

BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS!

7-10

BIBLE VERSES: Genesis 26:17–22, Psalm 23, Psalm 122:6-9, John 13:23-27, 1 Peter 3:9-12, Romans 14:19, Ephesians 4:26, Colossians 3:13-15.

The aim of this session is to understand what it means to have inner peace whatever your situation, and to see how we can try to bring peace into other people's lives.

LEADER'S NOTES

Peace. It is the third fruit of the spirit, and should be something that marks us out as different to other people. Peace in the biblical sense of the word is more than a dreamy, "I've had one martini too many and now everything is washing over me" feeling. Peace means feeling calm inside while you deal with the things that are going on around you. Peace means not getting riled up while everyone is arguing around you and the television is on at full blast and you can't finish your maths homework, which was due in yesterday. Peace is not a system of being able to ignore life's problems; it is something that helps you to deal with them properly.

This session has two strands to it: inner peace and how to get it, and being a peacemaker. The two go together – you can't be a peacemaker (that is, bring peace into other people's troubled lives) unless you have peace yourself. There are activities on both strands in each section of the session, so that you can follow just one of the strands or use a mixture of both of them.

"The peace of God which passes understanding" is what we should aim for. Inner peace basically comes from trusting God and His word. We know that God is in control, and that nothing happens to us unless He has allowed it, so we can have peace when bad things happen to us. We can ask for God's help when things get too much and we know that He will give it to us. Psalm 23 is an example of this sort of peace: the sheep is secure in the green pastures and in the shadow of death, because he knows that the shepherd is with him. So it is with us if we follow God. The way to peace is FORT:

- Focus on God and His promises
- Obey God – you can't have peace if you know that you are not doing the right thing!
- Realise that you have limits: do what you can do and let God do the rest
- Trust God to be God!

We are called to be peacemakers. But being a peacemaker is not necessarily easy because it means getting to the root of a problem and dealing with it. You can silence or ignore all opposition and call it peace, but that just pushes problems underground to resurface later, and this is not real peace. A peacemaker works to find the best solution. Sometimes, being a peacemaker means agreeing to give up your own wishes so that peace can prevail. Isaac was a peacemaker. When the herdsmen told him to move on and dig his wells elsewhere, he didn't stay and argue that he had a right to be there too (as he did have!) Instead, he moved on.

Peace is important. Life today is loud and hectic. Children rush from one activity to the next, fitting in their homework between ballet and drum lessons, or in between neighbours and Emmerdale and trying out the new PS2 game. Everything is noisy – the music in the bedroom competes with the music in the kitchen, which competes with the television, and the babies rattle – not to mention Susan's violin practise!

And, quite aside from the physical noise of life, many children carry around secret stresses. Family problems are not hidden from children as they may have been in the past: a third of children now come from “broken homes” and have to learn to accept new people into their lives – and sometimes quite a succession of new people! Then there are friendship problems to deal with, especially for the girls who seem to fall in and out of friendships on a daily basis. And problems with the opposite sex seem to arise earlier, too, with children as young as year five “dating” each other.

It is no wonder that we need to find the peace of God so that we can live our lives in a way that is pleasing to Him and in a way that can bring calmness to the lives of other people. As leaders we need to pray that we will exhibit God's peace in the way that we deal with our groups, especially when we encounter problems, and pray that a little of our peace can touch the lives of the young people in our care.

SOUND EFFECTS

GAME | 🗣️ WARMING UP

Divide the group into small groups of 4 or 5 people.

Give each group a piece of paper with a location written on it.

Give the group 2 or 3 minutes to think of the sounds they might hear at this place, to practise making them and to put them together in a vocal routine. They can include one phrase of no more than four words – for instance, “Open wide please.”

Now bring the group back together. Each group should perform their set of sound effects and the other groups should see if they can guess where the group are meant to be.

Suggested places:

- At the beach.
- At the dentist.
- A school playground.
- A classroom.
- The kitchen.
- A railway station.

