



BIBLE RESPONSE GUIDE

Portions of this work copyright © 2019 The Pastoral Center / PastoralCenter.com.
Adapted and reprinted with permission from *Peace Lab: Discover God's Way of Peace*.
© 2017 MennoMedia, Inc., Harrisonburg, VA 22803. All rights reserved.
Printed in United States of America
Writer: Anna Ralph; Project Director: Mary Ann Weber; Designer: Reuben Graham

All rights reserved. This publication may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in whole or in part, in any form, by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without prior permission of the copyright owners.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture text is quoted, with permission, from the *New Revised Standard Version*, © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

To order or request information, please call 1-844-727-8672 or visit GrowingUpCatholicVBS.com.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Peace Lab*, where children discover God's way of peace! Through learning how to resolve conflicts and figuring out ways to help others, children will learn how to be peacemakers in this VBS curriculum. The five Bible stories will lead children on an awesome adventure through the Bible, equipping them to follow Jesus as compassionate peacemakers.

Each Bible Response time includes:

- Introduction—Welcome the children.
- Bible story—Talk about the Bible story, which was presented in a drama during Worship. Do activities in *Lab Book*.
- Bible memory—Do activities and motions to learn the Bible memory passages.
- Closing—Work on part of the Peacemaker Challenge wall hanging and end your time together by singing and saying a prayer.

Each day includes an Additional activities section. The activities may be used if there is more time in a session after the daily plan is completed. Consider the age and abilities of the children so that you can choose activities appropriate for the groups. In addition, a book list is offered each day if you want to read to the children. The suggested books follow the day's theme. You are welcome to find other books as well.

Each session plan includes the day's Scripture, Bible background, purpose statement, and Bible memory passage. Read over these sections so that you are familiar with the focus of the day. All VBS leader guides include this information so that the activities and discussions will reflect the themes presented during the Worship time.

ROOM ARRANGEMENT

It will be helpful to have two sections in the Bible Response area—one section with table and chairs so that children can sit to work in *Lab Book* and do other activities, and the second section an open area where children can sit on the floor or have room to move if there is an activity that requires more space. Read the daily plans carefully so that you know the space that is needed for the activities, and plan accordingly.

MUSIC

VBS music is available on the *Peace Lab* CD, MP3 files, and songbook. Each Bible Response time will end with the song “Give Us Your Peace.” You will find motions in the *Peace Lab* songbook. In addition, play music as children enter the Bible response space and as they leave to go to the next VBS activity.

LAB BOOK STUDENT BOOK

Lab Book is an optional but very helpful part of the Bible Response time. If you use them, each child will need one, plus you will want to have a few extras in case new children join VBS. *Lab Book* includes stories of young people who are peacemakers, and Bible memory puzzles.

BIBLE MEMORY

Show the Bible memory poster or the Bible memory Powerpoint slide show. Invite children to read the passage with you.

Grades K–5; 6–8

- **Day 1:** Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. —Matthew 5:9

The following days are portions of Romans 12:16-18:

- **Day 2:** Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. —Romans 12:16
- **Day 3:** Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. —Romans 12:17
- **Day 4:** If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. —Romans 12:18
- **Day 5:** Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. —Romans 12:16-18

note: The Bible memory passages are from the *New Revised Standard Version*. You may use a preferred translation.

PEACEMAKER CHALLENGE WALL HANGING

Children will decorate a peacemaker challenge page each day as part of the closing activities. On the final day of vacation Bible school, the children will use the pages to make a wall hanging. They can take it home and hang it in a place where it will remind them to practice peacemaking.

You will need:

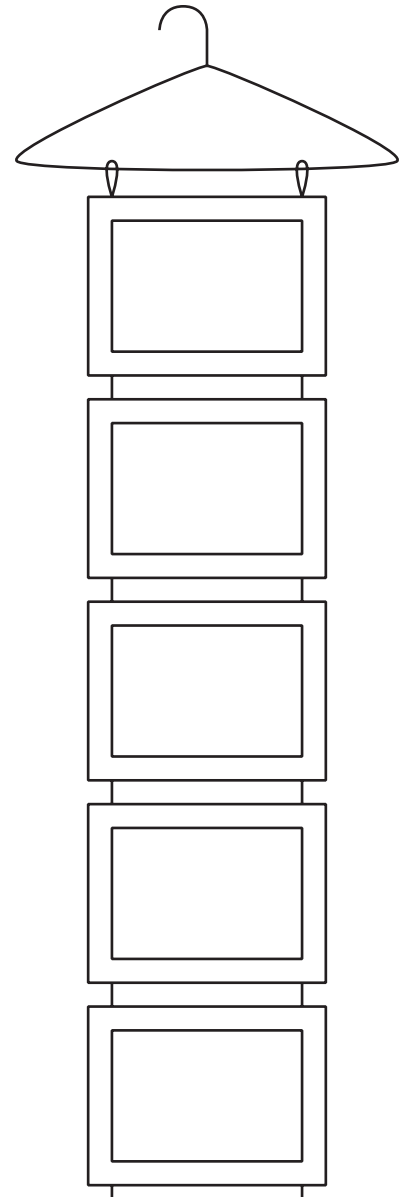
- Card stock or construction paper in assorted colors, five sheets per child
- Plastic clothes hangers or dowel rods, one per child
- Ribbon, yarn, or twine, 10 ft / 3 m per child
- Glue
- Staplers
- Scissors or paper cutters
- Reproducible peacemaker challenge pages

note: To save time, ask adult volunteers to help with the initial steps of the making the wall hangings.

To assemble the wall hanging before Day 5:

- Cut the ribbon in half (making two 5 ft / 1.5 m pieces). Place the five pieces of card stock above each other. Glue one piece of ribbon to one side of the card stock, and the second piece of ribbon to the other side of the card stock. Leave about 4 in / 10 cm of extra ribbon at the top. Loop the extra ribbon over the clothes hanger or dowel and glue or staple the ends to the top piece of card stock.
- Trim the wall hanging pages $\frac{1}{2}$ in / 1.5 cm from the margins so that the card stock will “frame” the page.
- Children may glue the pages to the card stock.

note: If any children missed a day of VBS and have pages not yet colored, allow time to color on the final day so that those pages can be included in their wall hanging.



DAILY SCHEDULE

Several meeting times are included in each day: Gather, Worship, Respond, and Send. The schedule for a 2-hour-and-15-minute Bible school session is as follows:

1. Gather

(10 minutes)

Children gather in small groups with their Group leader to begin the day. The Group leader will take attendance, answer questions, and make sure everyone is ready for VBS. The Group leader will accompany the children to the various VBS segments.

2. Worship

(25 minutes)

All the groups gather in one area for Worship time. This large-group experience includes a call to worship, music, offering, and a drama to present the day's Bible story.

3. Respond

(30 minutes each)

Small groups rotate and participate in three Response stations each day. Activities focus on the Bible story themes; the Creative Response time includes a snack.

- **Active Response** (games and activities)
- **Bible Response** (Bible story discussion, student book activities)
- **Creative Response** (crafts and snack)

4. Send

(10 minutes)

Children meet in their small groups for a sending blessing and to be dismissed.

