

BIBLE VERSES: 1 Samuel 25, Matthew 5:9, Mark 4:35-41, Galatians 5:22-23, Philippians 4:6-7.

In this session we'll look at the two ideas of being peace-making and peace-filled.

LEADER'S NOTES

How to describe peace? I'll let this story do it for me:

Horatio Spafford was a successful lawyer and family man based in Chicago. In 1870, life took a downward turn as their only son was killed by scarlet fever at the age of four. A year later, it was fire rather than fever that struck. Horatio had invested heavily in real estate on the shores of Lake Michigan. In 1871, the great 'Chicago Fire' destroyed all his property.

Aware of the toll that these disasters had taken on the family, Horatio decided to take his wife and four daughters on a holiday to England. Just before they set sail, a last-minute business development forced Horatio to delay. Not wanting to ruin the family holiday, Spafford persuaded his family to go as planned. He would follow on later. With this decided, Anna and her four daughters set sail for Europe while Spafford returned to Chicago. Just nine days later, Spafford received a telegram from his wife in Wales. It read: "saved alone."

The boat that his family had been traveling on had collided with another vessel – it sank claiming the lives of 226 people, including Spafford's four daughters. His wife had desperately tried to save the lives of her precious daughters – her last memory was that of her baby being violently torn from her arms by the force of the ocean waters. Upon hearing the tragic news, a devastated Horatio Spafford boarded the next ship out of New York to join his grief-stricken wife. On passing the very spot where his daughters' lives had prematurely come to an end, Spafford wrote the lyrics to the great hymn 'It Is Well With My Soul'.

'When peace, like a river, attendeth my way

When sorrows like sea billows roll

Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say

It is well; it is well with my soul.'

Peace is not the absence of pain; it's experiencing the presence of God in the midst of pain. The Greek for peace (as used in Philippians 4) is *eirene*, which means to join or bind together. We can see how that works if we're talking about making peace with someone but that's the not the sense of Philippians 4 - here Paul is talking about letting the peace of God guard our hearts and minds. So, for me, this idea is talking about the way that we become joined or bound to God when we choose to trust him and invite his peace to reign in our hearts and minds.

In this session I haven't only looked at the side of peace that comes from our trust in God in the midst of all that life throws at us, I've also explored a bit about making peace or living at peace with others.

PEACEFUL FISH

COMPETITION | 🕒 WARMING UP

Ask the children to find a space and lie down on the floor. The aim of the game is to keep as still as possible for as long as possible - blinking counts as moving so they should shut their eyes. Get your leaders to walk around the room to judge when people have moved. As children move, they are 'out' and get up off the floor and move to the side. The last person on the floor is the winner.

The Point: Just for fun and tenuous link to being peaceful.

EQUIPMENT

None.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

CAPTURE THE FLAG

GAME | 🕒 WARMING UP

This game is best played in a large, outdoor space; however you can be creative with an indoor space - use chairs and other furniture to make the room into a battlefield with places to lurk and hide. Outdoors, you can either use an open space with plenty of room to run, or play in a forest space where there is potential for hiding. What's most important about whatever space you use is that each team has a base at opposite ends of the area and you have a central dividing line across the middle of the playing area.

Divide the children into two teams. Give each team a base and a flag (or other object). The aim is for the team to get to the opposition's base and steal their flag. They must then get it back to their own base. However, if they are tagged by a member of the other team they are taken prisoner and must wait with their hand touching the opposition's base until a member of their own team frees them by tagging. You cannot be captured if you are the same side of the central line as your base.

Play for as long as you like. At the end, have a peace-making moment where the teams shake hands.

The Point: Just for fun, links a bit to making peace at the end.

EQUIPMENT

Ideally a large, outdoor playing area, two flags (or other objects).

DURATION: 15 MINS.

THREE KNEES

GAME | 🕒 **WARMING UP**

In this game, the children run around the room and when you blow the whistle they must stop and respond to your instruction. Your instruction takes the form of a number and a body part - for example "3 knees". The children must get into a situation where they are involved in making three knees touch. Sometimes this will be achievable alone if they think about it – e.g. 8 fingers, but more often they will need to co-operate with one another. If you want to make it competitive, anyone not managing is out. Play until you have a winner/winners.

The Point: Just for fun.

EQUIPMENT

Whistle

DURATION: 10 MINS.

BE AT PEACE

STORY | 📖 **TEACHING TIME**

Read the story *The Very Scary Storm* beginning on page 330 of The Lion First Bible. This is the story of Jesus stilling the storm from Mark 4:35-41, so feel free to use another version if you don't have the Lion book.

Ask the children how they feel when they are asleep or sleepy. Is it possible to go to sleep if you are frightened or scared? It certainly makes it very difficult! Ask them why they think Jesus fell asleep in the boat. Bring out the point that he felt peaceful enough to do it - he felt safe. What happened when he had fallen asleep? What did the disciples do when the storm started?

Bring out the point that the disciples felt scared. Show how different that was from how Jesus was feeling - peaceful and safe. Was Jesus frightened too when he woke up? Not a bit! What did he do? He told the wind and the waves to calm down - he told them to be as peaceful as he had just been when he was asleep. And what happened?

