the volunteers make the model. What kinds of things do we do that need instructions (e.g. Ikea furniture, knitted jumpers, recipes)? Have you ever looked at a picture of a lovely cake, or a beautifully made item, or even a fiddly shelf unit – and decided to have a go yourself? I'm sure you *always* look at the instructions (pattern, recipe)!! Or perhaps you turn to YouTube for help. Why are instructions important? Instructions help us to achieve something we see and admire, or we think it would be good to have. Ask how the LEGO™ model is coming along. Does it look like the picture on the box? In our worship today, listen for anything else that is being built, and for the instructions we might find to help us.

With very young children

WEB Resources on the reading to use with under 5s.

Open the Word

To help the listener

The reader could use these words to provide context.

The focus of the Gospel reading is on how we treat one another in our communities, calling out sin, helping one another to live as Jesus wants us to. It is the central theme of all three of today's readings, because we can only live well if we help each other.

Present the Old Testament

This reading emphasises the importance of educating communities about healthy behaviour and the need to challenge destructive behaviour, warning that if we ignore such things, we will be held responsible for the results. And this is not what God wants. Display images of the effects and consequences of war, climate change, the rise in plastic waste, homelessness, knife crime, substance abuse and addictions, or similar, while the passage is being read out. Make the final image the question: 'How can we change our ways?' Alternatively, after reading the text, display the images accompanied by a music track such as 'Turn Back, O Man' by Gustav Holst – or the *Godspell* version – or a music group/choir singing 'Dear Lord and Father of mankind'.


Present the Gospel


WEB Script to print out.

This reading is less about church discipline and more about a good pastoral approach and healthy community relationships (see *Bible notes*), within the overarching message of Jesus' radical inclusion emphasised by most of Matthew's Gospel. Use the mime **WEB** to accompany the reading of the passage. It presents the reading twice, to emphasise this understanding. You will need: a sinner, a leader, some friends, and one other person who has a brief speaking part.


Explore & respond

Sermon ideas


WEB *PostScript*: Linking this week's reading to the news .


 The Gospel reading appears to be about life in the church, but if we consider that there was no formal church when Jesus was telling these stories, 'church' doesn't mean what it often implies today! The Greek word *ekklesia* (literally, 'called out from') could mean a gathering, an assembly or a community. What do we mean when we say 'church'? People who meet up in a religious building? A community of people who try to follow Jesus' example in their daily life? Something else? How does our understanding of the word influence and shape what we do as 'church' in our local context?

● The words 'against you' (NRSV) in verse 15 are not present in many ancient Bible manuscripts. Who decides what sin is? Is it something personal or communal? Can it be 'against you' or is it always and only 'against God'? Is it about conforming to the normative behaviour with 'the church' or something broader? How does our church view dissenters? Or questioners/doubters? Is the first interaction mentioned in the reading an invitation to listen to the one who is not conforming in order to understand their perspective (rather than promoting 'our' particular viewpoint and scapegoating those who don't share it)?

 The second meeting advocated in the reading is to be with a few church members. Might this be an invitation for the 'non-conforming person' to meet with a support group to help them through their issue? We might think, for example, of Alcoholics Anonymous, debt counselling, drug or gambling addiction groups. What others come to mind, or would it be good to consider?

● Confront the behaviour that is against the values of the community, because if you don't, it will pull the community apart. How can we do this in a loving, compassionate way? And what about the positive side: how can we encourage and promote healthy behaviour?

 John Wesley said, 'The world is my parish.' Perhaps we should be thinking well beyond the local when reflecting on this Gospel reading, and well beyond the individual. What are the great sins in today's world? Not looking after the poor? Not caring for the planet in the way we live? What would we highlight, and why?

 To treat people as a Gentile or tax collector (v.17) seems ironic in this reading, because it is clear that Jesus had a bias for the outcasts of his community, and preferred to mix with the people on the fringes of society – especially those who were outcasts because of religious rules. So, what does it mean here? In some safeguarding cases strict exclusion might be necessary for the good of the community, or some members of it. But in other situations, a relationship should be developed and maintained with the 'other' person. Much can be learnt and gained through these relationships – about other people's perspectives on life, about our own behaviours, and about God.

Visit www.rootsontheweb.com/sample to see the week's online materials


All-age conversation

A way for leaders to help all ages explore the reading.

