

Theme **Living in harmony**

Object

Use craft sticks to make a fence or a bridge.

Scripture

"If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell him—work it out between the two of you. If he listens, you've made a friend." Matthew 18:15 (The Message) Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. Romans 13:10 (NLT)

Once upon a time, there were two brothers. Their father had a large farm and when he became too old to work, he called his sons to him. "I am too old to work anymore," he said. "I will divide my farm in half and give each of you one half. I know that you will always work together and will be good friends."

When the brothers first started farming on their adjoining farms, they were the best of friends and would share everything together. Then, one day there was an argument between the two brothers and they stopped speaking to one another. For many years, not a word was spoken between them.

One day, one of the brothers was at his house when a carpenter came to his door and said, "I would like to do some work. Do you have any work that I can do?" The brother thought for a moment and then replied, "I would like for you to build a fence on my property. Build it down near the stream there that separates my farm from my brother's. I don't want to see my brother any more and I would like for you to build a high fence there please. I'm going into town and I'll be back this evening.

When he came back that evening, he was shocked to see that the carpenter had not followed his instructions. Instead of building a high fence there, he had built a bridge over the stream. The man walked down to take a look at the bridge, and as he did, his brother walked toward him from the other side. His brother said, "After all the terrible things I've done to you over the years, I can't believe that you would build a bridge and welcome me back." He reached out to his brother and gave him a big hug.

The brother then walked back up to his farmhouse to talk to the carpenter. "Can you stay?" he asked. "I have more work for you to do." The carpenter answered, "I'm sorry but I can't stay. I have to go, for I have many other bridges to build."

Sometimes you and I have a disagreement with our brothers and sisters in Christ. When that happens, we often build a fence between ourselves and them. We stop talking to them. We don't want to see them. We don't want to be around them. That isn't what Jesus wants us to do. Instead of fences, he wants us to build a bridge of love between us.

Dear Father, we know it is your desire for us to live together in peace and harmony. Help us to love one another. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Building Bridges Group Activities

Sermon Title: ["Building Bridges"](#)

Scripture Reading: Matthew 18:15-20

FRIEND CUT OUTS:

Give children half sheets of construction paper. Fold back and forth and then draw a "friend" on the front with the hands straight out. Cut the "friends" out but do NOT cut on the fold where the hands would be. When this is unfolded, all the "friends" should be hooked together, to tape to a wall or on a poster about today's lesson and write MAKE A FRIEND.... LOVE AND FORGIVE!

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS:

Draw and cut out "friends" and form the cut-outs in a circle with hands touching to hold hands. Glue onto a large poster board or individual construction paper posters. Write FRIENDS LOVE AND FORGIVE - Matthew 18:15b

FRIENDSHIP BRACELETS:

Give each child 3 different colors of yarn or colored string and help them braid them together to make a bracelet to fit their wrist and tie loosely. If time allows, let children make a second bracelet to give to a FRIEND!

FRIENDS BANNER:

Let children go to the wall with a long empty banner taped to it. Let each child draw a few stick figure "friends" on the banner and write names on each friend. With bright neon markers, the teacher can write LOVE AND FORGIVENESS around the edges!

FRIENDS SNACK BAG:

Give each child a white or brown lunch bag. Tear the top 1/3 (approx) of the bag off. Tape two thin strips of construction paper to the bag for handles. Give children some markers and stickers to decorate their FRIEND BAG. Children can write on their bags, "FRIENDS SHOULD ALWAYS LOVE AND FORGIVE". The teacher can have several bowls of various small snacks. Let children take one snack from each container to put in their "friends bag". Encourage children to give their bag to a friend. Then let children take a few candies/treats for themselves to enjoy before leaving class!

MAGNETIC FRIEND:

Let children draw and cut out a picture "friend" picture on heavy posterboard. Give pieces of cloth to glue on for a shirt, etc. Let children glue some yarn around the head for hair and color their "friend". Attach a magnet to the back of the "friend". If children would like to add a "sign", they can tape a toothpick to the hand of their cut out "friend" and attach/tape on a small sign to the toothpick that says FRIENDS LOVE AND FORGIVE.