Modified schedule

If your VBS program allows for less time, here are scheduling options:

If you have 2 hours:

Gather—5 to 10 minutes

Worship—25 minutes

Respond—75 minutes

- Active—25 minutes
- Bible—25 minutes
- Creative—25 minutes

Send—5 to 10 minutes

If you have 1½ hours:

Gather—5 minutes

Worship—20 minutes

Respond—60 minutes

- Active—20 minutes
- Bible—20 minutes
- Creative—20 minutes

Send—5 minutes

If you have 1 hour:

Worship—15 minutes

Respond—45 minutes

- Active—15 minutes
- Bible—15 minutes
- Creative—15 minutes

1 JESUS

Today's Bible experience

Matthew 5:9, 43-48

At the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told his followers that peacemakers will be called children of God. Later, Jesus shared that people are to love others.

Purpose statement

Blessed are the peacemakers.

Bible memory

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

—Matthew 5:9

Bible background

The Bible verses for today provide a foundation for the rest of vacation Bible school. The Sermon on the Mount is familiar to Christians because it outlines things that Jesus wants to teach us. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus followed these teachings himself, giving us practical examples of how we can practice his words.

The Sermon on the Mount begins with the Beatitudes. One of them is “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9). This is not a passive ideal—it is active. Making peace requires action. What does active peacemaking look like? The second part of today’s Bible memory passage—“for they will be called children of God”—gives a clue about what it means to practice peace.

Practicing peace means that we love others. We are to love those who are our friends, and we are to love those who are not our friends. We follow God’s example to love others. This is not always easy to do.

The apostle Paul took what Jesus said about peace and included the ideas in his letter to the church in Rome. The Bible memory verses for Days 2–5 begin and end with Paul’s encouragement to live a life of peace: “Live in harmony . . . live peaceably with all” (Romans 12:16, 18).

Throughout VBS, you will encounter stories of biblical characters who were active in making peace in some very practical ways. Children will learn from them, developing skills they can use to practice peace in their own settings. Encourage children to follow these examples and learn to make peace.

Session materials

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bibles | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Peace Lab</i> music/player |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bible memory poster or slide show from the Resource CD; projector | <input type="checkbox"/> Ball (any size) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Lab Book</i> , one per child | <input type="checkbox"/> Kazoos, one per child |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 1 peacemaker challenge page, one per child | <input type="checkbox"/> Pencils, markers, crayons, or colored pencils |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Supplies (see items needed for any Additional activities you choose to do) |

note: Do an Internet search to find instructions for how to make kazoos using simple, everyday materials.

Advance preparation

- Pray for the adults and children who will participate in VBS. May they be open to learning about God's way of peace and to practicing it in their lives.
- Read Matthew 5:9, 43-48 and the Bible background (p. 6) to become familiar with today's story. Consider what it might look like in everyday life to be the kind of peacemaker Jesus describes.
- Read the Bible Response daily plan and choose activities appropriate for your group. Gather materials.

DAILY PLAN

Introduction

1. **Welcome the children to *Peace Lab***, where they will discover how to practice making peace. Invite them to sit in a circle on the floor.
2. **One way to practice peace is to get acquainted.** Hold the ball and say your name, followed by something you like to do. For example, "Miss Kathy, gardening." Roll the ball to someone else around the circle, who will say his or her name and something he or she likes to do. Continue until everyone has received the ball and shared their name and a hobby.
3. **While the children are still seated in the circle, pass out the kazoos.** Have the children hum into the kazoos; make sure that everyone knows how to use them. Explain that now that you know each other's names, you will have a kazoo concert. Have the children line up in rows, against the wall, as they might if they were a choral group. Invite them to play a simple song, such as "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" or "Jesus Loves Me." Give no other instructions. There will most likely be a bit of chaos, such as different musical keys and tempos. Stop the children and tell them that kazoo concert did not sound very good. Have them try one more time, again without instructions.
4. **Have the children return to the circle.** Ask them why they think the kazoo concert did not sound very good. Answers will vary, but hopefully someone will mention, "We didn't practice!" or "You didn't tell us what to do." After hearing responses, point out that practice is important. It helps us learn and improve skills. If people are working in a group, practice helps each person coordinate with others in the group. Point out that this is what happens with sports teams and theater groups. Everyone needs to practice!

Say:

At vacation Bible school, we're going to experiment with how to be peacemakers. As with playing kazoos or playing soccer, peacemaking is something that takes practice. We need to learn from others who are good at it, and then practice doing it ourselves. Each day we'll see how a person in the Bible was a peacemaker, discover how a young person practiced peacemaking, and practice our own skills at being peacemakers. That's why we have Peace Lab—to experiment, discover, learn, and practice!

Bible story

1. **Review the drama presented during Worship time.**

- What happened?
- Did the children hear about anything that might need to be practiced?

Read Matthew 5:9, 43-48 aloud. Invite the children to find it in their Bibles and read along with you.

note: Encourage children to bring their Bibles to Bible school. Help them find the stories and memory passages.

2. **Move to the table.** Have the children write their names inside their *Lab Book*, and introduce them to Pax the Porcupine.

Turn to page 3 in *Lab Book* and read the story about Mayerly Sánchez, a young peace-maker. Explain that it isn't only adults who are peacemakers; young people can be peacemakers too!

Bible memory

1. **Have the children turn to page 5 in *Lab Book*** and complete the secret code. When everyone is finished breaking the code, read the verse together.

note: The answer to the secret code is the Bible memory passage for today.

2. **Today's Bible memory passage was part of today's drama.** Read it again, letting the children know that this is also the memory passage.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. —Matthew 5:9

To practice the verse, do the activity that was done during Worship time. Divide into two groups to learn the verse. Have Group 1 say "Blessed are the peacemakers" when you point to them. Have Group 2 say "for they will be called children of God" when you point to them. Practice the verse several times in this call-and-response style. Then have the groups trade lines and say it again!

Motions

peacemakers: make a peace sign

children: pretend to rock a baby

God: point up

Closing

1. **Read the Peacemaker Challenge** page together (“Blessed are the peacemakers”). Pass out markers, crayons, or colored pencils. Tell the children they will decorate a page each day that will be part of a wall hanging they can take home on the last day of VBS. Let them know that about ½ in / 1.5 cm will be cut off all around the border.
2. **Sing together** “Give Us Your Peace” from the *Peace Lab* music collection (lyrics and motions are in the songbook. You may want to show the motions video until they know them well.
3. **Make connections by saying:**

This week we'll learn how peacemakers experiment to find good ways to solve problems, help other people, speak up for what is right, and ask for help to resolve conflicts.

The next time we're together, I will ask if you practiced peacemaking in the time since we were together today. Let's be sure to look for ways we can be peacemakers.

4. **Pray a closing prayer:**

Dear God, I pray for everyone who is here today—the children, the leaders, and everyone who is helping us. Help us as we learn more about being peacemakers. Please show us situations where we can share your love and peace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

note: Additional activities can be used to extend a session, depending on the amount of time available. Consider the age and abilities of your VBS children so that you choose appropriate activities.