Tell this story: 'A man took a walk in a part of the wilds of Scotland that he had never been to before. He had read the guidebooks and planned his route carefully. During the walk, as he prepared to climb the stile to enter a field, he met a woman walking the other way. She advised him not to cross the field because there had been a storm the previous night and the field was extra boggy. But, instead of heeding her advice, the man walked through the field, and sure enough he got stuck in the bog.' Sometimes when we are walking the wrong way, we need to listen to advice from those who have walked the path before us!

Ask if anyone has changed their behaviour as a result of what someone said to them, and is willing to share the story. (You could present this as an interview with questions such as: What were the circumstances? What did you learn? What difference has it made to you?) What if someone tells us we have done/said something wrong, and we don't agree – how do we react then? What might help us to decide whether something is right or wrong, or just a different way of seeing or doing? Can we – do we – welcome and work with those who see things differently from the way we do, people who believe different things, who behave differently?

Active worship

Ideas to engage different ages, learning and spiritual preferences. Spiritual styles (as defined by David Csinos) key: **W**ord, **E**motion, **S**ymbol, **A**ction. Find out more  in *Worship and learning support*.

A simple worship activity for all ages

Give everyone two pipe cleaners (use a variety of colours to show diversity). Invite people to make a pipe-cleaner person using the two pipe cleaners, one to make the arms and the other for the body. Make the arms wrap loosely around the body (a 'self hug'). Read *A prayer of confession* (or another suitable prayer that mentions how doing wrong cuts us off from God and one another). After words of forgiveness, invite people to

Questions for reflection

- ▶ How well does this ordered pattern represent your community?
- ▶ What holds your community together?
- ▶ If your community was a hive, who are the bees? The drones? Where do you go for nectar?

unwrap the arms of their pipe-cleaner person, and to bring the figure to the front to join with all the others in making a big circle that symbolises a diverse but united community. Sing 'Bind us together, Lord'. **E S**

Community tree

Make a bare tree

Bind together some small branches or twigs to make a tree (or you could use a manufactured one), and prepare a quantity of paper leaves. You will also need string, sticky tape, scissors and pens. Invite people to take one or more leaves and to write on each leaf one quality that helps to build a healthy community. Use the string and tape to hang the leaves on the tree. **E S A**

More than one perspective

Make two jigsaws

Distribute pieces of at least two simple children's jigsaws that have similar-sized pieces. Invite people to 'make the jigsaw' – without telling them that there is more than one picture to be made. This should cause a lot of discussion. Encourage a discussion about diversity – that not everyone's picture of the world will be the same, but we need to listen to one another. **W E**

Spread the prayers

Research and write a prayer

Collect leaflets, or do an internet search for information, about local support groups. Display them on a table, together with sticky notes and pens. Invite people to choose a group that they would like to pray for. Encourage people to write a brief prayer for those who attend their chosen group, and to stick the prayer on a prayer wall or board. **W E A**

Picture pointers




Hymns & songs

Songs in italics are suitable for all ages.

A mighty stronghold is our God
Are you ready, ready, ready?
 As we gather in your presence now
Bind us together
 Come, let us walk this road together
 Community of Christ
For I'm building a people of power
 Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go
He is here, he is here, he is moving
 I come with joy, a child of God
It's me, it's me, it's me that builds community
Jesus stand among us at the meeting of our lives
 Let all the world in every corner sing
 Let us build a house where love can dwell
 Put peace into each other's hands
 There's a quiet understanding
This is our song, our sep'rate voices
United we stand
 We love the place, O God
You are always fighting for us

Send out

Live your faith

Encourage everyone to put their faith into action. Use the suggestion below or distribute the **Live your faith** sheet .

Write a letter to your MP about an issue that stirs your feelings, or join a campaigning group for such an issue (e.g. Avaaz or 38 degrees). **W A**

Held together

Matthew 18.15-20

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This week's resources explore: finding patterns for building community.


 Look out for ways to connect faith with everyday life.

