



BIBLE 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.

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:

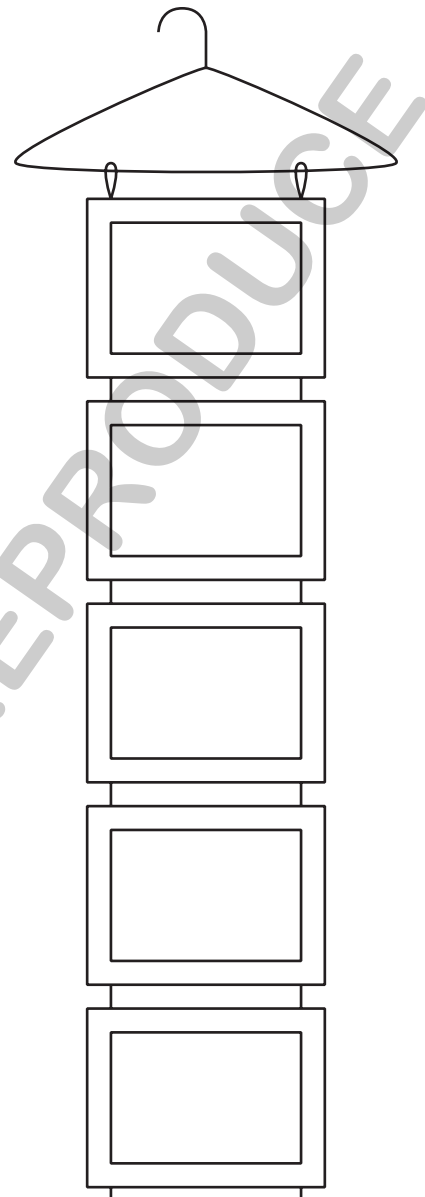
- Card stock or construction paper in assorted colors, five sheets per child
- Plastic clothes hangers or dowel rods, one per child
- Ribbon, yarn, or twine, 10 ft / 3 m per child
- Glue
- Staplers
- Scissors or paper cutters
- Reproducible peacemaker challenge pages

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

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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

- Bibles
- Bible memory poster or slide show from the Resource CD; projector
- Lab Book*, one per child
- Day 1 peacemaker challenge page, one per child
- Peace Lab* music/player
- Ball (any size)
- Kazoos, one per child
- Pencils, markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- 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 peacemaker. 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.