

Focus: Spreading Peace

Materials:

Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
CD: 25 Sunday School Songs
Gospel: In Lesson
Optional CD for activity 1
Book: Let There Be Peace on Earth

Gathering (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about how following God's laws, the Commandments, can make us happy and helps to be loving and caring children of God. This week Jesus tells us that sometimes we have to do more than we are asked to do to show God's love to others.

Opening Prayer

Together we make the Sign of the Cross (do in reverse so children can mirror).

Say: Now let's put our hands together and bow our heads.

Let us pray.

Dear God, you teach us that it is sometimes hard to show our love for others. Please help us to find ways to make your love shine in the world. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Song/Movement

God Is So Good, track: 4, from 25 Sunday School Songs Kids Love to Sing

Play music, encourage children to stretch or move to the music (clapping, stamp feet march in place to the beat), turn to each other and shake hands, saying hello, etc.

1. God is so good. (3 times)
He's so good to me.

3. I love him so. (3 times)
He's so good to me.

2. He answers prayer. (3 times)
He's so good to me.

4. I praise his name. (3 times)
He's so good to me.

End: I praise his name; he's so good to me.

Memory Verse

Say: Now let's take a moment together to learn a verse from the bible.

Love your enemy.

Have the children repeat the verse after you a couple of times.

Say: Jesus tells us that we should love everyone, because God loves everyone. It isn't always easy to love those we don't like. But we can love them by treating them with respect. If we call people

names or hurt them with our words we aren't showing God's love and that is what Jesus tells us to do.

Gospel Story

Say: *Today we are reading from the Gospel of Matthew.*

Have children make sign of the cross on their forehead, mouth and heart saying. *“Lord, open my mind, my lips and my heart so that I may learn it, speak it and love it.”*

Read: None, pp. n/a,

Jesus said to his disciples:

[Chatty hand, thumb against fingers]

“You have heard it said

[Cup hand around ear]

that if someone does something mean to you,

[Raise one fist menacingly]

you should do something mean back to them.

[Raise the other fist]

But I say that if someone does something mean to you,

[Raise one fist menacingly]

you should treat them lovingly and not hurt them back.

[Place other hand on top of fist and gently lower it.]

If someone asks to borrow your coat,

[Mime taking off coat]

let them borrow your hat, too.

[Mime taking off hat]

If someone asks you to help with a little chore,

[Hold thumb and forefinger and inch apart, indicating something small]

do the whole job without being asked.

[Spread arms wide]

You have heard it said

[Cup hand around ear]

That you should love your friends

[Wrap arms around yourself]

and hate those who are not your friends.

[Frown and cross arms across chest]

But I say, you should love everyone, even those who are not your friends,

[Wrap arms around yourself]

because God in heaven loves everyone.

[Point heavenward]

If you love everyone, not just people who love you,

[Wrap arms around yourself]

you will be perfect and holy

[Fold hands in prayer]

just like God in heaven.”

[Point heavenward]

After the reading say: *The Gospel of the Lord*

Children respond: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

Discussion Starters:

- *Who is Jesus talking to? (His disciples and us)*
- *What does Jesus tell us to do if someone does something mean to you?*
- *Why does Jesus tell us to give someone our hat, if they only ask to borrow our coat?*
- *Why should we do the whole big job, when they only ask you to do a little bit?*
- *Who does Jesus tell us to love?*
- *What happens if we love everyone?*

Reflection on Reading:

Jesus isn't saying that we should allow people to hurt us, but if they say things that hurt us we should still treat them with kindness. If others try to hurt us, we should talk to a grown up and ask them what we should do.

Sometimes when people get angry or hurt, they forget God's law of love. God wants us to remember his law always, because he knows that loving is the best thing for us. When we are filled with love, we're filled with God. We have a special word that describes God and his perfect love: holy. We live with the loving goodness that comes from God. We are holy. In today's Gospel story Jesus told us how to be holy.

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

Spreading Peace

One way that helps us remember to love each other is to remember that Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

When we are in church we exchange a Sign of Peace. We do this so we can practice being kind to others and to bless others with God's peace.

Have the children stand in a circle. Start with two children and have them shake hands and say "peace be with you." Then they turn to the other side and do the same thing. Then those children turn and repeat; do this until everyone in the circle has had a chance to both receive and give a sign of peace.

You might want to play some music, while the children are spreading peace. (Suggestion: "I've Got Peace Like A River", track 4, America's 25 Favorite Bible Songs.)

Finish by taking turns telling each other how they can be God's love and peace in the world.

Activity 2:**Praying for Peace**

Read the book: Let There Be Peace on Earth.

He came not only to bring us peace, but to show us how to live in peace. Our Church believes in this peace. The Church wants people to turn away from violence and to take care of people who need our help.

We are called to bring peace to our own small corner of the world and to protect those who are weak. Even if we can't help people around the world, we should try to help the people in our own families, schools and neighborhoods.

- Who helps you when you can't do something for yourself?
- Who are some people who might need your help?
- What do you think the Church is telling you to do for these people?

We can spread peace by saying prayers.

Let's all take a minute now to say a prayer. Think of someone you don't like very much or who does mean things.

Lord, help this person with your love; help him or her listen to your rules so that we can all live in peace.

Complete the weekly bulletin as a group-let the children color them if there is extra time

Closing Prayer

(Children respond: "I Believe!")

Ask: *Do you believe in God, who loves everyone?*

Do you believe in Jesus, who teaches us to bring peace to the world?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us to what is right and spread God's peace and love in the world?

Sending Forth

Say: Remember about God's peace this week and if you should meet someone who does something to hurt you, let them know that you aren't going to be mean back. You can stand up for your belief in God by using kind words and actions.

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play "*Whisper a prayer*" track 16 from 25 Sunday School Songs Kids Love to Sing while children put away any materials and lineup. Hand out weekly bulletins. Remind them it is important that they return to their family quietly so that we may all listen and pray together in church.