



**PRETEEN**

MARCH 2024

## FOR LEADERS ONLY

---

### **GOD VIEW: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PEACE AND GOD'S CHARACTER, AS SHOWN THROUGH GOD'S BIG STORY**

Throughout Scripture, we can see how peace is something near to God's heart. Even though people chose to break their relationship with God, God made a way to fix that relationship through Jesus. And because we reflect God's image, making peace with others should be a priority for us as well. That's why we're taking the first three weeks of March to highlight some passages and stories about peace to help kids understand more about how they can be peacemakers in their world.

### **CORE INSIGHT: The theological foundation for PEACE**

**Community** in the context of God's family. I choose to live in the complexities of family and communities because God values them.

Through our community at church, we can show people how much God loves them. When we choose to make peace with others, we're demonstrating that God's love can transcend our personal opinions and help us work together in spite of our differences. Choosing peace is a way for God's family to make an impact in the world.

**PEACE is proving you care more about each other than winning an argument.**

### **HEADS UP: IDEAS TO KEEP IN MIND AS YOU TALK ABOUT PEACE WITH KIDS**

Peace can be tricky. Sometimes it seems like everywhere we look, peace seems out of reach. It's hard enough getting along with people we know and love, much less strangers. And when you add conflict between people groups and entire nations, the idea of peacemaking can feel overwhelming. Remember, kids can only handle so much information about current events and might not even be aware of the conflict in the world. Don't present information that kids would be learning for the first time. If a child asks about a current event situation they may have heard about, choose your words wisely. Only answer the question a child is asking without giving an answer that goes into too much detail and causes anxiety.

This is also a good month to chat through how you and your teams can show sensitivity to kids you know who could be experiencing troubled situations at home or school. Create a safe place for them to process any emotions that might come up throughout the weekly lessons. Also have a plan if a child shares about a hurtful situation that requires outside help from a licensed social worker or counselor. We want to be sure that all kids feel safe and can get the help they need to experience peace in their lives.



## FOR LEADERS ONLY (CONTINUED)

### WEEK 1

Key Question: **Why is it important to make peace?**

Preteens are just becoming aware of the complexities of getting along with others. They may wonder if the work it takes to make peace with their friends, classmates, or teammates is worth it. We hope that talking through the importance of peace will be a great start in helping them see how they can choose peace in their relationships with others.

In week one, we look at something Paul wrote in **Romans 12:18**: *"If possible, live in peace with everyone. Do that as much as you can."* This is a big challenge! Do as much as you can to live in peace . . . with everyone! Paul was stressing how important it is for us to do everything in our power to fix what is broken—and make connections with the people around us. After all, this is what God did for us through Jesus.

Bottom Line: **Make peace whenever you can.** When God made peace with us through Jesus, God showed us that peace with others is possible. This doesn't mean that it will be easy, but living in peace with others is worth our best effort. We pray that kids will discover how they can show God's love by the way they make peace with the people in their lives.

### WEEK 2

Key Question: **Why is it hard to give up what you think is fair?** If you walk into a fifth-grade classroom, you'll quickly discover that kids argue with each other about the smallest things. It can be hard for a kid to walk away from conflict because they feel like their entire reputation might be at stake. We pray that our preteens will learn how to make the wise choice and work to make peace.

For week two, we head to **Genesis 13:5-18**. We read how Abram and Lot's herdsmen were arguing because there wasn't enough land for both men's herds. Abram chose to make peace with Lot by letting Lot choose the land he wanted. Abram could have taken the best land for himself, but instead, he trusted God and allowed Lot to decide.

Bottom Line: **You can show you care by letting go of what's fair.** Sometimes creating peace with someone means giving up what might seem most fair to you. It takes a strong person to have the self-control to make a compromise and walk away. We pray that kids will learn how they can choose peace when it would be easier to argue and fight.

### WEEK 3

Key Question: **How can you be a peacemaker?** It's one thing to SAY that peace is important. It's another thing to actively work toward making peace. As kids go about their day, we hope they learn to stop, look around, and see how they can help make peace between people they know who are experiencing an argument.

In **1 Samuel 25:1-35**, we find a story about a woman named Abigail. We read how King David was furious with a man named Nabal who had mistreated his men. David decided to get revenge . . . until Nabal's wife, Abigail, intercepted him, apologized, and offered gifts as a way to make peace. Even though Abigail wasn't responsible for her husband's offense, she realized that she could play a role in making peace.

Bottom Line: **You can help others make peace.** Peace is often about helping stop an argument before it can escalate into something worse. It takes time and energy to act as a peacemaker between other people, but God can give us the strength to help others make peace. For kids, this might mean getting the help of an adult who can calm down a situation. Sometimes an outside perspective is what someone needs to see a peaceful solution to an argument they're having. We pray that God will give kids wisdom to see how they can step in and help make peace.



