



Workshop Outline (90 minutes)

Advance Preparations

- Learn the songs from the CD “Come gather 'round,” and/or “Peace Be with You.”
- Write lyrics on newsprint.
- Assemble supplies and set up an attractive display.

Supplies:

- *Gather 'Round* Sample Kit
- Bible
- Hymnal (optional)
- Promotional brochures (to hand out)
- Faith Wheel (to hand out)
- Session outline or sample session (using a Teacher's Guide)
- *Talkabout*
- Price Sheet (to hand out or refer to)
- Copies of the foundation documents (for leader reference and in case someone asks for one: point people to website and the applicable section of the Handbook)
- Music CD, CD player, or musician/instrument
- Poster with lyrics for any song the group is going to sing together
- Easel and newsprint, if desired
- Items for display (worship center ideas)
- Forms to complete for publishers

Session Outline

1. **Gathering** (5 minutes)

- As people arrive, greet them warmly and introduce yourself.
- When most have gathered, play the gathering song from the CD, “Come Gather 'Round” and invite people to take their seats.

2. **Welcome** and introduction of seminar (10 minutes)

- Introduce presenter(s).
- Introduce the format for the event (or post the agenda on the easel, with times)
- If the group is small, invite participants to give their name, congregation, and position in their church (teacher, pastor, Sunday school superintendent, etc.)
- If the group is large ask for a show of hands from the group in answer to these questions:
Raise your hand/stand if you
* are or have been a children's Sunday school teacher

- * are presently the Christian education coordinator
- * are a pastor
- * are a parent, grandparent or caregiver of a child ages 3 to 18
- * are teaching or have used the Jubilee curriculum in your congregation.

3. **Biblical Foundations** (10 minutes)

Read the *Gather 'Round* theme scripture aloud, preferably from a NRSV Bible.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 NRSV

This scripture text conveys some of the most basic hopes and expectations of the *Gather 'Round* curriculum: that we help children and adults learn to know and love God; that we give parents and other adults tools to help them nurture their children's faith formation; that we carry our awareness of God into every dimension of our lives, and particularly, that we strengthen the connection between church and home.

Two other New Testament scriptures are particularly meaningful:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.

Luke 10:27

For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.

Matthew 18:20

These Bible texts are at the core of our curriculum. It is the scripture that forms and nurtures us in becoming followers of Jesus who know and love God, who interpret God's word, who belong to God's gathered community, and who share God's good news.

Gather 'Round is about loving God with heart, soul, mind, and strength. It's about loving our neighbor, and being faithful followers of Jesus Christ. It's about equipping children, youth and adults to hear and share the gospel in word and deed, living and loving with justice and compassion.

Prayer:

God of love

*Light a flame of love in our hearts to you,
A flame of love to our families and friends,
A flame of love to our neighbors,
A flame of love to our enemies.*

*Light a flame of love in our hearts to all,
From the lowliest thing that lives,
To the Name that is highest of all. Amen.*

(From *Sing the Journey*, 121 Used with permission of Faith & Life Resources)

Song: "If all you want" (*Hymnal. A Worship Book*, 512)

4. **Through a Sample Session** (25 minutes)

Distribute GR Brochure and session outline (or a Teacher's Guide) and walk through it. This will be a point of reference for all information. Highlight these things:

The Session Plan

- *Gather 'Round* provides curriculum units for 7 different age groups, preschool through adult, including a Multiage unit, a youth unit, and a parent/caregiver unit. All follow the same general format outlined here:
- Every session for children and youth begins and ends with a prayer or meditation for the teacher; in the case of Parent/Caregiver, these sections are for all participants) (*Opening to God, Pondering and Praying*)
- Each unit has the same *Bible story summary*, a memory jog for those who know the story, a capsule version of the story for those who don't. Sometimes an age group will only use part of the story, and if that is the case, then that part of the story will also be summarized.
- The *Faith Focus* states the main point of the text for a particular age group. Each element in the session should point back to the *Faith Focus*.
- The *Bible Insight* essay provides historical and theological context for the Bible story. These essays are written by commissioned Bible scholars.
- *Gather 'Round* is an opening that brings the group together, flowing into a worship ritual. We encourage teachers to think of the entire session as part of a worshipful experience.
- Every session provides a place to teach the memory verse, or part of it. Placement varies, as does the method of teaching.
- Every session is based on the reading or faithful retelling of a Bible story (*Hear the Bible story*). All age groups study the same Bible story each Sunday although they may stress different aspects of the story.
- Each session has suggestions for helping that age group understand and think about the story (*Reflect on the story*). These are often in the form of questions or wondering statements. We encourage teachers to create space for silent, personal reflection on these questions. Verbal sharing is also appropriate and helpful, but this time is not seen as a "discussion" (and definitely not a debate).
- Each session has suggestions for helping that age group make connections from the story to their own lives (*Connect to the story*). This may be a discussion or it may be another type of activity.
- Every session provides options for age appropriate responding activities (*Responding*). Options draw on different ways people learn (multiple intelligences). We encourage teachers to offer all three options or as many as they can, given their group and their resources. Class participants can then choose to do the options they prefer.

