

Third Sunday in Kingdomtide

Peace as a Kingdom Value

Old Testament: Isaiah 32:16-18 (NRSV)

The Peace of God's Reign

¹⁶Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.

¹⁷The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust for ever. ¹⁸My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places.

New Testament: Matthew 5:9 (NRSV)

⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.'

General Concept: The church participates in peace building by uncovering the roots of injustice and pursuing genuine peace.

Key Concepts in the Different Age Levels in Sunday School

K/YE: The church is a peace-loving community.

ME/OE: The church promotes peace.

Y: The church advocates equality and fairness in building peace.

A: The church denounces injustices to establish genuine peace.

Exegesis of the Biblical References

Isaiah is a book that unveils the full dimensions of God's judgment and salvation. God is "the Holy One of Israel" (1:4; 6:1) who will certainly punish the rebellious people (1:2) but will afterward redeem them (41:14,16). Israel is a nation who has become so blind and so deaf to God's instructions. In all these, they have experienced the awful judgment of God yet God will have compassion on God's people, and will rescue them from both political and spiritual oppression. Their restoration is like a new exodus as God redeems them and rescues them. That day will be marked by peace and safety when a king will descend from the line of David who will reign in righteousness and God's people will no longer be oppressed by rulers and Jerusalem will truly be the "City of the Lord" (60:14). Isaiah's idea of peace is like that of the rest of the prophets, when justice is served to the needy and the oppressed and the wicked are punished and destroyed.

These particular passages in Isaiah 32:16-18 are one of the many visions of Isaiah for God's shalom (Eirene in Greek, which means peace). This is the kind of peace and safety in a Messianic age wherein little children will be unharmed as they play with previously ferocious animals. This is a vision of an extraordinary peace and prosperity that will come to Israel under a just and righteous ruler.

Matthew's main purpose is to prove to his Jewish readers that Jesus is their Messiah. He does this primarily by showing how Jesus in his life and ministry fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures. Although all the Gospel writers quotes the OT, Matthew includes nine proof texts unique to his Gospel (1:22-23; 2:15; 2:17-18; 2:23; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:35; 27:9-10) to drive home his basic theme: Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament's predictions of Messiah. To accomplish his purpose, Matthew also emphasized Jesus' Davidic lineage right from the very first chapter of the Gospel.

Matthew 5:9. This verse comes from the Sermon of Jesus Christ on the Mount, wherein Jesus was somehow delivering an address that serves as the inauguration of his ministry, explaining what he expects of the members of his kingdom. The exhortations discussed here may look so demandingly difficult seen in moral and ethical standards but this is for us

to realize that we can only do it with the help and guidance of our God. This verse gives us an idea of the future of the one who chooses to be a peacemaker. The text calls the peacemaker blessed. Blessed here means more than just being happy because normally, happiness is an emotion often dependent on outward circumstances. Here blessed refers to the ultimate well-being and distinctive spiritual joy of those who share in the salvation of the kingdom of God. It's not just being "masaya" usually identified with plain merry-making, having parties and so on. It's having "kagalakan" "na hindi kayang burahin ng anumang mapait na karanasan dahil sa may ganap na kapayapaan ang kalooban." Peacemakers remain resolute, steadfast and unwavering in their conviction in spite and despite of what they may be going through because they know and believe that they are holding on to the way of the only God of their lives who remains in control of everything happening around them. Because of this inner peace, they become committed and passionate peacemakers. These peacemakers are the ones who promote peace. In so doing, they reflect a character of their heavenly father and are fittingly called "children of God".

These passages urge the church to become the peacemakers of today. The church being the representative of God and the body of Christ is given the task to continue the mission and ministry of Jesus for genuine peace to be real in the midst of so many unfavorable and unjust circumstances we may encounter along the way. Remember, we have been redeemed by the Messiah, now it is our chance to embody that Messiah in our living as children of God.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and other End-users

Whereas the empires of history are built on terror, the kingdom of God is founded on genuine and lasting peace. In God's kingdom there is a cessation of all struggles for domination and monopoly control of the earth's resources. As soon as peace based on justice prevails, the false gods and idols of power and wealth will topple down and people will come to worship God alone. Here lies the connection between worship and the pursuit of peace. The story of the Exodus depicts the Hebrew people's departure from slavery and the worship of false gods. They were in a journey to a land of freedom where peace dwells and where God alone reigns.

The biblical concept of peace includes both an end to warfare and the establishment of justice. The prophetic vision of turning swords into plowshares is an apt metaphor for the cessation of hostilities and the building of a new society. There is no shortcut on the road to genuine peace. A judicious combination of truce and a gradual dismantling of structures of injustice require an extended process that allows time for healing and for the conflicting sides to gain mutual trust and capability to hammer out a new order. Other than that, a peace process will only be used to gain tactical advantage and propaganda mileage.

In these days of wars and rumors of wars, the church has been at the forefront in peace processes involving the warring parties. The pursuit of peace has become a venue where churches of differing doctrinal persuasions come together in unity. Although they have yet to forge a common agenda for peace, the church is known as a vigorous peace advocate the world over.

Nursery/Kindergarten/Younger Elementary Levels

I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. tell that peace comes from God, is made known by Christ, and is made available by the Holy Spirit
2. describe the promise of becoming children of God as peacemakers;
3. explain why the church is a peace-loving community; and
4. participate in activities that promote peace as believers who abide in Christ by studying God's word, singing praises, praying, and doing peacemaking activities.