Younger children can use more than one sentence in their sound effects to make it easier for them.

The Point: Just for fun.

EQUIPMENT

Pieces of paper with different locations written on them.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

THREE-LEGGED RACE

GAME |  **WATCHER** |  **WARMING UP**

Each child should choose a partner, preferably of similar height!

The pairs stand next to each other and their inside legs are tied together with a piece of fabric. (String, wool or elastic can chaff the skin.)

The pairs line up at a starting line and on a given signal, race to the far end of the room. If your hall is quite short the pairs can go to the end and back.

The winner is the first pair to the finishing line.

The Point: Just for fun.

EQUIPMENT

Strips of fabric for tying children together. (Torn tea towels are best.)

DURATION: 5 MINS.

SQUEAK, PIGGY, SQUEAK!

GAME |  **WATCHER** |  **WARMING UP**

The group should be in a large space. One child is blindfolded. They are turned around 3 times and then have to move around the space until they catch one of the other children.

When they do, they say, “squeak, piggy, squeak!” The child who has been caught squeaks. If the blindfolded child can guess who has been caught, the child caught takes their place, and tries to catch another child.

If they get it wrong, they continue as the blindfolded person until they catch someone they can identify.

The Point: Just for fun.

EQUIPMENT

A blindfold.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

VISUAL AND AUDIO CLIPS |  **GETTING STARTED**

Summary: The friends have all had plans for thanksgiving, but they have fallen through and everyone has ended up having the day at Monica's. When everyone goes onto the roof to see an escaped helium dog, the door of Monica's apartment slams shut. Dinner is burned and thanksgiving is ruined!

Start time: 16:40 "Not that one!"

End time: 21:25 "And a crappy new year!"

Show the clip.

Ask the group:

- Why are all the friends so upset?
- Why does Monica lose her temper?
- What helps them to be happy again at the end?
- It is easy to feel peaceful when everything is going right, but how easy is it to be peaceful when everything is going wrong?
- Can you think of times that you have been happy until something goes wrong and it has ruined your day?
- What makes you feel peaceful again?

In the video, the friends decided to make the best of the situation when they realised that they had each other and could be grateful for that.

- What things could you think of to help you be peaceful in bad times?
- Does it help to remember that God is with you?

This video clip can lead into discussion on the fact that even when everything goes wrong we can be peaceful because God is with us.

The Point: In the video clip, everybody is stressed out because things have gone wrong for them, but in the end they feel peaceful because they realise that they have one another.

EQUIPMENT

A copy of Friends, series 1 episode 9, "The dog that got away" and the means to play it.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

I HAVE FOUND PEACE

CRAFT IDEAS | GETTING STARTED

Let the children work in small groups. If you have enough magazines, they could work individually.

Give each group/child a selection of magazines, some scissors, glue and a sheet of paper.

Ask them what they think of when they hear the word “peace”.

Using the magazines ask them to cut out pictures and make a collage of what peace is to them.

Have felt pens available so that children who really can't find anything can draw what they think instead!

When the collages are finished, set them out in a line and let everybody look at them all.

Draw the activity to a close by making some comments about the pictures. There could be things that are common to all the pictures – like a sunny sky – or some ideas that really stand out in their differences.

- Ask children to explain why they have chosen the images that particularly capture your imagination.

The Point: This activity encourages the children to think about what they mean by peace, and helps them to focus on the evening's theme.

EQUIPMENT

A selection of magazines, scissors, glue, paper.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

IT HURTS

ILLUSTRATIONS | GETTING STARTED

Ask some volunteers to pretend that they have something wrong with them: these can be as serious as they want.

Sit the rest of the children down. One of the leaders comes in acting the part of a nurse.

Send the first volunteer to the nurse. The nurse asks what is wrong and the child explains. If your volunteers are confident, they might want to explain exactly how their imaginary injury happened. The nurse examines the patient and with great solemnity sticks a sticker over the offending part and sends the patient away.

The next volunteer comes on and the process is repeated with him and then all the other volunteers.

