



## WORSHIP AND DRAMA GUIDE

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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 Worship time includes:

- Gathering—Children enter into worship by making connections between the Bible story and their lives.
- Worshiping—Children worship through music, a call to worship, learning a Bible memory passage, and watching a drama that tells the Bible story.
- Responding—Children reflect on the story by thinking about questions, praying, and giving toward an offering project.
- Sending—Children receive a sending blessing and sing a sending song.

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.

## LEADERS FOR WORSHIP TIME

Several adult leaders are needed for the Worship time:

- Worship leader—leads the children in worship and coordinates the other Worship time leaders.
- Music leader—chooses songs and leads the singing; leads a worship band, if desired.
- Drama leader—finds actors to perform the roles and coordinates the drama, including props and rehearsals.
- Bible memory leader—introduces the Bible memory passages and guides children in learning them each day.

Depending on who is available and their individual skills, some of the leadership roles may be combined.

## MUSIC

VBS music is available on the *Peace Lab* CD, MP3 collection, and video collection. The songbook includes a lyric page, simple scores, motion instructions. The music videos demonstrate the motions and are captioned with lyrics.

Music is an important part of worship, and songs will be used throughout the Worship time. You may want to choose the same songs each day so that the children learn them well, or you may want to sing different songs so that children sing a variety of songs.

In addition, play music as children enter the worship space and as they leave to go to the next VBS activity.

Consider purchasing bulk priced audio CDs or MP3 download cards so you can send the music home with the children and drive their parents crazy listening to them over and over!

# BIBLE MEMORY

Show the Bible memory poster or the Bible memory 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

## Early Childhood

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. —Matthew 5:9 (Younger children can learn just the first part of the verse.)


**note:** The Bible memory passages are from the *New Revised Standard Version*. You may use a preferred translation.

# VBS ENVIRONMENT AND DECORATIONS

In decorating your VBS space, you can focus on one or both of the following approaches:

## Peace

Incorporate the following peace symbols and words throughout your space:

- The word “peace” in many different languages can emphasize the universal and international nature of peace. A list of translations can be found at <http://columbia.edu/~fdc/pace/> and a “flag” that incorporates many of them at <http://columbia.edu/~fdc/pace/flag.html>
- The internationally recognized peace symbol  can be found on flags, banners, artwork, and more.
- The dove is a Christian peace symbol that can also be found in many existing decorative items.
- Origami cranes are another symbol of peace. Learn more at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace\\_Crane\\_Project](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_Crane_Project). Consider decorating with them or having children create cranes that are added to the environment throughout the week. You could even use a mixture of origami cranes and doves.

## Lab

You can also play up the “laboratory” aspect of the theme:

- Make the space look like a science lab. Put items such as beakers, flasks, funnels, test tubes, thermometers, magnets, petri dishes, and microscopes around the space. You could fill beakers and flasks with water mixed with different shades of food coloring. But be careful that fragile items are placed where they will not be disturbed.
- Leaders could wear lab coats.
- Science lab themed backdrops are available from some vendors. For example: <https://bit.ly/2Mb4006>. Try a web or Pinterest search on “lab decorations.”

## OFFERING PROJECT

We encourage you to include an offering project in your VBS that suits the needs of your parish and will provide a means of stewardship for participants.

### Recipients

Here are some ideas for where money can be directed:

- If you choose to install a peace pole (see later in this guide), contributions could go toward the materials and other associated costs to make it a reality.
- Pace e Bene is an excellent organization founded by the Franciscan Friars of California to promote peace and nonviolence. Learn more at [PaceEBene.org](http://PaceEBene.org).
- Heifer International works to alleviate poverty and build community by providing livestock and training through a “pay it forward” model. Being able to contribute one or more specific types of animals can particularly motivate kids. Learn more at [Heifer.org](http://Heifer.org).
- Catholic Charities USA is a remarkable organization serving those in need and advocating for justice. It also has member agencies in local dioceses. Learn more at [CatholicCharitiesUSA.org](http://CatholicCharitiesUSA.org).
- Catholic Relief Services is the international humanitarian agency of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Learn more at [CRS.org](http://CRS.org).

The above organizations have particular campaigns and educational materials that can help you share about the work they are doing in engaging ways.

### Offering visuals

Plan a visual way to recognize the amount of money contributed during VBS. Be sure to update the visual each day and point out the progress that is made. Be sure to thank children for their generosity!

