



CREATIVE 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: Debbie Denlinger; 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 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.

SNACK

Snack suggestions are offered each day for the Creative Response time, and they go along with the Bible stories in some way. Invite adults and youth who are not otherwise involved in VBS to prepare the snacks and clean up afterward. Have napkins or small plates on hand, as well as cups for juice or water. Make sure children wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before eating.

note: Be aware of anyone with food allergies or gluten intolerance. Have alternative foods on hand, if needed.

CRAFTS

A variety of craft options are offered each day and are designed to help children think about peace. Read the options carefully and choose ones that will work best for your groups and the children's ages and abilities. Each of the options uses easy-to-find materials; you may want to have an adult or youth who is not otherwise involved in VBS collect the materials you need. 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 crafts all highlight peace and are interchangeable from day to day.

Make the crafts ahead of time so that you understand the directions. Show your craft to the children as a sample of what they will make. Do not expect children to make their craft identical to yours; instead, allow children to use their creativity during this time. You may want to choose one craft for everyone to make, or you may want to set up craft stations around the room and allow children to choose what they would like to do. Some crafts require more adult supervision than others, particularly with younger groups, so invite adults and youth to help you.

Pay attention to how your meeting space is set up. It is ideal to have at least two areas or tables—one for snacks and another for crafts—if space is available.

PEACE POLE

If you decide to take on a peace pole project (see director's guide), children could work on it throughout these sessions or at other times during the VBS.

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

- ☐ Snack
- ☐ Napkins or small plates
- ☐ Cups, water or juice
- ☐ Hand sanitizer or wet wipes
- ☐ Supplies (see list with each creative option)

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 daily lives.
- Read Matthew 5:9, 43-48 and the Bible background (p. 4) to become familiar with today's story. Read the Creative Response daily plan and choose activities appropriate for your VBS groups.
- Make craft samples ahead of time to be sure you understand the directions, and so that children can see what they will make.
- Prepare a snack. Be aware of children who may have food allergies or gluten intolerances. Have alternate foods on hand, if needed.

DAILY PLAN

1. **Greet the children.** Welcome them to the first day of vacation Bible school! Explain that during this time they will enjoy a snack and make crafts that go along with the Bible story. Have the children talk about things they have already learned about being peacemakers.
2. **Share a snack.** Use the option listed, or use your own idea. Pass out plates, napkins, and cups of water or juice. Have the children wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before eating.
3. **Do a creative activity** that goes along with the story. Explain to the children that the activity will help them better understand today's story and how the story connects to them today.
4. **Allow time for cleanup.** Explain expectations for cleaning the areas and putting projects away. Decide whether the projects will be kept at Bible school, taken home, or distributed in another way. Make sure all the projects have names written on them.
5. **Close in prayer:**

Dear God, thank you for today's Bible story and the things we have learned and will continue to learn throughout the week. Help us to be peacemakers with our families, friends, and also with people we don't yet know. Thank you for the fun we had doing these activities today. Amen.

SNACK: PEACE COOKIES

Materials

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Large sugar cookies, two per child | <input type="checkbox"/> Variety of sprinkles and other edible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frosting (frosting tubes work well) | decorating items |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic knives | <input type="checkbox"/> Baggies |

Write the word *peace* on a large piece of paper or a whiteboard so that children can see it. Have children frost their cookies and then write *peace* on them. Just like in a chemistry lab where scientists mix elements together, the kids can experiment with creating different designs using sprinkles and other decorating items.

Each child may eat one cookie. Place the second cookie in a baggie so that it can be taken home and given to someone else as a way of passing peace to another person.

Think about it: How would sharing a cookie with someone promote peace? What are things people can share with one another to create peace in the world? (Share about an organization that works to feed people around the world, and tell the children that is one way to promote peace. Organizations could include Catholic Relief Services, Bread for the World, or your local Catholic Charities or St. Vincent de Paul food pantries.)

CREATIVE OPTIONS

Marble Art

Materials

- ☐ Dove and peace branch templates (p. 29)
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ Foil
- ☐ Box lids or shallow baking pans, one per child
- ☐ Poster paint in small containers
- ☐ Containers to collect paint-covered marbles
- ☐ Card stock
- ☐ Paint shirts
- ☐ Marbles, several per child
- ☐ Spoons for dipping marbles
- ☐ Letter stencils for the word *peace*
- ☐ Construction paper in various colors
- ☐ Scissors

In preparation, make copies onto card stock of the dove and peace branch templates from page 29. Place newspaper on the floor near a wall or on a table to create a space where children can place their finished artwork to dry. Cover work surfaces with newspaper as well. Cover lids or pans with foil to create containers for rolling the marbles. Pour the paint into small containers. Have containers ready to collect the marbles.

