



Kids Care Lesson 1

# Peace through Forgiveness

## LESSON FLOW

Introduction	5 mins
Bible Time	5 mins
Story Time	10 mins
Discussion Questions	15 mins
Arts and Crafts	10 mins
Snacks	5 mins
Reflection	5 mins
Blessing	1 min

## OBJECTIVE

To introduce children to the biblical concept of peace and peacemaking, beginning with the foundation of **peace with God**: reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ and forgiving one another as He forgave us.

## INTRODUCTION

*Make name tags in the shape of doves with different colours for each group (depending on your Children's Ministry class/camp structure). Print each child's name in the middle. Ask children to decorate the doves with pictures of things they like or things that describe them. Invite children to introduce themselves to one another and describe how they decorated their nametags.*

Shalom! Does anyone know what that means? I just greeted you with a Hebrew word that means peace.

Describe the theme for this year's Kids Care curriculum. Invite children to share their ideas about peace and what it means to be a peacemaker. Ask questions such as:

*"Have you ever had an argument with someone? How did you feel? What did you do?"*

Hand out the Peace Packs and Peace Passports. Tell children about their assignment – to learn about peacemaking and report their findings in **The Peace Times**, a video or podcast recording they'll work on throughout the week.



Over the next 5 lessons, we're going to learn about three countries – Bolivia, Democratic Republic of Congo, and South Sudan – where there has been turmoil or fighting and war, but where people who love God are building a culture of peace! Before we start, let's decide on some peace practices that we'll follow.

*Ask the children to think of ways they can show each other kindness and respect (by how they talk to one another, by including everyone, by settling differences). Use this time to establish the 'rules' for interaction/discussion but in a way that both involves the children and develops the theme.*

Today we're going to hear a story from the Bible about a man named Joseph and learn how he was a peacemaker by the way he offered forgiveness to people who had been very mean to him.

KEY IDEA: *Be a peacemaker by forgiving.*

#### BIBLE LESSON

Genesis 37-50

**Memory verse:** *Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Matthew 6:12 (NLV)*

This is the story of a young man named Joseph who lived with his family in Canaan. He had eleven brothers. Can you imagine having eleven brothers to play with, or fight with? Joseph was the second youngest. He was very special to his father, Jacob. Jacob even had a special robe made for Joseph. (They didn't have jackets back then, so this was a very special jacket.) It was very beautiful and had every colour you could imagine.

When Joseph's older brothers saw it, they got very jealous. They thought their father liked Joseph more than them because he got the special coat. They got so jealous and angry they couldn't even say a kind word to him.

One day Joseph had a dream, and he went to go tell his brothers. "I had a strange dream last night," he said. "We were tying up bunches of grain out in the field when suddenly my bunch stood up, while all of yours gathered around and bowed to me." The brothers looked at each other in disgust, but Joseph continued. "Then I had another dream that the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed down to me."

"Who do you think you are?" The brothers said. "Do you think that you are better than all of us? Do you think that we would ever bow down to you?" This made the brothers dislike Joseph even more.

When Joseph told his father about his dreams, he said, "Those are strange dreams." But he thought carefully about what Joseph had told him.

A few days later, Joseph's father asked him to check on his brothers. They were in the fields quite a distance away. So, Joseph went to find them.



When the brothers saw Joseph in the distance, they made a plan to kill him. But when Joseph's oldest brother Reuben heard this, he said, "Let's not kill him. Just throw him in a well out here in the field." He said this because he was secretly planning to come back and rescue Joseph when the other brothers had left.

When Joseph came to them, they took off his beautiful robe and they threw him in an empty well. A little while later a group of people came by who were travelling to Egypt to sell things. One of the brothers spoke up, "Why don't we sell him to these people? That way we never have to see him again, and we don't have to kill him."

The other brothers liked this idea, so they sold him to the people who were going to Egypt.

Unfortunately, Reuben had been working and didn't see what happened. When he returned to the well, he noticed that Joseph was gone.

The rest of the brothers took Joseph's beautiful robe and dipped it in animal blood and took it back to their father. When their father saw it, he thought an animal had killed Joseph. He cried for many days, so much that nobody could comfort him.

Now Joseph had been sold to a man named Potiphar, an assistant to the Pharaoh of Egypt. Joseph started out as a slave, but the Lord was with Joseph and helped him do everything right. Potiphar made him his helper, and put him in charge of everything that he owned. The problem came when Potiphar's wife lied about Joseph to her husband, so Potiphar had Joseph put into jail.

The Lord was still with Joseph in jail, and the warden put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners. He never worried because the Lord was with Joseph and helped him do everything right. After Joseph had been in jail for some time, a cupbearer and a baker to Pharaoh had been sent there. One night each of them had a dream. They told their dreams to Joseph and he told the cupbearer that he would soon be let out of jail. "Please tell Pharaoh about me and ask him to get me out of here," Joseph said.