Here are some ideas for an offering visual:

- Purchase a large lab beaker, or create one. Get a large glass container and use a marker to write measurements on the side. Either put the money inside the beaker so children can see it or use a colorful marker to draw lines on the beaker to represent how much money was given.
- Make a Peace wall with each letter of the word representing one day of VBS. For example, Day 1 will be *P*. Get construction paper and cut out one letter *P* for each dollar given, and attach them to the wall. Day 2 will be *E*. Cut one out for each dollar given, and attach them next to the *P*. Review at the end of VBS and compare the days.
- One way to be a peacemaker is to smile. Draw smiley faces on a bulletin board or poster board, with each face representing a certain amount of money given.

# 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

- Bible
- Bible memory poster or slide show; projector
- Peace Lab* music and player
- Offering containers

## 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. Read the Worship plan and practice the readings. Prepare what you will say during worship.
- Prepare the Bible memory slide show and practice teaching the passage (p. 8).
- Learn about the offering project (p. 4) and prepare to share about it with the children. Create a visual for keeping track of the giving (p. 4).
- If a music group is leading singing, make sure the group practices the songs.
- Work with the drama leader to make sure actors are rehearsed and props and other items are gathered.

# WORSHIP PLAN

## Gathering

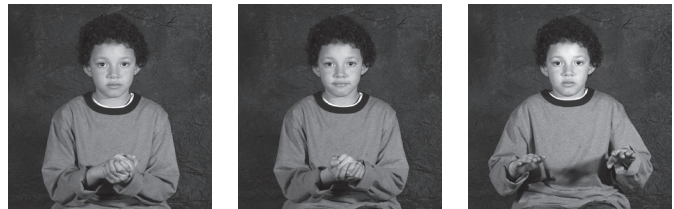
1. Play the *Peace Lab* CD as the children enter the worship space, or have the music group sing.
2. Welcome everyone to the first day of *Peace Lab* vacation Bible school! Say:

*I'm so glad you are joining us for Peace Lab vacation Bible school! During Peace Lab, we will learn ways to practice peace. What are some things that we practice? (Examples might include sports, games, music, math facts, spelling words, and other things.) You may have noticed that the more we practice something, the better we become. That's why we need to practice peace—so that we can become better peacemakers!*

*The Bible stories we will hear during Peace Lab are about people who practiced peace, and we will see what we can learn from them. And we will discover that God wants us to practice peace and be peacemakers too!*

## Worshipping

1. Lead the call to worship. To prepare children to participate, demonstrate how to make the sign language for the word *peace*, which the children should sign as they speak. Speak the words and show the other motions before beginning.



Check an online ASL dictionary for video of this sign.

For example: <https://SigningSavvy.com/search/peace>

**note:** A line will be added to the call to worship each day.

Leader: Blessed are the peacemakers.

*All: God's peace (sign "peace") in my heart (place hands over heart). Practice peace.*

2. Pray:

*Thank you, God, that we can learn about peace. Thank you for the Bible that teaches us so many things. Help us to listen and learn as we jump into Bible stories that show us how to practice peace. And as we learn, remind us of how much you love each and every one of us. Help us to love each other. Amen.*

3. **Sing one or more *Peace Lab* songs.** Here are suggestions:
  - “Power of Peace”
  - “Peace Maker”
  - “Walking the Ways of Peace”
4. **Introduce the Bible memory passage.** Open your Bible to Matthew 5:9. Invite children to read it with you from their Bibles, the Bible memory poster, or the Bible memory slide show.

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. —Matthew 5:9*

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

5. **Open your Bible to Matthew 5:9, 43-48** and explain that the drama will tell us about these verses. Say:

*Each day we will look at a Bible story that shows us peacemakers in the Bible. They will teach us how to practice peace. My friend Peter will help me tell the Bible stories. Be sure to welcome Peter when you see him each day.*

Transition to the drama (pp. 9–10).

**note:** The dramas use the name Peter; however, we invite you to use the actor's given name.

## **Responding**

1. **Ask the children to think about what they saw** and heard during the drama. Allow time for them to think silently as you ask questions. If it would work for your group, after a time of silence, give the children 30 seconds to tell a friend their thoughts about the questions.
  - Earlier we talked about things we practice (sports, games, music, math facts, spelling words). What are some of the ways Jesus tells us to practice peace in this story?
  - Jesus said that we should love our neighbors. I wonder what it means to love our neighbors.
  - Jesus said that we should love our enemies. I wonder what it means to love our enemies.
2. **Introduce the offering project.** An offering project and related visuals are suggested on page 4. Explain that one way we practice peace is by sharing what we have with others. Explain how the offering will be gathered and how the visual represents the total amount of money collected each day.