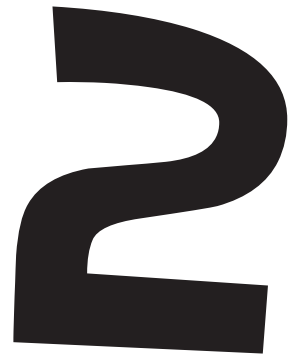
1. **Peace Lab discovery.** Explain that discovering peace and becoming a peacemaker takes time. It's not something we learn in one day, but something that we continue learning about for the rest of our lives. As we start to practice peace, we may notice that others start practicing peace too! It can spread to others.
To illustrate this, trim the bottom edge of a piece of celery, then place the celery stalk inside a clear glass with colored water. Say:
You won't see the results today, but the next time we meet, you will see the color spreading through the celery. That's how peace is—we don't always see the results right away, but it will spread, and we'll see them someday!
2. **Make a peacemaker cheer** that can be used throughout the week. It can be as simple as:
P-E-A, C, E; M-A-K, E, R / Peacemakers, peacemakers—who we are.
Hurraaaaay for peacemakers!
3. **Practice getting to know each other.** Pair children and have them sit anywhere around the room. Give each pair a pencil and paper. Give them three minutes to discover things they have in common. Commonalities can be serious or silly—for example, hair color, 10 fingers, same school, like ice cream, play soccer, have missing teeth, and so on. When the time is up, ask pairs to share their examples. Explain that in discovering things they had in common, they learned to know another person better. Learning to know people is one way to be a peacemaker.
4. **Learn about how to treat “enemies.”** Read Matthew 5:43-44 and ask the children what it means for someone to be an enemy. Depending on the responses, this might be a good opportunity to discuss a topic such as bullies or broken relationships. After it's established who an enemy might be, reread the passage to see how Jesus tells us to act. For older children, broaden the context by reading more verses: Matthew 5:38-48.

BOOK LIST

note: You may want to read to children or have them look at books, depending on how much time is available. This list offers suggestions that fit the day's themes. You are welcome to find other books as well.

- Kerley, Barbara. *A Little Peace*. Washington, DC: National Geographic Children's Books, 2007. Even small gestures can spread a little peace.
- Nelson, Kadir. *If You Plant a Seed*. New York: Balzer and Bray, 2015. If vegetable seeds produce more vegetables, what do seeds of selfishness or kindness produce?
- Seiling, Rebecca. *Plant a Seed of Peace*. Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2007. Stories of peace-makers—past and present—who put their faith into action. Written for children.
- Tutu, Archbishop Desmond, and Douglas Carlton Abrams. *God's Dream*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 2010. God's dream is that people everywhere will care and share, find peaceful solutions to conflicts, and embrace all of God's children.
- Udry, Janice May. *Let's Be Enemies*. New York: HarperCollins, 1988. After they have a falling out and become "enemies," two boys discover that memories of good times together can help them to reconcile.

ABRAM AND LOT



Today's Bible experience

Genesis 13

Abram and Sarai and Abram's nephew Lot traveled to a new land. There was disagreement among their herders about both parties using the best land for their cattle. To solve the argument, Abram suggested that Lot choose which land would be his, and Abram would go in the other direction.

Purpose statement

Peacemakers find good ways to solve problems.

Bible memory

Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. —Romans 12:16

Bible background

In this story, Abram and Sarai are on a journey to find a place to settle their family and livestock. They are wealthy, having accumulated silver, gold, and lots of livestock. Abram's nephew Lot is with them, and he also has livestock and tents. Their prosperity also brings conflict. The conflicts are not between Abram and Lot, however, but among those who work for them. The herders disagree over the land that will serve as pastures for their flocks.

Abram does not like the tension among the workers, so he speaks with Lot. Abram suggests that the two men no longer travel together: Lot should choose which way he will go, and then Abram will choose the opposite way.

Lot chooses the most desirable land, the plains of Jordan, which are lush and green. He settles near the city of Sodom. Abram settles in the other direction, near Canaan, in land that is rocky and hilly. Abram is gracious in allowing his nephew to choose the better land and gracious in accepting Lot's choice. Abram finds a peaceful way to solve the problem of the arguments among the herders.

Their choices affect their families and descendants for years to come. Verse 13 foreshadows that things might not go very well for Lot and his descendants in that area. Meanwhile, Canaan would become synonymous with good, desirable things.

God speaks with Abram, giving a blessing to Abram for being a peacemaker. God promises that all the land Abram can see will belong to Abram and his descendants. God also promises that Abram will have many descendants, too many to count.

Children know about conflicts. A practical example many children face is to have only one treat, such as a cookie, to share with a friend. One child breaks the cookie into two pieces, and the other child chooses which piece to eat. The conflict is settled peacefully.

Session materials

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Bible memory poster or slide show from the Resource CD; projector
- ☐ *Lab Book*, one per child
- ☐ Day 2 peacemaker challenge page, one per child
- ☐ *Peace Lab* music/player
- ☐ Pencils, markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- ☐ Supplies (see items needed for any Additional activities you choose to do)

Advance preparation

- Pray for the adults and children who will participate in VBS. May they be open to learning about God's way of peace and to practicing it in their lives.
- Read Genesis 13 and the Bible background (p. 11) to become familiar with today's story. Consider what Abram did to resolve the conflict between his household and Lot's household.
- Read the Bible Response daily plan and choose activities appropriate for your group. Gather materials.

DAILY PLAN

Introduction

1. **Welcome the children to the second day of *Peace Lab***, where they will discover more ways to practice making peace.
2. **Share one thing you have done to practice peace** since Day 1 of VBS. Ask the children if they remember that the last time you were together, you said that you would ask them if they had an opportunity to practice peacemaking. Allow time for children to share their experiences with practicing peace.

Bible story

1. **Review the drama presented during Worship time.**
 - What happened?
 - How was peace practiced during the story?

note: Encourage children to bring their Bibles to Bible school. Help them find the stories and the memory passage.

2. **Have the children turn to page 6 in *Lab Book***, then read the story about Brook together. Explain that it isn't only adults who are peacemakers; young people can be peacemakers too!

Bible memory

1. **Have the children turn to page 8 in *Lab Book*** and unscramble the order of the words for a special message. When everyone is finished, read the message together.
2. **Today's Bible memory passage** is the first of three verses that will be learned over the next four days of Bible school. Open your Bible to Romans 12:16 and help the children to find it in their Bibles. Read the verse.

Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. —Romans 12:16

Explain the parts of the verse that may be difficult for children to understand:

Live in harmony (*get along*) with one another; do not be haughty (*proud*), but associate (*spend time*) with the lowly (*people who don't seem important*); do not claim to be wiser than you are (*don't act like you know everything*). — Romans 12:16

Motions

haughty: hold hands above head

lowly: hold hands down low

wiser: point to head with both hands

Closing

1. **Read the Peacemaker Challenge** page together (“Peacemakers find good ways to solve problems”). Pass out markers, crayons, or colored pencils. Tell the children they will decorate a page each day that will be part of a wall hanging they can take home on the last day of VBS. Let them know that about ½ in / 1.5 cm will be cut off all around the border.
2. **Sing together** “Give Us Your Peace” from the *Peace Lab* music collection. Find lyrics and motions in the *Peace Lab* songbook.
3. **Make connections by saying:**

Can you think of a time when someone treated you unfairly? Can you think of a time when you have treated someone else unfairly? What would be a good way to respond if that happens again? The next time we're together, I will ask if you practiced peacemaking since this time together today. Let's be sure to look for ways we can be peacemakers.

4. **Pray a closing prayer:**

Dear God, I pray for everyone who is here today—the children, the leaders, and everyone who is helping us. When we have problems or arguments, please help us to know how we can solve them in good ways. Help us hear your voice and be creative when we're trying to figure out what is best to do. In Jesus' name. Amen.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

note: Additional activities can be used to extend a session, depending on the amount of time available. Consider the age and abilities of your VBS children so that you choose appropriate activities.

