

Know Peace

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ISAIAH 2:4; 11:6; MATTHEW 5:9;
JOHN 14:27



GOAL

Youth are introduced to the complexities of peace and begin to discern what it looks like for each individual to make peace.

- A** Art
- AM** Active/Movement
- AT** Abstract Thinking
- C** Conversation
- CT** Concrete Thinking
- D** Drama
- G** Game
- M** Music
- QC** Quiet/Contemplative
- S** Service
- T** Technology
- X** Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

Holy One, bring me peace as I seek to understand peace. Open my heart to new possibilities and opportunities. Amen.

THIS SESSION

Peace is an idea with a multitude of meanings. Each person can define and experience peace differently. Throughout the session, youth will come to know peace as holy and valuable to God. Participants may experience peace as both a destination and a journey. We must learn to recognize the importance of peace while still allowing for each person to find their own path toward peace.

THE BIBLE STORY

This session uses four short verses. Two are from the prophet Isaiah as he shares the visions God has given him of a world that lives peacefully with itself. The Israelites who originally heard these visions—in exile and being held captive by the Assyrians—would have found them comforting. They did not know when they would re-enter their own land.

The following Scriptures are teachings from Jesus. Matthew 5:9 directly names peacemakers as children of God. John 14:27 demonstrates that peace is a gift from God. In both Scripture verses, Jesus is trying to teach his followers about the kingdom of heaven. His words inspire courage and persistence to make peace.

CONNECTIONS WITH YOUTH

Youth are familiar with the demands of peace as they pertain to not arguing with siblings or not starting fights at school. They also recognize the need for peace as an end to violence in our world. However, most youth are unaccustomed to thinking of peace as a divine mandate that shapes their lives and their futures. Some will be eager to explore peace in opportunities for connection with others. Some will be hesitant because of the responsibilities involved in being a peacemaker. Especially in this first session, it is important to encourage youth to discern their own definition of peace as it might inspire their own actions. This session does not have any right or wrong answers. It is about exploration. Be sure you are comfortable with an open-ended session as you prepare.

SESSION PREPARATION

Depending on the options you choose:

- “Graffiti Sheets” (p. 6): Hang graffiti sheets, printed with suggested questions.
- “Introducing the Infographic” (p. 7): Obtain the *Make Peace* infographic poster (bit.ly/FMInfographicPosters, Year 2 Set).
- “Nobel Peace Prize” (p. 8): Review the list of Nobel Peace Prize recipients at bit.ly/FMNobelWinners and choose several names to mention.



GETTING STARTED

Choose one or both options.

PASSING THE PEACE

AM

As youth arrive, invite them to pass the peace with one another in a manner similar to how your church does it during worship. If you do not pass the peace in worship, suggest that participants exchange fist bumps or high fives while saying, “Peace be with you.” After all youth have arrived, tell them that we are beginning a unit about peace and today’s theme is *Know Peace*. Invite them to have an open mind to explore peace in ways that they may not have considered before.

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- Markers
 - Newsprint

GRAFFITI SHEETS

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Before youth arrive, post four pieces of newsprint around the room. Write one of the following questions at the top of each sheet:

- ➔ What is peace?
- ➔ When do you feel peaceful?
- ➔ What is the opposite of peace?
- ➔ How do you make peace?

As youth arrive, give them a marker, and invite them to walk around the room and write short answers to any of the questions on the graffiti sheets. After all have arrived, invite the youth to go around the room and read some of the answers. Have them notice the most interesting answers and those that show up frequently on each sheet. These graffiti sheets may be left up and referenced throughout the session or throughout the entire unit.

Pray this prayer or one of your choosing:

Holy One, bring us peace as we seek to understand peace. Open our hearts to new possibilities and opportunities. Amen.



INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

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- Index cards and pens
 - Newsprint and marker

DEFINING PEACE

C CT

Form pairs and give each pair an index card and a pen. Ask each pair to discuss the definition of *peace* and write down their definition on an index card. Encourage them not to overthink their definitions. Give the pairs about two minutes for the activity.

After two minutes, have the pair choose one person to sit down and the other person to keep the index card and find a new partner. Once new pairs have been established, the new pairs will compare their definitions of peace. Together they will decide which definition they like best, choose to combine definitions, or come up with something new. Continue this process of defining peace until the group has one definition. Invite a participant to write that definition on the posted newsprint.

Ask the group:

- ➔ Was it easy to create a definition of peace?
- ➔ What are some of the different ideas you had about peace?
- ➔ How do you feel about the final definition?

- ➔ Would you change anything?
- ➔ During this process, what did you learn about peace?

ROLLING THE DIE

Form small groups of at least two participants per group. Give each group a die and distribute copies of Resource Page 1. Have participants take turns rolling the die and following the instructions on the resource page based on the number they roll. Encourage the participants to engage in the game in a fun, non-competitive way. Youth may go around the circle taking multiple turns until you call time. There are no winners or losers. After playing, invite youth to tell the whole group something they learned about someone else while playing this game.

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- One die for each group
- Copies of Resource Page 1



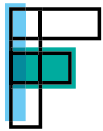
This game can also be played as one group.

INTRODUCING THE INFOGRAPHIC

Display the *Make Peace* infographic poster and spend some time looking at how it is arranged and reviewing all the peacemakers highlighted on the poster. Allow youth to comment about people and groups they know about and also the dimensions of peacemaking listed on the poster. Make this time of review part of each session's "Introducing the Practice," looking for people and movements that may highlight that session's topic.

C X

- Make Peace* infographic poster



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

Choose one or both options.

