

**Isa. 2:1–5**

**Ps. 122**

**Rom. 13:11–14**

**Matt. 24:36–44**

# Picturing Peace

**Goal for  
the Session**

*Tweens will picture the peaceful future prophesied in Isaiah 2 and consider ways of working for peace in the present.*

## ■ PREPARING FOR THE SESSION

### Focus on Isaiah 2:1–5

#### WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” Bruce C. Birch

This oracle is often called the “floating oracle of peace” because it also appears in Micah 4:1–3. It is apparently part of a general prophetic tradition that was available to both of these prophets as a promise of the eschatological fulfillment of God’s kingdom. Presumably this is especially important in times of difficulty when present circumstances seem unpromising; confidence that the future belongs to God gives hope in the present. In Advent we anticipate the birth of Jesus into a world in need of light (v. 5). Every generation needs assurance that the powers of the world—whether the Romans of Jesus’ time or the principalities and powers of our present age—do not determine the future.

#### WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” Noel Leo Erskine

We are promised by God that as God’s gift of peace becomes real among us, Jews and Gentiles alike will stream to the mountain of God to be instructed and directed by God. The people who are taught by God will seek peace and practice violence no more. Weapons of violence will be destroyed. To receive divine instruction is to share in a vision of a coming realm of peace in which God will judge among the nations, and nations will not learn war anymore. The way forward is to walk in the light of the Lord.

#### SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective,” Stacey Simpson Duke

In the end, what Isaiah offers is not only a vision of global transformation, but an invitation to live toward that day. “O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!” However hard it may be to believe that a new and longed-for reality will take hold some day, there is power in walking in God’s light now, one step at a time. We may feel cynical or hopeless about the prospects of Isaiah’s vision, but in his invitation lies enormous and practical power. The future belongs to God, but the first step toward that future belongs to those who have glimpsed God’s light and are willing to trust that enough light lies ahead.

#### NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,” Paul Simpson Duke

We are in the presence of a mystery. God’s own justice and peace will occur among the nations “in days to come.” What days? How? Perhaps all we can say is that the vision describes what God is, in fact, at work in the world to do. It is what Jesus apparently meant by “the reign of God,” which is already present and at work among us, though not yet in fullness. We saw it in Jesus, who converted fear to love, lunacy to sanity, enemies to friends. He died surrounded by swords; a spear stabbed him; nails tore him. They entered infinite love, which “melted them into light.”

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE**

**Isaiah 2:1–5**

## Focus on Your Teaching

Tweens are becoming more aware of national and world events, including reports of conflict and crisis. Such news can be upsetting, and may cause tweens to question their own security. Tweens also are aware of conflicts in their own communities and schools. They may long for unconditional assurances of safety. Honest adults cannot make such promises, but caring Christian adults can point tweens to the hope in God's promise that, ultimately, God's peace will prevail. They also can help tweens feel empowered to live now as peacemakers.

*Dear Jesus, I long for peace in my life and in the world. Strengthen me to trust in your presence and to point others to the promises of your reign. Amen.*

**YOU WILL NEED**

- ☐ purple or blue cloth
- ☐ four votive candles in holders
- ☐ artificial evergreen wreath (optional)
- ☐ matches or lighter
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Color Pack 1, 2, 36
- ☐ *Singing the Feast*, [bit.ly/SingingTheFeast](http://bit.ly/SingingTheFeast)
- ☐ newspapers, magazines
- ☐ newsprint
- ☐ markers
- ☐ scissors
- ☐ glue sticks

**For Responding**

- ☐ option 1: copies of Resource Sheet 1; colored pencils or pens
- ☐ option 2: copies of Resource Sheet 2, materials listed there; movie, *Star Trek: First Contact*; viewing device (optional)
- ☐ option 3: glow sticks; digital camera

## LEADING THE SESSION

### GATHERING

*Before the session*, spread a purple or blue cloth in the center of your learning space (see sidebar on p. 3.) Arrange four votive candles in a circle. Option: Arrange the votives inside an artificial evergreen wreath. If you are using option 3 in Responding, find an area that can be made quite dark. Bring one glow stick for each learner. (You can find them at discount stores.)

Welcome learners and gather around the candles. Announce that today is the first Sunday of the church season of Advent. Ask tweens what they know about Advent. Ask a volunteer to light one candle. Invite tweens to follow your directions in the following Advent prayer:

**Teacher:** *Advent is for looking back to Jesus' birth in Bethlehem.*

**All: Come, Lord Jesus!** *(Shield eyes with one hand as though looking into the distance, look backward over one shoulder.)*

**Teacher:** *Advent is for looking ahead to Jesus' return to rule in glory.*

**All: Come, Lord Jesus!** *(Shield eyes with one hand, point forward with the other.)*

**Teacher:** *Advent is for looking within our hearts for Jesus' presence now.*

**All: Come, Lord Jesus!** *(Cross arms over chest and bow head.)*

**Teacher:** *Come, Lord Jesus: Teach us your word of peace.*

**All: Amen.** *(Raise both hands over head.)*

Sing stanza one of "Four Candles" (Color Pack 36, [Singing the Feast](http://bit.ly/SingingTheFeast)).