1. **Peace Lab discovery.** Abram and Lot had a problem, and Abram came up with a way to solve it peacefully. The simple act of letting Lot choose his land made a beautiful way forward for their families.
To illustrate that simple solutions can be beautiful, mix equal parts water and Epsom salt together until the salt is dissolved. Give children paintbrushes and pieces of construction paper in dark colors. Invite them to “paint” designs on the paper with the salt water. In this simple activity, the combination of these simple ingredients will be beautiful after the paintings dry and crystals form.
2. **Foibles and flubs.** Retell the Bible story using incorrect details, and have children quietly count mistakes. Did anyone count all of them? Invite children to retell the story correctly, or divide into small groups to act out the story with the correct details.
3. **Read *Four Feet, Two Sandals*** (see book list) and talk about the creativity the girls demonstrated in solving the problem of how four feet can use two sandals. Be sure to point out the sacrifice made at the end by the girl who remains in the refugee camp when she gives away what she really needs.
4. **Talk about sharing.** Invite children to talk about situations in which sharing is a good idea. Write the situations on a whiteboard so that everyone can see them. Divide into small groups and allow each group to choose a situation on the whiteboard to act out for the larger group.

BOOK LIST

note: You may want to read to children or have them look at books, depending on how much time is available. This list offers suggestions that fit the day's themes. You are welcome to find other books as well.

- Al Abdullah, Raina, and Kelly DiPucchio. *The Sandwich Swap*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2010. A peanut butter sandwich and a hummus sandwich threaten to separate good friends when each girl claims the other's is “yucky.” After their dispute escalates, they take a risk and find a peaceful solution.
- dePaola, Tomie. *The Knight and the Dragon*. New York: Puffin Books, 1998. Since knights and dragons are expected to fight each other, each prepares for their first battle. They discover a way of interacting that doesn't involve fighting.
- Hills, Tad. *Duck and Goose*. New York: Schwartz and Wade Books, 2006. Duck and Goose find an “egg” and struggle to decide whose it is and how they will raise the young bird once the “egg” hatches.
- Muth, Jon J. *Stone Soup*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2003. Hunger can be a significant cause of conflict. Three monks help a village discover their hidden resources for helping one another and the strangers among them.
- Williams, Karen Lynn. *Four Feet, Two Sandals*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. First published 2007. Two young girls in a refugee camp develop creative strategies for sharing one pair of sandals between them.

NAOMI, RUTH, AND BOAZ



Today's Bible experience

Ruth 1–2

Ruth moved with her mother-in-law, Naomi, to Bethlehem. In order to support them, Ruth gleaned in nearby fields. Boaz, the owner of the farm, helped Ruth and Naomi by making sure grain was left for them.

Purpose statement

Peacemakers help other people.

Bible memory

Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. —Romans 12:17

Bible background

The book of Ruth begins with disasters. There is a famine in Bethlehem, so Elimelech and Naomi and their two sons move to the land of Moab. While they are there, the sons marry Moabite women. Then Elimelech dies. Later, the sons also die. Naomi decides to return to Bethlehem. One of her daughters-in-law, Ruth, insists she accompany Naomi.

The book of Ruth is a story of women living in a man's world, a story of relationships and love, and a story about helping those who are foreign and vulnerable in a strange land.

Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth face two problems when they arrive in Bethlehem. One is that they do not have a way to support themselves. Widows relied on family or charity for their needs, or were forced into prostitution. The second problem is that though there is now plenty of food in Bethlehem, it is still difficult to access. How are two widows who have journeyed from Moab expected to survive?

Ruth goes to the fields to glean. She gathers leftover grain that field workers have left behind. Ruth catches the eye of the owner of the farm, Boaz. Boaz is a relative of Elimelech's. When he discovers that Ruth is Naomi's daughter-in-law, Boaz tells the workers to be sure to leave some grain for Ruth. He invites Ruth to join him and his workers at mealtime, and she eats until she is full. Boaz tells the men to leave her alone. Even though Ruth is a foreign widow, she is not to be harassed while in his fields.

Ruth continues gleaning until the end of the harvest. Today's story ends there, but we know that Ruth and Boaz eventually marry. They become David's great-grandparents. (The Day 4 story is about David.)

Though the story is usually told from the perspective of Ruth, it is Boaz who acts as a hero in this narrative. Ruth is a foreigner from Moab. There are stories in the Bible of hostility between Moab and Israel (see the book of Numbers). Yet Boaz does not allow these divisions to keep him from helping

Ruth. He practices what is written in the religious laws: “You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. You shall not abuse any widow or orphan” (Exodus 22:21-22).

Session materials

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bibles | <input type="checkbox"/> Whiteboard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bible memory poster or slide show from the Resource CD; projector | <input type="checkbox"/> “Peacemakers help other people” charts (p. 31), one per child |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Lab Book</i> , one per child | <input type="checkbox"/> Tokens (buttons, pebbles, pieces of paper), 16 per child |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Peace Lab</i> music/player | <input type="checkbox"/> Bible memory cube (p. 32) (optional) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peacemaker challenge pages, one per child | <input type="checkbox"/> Supplies (see items needed for any Additional activities you choose to do) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pencils, markers, crayons, or colored pencils | |

Advance preparation

- Pray for the adults and children who will participate in VBS. May they be open to learning about God’s way of peace and to practicing it in their lives.
- Read Ruth 1–2 and the Bible background (p. 15) to become familiar with today’s story. Consider what Ruth did to help Naomi and what Boaz did to help Ruth.
- Read the Bible Response daily plan and choose activities appropriate for your group. Gather materials.
- Make copies of the “Peacemakers help other people” chart (p. 31), one per child.
- Cut out and assemble the cube (p. 32) for the Bible memory activity.

DAILY PLAN

Introduction

1. **Welcome the children to the third day of *Peace Lab***, where they will discover how to practice making peace.
2. **Share one thing you have done to practice peace** since Day 2 of VBS. Ask the children if they remember that the last time you were together, you said that you would ask them if they had an opportunity to experiment with peacemaking. Allow time for children to share their experiences with practicing peace.

Bible story

1. **Review the drama presented during Worship time.**
 - What happened?
 - How was peace practiced during the story?

note: Children might not make an immediate connection between helping others and making peace. You might want to spend some time talking about how helping others is a way to show kindness and care, which are important for making peace.

note: Do an Internet search to find a video clip of people gleaning, and play it on a laptop or other device. It’s a practice that still happens around the world today, and children will be curious to see what it involves.

note: Encourage children to bring their Bibles to Bible school. Help them find the stories and the memory passage.

2. **Ask children to think of ways they can help others**, and write the ideas on the whiteboard. Examples might include clean the house, share food, give clothing, pray, give money, care for a pet, read to a sibling, share toys.
Give each child a “Peacemakers help other people” chart copied from page 31. Have them choose items from the whiteboard and write one item per box, creating a bingo card. Make sure the children fill in their cards randomly so that each person’s is different.
Give each child 16 tokens for their cards, and have them cover the free spaces. Randomly call out the items on the whiteboard. Children should cover their spaces as you call the items. When four squares in a row are covered, the child should call out “Peacemaker!” You may repeat the game as time and interest allow.
3. **Have the children turn to page 9 in Lab Book** and read the story about John Paul together. Explain that it isn’t only adults who are peacemakers; young people can be peacemakers too!