But when the cupbearer was freed, he forgot about Joseph. So Joseph stayed in jail for two more years, until one day, the Pharaoh had a dream that nobody could explain. The cupbearer then remembered what Joseph had done for him, and Joseph was brought to Pharaoh.

"Can you understand dreams?" Pharaoh asked.

"I can't, but God helps me," Joseph replied. After Pharaoh had told him his dream, Joseph explained, "God is warning you. There will be seven years when nothing will grow and there won't be any food for anyone."

"What can I do?" Pharaoh asked.



“God has shown you what to do,” Joseph answered. “There will be seven years before the bad years that will be very good. So good that there will be extra food for everyone. So you should save a little bit of each year’s harvest. That way you will have enough to get you through the bad years,” Joseph said.

Pharaoh believed all that Joseph told him and put him in charge of all of Egypt.

When the famine came, people came from all over to buy grain from Egypt. Some of those people were Joseph’s brothers. When his brothers came, Joseph recognized them, but they did not know who he was. (It had been over 10 years since they had seen him). The brothers all bowed to him because he was an important person, just as he dreamed they would at the beginning.

After a few meetings with his brothers, Joseph couldn’t keep it in any longer. “I’m Joseph!” he said. “Is my father alive?” But his brothers were too afraid to answer him. Then Joseph said, “Come here. I am your brother, the one you sold! Do not worry, and do not be angry at yourselves for selling me, because God has put me here to save people from starving.”

So his father, his brothers, and their families came to live in Egypt with Joseph, and they had all the food they needed.

### BIBLE LESSON DISCUSSIONS

1. It seems that Joseph’s brothers were jealous of him. Do you know what jealous means? What do you think we should do when we feel this way?
2. How do you think Joseph felt when his brothers threw him in the well?
3. When Joseph saw his brothers, many years later, asking for help (remember they didn’t know it was Joseph) how do you think Joseph felt then?
4. How did Joseph treat his brothers?
5. Have you ever been treated badly by someone? How did you respond?
6. Why do you think it’s important for peacemakers to forgive others, even if someone has treated them badly?
7. Forgiving people isn’t easy, we can ask God to help us forgive those who have been unkind to us. Can you think of a prayer you can say to God when you need to seek His help to forgive?



## Jesus our Prince of Peace

When Jesus came to the world, he came to bring us peace—peace to our hearts, peace to our relationships, peace to our world.

By having a relationship with him, we can learn how to be peacemakers.

*Read Isaiah 9:6-8:*

**For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his  
shoulders.**

**And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

If you come to church you've probably heard this verse a lot at Christmas. What child is this verse talking about?

*Explain in age-appropriate ways that this verse was written by a prophet a long time before Jesus was born. Explain that many people were doing bad things, but God promised to send a Saviour to the world. Through him we have forgiveness for our sins and through him, we can learn to forgive others.*

## Bullying

Introduce the topic of bullying, something the children have probably already encountered. Help them learn to recognize different types of bullying and how to respond as peacemakers.

A lot of bullying happens when adults are not present – between classes, during lunch or recess, after school and online. However, there is usually an audience. The majority of the time other children witness bullying take place and usually don't try to stop it. This often causes the bullying to last longer because it reinforces the bully's power and status, which are two reasons that people bully.

Most children don't want bullying to happen and they don't want to watch it, but often they don't know what to do and worry that if they say anything they might become the next victim. One of the most effective ways to stop bullying and prevent it from happening again is for other children to help out when bullying happens.

### The following might be a helpful tool for teaching children how to respond to bullies.

- Forgive and pray for the bully.
- Don't hang around the bully—not just for safety's sake, but to avoid being influenced by them. Forgiving doesn't mean allowing yourself to continue to be bullied. Walk away. This shows bullies that their behaviour is not okay.
- Do not seek revenge – choose love and kindness over treating them badly. (Overcome evil with good.)
- Speak up. Tell bullies that what they're doing is wrong.
- Be a friend to those being bullied. Some children are bullied because they don't have any friends to stand up for them.
- Get an adult. Sometimes children who are bullied are afraid to ask an adult for help because they think it will make the bullying worse.



## ACTIVITY

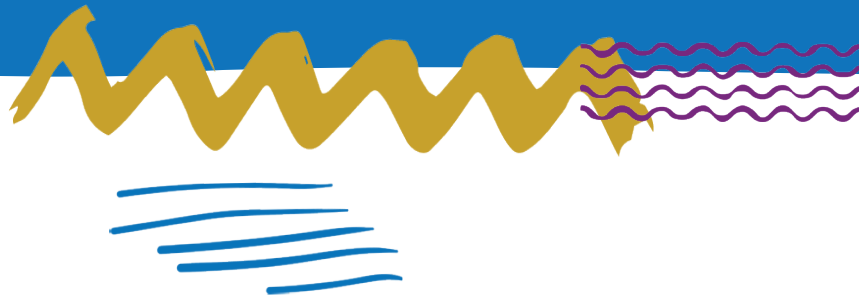
Have a drama time with the children. Give them different situations that reflect bullying behaviour and have them come up with skits to represent how they would respond as peacemakers.

