



God's Peaceable Kingdom

(based on Isaiah 11:1-9)

Long, long ago and far, far away, a country was surrounded by war and fighting. It was very scary.

The people who lived in that country were frightened. "What will happen to us?" they asked each other. "Will the fighting ever end?"

Then someone came along who gave the people hope. It was the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah knew that God had an important message to share. It was a message filled with hope.

"Listen to God's message," exclaimed Isaiah. "I have good news to share."

The people gathered around to hear.

"One day the whole world will live together in peace," declared Isaiah. "In this world of love even the animals will look after each other. The wolf and the lamb will be friends. The leopard and the goats will live together in peace. The cows and the bear will share the same food."

The people were amazed—what a beautiful world this would be. "Tell us more," they asked.

"Nothing terrible or scary will happen again," explained Isaiah. "The whole world will be filled with people who love God and follow in God's loving ways."

"Wow!" said all the people.

"Wait a minute," said one person. "God's world of love is already beginning."

"It's true," said another. "I see God's world of love when we share."

"I see it when we use kind words," shouted a little boy.

"We see God's world of love when we help others," noted a group of girls.

"Yes!" replied Isaiah. "If we follow God's way of love then the world will change. And God's love and peace will spread everywhere."

The people didn't forget the wonderful message that Isaiah had given them. They shared the good news with their children and their children's children. Then they waited and watched for signs of God's world of love. They began to see signs everywhere.



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- The Isaiah passage is highly imaginative and may appeal to your child in a “what if” kind of way. Have fun dreaming up ways that all creation might come together in peace. How will you encourage your child to think imaginatively and creatively, as God does, about what might be possible? How will you affirm the image of a child as leader?
- Wonder together how we are like lions and lambs. Consider who the lions and lambs are in your life. How have they, or may they, come to a new relationship? Are you a lion or a lamb?



Responding to God's Grace

- Read aloud Isaiah 11:6-9. List the animals in Isaiah's dream. Choose to be one of these animals and think about simple mime actions.
- How did the animals in Isaiah's vision have to change for the world to be safe for all? In Isaiah's dream, how would people know that God is present?
- Talk about things that make you afraid. When you're feeling afraid, wonder aloud what you can do to remember that God is always with you. When things are scary or unsafe, what can you do to get help or to get somewhere safe? Work together to color some ideas—things that make you afraid, images of a safe world, and ways we help each other to be safe.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Find ways to nurture cooperation. As you provide situations for cooperation to occur, you teach peacemaking skills. Offer suggestions on how to play together, ensure fairness, or talk through a conflict.
- Light a purple candle. Pray:

*O God, you are with us
in the bright candle flame.
You made us and grace us,
and know all our names.
You're with us in laughter;
you're with us in tears.
You're with us in stories
from long-ago years.
Be with us today.
Help us, with grace,
to walk in your way. Amen.*