

# Peacemakers Know Peace

ISAIAH 11:1-9; MATTHEW 5:9



#### GOAL

Children begin to see where peace may be found and create a foundational understanding of the concept of peace to be built on throughout the unit.

- Art
- Active/Movement
- Conversation
- Drama
- Food
- G Game
- Music
- Nature/Science
- Quiet/Contemplative
- Service
- Technology
- 🚺 🛮 Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



#### **PRAYER**

Holy Peacemaker, may your peace be felt this day, in this space, as we explore your word and practice peace. Amen.

### THIS SESSION

As we set the stage for four sessions on the practice of making peace, we are helping the children to understand the basic meaning of the word *peace* and to consider what peace feels like personally before moving into a deeper exploration of this practice. Using imagery from Scripture and examples from their lives, the children are invited to consider what peace looks like in the world and how they experience it.

### THE BIBLE STORY

This prophetic passage from Isaiah 11:1–9 is often associated with the season of Advent when we prepare for the celebration of the birth of one called the Prince of Peace. This passage is full of unlikely scenarios of predators and prey coexisting, and of the idea of a child leading the world into paths of peace. From Isaiah, we move to Jesus' proclamation, found in the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:9, that those who make peace are blessed.

## CONNECTIONS WITH CHILDREN

Although the word *peace* is likely familiar, there are many meanings and contexts in which this word is used, so, although children may know the word, they may not be able to articulate an understanding of it. In this session, leaders can affirm the variety of meanings that the children might know—including the absence of war, calm or quiet, and helping people get along—as all being important aspects of peace.

## SESSION PREPARATION

- "I Like to Make . . ." (p. 8): Obtain *Peace Is an Offering* by Annette
- LeBox (Dial Books, 2015) or use the YouTube video "Read Aloud Story—Peace Is an Offering by Annette LeBox" (bit.ly/FMPeaceOffering, 4:33).

Depending on the options you choose:

"Animals of Peace" (p. 10): Gather a stick with three branches for each child for the peace mobile. If sticks are not available, use a dowel rod or hanger. If possible, wind some artificial vine around them to represent a growing branch.



- Music player or internet-connected device and instrumental music or nature sounds
- ☐ Quiet sensory items, such as silky scarves, stress balls, smooth stones, feathers, small pillows

Glory to God hymnal or other hymnal with "Dona Nobis Pacem" and/or internet-connected device



Hebrew:

Sim shalom, sim shalom, sim shalom, sim shalom aleinu.

#### Arabic:

Rabbu habna salamann tamman Rabbu habna salamann.

Peace Is an Offering by Annette LeBox (Dial Books, 2015) or an internet-connected device

#### SEEKING PEACE







Play quiet instrumental music or nature sounds to create a peaceful atmosphere. Place the items you have gathered on a table. As each child enters the space, invite them to choose one of the quiet sensory items and find a spot in the room to sit and quietly explore their item.

Once all children have arrived and had a chance to explore their items, invite them to move to the sounds being played, encouraging their movements to reflect different words that you will call out. Words could include: happy, sneaky, silly, slow, quiet, joyful, or others that might fit with your group. End with the word *peaceful*. Have the children return their items to you and then move to a gathering space.

#### A PRAYER FOR PEACE





Invite the children to pray with music as they sing or listen to "Dona Nobis Pacem," found in the Glory to God hymnal #752, or sing along with or listen to the YouTube video "Dona Nobis Pacem" (bit.ly/FMPacem, 2:04). Explain that the Latin words are a prayer that means "Give us peace." As the tune becomes more familiar, you might introduce singing the song in Hebrew or Arabic.

Close the prayer with the following sentences: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Let us live as makers of peace. Amen.

# INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

#### I LIKE TO MAKE . . .







Tell the children that you will play a game together about things that you like to make. Invite each child to name something that they like to make, and to do a movement to show it, such as "I like to make drawings" while acting out painting or "I like to make cookies" while acting out rolling out dough.

Explain that some things you make can be seen and held, like a cookie or a picture, but other things you make can't be seen, like making someone happy or making up stories, although you can see the results of those things. Reflecting on the things the children shared, note that, in the group, there are cookie makers and art makers and so forth, being sure to include all of the children. Tell the children that you will explore together how you can be peacemakers, or makers of peace.

Read aloud Peace Is an Offering or show the YouTube video "Read Aloud Story—Peace Is an Offering by Annette LeBox" (bit.ly/FMPeaceOffering, 4:33). Reinforce the message that, when we do things that bring peace, we are peacemakers. Wonder:

- What were some of the things you heard in the story that were *peace*?
- Where are places you find peace?
- What are some ways we can offer peace to another?