Ask the children if any of the patients will be helped by having a plaster stuck onto them? (Hopefully none of your patients will be helped at all by it!)

- Why won't the plasters work?
- What would work better?

Explain that some people think that the best way to have peace is to ignore bad situations and hope that they will go away. They won't. If you want to have peace then you have to look at the problem and try to solve it. Being a peacemaker can be hard work!

The Point: This activity illustrates that you have to work hard to make things better – you can't just ignore them. It is not making peace to ignore a situation – if you want to be a peacemaker, you must deal with the problem.

EQUIPMENT

Large blank stickers or plasters.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

POUR ON PEACE

DISCUSSION | DIGGING IN

Read the children Colossians 3:15-17.

Discuss with the children:

- Why should we live together in peace?
- What stops us from managing this?
- How can God help us to live in peace with other people?
- How can the things we think and talk about help us to live in peace with others?

Ask the children to get into small groups of up to 4. In their groups they should think of a specific situation where they find it hard to live peacefully with a specific other person – it could be a problem they have with a relative or a friend, at home or at school.

They should think about how God could help them live in peace in this situation – what could they pray? What could they try to think? They should put this into a short role play that shows the situation and the way they need to respond.

Ask each group to show their role play. When the child attempting to live in peace is showing how we can actively seek God then someone should stand behind that child with a watering can and pour the invisible contents onto the child's head, saying "I give you my peace."

For example: a group may do a role play based on siblings fighting over the remote control. The one sibling

is asking God to help her stop fighting and give into what the other sibling wants.
Sibling 1: "You can have your own way – I don't mind. (God help me not to mind!)"
At this point the child with the watering can should pour "peace" onto sibling 1's head.

By the end of the role plays the group should be aware that God can give us peace when we ask...

Finish the activity by praying together that God will give us the strength to pursue peace even when we don't feel like it!

The Point: To see how God can give us peace in specific circumstances.

EQUIPMENT

Bibles, empty watering cans.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

BIBLE STUDY | 🕯 DIGGING IN

Divide the group into four smaller groups and give each a large piece of paper – a strip of wallpaper would be fine – and some thick felt pens. Ask them to sketch a quick background onto the paper – it does not have to be artistically perfect. Give them two or three minutes to create their sketches.

The sketches:

- A meadow with a river running through it - a nice place!
- A scary valley with a mountain behind it and scary animals.
- A picnic table in a field full of horrible animals.
- An evening picture with the stars coming out over the land.

Put the pictures at the front of the hall, blu tacked to the wall. Put the sheep on the roller-skate in front of the first picture. Read Psalm 23 and pull the sheep from picture to picture as the reading progresses:

Picture one, verses 1 – 3

Picture two, verse 4

Picture three, verse 5

Picture four, verse 6

Psalm 23 is about having peace. The writer trusts God completely no matter what is happening to him.

- Ask the children which picture it would be easiest to trust God in?
- Which would be hardest to trust God in?

- Why should we trust God?

Explain that we can have peace if we trust God because we don't have to worry about what is going to happen to us. We know that God is in control, even when bad things happen.

The Point: Psalm 23 shows us what it means to trust God: a sheep trusts his master and is at peace whatever is going on; in the same way, if we trust God we will be able to be peaceful inside in all circumstances.

EQUIPMENT

Marker pens or thick felt pens, sheets of paper, a toy sheep fixed to a roller skate so that it can be pulled along.

DURATION: 15 MINS.

ISAAC'S WELLS

BIBLE STUDY | DIGGING IN

As you tell this story, ask the children to respond to the following words:

Well: Mime digging.

Animals: loud animal noises.

Moved on: Get up and walk 5 spaces. Sit down again.

Quarrelled: Shake fists and mutter, "not fair".