- The sessions close with a worship moment/time which may include song, prayer and/or scripture (*Ending and Sending*).
- *Following* the closing is a meditation for the teacher (*Pondering and Praying*). The Parent/Caregiver sessions conclude with a FOR THE LEADER section.

Bible Outlines

- The curriculum is based on a four year Bible outline and will be produced new every year.
- The Bible outlines are posted on the Gather 'Round Website (www.gatherround.org)
- The Bible version used in the memory posters is New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

5. **Multiple Intelligences** (10 minutes)

Distribute or refer to the Faith Wheel.

- Invite participants to turn to the side of the wheel that refers to the ways we learn.
- Ask them to identify two or three intelligences that are more highly developed for them (based on how they prefer to learn about things)
- Option (if time permits): Lead the group in an exercise based on the MI workshop handout.

6. **Curriculum Products** (10 minutes)

Refer to the brochure and/or point out the items from the sample kit.

- All units have a teacher's guide.
- All units except youth have a classroom pack (posters and other material).
- Each student book for the children's units has its own name and look. Student books are kept in the classroom and used in class until the end of each quarter.
- Youth unit, Search, consists of a teacher's guide with reproducible student pieces, available primarily as a downloadable resource (also a CD version).
- For summer quarters, multiage, preschool and parent/caregiver units will be available. There will be no summer guides for Primary, Middler, or Junior Youth.
- Parent/caregiver unit, Connect, has a guide designed for both leaders and participants. It is also suitable for individual use. Connect offers Bible study and discussion of faith nurture issues. It includes daily meditations related to parenting issues to read throughout the following week.
- The Talkabout is designed to sit on the family table, providing tips for reflecting, discussing, acting, and praying on weekly Bible themes. It will have a different look every quarter.
- Music CD. There is one CD per year, geared toward Preschool through Middler, but suitable for all ages. Teacher's guides recommend songs from the CD, as well as from *Hymnal. A Worship Book*, and occasionally from *Hymnal Supplement* (Brethren Press) and *Sing the Journey* (Faith & Life Resources). We recommend that each classroom has a supply of hymnals for use.

7. **Questions and Answers** (15 minutes)

- Refer to the website for reference (If possible, log on to www.gatherround.org.) Encourage participants to check it out on a regular basis.

- Price sheet/order form. Point out the order form that will come on a quarterly basis. The material is not re-usable.
- Refer to the handout, “Talking Points,” for answers to some of the questions that you are sure to get (it is not necessary to give this information unless it is requested).
- If there are questions for which you do not have answers, be sure to get contact information and follow up as soon as possible.

8. Ending and Sending (5 minutes)

- Thank the group for their participation.
- Invite further browsing and informal conversation after the ‘formal’ closing.
- To close, play or sing the song, “Peace Be with You,” from the CD.
- Or use this benediction from Call, (Junior Youth Student Book, 9)

Go now from this place, and know that God’s love surrounds you.

Go now to a new time, and feel God within and beside you.

Go now ...and live as God’s own.

Gather 'Round Training Format Options

The following outlines are designed to give you a framework for training events of different lengths. These are only guidelines. You may choose to alter the suggestions to suit your personal style or to address particular issues.

1. If your presentation is ninety minutes long:
 - Follow the detailed format you were given.

2. If your presentation is one hour long:
 - Gathering and Introduction (5 minutes)
 - Biblical Foundations (10 minutes)
 - Sample Session (20 minutes) – use Brochure
 - Curriculum Products (10 minutes)
 - Questions and Answers (10 minutes)
 - Ending and Sending (5 minutes)

3. If your presentation is three hours long:
 - Gathering and Introductions (10 minutes)
 - Biblical Foundations (10 minutes)
 - Teach a Sample Session (40 minutes)
 - Feedback and review of components of a Sample Session (15 minutes)
 - Multiple Intelligences Introduction and Mini-Workshop (30 minutes)
 - Break (15 minutes)
 - Curriculum Products (15 minutes)
 - Present another mini-workshop (parent-caregiver unit, multiage unit, hearing and sharing workshop, music) (30 minutes)
 - Questions and Answers (10 minutes)
 - Ending and Sending (5 minutes)

4. If your presentation is longer than three hours:
 - Present more mini-workshops
 - Give time for small groups to practice preparing and presenting parts of a session
 - Plan for a worship time that incorporates some of the songs and prayers from the CD and Teacher's Guides.
 - Incorporate the Shema Stations into the section on Biblical Foundations.

5. More Ideas