Bible memory

1. **Today’s Bible memory passage** is the second of three verses that will be learned during Days 2–5 of Bible school. Open your Bible to Romans 12:17 and help the children find it in their Bibles. Read the verse.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all.
—Romans 12:17

Explain the various parts of the verse that may be difficult for children to understand, particularly what it means to “repay evil for evil” and the meaning of *noble* (good, right, honest, generous). As peacemakers, we are to act in peaceful ways, even when others do things that are mean, hurtful, or wrong.

Motions

not: shake head

evil (first time): hold out left hand, palm up

evil (second time): hold out right hand, palm up

thought: point to head with both hands

noble: bring hands together in a prayer position

Optional activity:

Use the Bible memory cube. With the children standing, practice saying the verse together, but add a twist: Roll the cube. Follow the instruction that is rolled for how to say the verse together. Repeat several times until the children have learned the verse and used all the variations.

2. **Have the children turn to page 10 in Lab Book**. Explain that they are to match the word or phrase on the left side of the page with the word or phrase that follows it on the right side of the page. Do the first few together. When everyone is finished, read the verses together.

Closing

1. **Read the Peacemaker Challenge** page together (“Peacemakers help other people”). Pass out markers, crayons, or colored pencils. Tell the children they will decorate a page each day that will be part of a wall hanging they can take home on the last day of VBS. Let them know that about ½ in / 1.5 cm will be cut off all around the border.
2. **Sing together** “Give Us Your Peace” from the *Peace Lab* music collection. Find lyrics and motions in the *Peace Lab* songbook.
3. **Make connections by saying:**

What is something specific you can do today to help someone and be a peacemaker? The next time we're together, I will ask if you practiced peacemaking in the time since we were together today. Let's be sure to look for ways we can be peacemakers.

4. **Pray a closing prayer:**

Dear God, I pray for everyone who is here today—the children, the leaders, and everyone who is helping us. We would like to be peacemakers by helping others. Please show us the people you want us to help, and give us good ideas about what we can do. In Jesus' name. Amen.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

note: Additional activities can be used to extend a session, depending on the amount of time available. Consider the age and abilities of your VBS children so that you choose appropriate activities.

1. **Peace Lab discovery.** Explain that Boaz helped Ruth by allowing her to glean, and Ruth helped Naomi by bringing home the barley she gleaned. Things go well when we work together.
To illustrate working together, fill a glass jar halfway with water. Add a few drops of food coloring and shake the jar so that the water is colored. Add cooking oil to the jar, almost to the top. Wait until the water and oil separate and settle. Next, break an Alka-Seltzer™ tablet into several pieces. Drop them into the jar one at a time and watch the bubbles rise. Say:
In this demonstration, we discovered that water and oil do not mix. They don't want to work together! But when we added the Alka-Seltzer™ pieces, they helped the water and oil work together to create bubbles. That's how making peace is sometimes—we need to find a way to help people work together!
2. **Invite someone in your parish or local community** to share with the children about a helping ministry in which she or he is involved, such as refugee resettlement, food bank, community garden, or another project. Are there ways that children and their families can participate?
3. **Play a memory game.** Place on a tray an assortment of 10–15 objects that represent ways to help people, such as Band-Aids, a screwdriver, a glove, a spoon, and so on. Allow children to view the tray for one minute, then cover it. How many items do children remember? How do the items help people?
4. **One way to help others** is to live with fewer things in our lives, allowing more money and other resources to be available to help others. We don't need everything we think we do! Ask children to name things they need, and list them on a whiteboard. If they name mostly tangible items, encourage them to also include more abstract things, such as love, family, music, God, church, school, and other things. After a list is compiled, invite children to take turns crossing off one item each that they could live without, if necessary. Some children may want to explain their choices. When children reach the point when there is nothing left that anyone would consider crossing off, talk about what our needs really are.

BOOK LIST

note: You may want to read to children or have them look at books, depending on how much time is available. This list offers suggestions that fit the day's themes. You are welcome to find other books as well.

- Lyon, George Ella, and Stephanie Anderson. *You and Me and Home Sweet Home*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2009. A young girl's church family comes together to help her and her mother build a house—a permanent home.
- Proimos, James. *Paulie Pastrami Achieves World Peace*. New York: Little, Brown Books, 2009. Starting with small but intentional acts of kindness and expanding his sphere of influence, Paulie achieves peace in his world.
- Rockliff, Mara. *My Heart Will Not Sit Down*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. During the Great Depression, a young girl in Cameroon inspires her village to help feed starving people in New York City.
- Williams, Vera. *A Chair for My Mother*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 2007. Neighbors and relatives help replace what a girl's family lost in a house fire—except a comfortable chair for her hardworking mother. The girl, Mama, and Grandma save their coins until they can shop for a beautiful new chair.
- Woodson, Jacqueline. *Each Kindness*. New York: Nancy Paulsen Books, 2012. Chloe and her friends ridicule a new girl's shabby clothing, ignore her overtures of friendship, and refuse to play with her. By the time Chloe realizes how unkind she has been, it is too late to make things right.

4

JONATHAN, MICHAL, AND DAVID

Today's Bible experience

1 Samuel (18) 19–20

King Saul was increasingly jealous of David. Saul's son Jonathan and his daughter Michal, who was also David's wife, tried to talk their father out of harming David because they believed it was the right thing to do.

Purpose statement

Peacemakers speak up for what is right.

Bible memory

If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.
—Romans 12:18

Bible background

Sometimes it's hard to speak up for what is right. There's a lot of drama in today's story, yet what is striking throughout it is that the siblings Jonathan and Michal practice peace by saying the right thing, even when it is difficult.

David is just a shepherd when he is anointed to one day be king. His actions against Goliath help Israel defeat the Philistines. David goes on to win more battles, and his popularity soars. As this happens, King Saul becomes hostile toward David.

This puts Saul's children in a difficult position. Saul's son Jonathan is David's close friend, and Jonathan loves David "as his own soul" (1 Samuel 18:1). Saul's daughter Michal marries David. It is Jonathan and Michal who work to keep David safe when Saul threatens him.

Saul decides to kill David, and Jonathan is devastated. He is so distressed that he finds the courage to speak with Saul about it, reminding Saul that David has done many good things for Israel. Jonathan asks Saul, "Why then will you sin against an innocent person by killing David without cause?" (1 Samuel 19:5). Saul relents, and David is safe.

But not for long. Saul's anger continues to grow. He sends soldiers to David's house to kill him. Michal understands the grave danger David is in. She does what is right and helps David escape through a window.

Saul again makes plans to kill David. Jonathan and David develop a secret code. David will hide in a field and Jonathan will go there to shoot arrows. If Jonathan shoots his arrow far, it will mean that David needs to leave. Jonathan has another conversation with Saul and speaks up for David. But in the end, Jonathan has to shoot his arrow far. David leaves, and the two friends never see each other again.

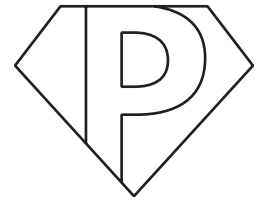
The violence and murderous schemes in this story can be disconcerting. We don't want children to think that Saul's action and schemes are okay. They are not—and they should not be glorified in any retellings of the story. Instead, the emphasis should be that despite Saul's jealous anger, Jonathan and Michal found the courage to do and say what is right.