Distribute newspapers and magazines. Have learners cut out headlines and photos from stories about conflict or violence. Discuss:

- ✂ What conflicts in the world today worry you most?
- ✂ Do you expect the world to grow more peaceful, less peaceful, or stay about the same in your lifetime? Why?

Some churches use the color blue in worship during Advent as a symbol of hope. Some churches use purple, a color of royalty, to honor the coming of our king, Jesus. In your class, when a choice of blue or purple is given in the instructions, use the same color your church uses in worship.

### Four Candles

Light one candle, Messiah is coming; wait and watch, for his Advent is near. He will meet us on God's holy mountain; how shall we prepare for his coming?

One. One candle to light the darkness. One. One candle to light his way.

Tell learners that today's Bible reading is about peace.

## EXPLORING

Distribute Bibles and ask tweens to find Isaiah 2:1–5. Tell learners that God called Isaiah to be a prophet about 750 years before Jesus was born. Isaiah lived in a world filled with conflict—the army of the Assyrian Empire was conquering many smaller nations. Isaiah urged Judah's king to trust God instead of making alliances with other kings. Judah's king didn't obey Isaiah's message, yet the Lord still promised that God's people would have a future of peace.

Ask a volunteer to read aloud Isaiah 2:1–2, 4. Tell the group that they will read verse 3 in unison. Discuss:

- ✂ Where are the world's peoples going in Isaiah's vision? (vv. 2–3; "the LORD's house" refers to the temple—the Israelites believed God was present there.)
- ✂ Why will the peoples be going there? (v. 3; Jacob was also called *Israel*; the text refers to Israel and Judah's God, not just any god.)
- ✂ Why does Isaiah say Mount Zion—which is more of a hill—will be "the highest of the mountains"?
- ✂ How will disagreements and conflicts be handled in the future that Isaiah describes? (v. 4)

Display Color Pack 1. If necessary, identify the pruning shears and the plow. These are modern equivalents of the "plowshares" and "pruning hooks" of Isaiah's day (v. 4). Ask:

- ✂ What makes plows and pruning hooks different from swords and spears?
- ✂ How do you imagine people in Isaiah's day reacted to his prophecy?
- ✂ How do you react to Isaiah's vision? Why?

Suggest that Isaiah's prophecy is meant to encourage God's people. Comment that a first step toward securing peace is envisioning peace. Encourage learners to create headlines and images of peace by cutting up and rearranging the headlines and photos they cut out in Gathering. Have tweens work together to arrange their work on a piece of newsprint and glue the pieces in place. Display it for others in your church to see.

Show Color Pack 2. Ask learners to turn in their Bibles to Isaiah 2:5 and read it aloud in unison. Discuss:

- ✂ What does it mean to "walk in the light of the Lord" right now? What might you do or say to encourage others to live in God's peace today?

## RESPONDING

Mark the activities you will use:

1. **Isaiah's Vision Today** Tweens will translate Isaiah's vision of peace into their vision for today. Together, discuss what images they might use to tell about Isaiah's vision in verse 4 to people their age. Encourage creative images relating to specific conflicts. (For example, what would "beating swords into plowshares" look like in a school struggling

EASY  
PREP

Option: Show “Zefram Cochrane about a Future” from *Star Trek: First Contact* ([bit.ly/STtelescope](http://bit.ly/STtelescope)) in which *Enterprise* crew members show Cochrane their starship through his telescope, convincing him to make his spaceflight and ensuring a brighter future. Discuss what Cochrane sees in the future and how it is similar to or different from Isaiah’s vision.

There are detailed camera instructions at [bit.ly/GlowStickPhoto](http://bit.ly/GlowStickPhoto); however, experimentation is central in this activity.

Save the votive candles and artificial evergreen wreath to use in upcoming sessions.

with racial tensions?) Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 1 (Isaiah’s Vision Today) and colored pencils or pens. Allow a few quiet moments for learners to fill the thought balloon with images and/or words that illustrate their modern-day vision. When all are finished, invite volunteers to talk about their work. Discuss what they might do or say to help these visions become reality.