Isaac was a rich man. God had blessed him and he had many ANIMALS and other possessions. Isaac was living in the lands of the Philistines because there had been a famine in his own land; but one day, the King said to him, "We want you to move because you are too rich. Go somewhere else,"

So Isaac and his servants packed up all their things, rounded up all the ANIMALS and MOVED ON. They went to the valley of Gerar, where Isaac's father had once lived. The ANIMALS started to eat the grass and the servants found the WELL that Isaac's father had dug. They dug the WELL out again, so that they could all drink fresh water. Then the servants dug a new WELL in the valley so that the ANIMALS could drink as well.

But the men who lived and worked in Gerar QUARRELLED with Isaac's servants. "The water is ours!" they said, "You can't dig a WELL here! Go somewhere else!"

So Isaac's servants MOVED ON a little way and dug a new WELL. But the men of Gerar QUARRELLED again. "Go right away," they said, "Take your ANIMALS and go!"

So Isaac gathered up all his possessions and all his ANIMALS and MOVED ON. Then he stopped in the plain and dug another WELL.

This time, the other men didn't QUARREL about the well, and Isaac was pleased.

Isaac moved on again. He stopped in a place called Beersheba and dug another WELL so that his family, his servants and his ANIMALS could have fresh water to drink. Isaac also built an altar so that he could worship God, because he was grateful to God for looking after him on his travels.

One day, Isaac had a visitor. Abimelech, the King of the Philistines and some friends came to see him. Isaac wondered if they had come to QUARREL with him again.

“Why are you here, seeing as you don't like me and sent me away from your land?” Isaac asked.

“We want to make peace with you,” Abimelech said. “We have seen that God is with you, and we want to make a treaty with you that we can live in peace together,”

So Isaac killed some of his finest ANIMALS and made a feast for Abimelech and his friends and they ate it together.

Ask the children:

- Why did Isaac let the other men bully him and keep moving on?
- Why didn't he argue his case?
- What happened in the end?
- Would he have had this outcome if he had argued about the wells earlier on?

Explain that if we value peace, sometimes this means that we have to let other people win an argument – sometimes it is silly to argue over a little thing; it is better to give the other person what they want to keep peace between us.

Isaac was unselfish and kept moving on, and this showed the King of the country that he was a good man. The King saw that Isaac was a man of peace because of his actions, and this led to him making a peace treaty with Isaac.

- Can the group think of any situations where they might need to let go of what they want in order to preserve peace?

Sometimes we have to make a decision to let something go because peace is more important than our rights. We need to save our fights for things that matter.

The Point: To show that part of having peace is being able to let things go!

EQUIPMENT

Nothing.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT PEACE

Read John 14:26-27

- Jesus spoke these words just before he was arrested: he knew that hard times were coming for the Disciples. Why did He want His disciples to have peace?
- When some people talk about peace they mean everything is quiet and nice – wars are over and no one is arguing. When Jesus talks about peace, he means peace inside even though everyone is being nasty to you and bad things are happening. Do you think it is possible to have that sort of peace when things are going wrong?
- Why can we feel peaceful in bad times?
- How does the Holy Spirit help us to have peace?

Read Philippians 4:6-7

- What should we talk to God about if we want to have peace?
- Paul says we should give thanks. Why do you think giving thanks is important?

Read Psalm 122:6-9

- What do you think a peaceful city would be like?
- Does it just mean that there isn't any war, or is it more than that?
- Think about your town: what stops it being peaceful?
- How could you pray for your town?
- **The Point:** To look at what the Bible says about peace.

EQUIPMENT

Bibles.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

WONDERFUL LORD

WORSHIP AND REFLECTION |  **WATCHER** |  **RESPONSE**

Play the song "Wonderful Lord" by Doug Horley ([lyrics here](#), [YouTube video here](#)).

Ask the children to find a place to sit or lie quietly as they listen. As they listen do, they can pray that God will help them to have peace – or they can just let the words sink into them!

The Point: to have a time of peace.

EQUIPMENT

The song "Wonderful Lord" by Doug Horley.

DURATION: 5 MINS.

A FORTRESS!