Session materials

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Bible memory poster or slide show from the Resource CD; projector
- ☐ *Lab Book*, one per child
- ☐ *Peace Lab* music/player
- ☐ Peacemaker challenge pages, one per child
- ☐ Paper superhero shield with the letter *P*, tape or safety pin
- ☐ Empty soda can
- ☐ Recycling container with a recycling symbol on its side
- ☐ Playground ball or jump rope
- ☐ Balloons (prepared according to directions in Bible memory section)
- ☐ Duct tape
- ☐ Pencils, markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- ☐ Supplies (see items needed for any Additional activities you choose to do)

Advance preparation

- Pray for the adults and children who will participate in VBS. May they be open to learning about God's way of peace and to practicing it in their lives.
- Read 1 Samuel (18) 19–20 and the Bible background (p. 20) to become familiar with today's story. Consider what Jonathan and Michal said and did to help protect David from Saul.
- Read the Bible Response daily plan and choose activities appropriate for your group. Gather materials.
- Create a paper superhero shield with the letter *P* on it. Read over the two peacemaking scenarios to make sure you understand how they will work.
- Prepare sets of balloons as described in the Bible memory section.



DAILY PLAN

Introduction

1. **Welcome the children to the fourth day of *Peace Lab***, where they will discover how to practice making peace.
2. **Share one thing you have done to practice peace** since Day 3 of VBS. Ask the children if they remember that the last time you were together, you said that you would ask them if they had an opportunity to practice peacemaking. Allow time for children to share their experiences with practicing peace.

Bible story

1. **Review the drama presented during Worship time.**
 - What happened?
 - How was peace practiced during the story?

note: Encourage children to bring their Bibles to Bible school. Help them find the stories and the memory passage.

2. **Act out peacemaking scenarios** in this modified role-playing activity. You will be the Director, and several children will help. Both scenarios need a superhero, Peacemaker, who wears a shield with the letter *P*. Both scenarios also need a teacher, perhaps another adult, who stands to the side of the room.
Each scenario has multiple parts.

Scenario 1

Put the recycling container within sight somewhere in the room. Choose a child to be the superhero Peacemaker, and use tape or a safety pin to attach the *P* shield to his or her shirt. Have Peacemaker stand to the side. Whenever Peacemaker hears “That’s not right!” it’s time to swoop into action. Choose one child to be the main character and give him or her the empty soda can. Tell the remaining children that whenever you motion to them, they should say loudly, “That’s not right!”

Director says: “Lights, camera, action! Now you (with the can), act as if you’re walking down the street. Drop the can along the way.” When the can has been dropped, cue the crowd to say, “That’s not right!”

Director cues Peacemaker. “Peacemaker, I want you to pick up the can and take it to the teacher. Tell the teacher you saw that kid drop the can on the ground.” Peacemaker follows instructions. Director says, “Okay, cut, cut, cut!”

Director says to the group, “That was one solution. Let’s see if there’s another one.”

Repeat the scenario, but this time tell Peacemaker to pick up the can and put it in the recycling container. Director says to the group, “That was a good solution. Let’s see if there’s another one.”

Repeat the scenario, but this time tell Peacemaker to go to the child who littered and say, “It’s not good to litter. Let me show you where you can toss the can.” Peacemaker should pick up the can, hand it to the child, and walk with the child to the recycling container.

Director says to the group, “Wow, I think maybe that was the best solution. Now we know where to throw our empty cans, and we’ll remember it next time.”

Scenario 2

Choose another child to be Peacemaker, and give him or her a ball or a jump rope. Designate two children to stand to one side, and a third child to stand alone on the other side.

Director says: “Lights, camera, action! The two of you standing on the one side should act as if you’re playing on the playground. You see there’s another child who is alone, but you keep playing and ignore him (or her).” Cue the crowd, “That’s not right!”

Director cues Peacemaker. “Peacemaker, I want you to go and tell the teacher that the two kids won’t play with the one who is alone.” Peacemaker follows instructions. Director says, “Okay, cut, cut, cut!”

Director says to the group: “That was one solution. Let’s see if there’s another one.”

Repeat the scenario, but this time tell Peacemaker to play with the child who is alone, sharing the ball or jump rope. Director says to the group, “That was a good solution. Let’s see if there’s another one.”

Repeat the scenario, but this time instruct Peacemaker to take the new friend over to the other children and initiate a game that they can all play together with the ball or jump rope by saying, “Can we all play together?”

Director says to the group, “Wow, I think maybe that was the best solution. That time the whole group got to play together and could learn to know each other!”

Talk about the scenarios. Say:

Peacemaker spoke up for what was right. Sometimes Peacemaker used words, other times Peacemaker used actions, and sometimes Peacemaker used both words and actions. In what situations might you want to speak up for what is right?

3. **Have the children turn to page 11 in *Lab Book*** and read the story of Malala together. Remind the children that it isn’t only adults who are peacemakers; young people can be peacemakers too!

Bible memory

1. **Today's Bible memory passage** is the third of three verses that will be learned during Days 2–5 of Bible school. Open your Bible to Romans 12:18 and help the children to find it in their Bibles. Review the two verses from the previous days (Romans 12:16-17) by having the children say them along with you. Read today's verse.

If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. —Romans 12:18

Explain that God wants us to live peaceably with everyone. Even though we don't always have control over what happens around us, especially with other people, God will help us to say and do the right things that will make peace.

Motions

you: point in front of you with both hands

peaceably: make a peace sign

all: make a large circle with both hands

To help the children learn today's verse, play a balloon game.

Make two or more sets of balloons. Each set should include 12 balloons of the same color. With a permanent marker, on each set write the words of the memory verse grouped like this: If / it is / possible, / so far / as it / depends / on you, / live / peaceably / with all. / Romans / 12:18

Put a loop of tape on the back of each balloon. (Duct tape works especially well.)

Mix the balloons together on the floor. Divide children into teams according to the number of sets of balloons. Assign each team a color of balloon.

When you signal that it's time to start, each team gathers its balloons and takes them to an assigned area of the wall. They will stick the balloons to the wall in the correct order. When teams are finished, everyone steps back and reads the verse in unison.

If the tape on the balloons is still sticky, mix up the groups and repeat the activity.

Optional: (a) For a younger group, tape pieces of paper to the wall with the words printed out so that the children only need to match the balloons with the papers. (b) The winning team can be given sharp pencils and allowed to pop all the balloons on the wall.

2. **Have the children turn to page 12** in *Lab Book* and help find a path for Pax the Porcupine to get home from school. Read the directions together and help the children get started. Younger children can be paired to work together. When everyone is finished, read the message together.

Closing

1. **Read the Peacemaker Challenge** page together (“Peacemakers speak up for what is right”). Pass out markers, crayons, or colored pencils. Tell the children they will decorate a page each day that will be part of a wall hanging they can take home on the last day of VBS. Let them know that about ½ in / 1.5 cm will be cut off all around the border.
2. **Sing together** “Give Us Your Peace” from the *Peace Lab* music collection. Find lyrics and motions in the *Peace Lab* songbook.
3. **Make connections by saying:**

When is a time that you spoke up for something that was right, or when was a time you watched someone else speak up for what was right? The next time we’re together, I will ask if you experimented making peace since this time together today. Let’s be sure to look for ways we can be peacemakers.

