



Older Children's (5th–8th Grade) Lesson Plan

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- Reflect on the meaning of the word peace
- Internalize a symbol of peace for their life
- Learn about different symbols for peace and ways to say peace in different languages
- Be inspired by the variety of ways the PC(USA) is involved in peacemaking efforts around the world

Resources and Equipment

- Clock Buddy sheet (one per participant)
- Pencil for each participant
- Bibles for each participant (*NRSV preferred*)
- Markers/crayons
- Older Children's Activity Sheet (two pages, single or double-sided) for each participant
- Computer/tablet with internet access*
- One white sheet or tablecloth (large enough to cover the communion table)
- Fabric markers

*If you do not have access to the internet, you could research this beforehand and present the examples of the flags and the ways to say and write peace in the various languages.

Set Up

- Copy the Older Children's Activity Sheet on cardstock (*one page of each for each participant*).

GATHER (15 MINUTES)

Peace Is ... Knowing Our Neighbors

As children arrive, give each one a Clock Buddy sheet and a pencil. Ask them to write their names in the center of the clock. Invite them to find another child to sign on one of the lines by the numbers on the clock, and then have them write their names on the other child's clock on the same number. Ask them to try to fill up their clock with names. It's okay if all the numbers aren't filled — but it's important that they sign the same number on the other child's clock as the child signed on theirs.

When all of the children have arrived and have at least a few names on their Clock Buddy sheet, welcome all by saying:

I'm so glad you're here today! We're going to talk about something really important—peace. Not only what it is, but how we can be a part of making peace too. One way we can be peacemakers in the world is simply by getting to know others. In a minute, I'll ask you to find a certain time on your clock and see who your buddy is for that time. When you find it, meet up with that buddy and I'll have a question for you to talk about together. Ready?



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Find your 3:00 buddy. *Help children find the name written at the number 3 space on their clocks and match them up.*

Now that you've found your 3:00 buddy, answer this question with your buddy:
"What's your favorite color?"

Give the pairs time to share with each other. Continue announcing various times of buddies to find (10:00 buddy, 6:00 buddy, etc.) and ask a new question each time new pairs form. Possible questions to ask:

- "Name some place you like to go that's really peaceful, and share why."
- "Share a compliment about your buddy."
- "Tell your buddy about someone special that you love, and why."
- "Peace is ..."
- "Share an idea for a great way to be a friend."
- "What's one way you like to cheer people up?"
- "Share something you love to do, and why."
- "If you were to draw a picture about peace, what would you draw?"

Once you've had them pair up with several different buddies and they've answered several different questions, gather the group together again.

That was a fun way to get to know one another. I wonder, how does getting to know people help us make peace?

Opening Prayer

Open in prayer using this prayer or one you create on your own:

God of peace, through Christ you bring peace and call each of us to be people of peace in our families, our community, and our world. Be with us today as we consider what it means to seek peace at all times and in all ways. Amen.

EXPLORE (40 minutes)

Today we're going to think about peace, and we'll start with scripture. We'll be reading from a book in the Bible called Second Thessalonians. While we call it a book in the Bible, it's actually a letter that Paul, a follower of Christ, wrote to a church in Thessalonica.

Invite children to open Bibles to 2 Thessalonians 3:16 (if you have access to the NRSV, use that translation) and invite a child to read.

Paul is praying for Jesus to give peace to those in Thessalonica.



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How would you describe peace?

Help children think through a variety of descriptions. For example:

- Calm
- Lack of violence or conflict
- Being whole
- Fairness

What kind of peace does Jesus give?

What else do we read about peace in this passage? *At all times, in all ways.*

I wonder what peace at all times and in all ways would look like?

Symbols of Peace

Hand out an Older Children’s Activity Sheet to each child.

Let’s learn about these symbols of peace together.

Walk through the Older Children’s Activity Sheet (page 1), highlighting the information together.

Which symbol helps you understand peace in a new way?

If you could draw a symbol of peace, what would you include, and why?

Invite children to create their own symbol of peace on the handout, including a description.

Peace in Every Nation

Today *(or if you’re doing this lesson before, note when it would be)* we celebrate World Communion Sunday—a day when we particularly remember our brothers and sisters in Christ all over the world and how Christ unites us at the table through his love. We also receive the Peace & Global Witness Offering today. This offering is used in our community, in our region, and all over the world through our denomination.

Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 3 that he prays for Christ’s peace “at all times and in all ways.” But I think we could add “in all places.”

Let’s investigate various countries in the world and learn how to say peace in their languages. We’ll also learn about ways our denomination is partnering with those countries to work for peace.

Divide up who will research which country (you might not have time for each child to do each one) and use page 2 of the Older Children’s Activity Sheet—Peace in Every Nation.



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Using a computer or tablet, invite children to research the countries listed, drawing the country’s flag, then researching the language and how to say and write “peace” in that language.

Come back together and have children share the flags and words of peace and then read together the information about ways the Presbyterian Church (USA) is working for peace in that country. Note the ways we are part of peacemaking through these projects when we participate in the Peace & Global Witness Offering. If you have extra time, you can research the work the Presbyterian Church is doing in these regions at <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/co-worker-map/>

Peace Art—Communion Cloth

As we celebrate World Communion Sunday, we’re going to decorate a tablecloth to be used on the communion table during communion.

Using the fabric markers, let’s create a peace cloth by drawing all of the symbols of peace (including the ones you came up with today!) on the cloth.

Let’s add the flags and the words for peace in different languages as we celebrate World Communion Sunday.

Assist children as they draw and write, ensuring the designs get spread around the cloth.

CLOSE (5 minutes)

As we look at this cloth, I see so many symbols of peace! I encourage you to think of the symbol you created and live out that symbol in your families, community, and world.

Closing Prayer

Invite the class to gather around the communion cloth for the closing prayer, each person holding a part of it.

Are there particular places or people you would like to lift up who are in need of Christ’s peace today? I’ll start the prayer, and you’re encouraged to lift up those people and places during the prayer.

Holy God, thank you for the peace you give to us. Help us to be people of peace in this world. We pray for people and places in need of your peace. We pray for ... *pause and invite participants to lift up their prayers* We lift each of these people and places before you. Guide us to be people who extend your peace at all times, in all ways, and in all places. Amen.

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