1. Give each child a paint shirt and a piece of plain card stock placed on a foil-covered lid or pan. Demonstrate how to use a spoon to dip a marble into the paint and then place the marble on the card stock. Gently roll the marble and create a design on the card stock. Use several marbles dipped into different colors to make a colorful piece of art. Place finished pieces on newspaper to dry.
2. While the art is drying, invite children to use stencils to write the word *peace* on construction paper and then cut out the letters. The letters should be placed next to their art while it dries. Children may also want to cut out a dove or peace branch. Explain that the letters, dove, and peace branches will be glued to the marble art on Day 2. Be sure to follow up on this project.

Think about it: Think about the interesting design you created and how everyone's design was different. Talk about rolling the marbles. Rolling the marbles was easy—but if you needed to explain why and how each marble went where it did, that would be hard to do. Sometimes peacemaking is like that too. Peacemaking can be easy or very difficult. But in the same way the end product of your marble art is something special, the end product of peacemaking is something special as well.

Peacemaker Mobiles

Materials

- ☐ Square, rectangle, and circle templates (p. 30)
- ☐ Yarn
- ☐ Paper plates, one per child
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Crayons, markers, pencil crayons
- ☐ Construction paper, glitter
- ☐ Tape or glue
- ☐ Hole punch

In preparation, make several copies onto card stock of the shape templates on page 30. Cut yarn into various lengths, making at least four strands per child.

1. Give each child a paper plate. Write the word *peacemaker* on a whiteboard or poster board so that everyone can see it, then have children write the word on their plate. Have children decorate their plates using art supplies and glitter.
2. Talk with the children about things they can do to be peacemakers. Sometimes, just like scientists who know the end result they want to get to but aren't sure the best way to do it, people have to experiment with different ways to bring peace to a situation. Invite them to trace around the three shape patterns on construction paper, then cut them out. On each shape, have them draw or write one thing they can do to be a peacemaker.
3. Demonstrate how to use tape to fasten the shapes to a piece of yarn, then tape the yarn to the back of the plate.
4. Have adults or youth punch a hole in the top of the plate and put string through it so that the mobile can be hung.

Optional: Use a hanger instead of a paper plate. You may also punch holes in the shapes and bottom of the plate, and fasten them to each other by threading string through the holes rather than using tape.

Think about it: Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." Why would peacemakers be blessed?

Peace Rocks

Materials

- ☐ Rocks large enough to write on (natural stones are available at craft stores)
- ☐ Paint, paintbrushes, and markers
- ☐ Paint shirts
- ☐ Paper, pencils

1. Give each child a clean, dry rock. Think together about designs to paint on the rocks to remind children about peace. Children may choose one design and paint or draw it on their rock, or perhaps they will think of an original design. Have paper and pencils on hand in case children want to sketch their design on paper first. Children who choose to paint should wear paint shirts.
2. Allow rocks to dry. The children will take them home so they remember that peace is important—peace rocks!

Think about it: How could this rock help you remember that peace is important? Look at the various designs and notice how everyone's design, though different, works toward the same goal of peace. We can be different, yet we can still work together.

Peacemaker Badges

Materials

- ☐ Shrink art plastic or recycling #6 plastic
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Permanent markers or colored pencils
- ☐ Hole punch
- ☐ Yarn or lanyards
- ☐ Cookie sheets
- ☐ Oven

1. Give each child a piece of plastic and a scissors. Adults may need to help younger children. Have the children cut a piece of plastic about two times the size of their hand, in any shape they want to make.
2. Have the children write the word *peace* across the plastic and then draw designs and decorate the rest of the plastic.
3. Using the hole punch, make a hole at the top of the plastic pieces, then put the pieces on cookie sheets.
4. Bake according to the shrink plastic package directions, or at 350°F / 175°C for 1 to 2 minutes. Be sure to watch carefully. The plastic will curl and bubble initially, but will flatten as it shrinks. When the plastic flattens, take it out of the oven. The pieces will be about a third of their original size.
String yarn or lanyard through the holes. Children can wear their peace badges or attach them to backpacks.

Tip: It's good to use an oven in a well-ventilated space.

Think about it: We learned that God wants us to be peacemakers. Wearing this badge can remind you of that. How can you be a peacemaker?