Say that we can all get worried or frightened about lots of things. Sometimes it feels like a big storm is going on inside of us. Do the children think that Jesus could make an imaginary storm inside of us peaceful like he did in this story? He absolutely can - all we need to do is ask.

In the story, Jesus told his friends that they didn't need to be scared because they should have known that God was looking after them - and they should have trusted him. We know that God is looking after us too so we can trust him when we feel the storm inside of us.

Say that today's session is all about peace - peace means knowing that God is with you and will look after you - even when everything seems a bit scary.

The Point: To see the peace in this story.

EQUIPMENT

The Lion First Bible, or another children's Bible.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

PEACEFUL ABIGAIL

DRAMA |  **WATCHER** |  **TEACHING TIME**

As you tell this story, call children out to play the various characters. If they are confident they'll be able to repeat the dialogue you give them. If they are less so they can just act it out. You can furnish them with simple props as you see fit.

There was once a man named Nabal. He was extremely rich and he owned more than 3000 sheep and 1000 goats. He was married to a beautiful woman named Abigail who was also very sensible. Nabal, however, wasn't that sensible and he often made bad choices in the way he acted towards other people.

One day, Nabal was supervising his servants whilst they sheared the sheep when he heard from David. David was a very special man - so special that God had said that he would be the next King of Israel. At this point in his story, though, David was in a sticky situation which meant that he was on the run with some other men. David had sent some of his men to ask Nabal if he would be able to give them some food. David had always been good to Nabal's servants and so he hoped Nabal would help him.

Nabal wasn't having any of it. "Why should I give him any of my stuff?" he asked and he sent David's servants (who had brought the message) away. David's servants went back to him and told him everything Nabal had said. David wasn't very impressed at all and decided to take lots of his men and teach Nabal a lesson. They were going to fight them!

Meanwhile, one of Nabal's servants realised that Nabal's answer to David could mean big trouble so he went and told Abigail everything that had gone on. Abigail quickly realised that there could be a big fight on her hands and so she got lots of food together (200 loaves of bread, 2 enormous jars of wine, the meat from 5 sheep, 100 cakes of raisins and 200 cakes of figs), packed it up and sent it off to David with one of the servants. She followed on but she didn't tell Nabal what she was doing.

As Abigail was riding her donkey around the road on the hillside she ran smack bang into David and all his men. Quickly she got off her donkey and bowed right down to the ground then she said, "I heard about what Nabal said to your servants but don't pay any attention to him at all. Did you know that his name actually

means idiot?" Then she went on to ask David and his men not to come and have a big fight - and she gave them the food she'd packed up. She said lots of nice things to David and he calmed right down and decided not to go and get into a big fight.

When Abigail got home, she found Nabal throwing a big party and in a bit of a state. The next morning when Nabal wasn't being silly anymore, she told him what had happened with David. He was so cross and surprised that he had a heart attack right that moment and died a little while later. When David heard, he sent a message to ask if Abigail would marry him - and she did!

Ask the children what they think about the characters in the story. What was Nabal like? What was David like? What was Abigail like? What did Abigail manage to do? Bring out the point that Abigail managed to make peace between David and Nabal - otherwise they would have had a massive fight and it wouldn't have ended well!

Say that God doesn't want us to fight with other people. He wants us to love them and he also wants us to help other people to get on with one another too. There's a verse in the Bible that says, "God blesses those people who make peace." Matthew 5:9. God blessing us means that God is on our side - that he will look after us.

In small groups you might like to discuss:

- Who do we need to make peace with?
- Who can we help to make peace with one another?
- How can we do this?

The Point: To show how important it is to make peace.

EQUIPMENT

Suitable props.

DURATION: 15 MINS.

FIVE MINUTES PEACE

STORY | TEACHING TIME

Start off by reading the story *Five Minutes Peace*. Ask the children if they think we can learn anything from this story. What does having five minutes peace mean? Have they ever heard their mum or dad ask for the same thing?

Say that having peace isn't just about having a bit of time to ourselves - it's about how we feel right down deep on the inside. Peace is about knowing that God is in control and everything will be ok because we trust him. Say that there's a famous bit in the Bible that talks about peace and how you get it.

Read Philippians 4:6-7: *Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything. With thankful hearts offer up your prayers and requests to God. Then because you belong to Jesus, God will bless you with peace that*

no one can completely understand. And this peace will control the way you think and feel.

Either in smaller groups or altogether, use these questions to unpack the verses:

- What kind of things do we worry about?
- What does this verse tell us about worrying?
- What should we do instead?
- What do the verses say about how our hearts should be when we're praying to God?
- What can we be thankful for today?
- What will happen if we do all this? [We'll get peace - v. 7]
- How will this happen? [No one understands!]
- But what will getting peace do? [Control how we think and feel.]
- Can you sum up these verses in your own words so that you will remember the idea?

The Point: To unpack what it means to have peace.

EQUIPMENT

Five Minutes Peace by Jill Murphy (Walker books), Bible (CEV).