Lectionary Bible readings

RCL Proper 18 Year A
Ezekiel 33.7-11
Psalm 119.33-40
Romans 13.8-14

Matthew 18.15-20

Creation Time

1 September – 4 October 

Bible notes

- Matthew's Gospel contains five sections where Jesus teaches at length on a subject. Today's passage is part of the fourth section, focusing on life in the church. It is important to note that 'church' as we understand it did not exist at the time Jesus was speaking. When the reading speaks about 'church' it could mean a gathering or an assembly, or this might be a later edit by Matthew to help us understand his meaning.
- Jesus teaches about how to handle a situation where wrongdoing has broken relationships within the community. He presents a plan for mending these relationships. If we feel someone has wronged us, we must tell them and deal with it face to face. If need be, we should take one or two others we trust along with us, and if that doesn't work, we should take our differences to the whole church community to sort out. Jesus then affirms the importance of our Christian communities by promising that he will be present, no matter what size the gathering is.
- Today's passages from Ezekiel and Romans also speak about our duties towards one another in community. In Ezekiel there is a call for accountability, and the Romans passage places the value of loving one another above all others.
- How might these passages speak to the communities we find ourselves in today? What tensions and difficulties arise? And how do we deal with them in a way that builds up the community?

Prayers Welsh translations.

A gathering prayer

Dear Lord Jesus,
we don't have to see you
to know you are with us.
You bring us all together,
as a community,
in your love.
Thank you, Jesus. **Amen.**

A prayer of thanksgiving

Give each person a card with their name
attached to a building block. Work
together to build a steady tower.

Lord God, we thank you that we are all
members of your family.
Thank you that together we can
build a strong community.
We can make a difference in our world.
Amen.

A prayer for forgiveness

For the times I do wrong
and don't think how it affects others:
forgive me, Lord Jesus.
For the times I don't work together
with my friends:
forgive me, Lord Jesus.
For the times I don't listen to you:
forgive me, Lord Jesus. Amen.

A prayer for others

Give everyone their building blocks back.
Ask them to write a name next to their
own of someone they want to pray for.
Let them rebuild the tower, saying:

Lord bless...(insert name)
as each brick is placed. Encourage
everyone to take the blocks home and
continue praying for that person during
the week.


A sending out prayer

Dear God,
we go back to our communities;
the places where we live,
where we learn to listen to you
and to each other
and act on what we hear.
Be with us, Lord.
Amen.

Gather

Choose a quiet or active way to begin your session.

What's going on?

Show the group the painting
'Reconciliation' by Ni-nig or a photograph
of the sculpture entitled 'Reconciliation'
outside Coventry Cathedral (links on )
and ask the children to describe what
they think might be going on in the
artwork.

Friendship tag

Play a game of 'tag' by asking someone
to be 'it' and 'tag' the other children
gently as they move around the room.
If a child is caught, they must stand still
until another player comes and shakes
their hand to set them free. You could
add saying 'sorry' as you shake hands
to emphasise the idea of mending
relationships.

Open the Word

Present the reading Open the Bible at Matthew 18.15-20

Jesus teaches us how to deal with someone who upsets us.

Choose from these two ways of telling the story.

Sounds/actions Whenever the phrase 'don't listen' or 'won't listen' occurs in the story, ask all the children to cover their ears and make a 'la la la la' noise. Read the story a second time and invite them to invent sounds and actions for the rest of the story.

Mime Ask two children to volunteer to mime. Invite them to stand at opposite sides of the space and act as if they have fallen out. As the story is read, ask child A to approach child B on their own. When the disciples ask, 'What if they don't listen?' child A can move back to where they started. Next, choose two other children to go with child A at the appropriate point in the story towards child B and then return; then when the 'whole church' is mentioned, the whole group moves with child A towards child B on the opposite side of the room. Finish reading the story and ask everyone to stand together in the middle, shaking hands and smiling at one another.

'Imagine,' said Jesus, with his disciples gathered about him, 'that somebody in the church has done something to upset you.' The disciples had just been asking about who was the most important in the church, and Jesus had shocked them by saying it was the children. Now he was teaching them about relationships.

Jesus continued, 'Speak to the person alone and tell them what they've done wrong. If they listen, you'll have solved the problem and got a brother or sister back.'

'What if they don't listen?' the disciples asked.

'Take along one or two other people, who can hear what you say to one another,' Jesus replied. 'If the person still won't listen, then tell the whole church what has happened. If they won't even listen to the church, then that person is not like a brother or sister to you. They are like a Gentile or a tax collector, and you shouldn't treat them as family.'

Jesus told the disciples that they would be the ones making judgements in the church. 'You are in charge of deciding what is forbidden and what is allowed now. Whatever you forbid on earth, will also be forbidden in heaven. Whatever you allow on earth, will be allowed in heaven. And remember, if two of you agree when you ask for something on earth, my Father in heaven will give it to you.' Looking at the group listening to him, Jesus said, 'Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.'



Glossary

Gentile the name that Jews give to non-Jews; **tax collector** tax collectors were Jews who worked for the Romans, collecting money from their own people. This meant they were seen as traitors.