4. **Pray a closing prayer:**

Dear God, I pray for everyone who is here today—the children, the leaders, and everyone who is helping us. Help all of us to know when speaking up will be helpful. Please give us the words to say and the courage to speak, even if it’s hard. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

note: Additional activities can be used to extend a session, depending on the amount of time available. Consider the age and abilities of your VBS children so that you choose appropriate activities.

1. **Peace Lab discovery.** In today’s story, Jonathan and Michal spoke up for David. There are many ways to communicate with each other. Invite the children to make simple telephones to talk to each other.

You will need two plastic cups for each telephone and a long piece of cotton string or fishing wire (a length of 10–20 ft / 3–6 m works well). Use a needle to thread string through the bottoms of each cup, then knot the string inside the cups. Pair children and have them stand apart from each other, as far away as the length of the string. Have them talk with each other at that distance. Can they hear each other? Then, have them speak into their cups, keeping the string taut. Can they hear each other? Say:

This is a fun way to speak to each other. There are many ways to communicate and many ways to speak up for each other.

2. **Play Telephone.** Begin by having children practice whispering to each other, making sure their voices are not too loud or too soft. Have the children sit in a circle and, as the leader, whisper something to the child next to you, such as “We are learning a lot about peacemaking” or “I wonder what David thought of his friends.” The child you whispered to will then whisper to the next child; continue around the circle. After the final child has heard the whisper, she or he will say it out loud. You may want to do this activity several times, switching who the first and last children are around the circle. Did any changes happen to the original sentences you whispered? Talk about how information gets changed or distorted when people pass it along,

and how we need to be careful not to believe everything we hear. We should try to go back to the original source for our information.

3. **Explore current events.** Depending on the maturity level of the children and the issues your community faces, this is a good time to talk about the voices that speak up in your community. What organizations address bullying and other types of discrimination? How do they do it? Some of the books in the book list simplify this concept and can be read out loud to launch a discussion.
4. **Draw comic strips.** Give children sheets of paper with six to eight blank comic frames on them. Encourage them to think of a situation where someone needs to speak up for what is right. Have them draw and caption the scenario and the solution. Or, they may draw today's story. Have them share their comic strips with each other.

BOOK LIST

note: You may want to read to children or have them look at books, depending on how much time is available. This list offers suggestions that fit the day's themes. You are welcome to find other books as well.

- Abouraya, Karen Leggett. *Malala Yousafzai: Warrior with Words*. Great Neck, NY: StarWalk KidsMedia, 2014. A young girl from Pakistan speaks up for the right to education for every child—particularly girls. Malala becomes an international advocate and receives the Nobel Peace Prize.
- Engle, Margarita. *Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage Changed Music*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015. A young Chinese African Cuban girl works to break through the traditional Cuban taboo that prohibits drummers from being female, and eventually becomes a world-famous musician.
- Otsoshi, Kathryn. *One*. Berkeley, CA: K O Kids Books, 2008. A simple yet profound book about the power of one voice standing up to a bully and eventually uniting the bully with those he has intimidated.
- Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *Sit-In: How Four Friends Stood Up by Sitting Down*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2010. Four black college students stage a peaceful lunch counter sit-in. Persevering despite strong opposition, their actions precipitate one of the defining moments of the early days of the civil rights movement.
- Tonatiuh, Duncan. *Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation*. New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2014. True story of the Mendez family, whose 1940s legal fight against segregated schools for Mexican children in California helped end school segregation in the United States.
- Verdick, Elizabeth. *Words Are Not for Hurting*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 2004. This book teaches children the importance of careful and intentional use of their words. It includes tips for parents and teachers.



MARY AND MARTHA

Today's Bible experience

Luke 10:38-42

Martha was upset because her sister, Mary, sat and listened to Jesus rather than help with tasks around the house. Martha asked Jesus for help in solving the conflict between her and Mary and received a different response than she expected.

Purpose statement

Peacemakers ask for help to resolve conflicts.

Bible memory

Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. —Romans 12:16-18

Bible background

This well-known story about Mary and Martha is unique to the book of Luke. The story is of a sibling rivalry that has cultural implications. We infer from reading about Martha's many tasks that she wants to prepare a meal for Jesus, a usual hosting responsibility for women in her day and culture. Mary, however, chooses to ignore social boundaries and instead does what men of her day do—visit, talk, listen, and learn.

At first glance, it seems that this story does not fit a peacemaking theme. We usually hear this story as an example of following Jesus—it's important to stop our usual tasks and spend time with God, listening, learning, and growing in faith.

Yet a second look shows that conflict lies at the very heart of the story. Martha believes she is doing what is expected of her and that Mary is not. How does Martha handle this? She asks for help! Her tone suggests that Jesus would agree with her—after all, women should be helping with preparations.

Sometimes conflicts are larger than what we can handle on our own. Sometimes we need to ask for advice and help in solving a situation. This is what Martha does.

Jesus' response does not necessarily help Martha. Instead, he agrees with Mary. It is time for Martha to stop working so that she can sit and talk with him. This is the better part. This goes against cultural expectations of the day; unfortunately, we do not know the outcome of the story. Did Martha stop her work and sit with Jesus and Mary? Or did Mary begin to assist Martha in the preparations?

This story about siblings is one that many children will relate to. They might think of their own siblings, cousins, or friends with whom they sometimes have disagreements. When the disagreements get too large for them, children will run to an adult for help, saying something like, "Mom! Dad! Make him stop teasing me!" (or whatever the offense may be). The frequency

of this may sometimes annoy adults, but it's important for children to recognize that sometimes it is good to ask someone else for help in finding a solution that works for everyone.

Session materials

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Bible memory poster or slide show from the Resource CD; projector
- ☐ *Lab Book*, one per child
- ☐ *Peace Lab* music/player
- ☐ Peacemaker challenge pages, one per child
- ☐ Whiteboard and marker
- ☐ Paper circles (1 red, 1 green, 10 light-colored)
- ☐ Tape
- ☐ Pencils, markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- ☐ Supplies (see items needed for any Additional activities you choose to do)

Advance preparation

- **Pray for the adults and children** who will participate in VBS. May they be open to learning about God's way of peace and to practicing it in their lives.
- **Read Luke 10:38-42 and the Bible background** (p. 26) to become familiar with today's story. Consider what Martha did when she perceived that she was in the middle of a conflict.
- **Read the Bible Response daily plan** and choose activities appropriate for your group. Gather materials.
- **Make 12 circles (paper plates may work).** One should be green, another red, and the rest should be light-colored so that they can be written on. Write a different scenario on each light-colored circle, each one a situation where the children must choose whether they can attempt to deal with it by themselves or whether they should ask for help. Tailor the examples toward the ages and experiences of your groups. They could include:
 - A fight breaks out on the playground.
 - Your sister takes your last piece of candy.
 - Your brother gets mad and throws your puzzle pieces.
 - A classmate says that he is going to beat you up.
 - Someone cuts in line at the playground slide.
 - Your sister didn't take out the trash like she was supposed to.
 - Some kids are throwing rocks at a neighbor's house.
 - Your friend borrows your favorite book and doesn't return it.
 - Your brother won't let you have a turn with a video game.
 - You see a girl at the playground who is playing by herself.
- The final page of *Lab Book* is a certificate that says: "_____ is a peacemaker." Fill out the certificates with children's names.
- Prepare the Peacemaker Challenge wall hangings. For assembly directions and supplies, see page 4.