Song: "Did You Think to Pray" by Wm. O. Perkins (adapted)

[Words and Music](#) (pdf)

[MP3](#) Accompaniment Track

Song: "Love One Another" by Charles Kirkpatrick

[Words and Music](#) (pdf)

[MP3](#) Accompaniment Track

One Plus One Equals Three

Theme

When we are gathered in Jesus' name, He will be there with us.

Object

A set of flash cards which you will make yourself.

Scripture

"For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." Matthew 18:20 [NIV]

It is back to school time! All around the world, children have either already started back to school or they will very soon. As a teacher, I can tell you that one thing that is very important for a teacher is to find out what their students already know. That way, they will know where they should start in teaching them what they should know.

I was wondering if it would be a good idea for our Sunday School teachers to give a little quiz to find out how much their students know about the Bible? As an experiment, I made up a sample quiz to try out on you this morning. Are you ready? If you know the answer, raise your hand.

How many of each animal did Moses take on the ark with him? (allow time for answers)
Let's turn the card over and check our answer. "None!" I thought the answer was two. Oh, that's right, it was Noah that built the ark, not Moses.

Here is question number two. Are automobiles mentioned in the Bible? Let's check our answer. "Yes, in Acts 2:1" Let's see what it says in Acts 2:1. . . "When the day of Pentecost was come, they were all in one accord." Hey! I don't think it is talking about a Honda Accord automobile there!

Those first two questions were trick questions, weren't they? Well, I promise you that the next question is not a trick question. Here it is: According to the Bible, can one plus one ever equal three? Let's check our answer. "Yes!" How can that be? The answer is in the Bible. Jesus said, "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." Oh, I see, if two are gathered in Jesus' name, Jesus is there with them — so one plus one equals three.

Look around this room. I'm not sure exactly how many people are here this morning, but whatever the number is, you can add One to it, because Jesus is here too.

Dear Jesus, we thank you for being here with us this morning as we gather together to worship in your name. Amen

One Plus One Equals Three

Group Activities

Sermon Title: ["One Plus One Equals Three"](#)

Scripture Reading: Matthew 18:15-20

CHAIN OF THREE:

Children will divide into groups of 3 and as the teacher tells the groups what to do, they will continue in that activity until the whistle blows and then the children will change ONE person of their group with another child from another group and then do another activity as the teacher tells them to. Continue as time allows. Activities for the groups of 3 to do could be hopping, skipping, jumping, climbing, etc but the children cannot disconnect while doing the activities in their groups of 3 until its time to change partners.

THREE LEGGED RACES:

The children can pair up in teams of two and use a string or scarf to tie two of their legs together as they stand next to each other. Then teams will RUN in a race to the finish line and back. If the teacher doesn't want to do this as a race, the children can just run or walk together in an area while the teacher plays music, etc.

RUNNING CIRCLE:

All the children can run around an area until the teacher blows the whistle. When they hear the whistle, they'll quickly get into a circle around one of the words on the floor that says JESUS. These colorful words that say JESUS in very large letters can be placed in various areas of the designated area (even outside on a large parking lot if available. When children are in a circle around the JESUS word, they will recite today's Bible verse. Continue to play the game of RUNNING CIRCLE as time allows.

2 X 2:

Children will be divided into groups of 2 and will hunt for the word JESUS on many different items (such as a book, a chair, a door). When each group of 2 find the word JESUS, they they will have their "2 + 1" group and will recite today's Bible verse and then run to find another word JESUS and do the same. Let children hunt several times before returning to the classroom table.

BALL BOUNCING X 3:

Children can throw a ball against the side of the building or a wall that is approved to do this activity and then let it bounce just THREE times only and then catch. The teacher can

make many variations to this game but mostly just remember to let the children know that the number THREE is very important in today's lesson.

1 + 1 = 3 BANNER:

Give all the children a piece of construction paper and markers, stickers and glitter to make a large banner with $1 + 1 = 3$ in the middle and words from today's lesson around the edges and hang on the classroom wall or in areas of the church or learning area. Make sure children have printed today's Bible verse on their banner in the area of their choice.

JESUS BADGE OR BUTTON:

Children can be given supplies to make a round circle to write, JESUS AND ME IS A MAJORITY, or $1 + 1 = 3$, or today's Bible verse. Tape or hot glue a safety pin to the back for children to wear on their shirt. Children will enjoy coloring their button or badge as well.