Talk together

- Why do you think Jesus tells us that the whole church should be involved if two people can't sort a problem out?
- Have you ever fallen out with a friend? What did you do about it?
- What things can we do to help everyone get along with one another?

For very young children

Play and explore building community.

Play materials: toys and construction sets that link together.

Storytelling

Gather the children in a circle and ask them to copy your actions as you tell the story:

Jesus was talking to his friends.

He said, 'If anyone does anything that makes you feel sad (*make sad face*) ask them to stop. (*hold up hand*)

If they don't listen (*cup ear with hand*) then ask some other people to come and talk to them (*beckon to someone else*) and make things right again.' (*shake hands*)

Jesus said that this helps make the church work:

'If two or three people come together to share my love (*hold hands around circle*) then I will be there.' (*place candle in centre*)

Play

Provide some play figures and buildings, including a toy or model church. Talk about how we can share God's love at church, and Jesus will be there, but also that we can meet in many other places and still share God's love.

Create

Invite each child to decorate a strip of paper using art materials. Then make them into a paper chain to represent those gathered in Jesus' name in your group today.

Praise

Give each child a battery-operated tealight to hold or place in front of them. Play or sing 'Be still, for the presence of the Lord' (link on [WEB](#)) and encourage the children to watch their flame.

Pray

Dear God,
thank you for being with us at (*insert name of group*) today.
Please help us to share your love,
and to build up our love for each other.
Amen.

Find more prayers opposite and additional activities on the next page.

[WEB](#) Very young children page with more activities, prayers and songs.

Explore & respond

Select ideas to help children connect the Bible reading and their lives. [WEB](#) Templates and links to online resources. Spiritual styles (as defined by David Csinos) key: **W**ord, **E**motion, **S**ymbol, **A**ction. Find out more [WEB](#) in *Worship and learning support*.

Do

Don't get mad, be forgiving 5 mins **E S**

Play and think about 'putting things right'

You will need: a simple balance scale (you can make this by hanging a yoghurt pot off either side of a wire coat hanger and hanging it on a rail), different sized stones.

- Place a big stone in one side of the balance scale and challenge the children to add stones to the other side to make it balance.
- Talk about how difficult this is, and how the easiest way to balance the scale would be to take all the stones away.
- It's like this when someone does something that upsets us – trying to take revenge will never achieve balance. Forgiveness is the only way to put things right.

Pairs quiz 10 mins **W E**

Think about what it means to be responsible for one another in community

You will need: age-appropriate quiz questions for your group (link on [WEB](#)), a score sheet, some pre-prepared forfeits.

- Divide everyone into pairs for a quiz. In this quiz, each person's score depends on their partner.
- If someone's partner gets a question right, they will score a point. If their partner gets the question wrong, they will have to do a forfeit, e.g. stand on one leg for one minute.
- Discuss with the children what it felt like scoring or doing a forfeit based on someone else's performance. Talk about our actions affecting other people in the communities we are part of.

Building up a team 10 mins **W E**

Work together as a team

You will need: equipment for your chosen game.

- Play a team game, such as football, rounders or hockey. This would also work with a really simple game, e.g. balloon volleyball. Brief the teams on the game's rules.
- Afterwards, ask each team to discuss what helped 'build up' the team. How did they encourage one another? How did they deal with something that went wrong? Then discuss whether this is the same as being part of a community: what is different from being in a team? What is the same?

Make

Beauty from brokenness 10 mins **E S**

Make a symbol of restored relationships

You will need: a pack of different coloured paper, glue.

- Give each child a different coloured piece of paper. Ask them to think of times they have been wronged or upset by other people, and to tear a piece off their paper for each one.
- As they do this, begin to gather everyone's torn pieces of paper together.
- When everyone has reflected on how others have upset or hurt them and ripped up their paper, ask the children to work together, using all the pieces of paper to create a mosaic of something beautiful, e.g. a flower, a heart or a butterfly.
- After they have finished, talk with the children about how beautiful things can come from dealing with things that have upset us. Ask: have you ever experienced something like that?

Pray

Together again 5 mins **E S A**

Pray for relationships that need mending

You will need: zips (available from craft or sewing shops).

- Give each child half of a zip and ask them to find its 'partner' to put it together again. First, demonstrate how this works.
- Wait until everyone has found the matching zip and then, as they zip it up, say a simple prayer, e.g. When we hurt or upset one another, help us, God, to come together again. **Amen.**

More prayers are on p.6.