DAILY PLAN

Introduction

1. **Welcome the children to the last day of *Peace Lab*,** where they have discovered how to practice making peace. There's one more way of practicing peace to talk about today!
2. **Share one thing you have done to practice peace** since Day 4 of VBS. Ask the children if they remember that the last time you were together, you said that you would ask them if they had an opportunity to practice peacemaking. Allow time for children to share their experiences with practicing peace.

Bible story

1. **Review the drama presented during Worship time.**
 - What happened?
 - How was peace practiced during the story?
2. **Play Stop and Go.** Tape the green and red plates to the wall, with some distance between them. To begin, ask the children to name people whom they can ask for help, and write responses on the whiteboard. Then point to the green circle and ask what green means (go), then point to the red circle and ask what red means (stop). Say:

I'm going to give you examples of situations you might see. I need your help to decide which traffic light they go with—red or green, stop or go. If the situation is something that you can go ahead and do something about yourself, we'll put it with the green circle. If the situation is something you should ask for help with, we'll put it with the red circle.

Read a scenario and allow time for children to explain why it is “stop” or “go.” If there are differences of opinion, talk about how decisions are made and how sometimes we might need to talk with God in prayer before making a decision.

Invite different children to tape the circles to the wall under the red or green circle. If a response is green, talk about words that could be used to address the situation. If the response is red, look at the list of people on the whiteboard whom children can go to for help.

note: Make sure the children understand that any time danger is involved—either to themselves or to others—that the answer is *always* red: ask someone for help.

3. **Have the children turn to page 13** in *Lab Book* and read the story about the peacemaking work at the Franklin Park Community Garden. Remind the children that it isn't only adults who are peacemakers; young people can be peacemakers too!

Bible memory

1. **Today's Bible memory passage** is all the verses from the past three days. Open your Bible to Romans 12:16-18 and help the children to find the passage in their Bibles. Read the verses. Invite the children to say the entire memory passage with you.

Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. —Romans 12:16-18

Motions

haughty: hold hands above head

lowly: hold hands down low

wiser: point to head with both hands

not: shake head

evil (first time): hold out left hand, palm up

evil (second time): hold out right hand, palm up

thought: point to head with both hands

noble: bring hands together in a prayer position

you: point in front of you with both hands

peaceably: make a peace sign

all: make a large circle with both hands

2. **Have the children turn to page 14** in *Lab Book* to see if they can write the memory passage from memory. You may want to pair younger children and have them work on it together. When everyone is finished, read the memory passage together.

note: Today is the last day of VBS. Children may take home their *Lab Books*, along with the Peacemaker Challenge wall hanging. Let the children know that they can read the stories and look at the wall hanging any time they want to be reminded about being a peacemaker.

Closing

1. **Read the Peacemaker Challenge** page together (“Peacemakers ask for help to resolve conflicts”). Pass out markers, crayons, or colored pencils. Tell the children they will decorate a page each day that will be part of a wall hanging they can take home on the last day of VBS. Let them know that about ½ in / 1.5 cm will be cut off all around the border. Put the wall hangers together according to the directions on page 4. You may want to have extra volunteers on hand to help.

2. **Have the children turn to page 15** of *Lab Book* so that they can see their peacemaker certificates. Explain that they have completed this part of their training as peacemakers. Say:

Now that we have completed our peacekeeping practice during Peace Lab, I hope you will continue to ask yourself each morning how you practiced peacemaking the day before.

3. **Sing together** “Give Us Your Peace” from the *Peace Lab* music collection. Find lyrics and motions in the *Peace Lab* songbook.

4. **Pray a closing prayer:**

Dear God, I pray for everyone who is here today—the children, the leaders, and everyone who is helping us. Sometimes we don’t know what to do when we see something that is wrong or when someone does something mean to us. Please show us when we need to ask for help, and give us good words to say. Help us to find ways each day to practice peacemaking. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

note: Additional activities can be used to extend a session, depending on the amount of time available. Consider the age and abilities of your VBS children so that you choose appropriate activities.

1. **Peace Lab discovery.** Martha asked for Jesus’ help in today’s Bible story. Even though we don’t know the ending of the story, we know that things often go better when we ask for what we need. And when we find the people and the resources to help us, we can accomplish our tasks.

To illustrate finding what we need and working together, put ½ cup / 120 ml vinegar into a plastic bottle. Use a spoon or funnel to pour baking soda into a balloon until it is about a quarter full. Carefully stretch the balloon over the neck of the bottle so that none of the baking soda spills. Then, quickly but gently sprinkle the baking soda from the balloon into the bottle. What happens? Say:

For this demonstration, we needed a few things: a bottle, vinegar, baking soda, and a balloon. When we combined these things, they worked together! Asking for what we need and working together are ways to make peace.

2. **Swallowed anger.** This is an illustration of what can happen when we swallow our anger instead of asking for help when we find ourselves in conflict. Go outside and have children

stand in a circle. Gently toss an unopened can of soda to each other. As children catch the can, they can share things that can make them angry. When everyone has had a turn and the can is sufficiently shaken, ask the children what will happen if the can is opened. Then, open it away from the group. Explain that the can is like anger that hasn't been expressed. It can explode rather than come out in small amounts in good ways. Talk about how asking for help to deal with conflicts as they happen can prevent big, emotional explosions later.

3. **Do the right thing.** Invite children to respond to statements by giving a thumbs-up if it is true of peacemakers, or a thumbs-down if it is false. Talk about the statements and responses. You may use these suggestions or create your own:
 - Love your neighbor.
 - Live peaceably with everyone.
 - Get mad at your friends.
 - Find good ways to solve problems.
 - Help only your friends.
 - Speak up for what is right.
 - Love your enemies.
 - Don't ask for help.
 - Peacemakers are called children of God.
4. **Read *My Secret Bully*** (see book list) and help children understand that bullying is not always physical, but can involve social and emotional manipulation too. Discuss the solution that Monica and her mother decide is appropriate.





Pay attention to what children may share. If you suspect that some might be experiencing bullying, look for an opportunity to talk with parents or caregivers.

BOOK LIST

note: You may want to read to children or have them look at books, depending on how much time is available. This list offers suggestions that fit the day's themes. You are welcome to find other books as well.

- Cronin, Doreen. *Click Clack Moo: Cows That Type*. New York: Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2000. When the cows reach an impasse in their ultimatum to the farmer, they enlist the help of the duck to negotiate a peaceful solution.
- Lovell, Patty. *Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2001. Advice from Molly Lou's grandmother helps her deal with children who ridicule her.
- Ludwig, Trudy. *My Secret Bully*. New York: Dragonfly Books, 2004. Although Monica and Katie have been friends since kindergarten, Katie has recently begun to bully Monica through her words and actions. Monica's mother helps her figure out how to deal with Katie's aggression.
- Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. *King of the Playground*. New York: Alladin, 1994. When Kevin tires of being bullied at the playground, he asks his dad for help in disarming the bully's threats.
- Polacco, Patricia. *Thank You, Mr. Falker*. New York: Philomel Books, 1998. After years of being teased because she can't seem to learn in the same way others do, a young girl encounters a teacher who protects her and helps her to discover ways to learn that overcome her dyslexia. (Based on the author's own experiences.)

PEACEMAKERS HELP OTHER PEOPLE

 = free space

BIBLE MEMORY CUBE

Directions:

Copy the page and cut along the outline. Fold the dotted lines and use tape or glue to fasten each edge with the tabs inside of the cube.