2. **Peace Scopes** Tweens will make a physical reminder of the vision of God’s peace. Suggest that Isaiah’s vision functions like a telescope: It brings into focus a far-off sight, allowing us to see where we’re headed. Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 2 (Peace Scopes) and the materials needed. Lead learners in following the steps to make “Peace Scopes.” Allow time for learners to take turns looking through each other’s scopes. Discuss who else might like to look through their scopes.
3. **Walking in Light** Tweens will create photographs to express their understanding of Isaiah’s call to walk in God’s light as people of peace. Move to an area that can be darkened. Give each tween a glow stick. Have them snap and shake their glow sticks to activate them. Invite tweens to walk around slowly while moving their sticks through the air. Set a digital camera to “no flash,” “night mode,” or a slow shutter speed and take multiple photographs of learners as they walk. Look together at the photos and decide on captions that will encourage others to live as people of peace, perhaps using phrases from Isaiah. Display the photos where others will see them.

## CLOSING

Gather the group around the Advent candles. Place Color Pack 2 on the cloth. Invite tweens to tell what they will remember about peace from Isaiah’s vision. Discuss:

✠ What will you do this week to help bring God’s promise of peace to someone you know?

Invite learners to name joys and/or concerns they would like the class to pray about. Take notes if necessary so you can incorporate these things into the prayer. Pray aloud:

*Lord, we look forward to the time when everyone will know your peace.  
Hear the joys and concerns that fill our hearts today: (list the joys and concerns named by learners). Come quickly, Lord Jesus, to rule as Prince of Peace. Amen.*

Read aloud the following blessing:

*May God himself, the God who makes everything holy and whole, make you holy and whole, put you together—spirit, soul, and body—and keep you fit for the coming of our Master, Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:23, The Message).*

Exchange signs and words of God’s peace with learners as they depart.

## Isaiah's Vision Today



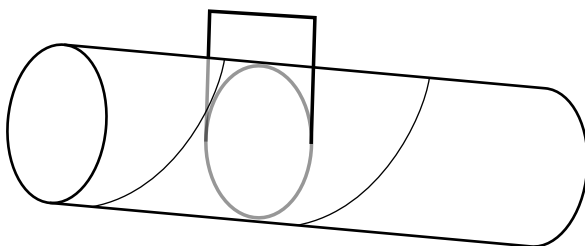
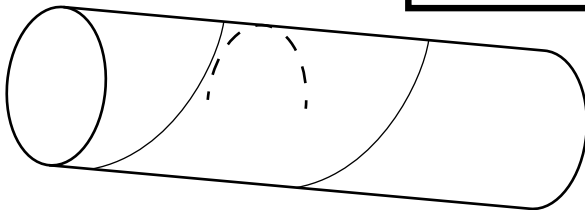
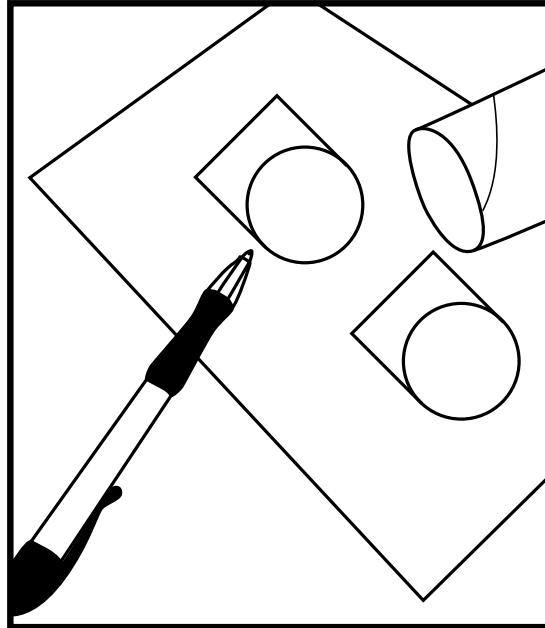
## Peace Scopes

### What You Need

- ☐ paper towel tube
- ☐ fine-tipped permanent markers
- ☐ ½ sheet clear acetate or overhead transparency paper
- ☐ sharp scissors
- ☐ serrated knife

### Directions

1. Use the paper towel tube to trace two circles on the acetate. These circles, when cut out, will become slides.
2. Sketch a partial square on top of each circle, to form a kind of “tab” you will use to insert and remove the slides from your scope.



3. Carefully cut out your slides with sharp scissors.
4. Use fine-tipped permanent markers to draw a scene on each circle, one illustrating peace in the future and one illustrating a way we can work for peace now.
5. Using a serrated knife, carefully cut a horizontal slit about 1½ inches from one end of the paper towel tube. Do not cut all the way through the tube. You will insert your slides into this slit.
6. Insert one slide and hold your scope up to one eye. Close your other eye and turn toward a light source. Do the same with the other slide. Enjoy your views of peace—both future and present!