**PRETEEN**

MARCH 2024

## FOR LEADERS ONLY (CONTINUED)

---

### **GOD VIEW: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN EASTER AND GOD'S CHARACTER, AS SHOWN THROUGH GOD'S BIG STORY**

Peace is more than something to consider in our relationships with others. Peace is something that starts with how God relates to us through Jesus. From the start, God wanted a close relationship with people. Even when people broke that relationship, God continued working for the sake of peace. Ultimately, God made it possible for us to have peace through Jesus.

When Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, He made peace between God and us. Because of the peace that Jesus made possible, not only can we spend forever with God . . . but also we can experience true peace, knowing that God loves us and wants a relationship with us. This is what we remember at Easter as we celebrate that Jesus is alive!

### **CORE INSIGHT: The theological foundation for EASTER**

**Faith** in God's Son. I believe in Jesus and will continually trust Him even when life doesn't make sense.

Even when we put our faith in Jesus, life isn't perfect. We might always feel a level of complexity and confusion about what's happening in the world and how God is still working. But we can trust God no matter what. Because of Jesus, we can experience God's love forever and have a peace that passes understanding.

### **EASTER is about celebrating that Jesus is alive.**

### **HEADS UP: IDEAS TO KEEP IN MIND AS YOU TALK ABOUT EASTER WITH KIDS**

These two weeks are a "series within a series." Since Easter falls on the last Sunday in March, this gives us a chance to focus our attention on the events of Palm Sunday and the week leading up to Easter Sunday. The scripts in these two weeks will still include some language related to peace; however, the focus is on the peace God made possible through Jesus instead of the peace we can make with others.

Easter is one of those times of the year when people visit your church for the first time or return after a season away. These could be people who've attended your church in the past but haven't been since Christmas. These could be visitors who are in town with extended family. Whatever the case, they've chosen to attend your church during the Easter season. This is a great time to think through how you welcome guests. Consider a gift bag with information about your ministry, or a handout with upcoming events. However you welcome people to church, be sure to make them feel at home. Use your Easter programming as an opportunity to invite them to return next week to continue the fun of learning more about Jesus.



## FOR LEADERS ONLY (CONTINUED)

### WEEK 4

**Key Question: Why are promises important?** We start with a high-level question about promises to get kids thinking about the ways that making and keeping promises can build trust with people. Promises can allow us remain at peace with each other. They can also show how much we're willing to go the extra mile to show others how much they mean to us. Most of all, we pray that kids start to understand some of God's huge promises that came true through Jesus.

We kick off Easter week with the story of Palm Sunday as described in **Matthew 21:1-11**. By this time, God's people had been waiting hundreds of years for God's promised Savior. As Jesus' ministry grew, the people were starting to believe that Jesus WAS that Savior. They were sure that God's promises were finally coming true! So when Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, just like a prophecy foretold, the people celebrated and worshipped Him. And while they might not have fully understood how Jesus was about to make peace, they could celebrate because God was faithful to send a Savior.

**Bottom Line: Jesus came to be our Savior.** Jesus was more than a good teacher and miracle worker. Jesus is God's very own Son. God promised that Jesus would come and save us from the consequences of our sin. When Jesus came, He fulfilled all of the promises that God made. On top of that, Jesus is the Savior we all need to have a forever relationship with God. We pray that all kids choose to trust Jesus as their Savior this Easter season.

### WEEK 5

**Key Question: Why does Easter matter?** When you look around at the bunnies and flowers and chocolate eggs, you can understand why it might be hard for kids to grasp the importance of Easter. We start with this question in order to engage kids in a discussion about who Jesus is, what Jesus came to do, and how they can have a relationship with Him. We hope all kids can discover an everyday faith in Jesus and discover all sorts of ways to celebrate that Jesus is alive!

We finish March by celebrating Jesus' resurrection as described in **Luke 24:1-12, 36-49**. God went to great lengths to make peace with us. All of God's promises came true, and everything that Jesus said and did led up to this moment. When Jesus paid the price for our sin on the cross and then came back to life, He made it possible for us to have peace with God forever! THAT is something to celebrate

**Bottom Line: Jesus is alive.** As we celebrate Easter this year, we want kids to know why we make such a big deal about this special day. Jesus isn't just some person that said and did some cool things a long time ago. We believe that Jesus is God's Son . . . and through Him, we can have life forever with God. That's only possible because Jesus is alive! We pray that kids will understand what Jesus has done for them and choose to put their trust in Him.