

ROUNDabout

Summer 2008



The newsletter for Gather 'Round leaders

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Peace is fundamental to our Brethren and Mennonite understandings of the Biblical message. Often we think of peace as a particularly New Testament theme, but this summer we will explore perspectives on peace and peacemaking from the Old Testament as well as the New. Children and adults alike will enjoy the creative ways our writers present both familiar and unfamiliar stories.

Gather 'Round is offering three resources to help your entire congregation worship together and learn about peace this summer. Read more about the Youth/Junior Youth Summer Supplement and our free summer worship resources in the column on the opposite side of this page.

The Talkabout, as always, is an aid for family faith talk on the weekly Bible themes. This quarter the suggestions are printed on multi-colored origami-style paper and come with instructions for folding peace cranes or peace doves. (The doves are easier for younger and craft-impaired people like me).

Think about a special way to use the cranes, such as encouraging families to bring their cranes in to church week by week for display in the sanctuary or fellowship room.

Enjoy this special unit on peacemaking—a skill so desperately needed in our world today.

—Anna Speicher, Director and Editor

Peace be with you

During the summer quarter, Gather 'Round will engage your congregation in stories of peacemaking. Under the theme “The Things That Make for Peace,” you will explore instructions for peaceful living from Moses, Jesus, Paul, and James. You will learn how Abigail, Isaac, and Elisha averted conflict with creative resolution. You will even learn how to dress for peace!

Peacemaking is an important theme in Anabaptist theology. The stories and activities in this quarter can equip the children, youth, and families in your church to make a real difference in a world torn apart by violence and war.

New youth supplement

This summer there is a new resource being offered for high school and junior high school youth. In response to user requests, a Youth/Junior Youth Summer Supplement will be available. It is designed to be used in conjunction with either *Connect* (the Parent/Caregiver guide) or the Multiage Teacher's Guide, whichever is most appropriate for your group.

The supplement includes suggestions for reading and presenting Bible stories, “Connect to the Story” activities, and “Responding” options. Each session also includes a page that is reproducible for each participant in the class. The supplement is available either as a download or on CD. Please purchase one CD or download for each class you offer.

Summer worship resources

Also available this quarter are special worship resources based on Gather 'Round sessions. These are available free of charge: look for them at www.gatherround.org in the “For users” section.

Use these resources in congregation worship throughout the summer and consider holding a special worship service at the end of the quarter.

Ideas for summer programming

Congregations vary in summer programming. For some, it's Sunday school as usual. For others summer is a time to change the routine. Check page 101 of the Gather 'Round Handbook for creative ideas for summer Christian education opportunities.

KUDOS FOR MY BIBLE STORYBOOK

I love that the [Preschool] stories are in one booklet for the children to take home at the end of the quarter! My son is in the class and we reread the stories from past quarters before bed.

—Rebecca, Akron, Ohio

Thank you, evaluators!

Each quarter, a number of Gather 'Round teachers fill out and return the evaluation forms found at the back of each teacher's guide—or online at www.gatherround.org. If you've turned in an evaluation recently, we'd like to sincerely thank you. Your feedback is very helpful to the Gather 'Round project staff. Several key changes have already taken place as a direct result of user comments. If you haven't filled out an evaluation recently, we invite you to do so soon.

If you're a superintendent or pastor rather than a teacher, you can help us too. Remind teachers in your congregation of the importance of evaluating. Make it easier for them by emailing a link to the online form, or by offering to collect and return paper forms on their behalf. Suggest a deadline for completing evaluation, or ask teachers to gather and share their feedback with each other as they fill out the form. Encourage teachers to evaluate at least once or twice a year. Thank you for supporting Gather 'Round curriculum in this way.

Telling the Bible story

If you invite older youth, young adults, or adults to take a turn at teaching a session during the summer, it might be a good idea to give them some tips for telling the Bible story. Chapter 8 of the Handbook offers a wealth of suggestions for learning the Bible story, different ideas for telling the story, and more ideas for engaging the class members in relating the story. Share this information from pages 106-110 with your new and seasoned teachers. Encourage teachers to take the time to present the Bible story well. After all, understanding the Biblical story and connecting it with daily life is an important goal of our teaching program

**HANDBOOK
NUGGET**

Copy and distribute to
all teachers and leaders.

PDF at:
www.gatherround.org

Summer 2008 Talkabout

The **Talkabout**, a quarterly resource for families, relates to each Gather 'Round session. Brief scripture readings, activity and discussion ideas, and short prayers help parents and children talk about faith every day. Order one for each family with children in Sunday school.



www.gatherround.org

Free sample sessions,
Bible texts, and more at
www.gatherround.org

