

Gather Together across Difference

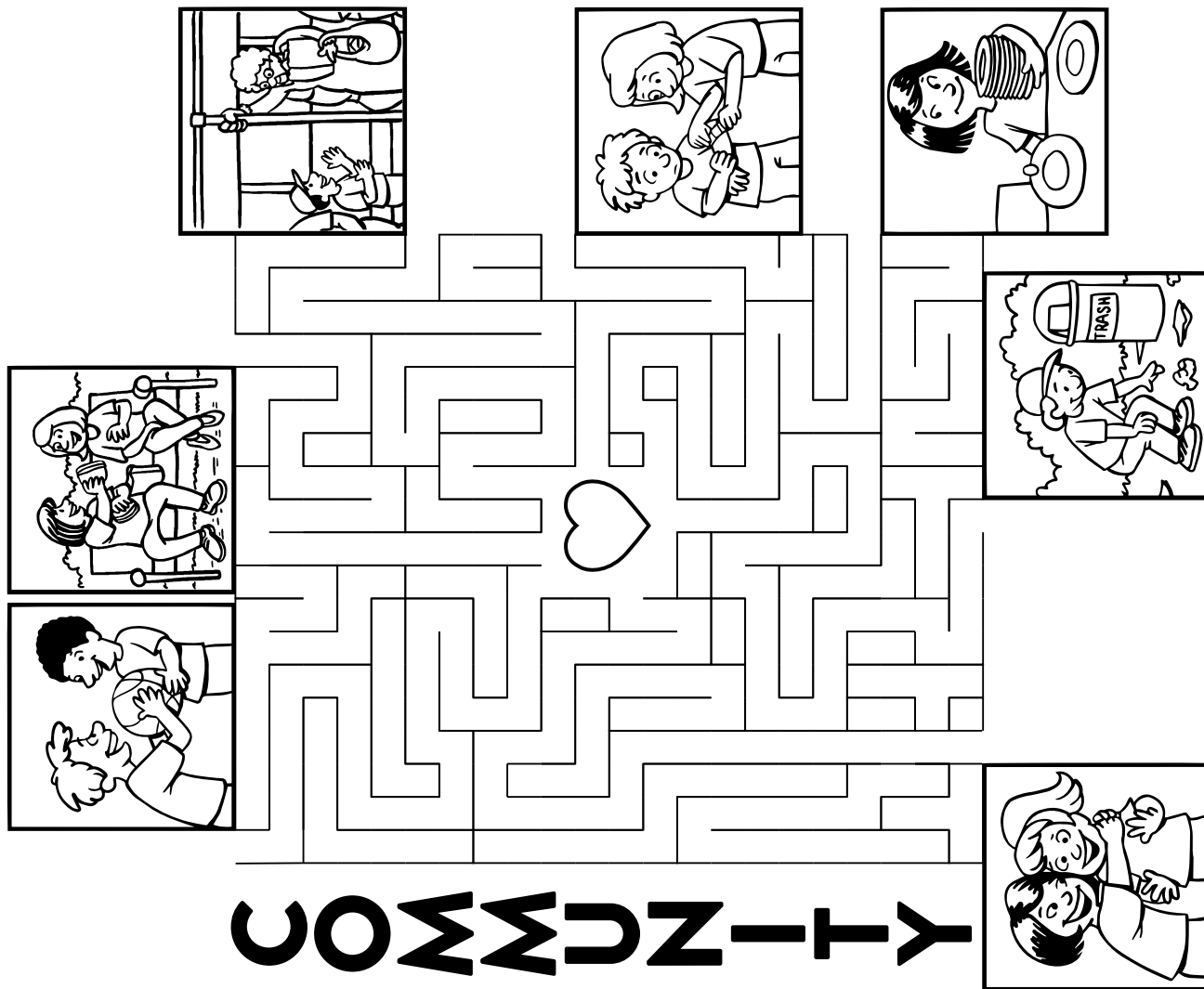
WAYS TO PRACTICE AT HOME

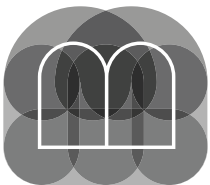
- Before we can live in community, first we must gather. God always calls diverse groups of people together to live in community. Communities are made of different people: different ages, genders, races, and life experiences. The Holy Spirit binds us together across all the differences and divides that exist in our world.
- Your family is a community. Talk together about your differences. Wonder what it would be like if you were all the same; you liked the same foods, you did the same activities, you dressed the same, and so forth. Celebrate your differences by making a meal with a favorite food of each person or spend a day doing each person's favorite activity.
 - Read the book *We Are Together* by Britta Teckentrup (Tiger Tales, 2020) or watch the YouTube video "We Are Together by Britta Teckentrup—Children's picture book read aloud" (bit.ly/FMTogether, 2:44). Wonder together who are the people who are part of your team: who helps you soar, who is with you in the storms, whose voice is with yours, who encourages you, who walks unknown paths with you, who keeps you going, who warms your heart, who is near to you, and who is in your big happy crowd.

Dear God, you call us into community with one another and with you. Thank you for all the diversity we find in our communities. Amen.

Note: [bit.ly](https://bit.ly/FMTogether) addresses are case-sensitive.

There are so many ways to come together as a community. Help all the people unite in the center.





BIBLE STORY

Based on Mark 1:16-20

Jesus loved people and wanted to teach them about God's love. One day, he walked by the sea to find some people to teach and love. Jesus needed these people to help him teach and love even more people.

Jesus walked by a lot of people that day and didn't say anything to them. Then he saw two brothers, Simon and Andrew. They were fishing. Do you think Jesus felt something different about them?

"Come, follow me," Jesus called out to them, "and I'll teach you to gather people together better than you gather fish."

That's all Jesus said. Kinda weird, right? But Simon and Andrew left their fishing stuff and followed. Why do you think they followed?

The three of them walked a little further. They came to two more brothers, James and John. They were fixing their fishing stuff. Jesus called them too, saying, "Come, follow me." James and John left their fishing stuff too. Now Jesus had some people to teach and love. Now Jesus had people to help him teach and love others. A lot of other people would gather together around Jesus as he taught and loved people.