SEEING PEACE

Form small groups. Assign each group one of the following Scriptures: Isaiah 2:4; Isaiah 11:6; Matthew 5:9; John 14:27. Have the groups read their Bible verse and discuss what peace looks like in the verse. Have the group illustrate that vision of peace on a piece of paper. The illustrations can be a literal interpretation or something modern or abstract. Have each group share their pictures of peace and then invite comments on what is similar and what is different about the illustrations.

A

- Bibles
- Paper
- Markers or colored pencils

EMBODYING PEACE

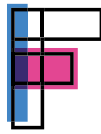
Form groups of two to four persons. Assign each group one of the following Scriptures: Isaiah 2:4; Isaiah 11:6; Matthew 5:9; John 14:27. Have groups read their Bible verse and imagine a scenario in their lives that reflects the type of peace being presented in this Scripture. Have groups create a short skit about a modern scenario. (*Isaiah 11:6 might inspire a group to create a skit about a bully and someone being bullied making peace with each other.*) Bring the group back together and have each group read their verse and present their skits. Discuss similarities and differences between the verses and skits.

AT D

- Bibles



Providing random, colorful, and fun props or costumes could spark ideas and make this activity more fun.



FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Choose one or both options.

- Internet-connected devices
- Paper and pens

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

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Invite youth to name a past recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize (*Barack Obama, Al Gore, Rigoberta Menchu, Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, Elie Wiesel, Malala Yousafzai*). Inform participants you will work as individuals (or form groups) to investigate a past winner. Each group will need an internet-connected device (cell phone). Using the list of winners at bit.ly/FMNobelWinners, assign one prize winner to each group to investigate. Invite youth to take five minutes searching the internet for why their recipient won the Nobel Peace Prize. Encourage the youth to write or draw something they learned about the prize winner. Have youth present about their winner to the group. When all have shared, ask the group:

- ➔ How do these examples of Nobel Peace Prize winners work for peace?
- ➔ What can we learn from these examples of peace?
- ➔ For what would you want to win the Nobel Peace Prize?

- Internet-connected device

PEACE VIDEO

C T

Show the video “What Does Peace Mean to You?” (bit.ly/FMPeaceMeaning, 3:59). In this movie, the students and teachers at The Washington Latin Public Charter School are asked questions about peace. Use the following questions to lead a discussion about the video.

- ➔ We heard several definitions of peace in this video. Which ones did you like? Which did you not like?
- ➔ Did any of the definitions surprise you?
- ➔ Which definitions feel most like the Bible verses discussed earlier?
- ➔ Why do you think there were so many different definitions of peace?
- ➔ Do you think it is easy or hard to define peace?



Similar to “Make a Peace Video,” youth can make individual videos about peace and share them on their own or through your faith community’s social media pages.



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or both options.

- Recording device
- Paper and markers (optional)

MAKING A PEACE VIDEO

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Have the group make a peace video similar to the “Peace Video” activity above. Give each person a few minutes of quiet time to contemplate their own definition of peace and prepare to speak this definition while being recorded. Participants may find it fun to record their own answers or record one another’s. Some youth may choose to write, draw, or create a poem or song about peace. Although there will unlikely be enough time to edit the video within the session time, look for a volunteer to edit the videos together for watching in a later session, for use in worship, or for sharing at an intergenerational gathering. Make sure and get each youth’s permission to be on camera. Not all youth may agree to be recorded.



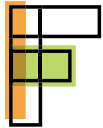
Follow your church’s policy on parental approval needed for filming youth.

PATHS TO PEACE



Distribute copies of Resource Page 2 and colored pencils. Invite youth to spread out and find a quiet spot where they can draw or write quietly. Read the first paragraph at the top of the resource page. Encourage the youth to think about their own journey toward peace. What obstacles get in the way of peace? What specific goals or steps could they take to reach peace? Play the music and give them time to draw and write their answers. Allow youth to share their paths if they wish to share.

- Copies of Resource Page 2
- Colored pencils
- Music player with contemplative music



FOLLOWING JESUS

GROUP PRAYER



Invite the youth to stand in a circle, holding hands if they feel comfortable doing so. Explain that you are going to begin a prayer about peace and say a word or phrase that represents peace for you. After you say your word or phrase, you will squeeze the hand of the person on your right or tap their shoulder. Encourage the person to share aloud a word or phrase about peace that spoke to them today before squeezing or tapping the person next to them.


Holy God, thank you for this time to gather and for this time to explore peace. Thank you for opening our minds and hearts to so many ideas. Hear now our words of peace that we offer as a prayer . . .


When the *squeeze* gets back to you, conclude by saying:


Make us peacemakers who are blessed by you in all we do. Amen.


Peace Game


Take turns rolling the die and follow the instructions based on your roll.


If you roll a , share the name of someone you consider to be a peacemaker and why.


If you roll a , describe a situation that is not peaceful.


If you roll a , change places with someone in your group or someone from another group.


If you roll a , share the lyrics or title of a song with the word *peace* in it.


If you roll a , share something that your church or community does to create peace.


If you roll a , describe a time you have felt peace.


If you roll a , share the name of someone you consider to be a peacemaker and why.

If you roll a , describe a situation that is not peaceful.

If you roll a , change places with someone in your group or someone from another group.

If you roll a , share the lyrics or title of a song with the word *peace* in it.

If you roll a , share something that your church or community does to create peace.

If you roll a , describe a time you have felt peace.

The Mountain of Peace

Making peace is much like climbing a mountain: you have to identify the path that you can navigate. Some will make the steepest climb, while others may adopt a more circuitous route to the top of the mountain. On the mountain below, illustrate or write about peace. What things in your life, in your community, or in your world need peace? How can you get there?