Sing

[WEB](#) Abbreviations and music links* in *Hymns, songs & music*.

Under 5s God loves you, and I love you
This little light of mine

Under 12s I am the church! You are the church!
The Spirit lives to set us free

12+ Rend Collective, Build Your Kingdom Here on *Rend Collective (Homemade Worship Album)**
We really want to thank you, Lord

Songs from Same Boat Music

[WEB](#) As One

See www.rootsontheweb.com

Children's Sheet and Colouring Sheet (Welsh versions available).

Send out

Live your faith

Encourage the children to put their faith into action. Use the idea below or give out the **Children's Sheet** [WEB](#).

Think of a friend you don't talk to much any more, and make an effort to speak to them this week. **E A**

Visit www.rootsontheweb.com/sample to see the week's online materials

ROOTS YOUNG PEOPLE

Go to www.rootsontheweb.com for all templates, links and images. Find Bible notes and more prayers on p.6. Use the BIBLE section below first, then choose activities from the other sections. Extra ideas can be found in *Explore & respond* opposite.

BIBLE Matthew 18.15-20

Warm up 5 mins W E

Create a shared story. First, offer a starter such as, 'John had really upset Jane, so she...' Invite each person to add the next line of the story, ending each line with 'so he...' or 'so she...' until everyone has had a turn, or the story has run its course.

Good advice 10 mins W E

Give each young person a copy of the passage and a highlighter pen. Ask them to read the passage and highlight anything Jesus says that they believe is good advice. Share the pieces of good advice with one another. Ask: why does this seem good? Does everyone agree?

Questions to discuss

- Why would Jesus need to talk about how to deal with someone who does wrong within the church community?
- Why might Jesus believe it is best to 'have it out' with someone rather than ignoring the problem?
- What do you think it means when Jesus says that he will be there when two or three gather in his name?

CONNECT

Appreciate me 10 mins W E

Watch the scene 'Appreciate me' from the film *The Breakup* [12A] (link on [WEB](#)). In this clip, Gary let Brooke down by failing to turn up at a concert, and she tells him face to face how this made her feel. Discuss the clip with the young people and ask: what changed between them when she confronted him? What could have happened if she had decided to do nothing?

Speak up 15 mins W E A

Provide access online or print out some stories for the group about people who spoke up against others in their community they believed were doing wrong (link on [WEB](#)). Discuss together the young people's reactions to these people and their actions. How did they make a difference? What types of wrongdoing can occur in the communities we are part of, e.g. church, school, friends, family, country? What action would you be prepared to take?

[WEB](#) PostScript: Linking this week's reading to the news .

Listen

[WEB](#) See *Young People* page or *Hymns, songs & music* for links to these tracks.

Hold Me Together, Royal Tailor on *Black & White*
Rescuer (Good News), Rend Collective on *Good News*
We Will Stand Our Ground, Kingdom Heirs on *We Will Stand Our Ground*

EXPLORE

Role play 10 mins E


Ask the young people to form groups of two or three. Then ask them to come up with a scenario where one person has caused disharmony in a group, e.g. sports team, after-school club, friendship group. Ask the others to role-play how they would approach them in dealing with it.

Fitting together 10 mins E S A

Cut out person shapes from the template (see [WEB](#)), giving the young people one each, and a pen. Ask everyone to write on their person shape an action or quality that helps a community to get along well or builds them up. Work together as a whole group to join all the people shapes into one cohesive pattern.



Picture pointers [WEB](#)

Questions for reflection 

- ▶ How well does this ordered pattern represent your community?
- ▶ What holds your community together?
- ▶ If your community was a hive, who are the bees? The drones? Where do you go for nectar?

PRAY

Unfriended 5 mins E S

Gather the young people in a circle. Invite everyone to picture in their mind someone they have 'unfriended' or 'unfollowed' on social media, and to spend time praying for that person and for their relationship with them.

Praying the psalm 10 mins W S

Give each young person a copy of Psalm 119.33-40 and some colouring pens. Play some quiet instrumental music and give time for everyone to read the psalm and select just one verse from it that stands out to them as something they would like to pray about. Invite them to underline, illustrate or doodle that verse, or to repeat it silently.

Live your faith

Think of a friend who you have upset or who has upset you. Make an effort this week to get in touch with them and put things right. **E A**

Visit www.rootsontheweb.com/sample to see the week's online materials