

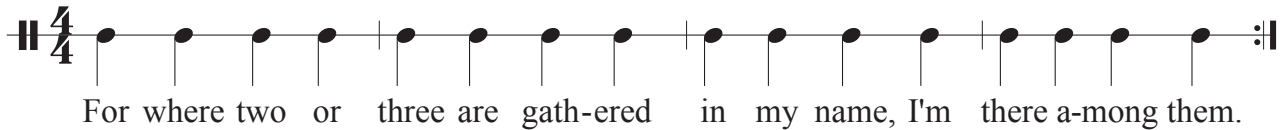


Community

Not just I - but we - are created in God's image.
It takes all of us working together to be God's hands,
God's heartbeat,
God's song in the world.



Bible Beat: **Matthew 18:20**



Songs: **"The Church Is a Community"** and **"The Heart-Song of God"**



Treasure of Nature: **Leaf**



Art Experience: **Tangrams**



Game: **Herding Balloons**

Materials You'll Need:

- Leaf
- Tangram template
- Scissors
- Tangram example page
- Balloons
- Masking tape
- Cardstock sheets
- Song page for "The Heart-Song of God"



Treasure of Nature: Leaf

Hand each person a leaf (or find one outside).

Say:

Gently hold your leaf. Notice the shape of it.

Just as people have organs, like the stomach or the heart, plants have organs, too.

The leaf is the most important organ of a plant or tree.

Leaves take in carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to help the plants grow.

And leaves are very important to us because they release oxygen, which we need to breathe.

Without plants and trees...and their leaves...we couldn't breathe.

Listen to these words from Job 33, verse 4 –

The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life.

Now let's sit in silence. Breathe in and out gently. As you hold the leaf, wonder at how every breath is a gift from God.

After a few moments of silence, pray (the children can echo):

Loving God,
Thank you for plants and trees,
and for your holy breath in us.
Amen.



Tangrams

Materials: tangram template sheet, scissors, tangram example page

Background:

Each tangram consists of seven pieces. In Chinese, a tangram is called Chi-Chiao, which means "seven clever pieces." (Seven pieces, seven days of Creation. *Hmmm...*)

Of those seven pieces, five are triangles.

(The triangle is a powerful symbol in our faith – it symbolizes the Holy Trinity of God the Creator, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. *Hmmm...*)

What to Do:

Give each person a tangram template sheet and a pair of scissors.

Have each person cut out their tangram along the lines.

Allow everyone a few minutes to experiment with designs they can create using the seven pieces.
(No combining sets!)

Show the tangram example page of designs that can be made with the tangram pieces and challenge them to recreate these pictures.

See if they can put the seven pieces back together into a square. Note that when you take one piece away, the square is incomplete.

It's the same way with God's Creation. To leave out or eliminate one creature is to render God's Creation incomplete.



Players: 1 or more

What You Need: Balloons (4-5 balloons per person), masking tape, cardstock, watch/timer

How to Play:

Blow up several balloons.

Make a 4x4 foot square on the floor with masking tape.

Tip: If you don't want to put tape on your floor, use a hula hoop or jump rope.

Scatter the balloons around the room.

Give each person a sheet of cardstock.

Tip: A manila envelope or folder (without hooks) will also work.

On your signal, everyone must use their cardstock to "herd" the balloons into the square.

But here's the catch, they are not allowed to touch the balloons in any way – neither with their bodies nor with the cardstock.

Time it to see how long it takes to get all the balloons into the square.

Try again and see if you can beat your previous time!

This is harder than it sounds. Taking care of all the creatures in the garden was also probably harder than it sounds. Have you heard the expression, "It's like herding cats..."? Imagine having the responsibility of caring for *all* of God's Creation!



Family Worship

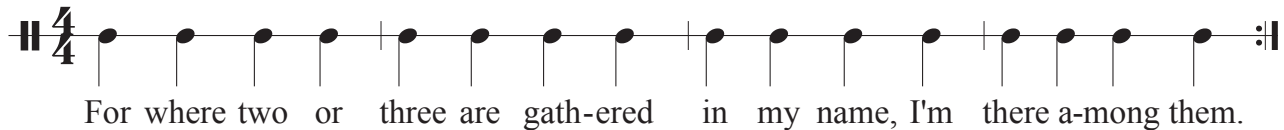
Opening Song: "The Church Is a Community"

This is the only song not from the musical *In the Image*. But it's super simple, and perfect for today's theme. The words are set to the tune of *The Farmer in the Dell*.

The building's not the church,
The building's not the church.
The church is a community.
The building's not the church.

2. The pews are not the church...
3. The robes are not the church...
4. The people ARE the church...

Say and Play the Bible Beat: Matthew 18:20



Bible Story: The Early Believers

Based on Acts 2:43-47; Acts 4:32-37

Today's Bible story takes place after Jesus went into heaven. As I read in rhythm, you pat a steady beat. And after every four lines we'll all say in rhythm –

Together. Together. We'll be the church together. *Practice once or twice.*

Ready? Here we go!

The followers of Jesus
Took care of one another.
They treated those around them
Like a sister or a brother.

Together. Together. We'll be the church together.

They sold all their possessions.
They had no need for "stuff."
They shared with those in need
And found they always had enough.

Together. Together. We'll be the church together.

They spent good time together.
Their hearts were full of love.
They ate and prayed and offered praises
To the Lord above.
Together. Together. We'll be the church together.

When others saw their kindness,
They knew just what to do.
They joined with the believers
And their numbers grew and grew.
Together. Together. We'll be the church together.

Let's follow their example
Not just by what we say,
But how we *reach out* to the people
We see every day.
Together. Together. We'll be the church together.

Those early believers didn't meet in big buildings with stained glass, or pipe organs, or screens, or guitars. *They* were the church. They each did what they could to love and support one another and the communities where they lived. And we can do that, too. Even though we can't all be together physically in one place – we can still do our part to *be* the church!

Prayer Experience: God's Hands

In our first worship time, we looked at our own hands and considered how we could use them to create beauty, love, and kindness in God's world. We remember that we are created in the image of God.

Let's each look at our hands once more.

Allow a few seconds.

Now, let's raise up our hands together.

Look around.

This is what God's hands really look like – not just one set of hands, but *all* of our hands working together. It's all of us doing what we can *together* that truly makes us in the image of God.

Keep your hands in the air as you repeat each line of the following prayer.

**Creator God,
Thank you for creating me.
Please bless these hands
to be a creative force for good
in your amazing world.
Amen.**

Joys and Concerns

Offer everyone a chance to share something they want to celebrate (i.e. a birthday, a loose tooth, a yummy meal), and something that's causing anxiety (i.e. I miss my friends, "Will Nana get sick?")

Encourage everyone to be present and listen to one another.

After a concern is voiced, people can respond by singing the last phrase from the hymn "How Can I Keep from Singing?" –

How can I keep from singing?

After joy is voiced, people can respond by singing the first four notes of Handel's Hallelujah Chorus –
Hallelujah!

Closing Song: The Heart-Song of God