#### **GOD'S VISION OF PEACE**

Explain that today's story is about a *vision*, a picture painted in our minds. The vision is one God gave Isaiah, who was a prophet, a messenger from God. Isaiah knew about many animals: bears, sheep, lions, snakes, wolves, and others. He knew that some animals fight and hurt each other, and some may hurt people. God showed Isaiah that, one day, all animals will live together in peace and be friends. They will be an example of how the whole world can live together in peace and be friends.

Hand out copies of Resource Page 1 and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture while they listen to the story. Read aloud the adapted Bible story from Isaiah 11:1–9 on Resource Page 2. Have the children point out some of the pictures that they heard about in the story.

ΒL	ESSED	ARE	THE	PEA	CEMA	<b>AKERS</b>
----	-------	-----	-----	-----	------	--------------

Tell the children that they will sing a song to remind them of the stories about peace in this unit. Teach the children the song and first verse of "Blessed Are the Peacemakers," sung to the tune "London Bridge Is Falling Down." Play the YouTube video "London Bridge Is Falling Down (Instrumental)" (<a href="https://bit.ly/FMLondonBridge">bit.ly/FMLondonBridge</a>, 2:02) to hear the tune or sing along with it. Each session there will be a new verse to sing.

**Chorus:** 

Blessed are the peacemakers, peacemakers; they are called the children of God, the peacemakers.

#### Verse 1:

The big lion and the lamb, little lamb, little lamb, the big lion and the lamb, lie together.



Choose one or both options.

#### **KNOW PEACE/NO PEACE**

Young children know the experiences of both *peace* and *conflict*, but may not be familiar with the vocabulary used to describe these concepts. Connecting these words with the experiences of the children will help them articulate feelings and experiences.

Tell the children that they will play a game to think about whether or not something is an example of peace. Tell the children that they will use two words to play the game. Explain that they have the same sound, but different meanings: *No* and *Know*. Use body movements to show the meaning of each word as you say it; shake your head for *No* and point to your temple for *Know*. Have the children practice the movements with each word and an example: There is *no* peace when people are fighting. We *know* peace when people are working together.

G AM

- Copies of Resource Page 1
- ☐ Resource Page 2
- ☐ Crayons

☐ Internet-connected device (optional)



Invite the children to contribute their own scenarios to check for understanding. It's OK if they repeat scenarios already mentioned.

Invite the children to respond with *No* (head shaking) or *Know* (pointing to their head) for each scenario listed below, or some suggestions of your own:

- Sharing your snack
- Fighting over a toy
- Using angry words
- Helping a friend
- Walking away from someone who is hurt
- Destroying something that someone else made
- Saying "I'm sorry"
- Giving a hug
- Hitting when you are mad
- Cleaning up your mess

#### Markers, crayons, colored pencils Scissors

- ☐ Single-hole punch Stick with three branches, or dowel
- rod or hanger, for each child Artificial vines (optional)
- Yarn, string, or ribbon

#### ANIMALS OF PEACE Copies of Resource Page 3



The most well-known imagery in the Isaiah passage is the lion and the lamb. Tell the children that lions and lambs are not animals that would usually be friends in nature. Ask the children what other animals might not usually be friends. Encourage children to think of books, cartoons, or movies where these types of unlikely friendships might occur. Tell the children that, in addition to unlikely animal friends being a symbol of peace, another animal is known as a symbol of peace: the dove. Using these three animals, have the children create a "peace mobile" to remember this story.

Provide copies of Resource Page 3 and coloring supplies. Have the children color the pictures and cut them out. Assist with cutting as needed. Show them how to punch a hole where indicated and tie pieces of yarn, string, or ribbon to each picture. Help them attach their pictures to the stick, dowel rod, or hanger to create their mobile.



#### Copies of Resource Page 4

#### PEACEFUL PRAYER POEM



Ask the children if any of them have ever tried yoga. Explain that yoga is a practice that matches movement with breath as a way to focus a person's thoughts, and many people find peace through this practice. Invite the children to take a deep breath in and out, moving their right arm in a big circle. Then have them take another deep breath in and out, moving their left arm in a big circle. Explain that there is a flow in the breath that connects one move to the next.

Using Resource Page 4, teach the children the words and movements to a peaceful prayer poem, going over it a few times as needed. Have the children repeat after you as you move into each pose as you say the words, then take a slow breath in through the nose and out through the nose while holding each pose. The first stanza should be done on the right side of the body, and the second stanza should be done on the left side of the body.

Give the children a copy of Resource Page 4 to take home and use this prayer poem on their own at home when they might need to find peace.

#### LION, LION, LAMB



Have the children sit in a circle, and explain that they will be playing a game, an adaptation of "Duck, Duck, Goose" that may be familiar, but with slightly different directions. Choose a child or invite a volunteer to be the lion (It). Explain that the lion walks around the circle, gently tapping each player on the head and saying, "lion" as they tap. When the lion chooses, they may tap a child and say, "lamb." Instead of chasing, the two link arms and skip around the circle saying or singing the verse from the song in "Blessed Are the Peacemakers" (p. 9):

The big lion and the lamb, little lamb, little lamb, the big lion and the lamb, lie together.