CRAFT IDEAS | 🖱️ RESPONSE

Give each child a piece of card. They should draw a simple fort with a tower at each end, and cut it out.

The fort can be covered with brown paper or just coloured in.

On the two towers, write F and T large so that they are as tall as the towers. In the middle of the fort, write O and R smaller so that the word FORT is written on the fortress. If the fort has been covered in paper, the letters can be cut out of card and stuck on top.

Fort is a mnemonic. Let the children write on the back of the card what each letter stands for:

- Focus on God's promises
- Obey what He has told you to do
- Realise that there are things that you can't change but have to accept
- Trust God.

These four things are vital if we are going to have inner peace, and the card will help the children remember the way to peace if they do find themselves in a bad situation.

The Point: To look at how we can have peace.

EQUIPMENT

Small pieces of card, business card sized, pens, scissors. Optional: coloured cardboard, crepe or tissue paper.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

PEACEMAKERS!

BIBLE STUDY | 📖 WATCHER | 🖱️ RESPONSE

Copy out these verses and hide them around the room. (If you have a large group, you may want to hide more than one copy of each verse so that all the children can find at least one!) Let the children look for the verses.

- 1 Peter 3:9 - Do not do evil if people have done evil to you, but do good instead.
- 1 Peter 3:10 - Stop saying bad and untrue things about people.
- 1 Peter 3:11 - Turn away from evil and do good.
- 1 Peter 3:11 - Seek peace and really work for it!
- Romans 14:19 - Work for the things that make for peace.
- Romans 14:19 - Work at the things that will help other people.
- Ephesians 4:26 - Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry.

- Ephesians 4:26 - When you are angry, don't sin.
- Colossians 3:13 - Forgive each other
- Colossians 3:13 - If someone does upset you, forgive each other.
- Colossians 3:14 - Make sure you are loving in your attitude.
- Colossians 3:15 - Let the peace of God be first in your heart.
- Colossians 3:15 - Be thankful!

(These verses have been paraphrased. Younger children may need them paraphrased even more; older children could have the verse as it stands in the Bible.)

When the children have found all the hidden verses, put the children into pairs and distribute the verses so that each pair of children has a verse to work with.

Give them 2 minutes or so to read their verse and work out what it means (leaders should be available to help the children do this). When they understand the verse, they should think of a practical outworking of the verse – that is, something they could do to put the verse into practice.

Sit the pairs in straight lines at the front of the room.

Play a worship song that emphasises peace: [Graham Kendrick's "Peace To You"](#) (link to YouTube) is absolutely perfect. You may want to play it on a loop so that it keeps on repeating itself.

As the music plays, each pair comes up in turn. One reads the verse and the other briefly explains their idea of how to put it into practice.

For instance: “do not do evil if people have done evil to you; do good instead.”

“When Tara copies all your work, still let her play with you at lunchtime.”

When they have finished, they sit down and the next pair comes up with their verse. If necessary, indicate the next pair to have to move, but try not to speak during the “performance”.

When all of the children have read their verses, let the song play to the end and switch the CD off.

The Point: We are called to be peacemakers – we should want to share the peace that is in us with others. Being a peacemaker is hard because it means that we have to lay our own wishes and inclinations aside. This activity helps the children to think of ways that they can practically be peacemakers.

EQUIPMENT

A copy of a song about peace, such as Graham Kendrick's “Peace To You” or Jerusalem's “Time Of Peace”, Bible verses written out and hidden around room.

DURATION: 15 MINS.

PEACE RULES

“Let the peace of God rule in your hearts”

Colossians 3:15a

Ask the group to think of hand actions for “Peace”, “God”, “Rule”, and “Hearts”.

Say the verse together with the actions.

Then say the verse, but don't say “peace”, just do the action. Next time round omit “peace” and “God” but do the actions for them. Next time, also omit “Rule” and the final time omit “Hearts” too.

The Point: To encourage young people to learn the Bible.

EQUIPMENT

Nothing.

DURATION: 5 MINS.