## **Sending**

1. **Explain the schedule.** Every day after Worship time, children will go with their assigned group and do activities and make crafts that relate to making peace.
2. **Sing “Give Us Your Peace”** as a sending song.
3. **Give a sending blessing** using the same words as in the call to worship, but substituting “Go in peace” for “Practice peace” as follows:

Leader: Blessed are the peacemakers.

All: *God's peace (sign “peace”) in my heart (place hands over heart). Go in peace.*



# DAY 1 DRAMA

The dramas present the Bible stories to the children and are an important part of the *Peace Lab* worship experience. The dramas use only two characters—a worship leader and a modern-day character. The actor’s real name may be used.

## Characters

- Worship leader (WL)
- Peter, dressed as an athletic coach in a sweat suit with a whistle and ball

**note:** The actor’s real name may be used. For the purposes of the written dramas, the character is called Peter.

## Props

- Bible
- Ball (use whatever connects with your group—basketball, soccer ball, etc.)
- Whistle

## Drama

*(Worship leader is onstage.)*

**WL:** My friend Peter said he would come and help me tell the stories this week, but I haven’t seen him here yet. Have any of you seen him? *(Worship leader asks several children individually if they have seen Peter.)*

*(Peter enters from the back of the space, blowing a whistle and carrying a sports ball. He speaks to the entire group.)*

**Peter:** All right. All right. Settle down. Settle down. We’ve got to get this practice started!

**WL:** Um . . . Peter? What are you doing?

**Peter:** I’m ready for practice. I’m here to teach the rules of the game and to practice some game skills. Now, if you’ll excuse me, this is important work and I’d better get started. *(Turns to children and prepares to explain something to them.)*

**WL:** *(interrupting)* These kids didn’t come to play ball.

**Peter:** But I thought this was practice!

**WL:** Well, we are planning to practice this week, but not a sport. We’re practicing peace.

**Peter:** Peace . . . ball? *(holds up the ball hopefully)*

**WL:** *(shakes head)* No. Just peace. God’s peace.

**Peter:** *(puts ball on the ground)* I’m not sure I’m familiar with that one.

**WL:** Well, I'd love to tell you about it! (*Opens Bible to Matthew 5.*) In the gospel of Matthew, when Jesus is talking to his followers up on a mountain . . .

**Peter:** Mountain biking! Yes! That's a great sport! (*He runs around the children, pretending to ride a bike.*) Racing along trails through the woods . . . narrowly avoiding trees . . . splashing through mud puddles . . . taking to the air over jumps—

**WL:** (*interrupts Peter*) No, no, no! Wait! (*Peter stops and looks at the worship leader.*) They weren't mountain biking! They were sitting on a mountain and listening to Jesus as he spoke. We call it the Sermon on the Mount.

**Peter:** Are you sure they weren't mountain biking?

**WL:** Positive.

**Peter:** (*sighs, returns to stage, and sits down with the ball to listen to the worship leader*) Okay. Go on with your story.

**WL:** So this whole crowd of Jesus' followers (*sweeps arm over the crowd of children*) was sitting on the mountain, listening to Jesus. Jesus said to them (*pauses, reads Matthew 5:9*), "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

**Peter:** (*listens with rapt attention*) What else did Jesus say?

**WL:** (*continues to read from the Bible, Matthew 5:43-48*) Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes the sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

**Peter:** (*stands up with excitement.*) I can do that! Forget about being a coach—I'm going to be a peacemaker!

**WL:** Great! But one of the amazing things about practicing peace is that you can be a peacemaker no matter what you're doing—if you're a coach, a teacher, a student, God loves everyone and wants all of us to practice peace in every circumstance! During vacation Bible school, we're going to look at some stories from the Bible. The stories show us some ways we can be peacemakers and practice peace.

**Peter:** Peacemakers in the Bible? I've got to go look that up! I'll be back to find out more. In the meantime, I've got to go practice some peace. See you next time! (*Peter runs out excitedly.*)

**WL:** See you tomorrow, Peter! (*waves goodbye*)