The child who is the lamb becomes the next lion. Make sure all the children have a chance to be the lion, if they wish.



#### PASSING THE PEACE

Invite the children to gather for a closing circle. Tell the children about the practice of passing the peace. Explain that it is often a part of a congregation's worship service when people share a word and sign of peace. Wonder together what words of peace may be spoken. Some suggestions may be: "the peace of Christ be with you," "peace be with you," or just "peace." Wonder together what some signs of peace may be used. Some suggestions may be: smiling, shaking hands, nodding one's head, hugging, fist or elbow bumping, or crossing one's hands over one's heart and making a slight bow.

Turn to the person on your left and say words and make a sign of peace. Invite the children to continue around the circle using words and signs of peace of their own choosing. When the peace comes back to you, say to all the children, "May God's peace be with you this day. Amen."





# **BIBLE STORY**

#### BASED ON ISAIAH 11:1-9 AND MATTHEW 5:9

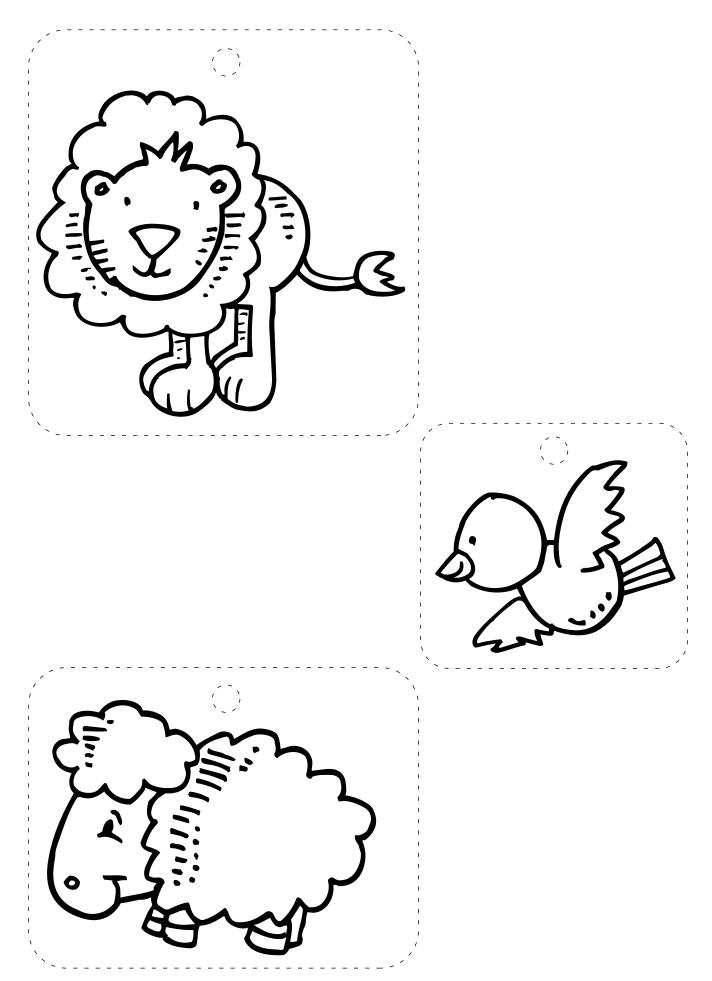
A prophet is someone who speaks God's words to God's people. Long before Jesus came, a wise prophet imagined a world where all of God's creation would know peace.

Peace, the prophet said, would grow like a branch of a tree, strong and steady, strengthened by God's Spirit. The prophet spoke words that painted a picture in people's minds. The prophet said that, just as a branch grows from a tree, one day, there would be someone who would guide and lead the world in new and unexpected ways. This leader would have the qualities that the world needs: wisdom, kindness, strength, and faith. They would be someone who cared and listened and spoke the truth; who did not just say the right words, but who changed how people saw things and acted.

The prophet invited the people to imagine a world different from what they knew:

Imagine gentle lambs and big wolves living together, a leopard and a baby goat taking a nap side by side, a calf and a lion playing together, and a little child leading them all, unafraid because all are at peace. Picture a world where no one worries about danger, because all care for one another.

This vision was the prophet's dream for peace, and it can be our dream too. Many years after this prophecy, Jesus was born. When he grew up, he tried to help God's people to know peace. He told stories to explain God's word and to spread God's message of peace. Jesus told the people who would listen that those who worked to make peace, the peacemakers, would be blessed and truly know what it means to be a child of God.



# Peaceful Prayer Poem