DURATION: 10 MINS.

MAY YOU FIND PEACE

MUSIC | 🎵 **RESPONSE**

Sing this song together as a blessing and encouragement. You can have some fun playing pretend trumpets in the instrumental break.

The Point: To respond to the teaching.

EQUIPMENT

Recording of May You Find Peace by Fischy Music (on the album 'I Wonder Why' and also on itunes) and the means to play it.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

WORLD PEACE

PRAYER | 🎵 **RESPONSE**

Spread out the world map and gather the children around the edges with their doves. Talk about situations

in the world that aren't peaceful - where there are wars or struggles. The children may have suggestions of places they have heard about, but it is worth you looking at the news for a few days to get some current situations too. Say that we can pray that God will bring peace and peace-makers into those situations.

Let the children pray for particular countries by placing their doves on them on the map. They can pray very simply; "Father, bring peace to...." Or they can say more. Finish with a peaceful 'Amen' (i.e. quietly!).

The Point: To pray for peace.

EQUIPMENT

A large world map, the kirigami doves from the take away section (or some other markers if you didn't do the doves).

DURATION: 10 MINS.

PEACEFUL FRUIT

MEMORY VERSE | 📖 **RESPONSE**

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." Galatians 5:22-23a.

Teach the verse. Say that the fruit of the spirit is a way of saying 'These are the things God grows in us'. Say that all these different things aren't different fruit - like we might have apples, oranges and bananas in the fruit bowl - they are all part of the same fruit - they grow together. It's like the segments in a satsuma. Let the children open the satsumas and recite the verse as they separate the segments - hopefully there will be at least nine...

The Point: To learn scripture.

EQUIPMENT

Satsumas.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

BOATS

CRAFT IDEAS | 📄 **TAKE AWAY**

This activity will work well with the following Teaching Time activities: Be at Peace.

If it is easier, you can pre-cut the pieces for this activity. Trim one end of the sponge into a V-shape to make

the body of the boat. Cut a piece of craft foam into a triangle sail shape. Punch two holes, one above the other, on the right side of the sail for the straw. Pull straw through the holes. Use the end of the scissors to create a hole in the sponge. Pull the straw through the hole so the mast stands up straight. Trim the top to the height you want it. If you have a hot glue gun, turn the sponge over and hot glue the bottom of the straw to the sponge. The sponge will float, but if it gets too wet, wring it out the excess water to keep it buoyant.

The Point: A story reminder.

EQUIPMENT

Cheap kitchen sponges (either sponge-scourers or the thinner sponges - about 1cm thick), drinking straws, coloured craft foam, hole punch, scissors, hot glue gun (optional).

DURATION: 10 MINS.

KIRIGAMI DOVE

CRAFT IDEAS |  WATCHER |  TAKE AWAY

[Download activity worksheet](#)

This activity will work well with the following Teaching Time activities: all.

Say that often we associate a dove with peace. You are going to make doves by folding and cutting paper in a particular way. The attachment has full, easy to follow instructions. You might find it easiest to split the children into smaller groups and have a leader take each group through the instructions step-by-step. NB: Make sure the leaders have practiced it once or twice beforehand so that they are confident.

The children could write 'Peace' on the dove once they are finished. You could also put a thread on them so that they can be hung up.

The Point: A session reminder.

EQUIPMENT

The attachment, white paper, scissors.

DURATION: 15 MINS.

CAKES OF RAISINS

FOOD AND COOKING |  WATCHER |  TAKE AWAY

This activity will work well with the following Teaching Time activities: Peaceful Abigail.

These Welsh cakes are not quite the cakes of raisins that Abigail presented to David but they will do to serve the point!

Ingredients (makes 20-25):

- 8 oz/225g SR flour
- 4 oz/110g butter/margarine
- 3 oz/75g raisins/sultanas
- 3 oz/75g caster sugar
- 1 small egg
- ½ tsp mixed spice

Method:

- Sift the dry ingredients together, then rub in the **butter** or margarine as you would if you were making pastry.
- When the mixture becomes crumbly, add the fruit and mix it in thoroughly.
- Beat the egg lightly and add it to the mixture. Mix to a dough and, if the mixture seems a little too dry, add just a spot of milk.
- Transfer the dough on to a lightly floured working surface and roll it out to about ¼ inch (5 mm) thick.
- Using a 2½-inch (6.5 cm) plain cutter (or any other shape you like), cut the dough into rounds, re-rolling the trimmings until all the dough is used.
- Lightly grease the thick heavy pan, using a piece of kitchen paper smeared with lard/butter/oil.
- Heat the pan over a medium heat and cook the Welsh **cakes** for about 3 minutes each side. If they look as if they're browning too quickly, turn the heat down a bit because it's important to cook them through – but they should be fairly brown and crisp on the outside.

The Point: A story reminder.

EQUIPMENT

SR flour, butter/margarine, raisins/sultanas, sugar, eggs, mixed spice, mixing bowls, rolling pins, cutters, heavy frying pan.

DURATION: 20 MINS.