FOLD OUT CHILDREN:

Children can fold a piece of construction paper 4 times and then trace and cut out the outline of a person - without cutting on the folded areas so that the 'children-cutout' will be hooked together when unfolded. Tell children to make sure there are 3 children hooked together to remind them of today's lesson and Bible verse. Children can add faces and buttons on 2 cut outs and write JESUS in bright colors on the 3rd cutout.

FINGERPRINTS X 3:

Give children ink pads and construction paper with today's Bible verse printed at the top or for children to write on the top of the paper. Then children will make finger prints in groups of 3, all around the piece of paper. Children may, if desired, use a pen or thin marker to add hair, arms, legs and face to their fingerprints.

STICKERS IN 3:

Children will enjoy working together for a large poster board of stickers. Title the poster board with today's Bible verse. Each child will be given 3 identical stickers to place together on the poster board. They will take turns going to the board to place their stickers in one area and trying to recite today's Bible verse. Then the next child will place their stickers in another area and recite the Bible verse. Continue for all children to have their turn.

SING A SONG:

I HAVE DECIDED TO FOLLOW JESUS; JESUS LOVES ME; JESUS LOVES THE LITTLE CHILDREN

SHARE A SNACK:

Give the children 3 lollipops or other such candies or pencils, etc, that could be tied together with a string or ribbon and handed out to children as they leave the classroom.

Song: "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"

[Words and Music](#) (pdf)

[MP3](#) Accompaniment Track

Song: "Jesus Loves Me"

[Words and Music](#) (pdf)

[MP3](#) Accompaniment Track

Don't Get Even

[Print](#)

Theme

Resolving conflicts with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Object

A simple balance scale and some stones of different sizes. (See sermon below)

Scripture

"If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell him -- work it out between the two of you. If he listens, you've made a friend." Matthew 18:15 (The Message)

Look what I have. Do you know what this is? It is a balance scale . It is used to compare things to see which is heavier. If you can get items that weigh exactly the same, the two sides of the scale will be even. Let me show you. (Put a stone in one of the cups and then the other using stones of different sizes.) Are the cups even? No, let's try putting another stone in this cup. Are they even now? No, now this side is too heavy. (Continue for a few minutes making sure that the two sides are never even.) It is really hard to get the two sides even, isn't it?

Has anyone ever said something that hurt your feelings? Sure they have! Perhaps you were playing with a friend and he called you a name. What did that make you want to do? Did it make you want to get even by calling your friend a name? Do you know what? That is just like trying to balance these scales -- you never get even! He calls you a name and so you call him a name. He doesn't like that so he calls you another name and on and on the name-calling goes. You never get even!

I have heard people say, "Don't get mad; get even." Think about the balance scale. We saw how hard it is to get even, so here's a better idea, "Don't get even; get ahead." How do you do that? Well, let me explain. In our Bible reading today, Jesus says, "If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell him -- work it out between the two of you. If he listens, you've made

a friend." Now that's what I call "getting ahead." If we try to get even, we will lose a friend, but if we forgive someone, we will make a friend!

Jesus did not call us to be his disciples to make other people pay for their sins by hurting them back. Instead, he told us to do what he did -- love them and forgive them. Sometimes that is very hard to do, but we can do it if we ask Jesus to help us.

Father, when someone hurts us, give us a forgiving spirit to talk to them and try to resolve the conflict rather than to try get even by hurting them back. Help us to love and forgive others as you have loved and forgiven us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

[Balance Scale Plans](#)

Dont Get Even Group Group Activities

Interactive Group Activities
by Carol Williams

Sermon Title: ["Don't Get Even"](#)

Scripture Reading: Matthew 18:15-20

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"BALANCE" PICTURE: Give children a picture of a scale or have them draw a scale balance and write LOVE and FORGIVENESS on the scale, with names of their friends, around the spaces in their scale picture!

FRIENDS BANNER: Let children go to the wall with a long empty banner taped to it. Let each child draw a few stick figure "friends" on the banner and write names on each friend. With bright neon markers, the teacher can write LOVE AND FORGIVENESS around the edges!

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