### *What would you do?*

1 Jennie and Rachel are playing. Anna takes Jennie away. You see Rachel has been left all alone and is crying. What would you do?

2 You are in the playground. You see Tom kicking Joe. Joe is hurt. Tom won't stop. What would you do?

3 Mark says something unkind about Ali. Ali hears what he has said. Mark is always saying horrible things about Ali. What would you do?



## SNACK

### Peace Dove

**Note:** You may want to prepare this snack ahead of time. If there are children with nut allergies, substitute another item for the almond in this recipe.

Create doves out of bread dough. Use your favourite yeast bread recipe or frozen dinner roll mix. Give each child a piece of dough about the size of a golf ball. Show them how to shape the dough into the body and tail of a dove. Press a fork into the dough to create a tail feather. Give each child a smaller piece of dough for the head. Stick an almond into the head to create a beak and add a dried cranberry or raisin for an eye. Allow to rise and bake. Brush with melted butter if desired. Serve with cheese and fresh fruit.



## GAME

### Throw a Smile

Have the children sit in a circle. One player ("it") starts the game by smiling widely, while all the other players are solemn. "It" then uses his/her hand to wipe off the smile and throw it to another player, who has to catch the smile and put it on. This new "it" can then wipe off the smile to throw to someone else, or choose to grin for a while, trying to make other children giggle. Once a player is caught with a smirk/smile and they are not in possession of the smile, they are out of the game.

## CRAFT

### Peace Mosaic

Shred up a magazine or newspaper picture and tell the children that the world is a broken place, just like this ripped paper. It is a mess, but there is good news! Jesus was born to bring peace to our world. God brings us peace through the cross of his son Jesus. And when God brings peace there is great joy! Today we're going to make something beautiful out of all of our ripped pieces.

- Distribute coloured construction paper (red looks best) with a cross outline, glue, scissors and newspaper/magazine pages.
- Have children rip up the pages into small pieces and glue them into the cross outline.
- For an additional challenge, have children look for letters to spell "PEACE" and glue them on their page somewhere.
- Have them write out the memory verse. (Preprint it on the pages for younger children.)

### Peace Dove

Make a dove out of paper. The body is made from stiff paper and the wings from thinner paper.

#### Supplies:

- Stiff paper
- Regular paper
- Scissors
- Pencil
- String
- Clear Tape
- Optional: markers, glue glitter



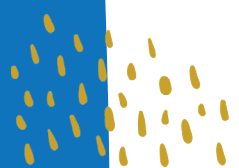
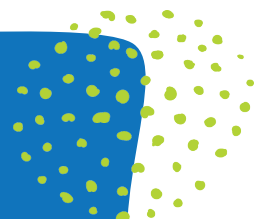
#### Instructions:

- Draw the shape of a bird's body on stiff paper.
- Cut out the bird and cut two slits in the body.
- Cut a piece of paper in half.
- Fold each piece like an accordion.
- Optional: Cut the edges of the folded paper for a lacy effect.
- Insert the folded paper (wings and tail feathers) into the slits in the bird's body. Secure them to the body with clear tape.
- Tape the ends of the tail feathers together to make a fan shape.
- Draw eyes on the dove.
- Tape some string to the body of the dove to hang it up.
- Optional: Decorate the dove with markers or glitter.

For older children: try making something a little more challenging, like Origami Doves. See the Resources section for a pattern.

#### REFLECTION

Lord, thank you for bringing peace to our hearts, peace to our relationships, and peace to our world through Jesus. Help us as we learn more about what it means to be peacemakers and learn to forgive like Joseph. As in Philippians 4:7 ***“May the peace of God that surpasses all understanding guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus,”*** as we go about our day.



#### REFLECTION

Spend some time helping the children reflect on what they've learned. This would be a good time to add to the Peace Passport, Olive Tree of Peace, or write and record a short episode of The Peace Times.

#### BLESSING

Lord, thank you for bringing peace to our hearts, peace to our relationships, and peace to our world through Jesus. Help us as we learn more about what it means to be peacemakers and learn to forgive like Joseph. As in Philippians 4:7 “May the peace of God that surpasses all understanding guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus,” as we go about our day.

Teach the children about the traditional practice in some churches of “Passing the Peace.” Explain that in biblical times a kiss of peace was given to welcome strangers and show a willingness to work with others. It is also a way that we can bless one another. Invite children to shake hands and offer one another peace by sharing this statement: “The peace of Christ be with you.”







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