



## ACTIVE RESPONSE GUIDE

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Printed in United States of America  
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To order or request information, please call 1-844-727-8672 or visit [GrowingUpCatholicVBS.com](http://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 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.

## GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

A variety of games and activities are offered each day. They will help children think about peace while they play. Be sure to use some of the "Think about it" questions and comments at the end of each game and activity because they will help to make connections between the stories and the children's lives. The questions are a good way to deepen the meaning of the activities.

Read over the game and activity options and choose the ones that will work best for your groups and the children's ages and abilities. If materials are needed, they are listed with each option and are easy-to-find items.

If there are several ideas for a day that you would like to do but don't have time for, keep them in mind and perhaps you will have time to do them another day. The activities and games all highlight peace and are interchangeable from day to day.

# 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

- Choose areas with enough space for the selected activities
- Activity supplies (see list with each activity)

## 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. 4) to become familiar with today's story. Read the Active Response daily plan and choose activities appropriate for your VBS groups.
- Collect and prepare the materials needed for each activity.

## DAILY PLAN

1. **Greet the children.** Welcome them to the first day of vacation Bible school! Explain that during this time they will do activities and play games that relate to the Bible story.
2. **Introduce the activity time.** Talk about ways children can be peacemakers in their homes, schools, and neighborhoods. Tell the children that they will be doing activities this week to experiment with peacemaking. Explain the directions for the activities you've chosen to do. Afterward, take time to discuss the "Think about it" questions listed after each activity, making connections between the activity and the Bible story.
3. **Close in prayer:**

*Dear God, thank you for Jesus and for his words of encouragement to us. Help us to learn ways to experiment with becoming peacemakers so that we can please you and help others. As we learn more about peacemakers in the Bible, we pray that the words "Blessed are the peacemakers" will take on a new or deeper meaning for us. Amen.*

## ACTIVE OPTIONS

### Peacemaker Scramble

#### Materials

- ❑ Chairs or carpet squares, one per child

In preparation, place the chairs or carpet squares in a circle. As leader, you will begin the game.

1. Have the children sit on the chairs or carpet squares. As the leader, begin play by standing inside the circle and saying, "I want to be a peacemaker with everyone, especially people who are wearing something blue."
2. Everyone who is wearing something blue must move to another seat. As leader, you should also look for a seat. There will be one person who does not find another seat; that person becomes the new leader.
3. The new leader says, "I want to be at peace with everyone, especially people who . . ." (like to eat pizza, play basketball, have a sister, and so on).

**Think about it:** In this game, the leader was choosing categories of people. How did it feel when you were part of a group that was chosen to move? How did it feel when you were not part of a group chosen to move? Sometimes we need to keep peace with people we know well, such as family or friends, and sometimes we need to keep peace with people we don't know very well. Can you think of times when you might need to keep peace by including people you don't know very well? Some examples might be choosing teams for a game or asking a new classmate to play with you.

## Bible Verse Relay

### Materials

- Bible memory verse cards in a bag or box, one set per team
- Masking tape or other line marker
- Poster board or mat, one per team
- Tape, one dispenser per team

In preparation, write the words of the Bible memory verse (“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God”) on individual cards. Make multiple sets of cards and put each set in a bag. (Make as many sets as you will need for teams of four to six children.) Use tape or another marker to designate starting lines for the teams. Place the bags with the Bible memory verse cards on the starting line. Place the poster boards across the room from the designated starting lines. Place a tape dispenser by each poster board.

1. Divide children into teams of four to six children, and have each team stand behind their starting line. Explain that each team will “write” the Bible memory verse on the poster board, one word at a time. To begin play, the first child in line will take one card from the bag, run to the poster board, and place the card on the board where he or she estimates it belongs in the verse. The child will return to his or her team, getting in line behind the others.
2. Play continues with the next team members until all cards are on the poster board. When the last word has been placed, all the children on the team will run to the poster board and sit around it. They will make sure that all the words are in the correct order.
3. A team that is finished will raise their hands so that a leader can check that their verse is correct.

*Tip:* If children don’t know where to place a word or can’t read it, they can simply place the word faceup on the poster board.

**Think about it:** Why was everyone important in this game? Does anyone remember where to find this verse in the Bible?

## Spreading Peace

### Materials

- Timer (optional)

1. Invite the children to stand in a circle. Let them know that they will experiment with spreading “peace” around the circle.
2. As the leader, begin spreading peace by gently squeezing the hand of the child next to you. That child will gently squeeze the hand of the next child, and so on, moving the peace around the circle. Everyone will both receive and give peace.
3. Do this several times. You may want to time how long it takes to get peace around the circle, and to see if you can beat the time on a second round.

**Think about it:** Everyone received peace and gave peace in this activity. Everyone has shared peace together. What would it mean if we continue to share peace with each other, even after vacation Bible school is over?

## Pass the Peace Potato

### Materials

- Chairs or carpet squares
- Potato
- Peace Lab* music/player

In preparation, place chairs or carpet squares in a circle.

1. Have the children sit in the circle, and give one child the “peace” potato to start the game. The children will pass the potato around the circle.
2. Play music as the potato is passed. When the music stops, the child holding the potato will share one way to be a peacemaker. After sharing, the child will sit in the middle of the circle. Those players forming the circle itself will need to shift to accommodate the vacant seat.
3. Play continues as long as you wish. To end the game, the children who are not in the center may share a way to be a peacemaker.

*Tips:* (1) You may need to begin the game by talking about examples of how to be a peacemaker. (2) A variation is “Pass the Peace Ice Chip.” Pass an ice chip around the circle until it melts. The last person with the ice shares. Pass another ice chip and start again.

**Think about it:** Recall some of the examples of being a peacemaker that were shared. What characteristics does a peacemaker need to be successful? How do you think a person gets better at peacemaking?

## Peace Circles

### Materials

- Peace Lab* music/player

1. Explain that the children will experiment with making peace circles. Each time a new circle is made, children should try to be in circles with new people.
2. Play music and have children move around the room. When the music stops, call out a description and have children form circles accordingly. You may use descriptions listed here, or develop your own.
3. Allow time for everyone in the circles to go around and say their names. After introductions, play music and have children move around again until the music stops.

Descriptions:

- Make a peace circle with three children.
- Make a peace circle with five children.
- Make a peace circle with seven children.
- Make a peace circle with children who are the same age.
- Make a peace circle with children whose names begin with the same letter.
- Make a peace circle with children who are wearing the same color of shoes.

**Think about it:** Why do you think this game is called Peace Circles? How does working together and learning to know new people help us to become peacemakers? What do you think adults could learn about peace from watching children play this game?