II. Concept: The church is a peace-loving community.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), song/verse charts, bond papers, coloring materials

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Give a warm welcome to children through a hug or by asking 'How are you today?' (You may play a welcome song as the children arrive.)
2. Opening prayer: "With praises and thanksgiving in our hearts, O God, we welcome you in our gathering today. We thank you for all the marvelous things that you have done to us. We ask you to bless these children as they now listen to your teachings. Grant us all wisdom to know you more. In the name of Christ whom we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "I've Got Peace like a River" (Note: If the song is not familiar to the class, teach it first.)
I've got peace like a river (2x).
I've got peace like a river in my soul, halleluia!
I've got peace like a river (2x).
I've got peace like a river in my soul.

B. Getting Ready

1. **For N/K:** Prepare cutouts of doves enough for all the children. Tell them to decorate their doves.
2. **For YE:** Prepare selected children who will present the following role plays. After the activity, discuss the role plays and ask the children which plays they like best and tell them to explain their choice.
 - a. Two children sharing snacks
 - b. Two children fighting for a toy
 - c. Two children planting trees in a vacant lot
 - d. Some children singing songs to disabled children

C. Learning Time

1. **For N/K:** Introduce the lesson by doing the following:
 - a. The word **peace** and tell the class that it is symbolized by the dove.
 - b. Tell the class that the **source of peace is God** and that the persons who believe in peace are called **peacemakers**.
 - c. Read Matthew 5:9 slowly. Let the children realize that being a peacemaker has a reward—becoming a child of God.

- d. Read the verse again and ask the children to say it after you.
2. **For YE:** Introduce the lesson by doing the following:
 - a. Write the word **PEACE** on the board. Let the class give their ideas about peace.
 - b. Tell the class that the **source of peace is God** and that the persons who believe in peace are called **peacemakers**. Relate this concept with the earlier activity of the dove. Ask them who played the role of peacemakers.
 - c. Read Matthew 5:9 slowly. Let the children realize that being a peacemaker has a reward—becoming a child of God.
 - d. Read the verse again and ask the children to say it after you.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Ask these questions. Note: Some questions may be difficult for the lower group, the N/K group. It is suggested that the teacher chooses the questions that can be understood by the lower group.)

1. What is peace? (Peace is a fruit of the Holy Spirit.)
2. Who is the source of peace? (God is the source of peace. Through Jesus Christ, peace is made known to us. Through the Holy Spirit, this peace is made available to us.)
3. What do you call the persons who promote peace? (Peacemakers)
4. What do you think Jesus wants us to be? (Jesus wants us to be peace-loving children. Jesus does not want us to fight.)
5. Why do we have to be peace-loving children/people? (God calls us to live in peace with others.)
6. How do we experience peace? (Peace comes from God. We experience peace when we pray. When we praise God, we experience peace. Peace happens we are not in conflict with others. Peace can happen when there is justice.)
7. What does the verse "Blessed are the peacemakers..." mean? (God blesses the peacemakers.)
8. What does "... for they will be called children of God" mean? (God makes a promise to peacemakers. They will be called children of God. They will be with God.)

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: As children of God/members of the church, why do we have to be a peace-loving community? (The church is an instrument of God to make her members peacemakers as they promote peace for everyone.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. **For N/K:** Say: Listen to what I will say. Stand and clap two times if the action promotes peace and cover your face if the action does not promote peace.
 - a. I will speak gently to everyone. (Stand and clap because a gentle person is a peacemaker.)
 - b. I will listen to my friends if they have something to say. (Stand and clap because I respect that person.)
 - c. I will help others only when I am asked to do so. (Cover face because a peacemaker is ready to help others always.)
 - d. I will be a friend to all my classmates. (Stand and clap because a peacemaker is friendly.)

- e. I can hurt anyone when I am hurt. (Cover face because a peacemaker does not hurt anyone.)
 - f. I can speak bad words when I am mad. (Cover face because a peacemaker does not speak bad words.)
 - g. I will share my toys only with my friends. (Cover face because a peacemaker share his or her blessings to everyone.)
 - h. I can make fun of others by teasing them. (Cover face because a peacemaker is not a bully.)
 - i. I will help my siblings in doing household chores even if it is not assigned to me. (Stand and clap because a peacemaker is always willing to help.)
 - j. I will listen to my parents' instructions. (Stand and clap because a peacemaker is a good follower.)
2. **For YE:** Tell the class to complete these sentences as peacemakers.
- a. I will speak gently to _____ (others).
(A gentle person is a peacemaker.)
 - b. When other persons have something to say, I will _____ (listen).
(A peacemaker respects persons.)
 - c. I will help others _____ (always).
(A peacemaker is a helpful person.)
 - d. I will be a friend to _____ (all).
(A peacemaker is friendly.)
 - e. When somebody hurts me, I will _____ (find out why).
(A peacemaker seeks understanding.)
 - f. When I am mad, I will be _____ (slow) to speak bad words against him or her. (A peacemaker does not speak bad words.)
 - g. I will _____ (share) my toys to those who need it.
(A peacemaker is kind.)
 - i. I will _____ (obey) my parents' instructions.
(A peacemaker is a good follower.)
 - j. To be a peacemaker, I will study _____ (God's word), _____ (sing praises to God), and I will _____ (pray to God always.)

G. Closing Worship

- 1. Tell the class to recite the memory verse: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." (Matthew 5:9)
- 2. Offering
- 3. Closing song: "Let There Be Peace on Earth" (1st stanza only)
Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.
For God is our Parent, children all are we.
Let me walk with each other in perfect harmony.
- 4. Closing prayer: "We thank you dear God for teaching us how to be peace-loving children. We know that you want us to always be gentle to all. That is why we should always follow you as our guide because your ways are always peaceful. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."

Middle and Older Elementary Levels

I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. tell that peace comes from God, is made known by Christ, and is made available by the Holy Spirit;
2. describe the promise of becoming children of God as peacemakers;
3. explain why the church should promote peace; and
4. participate in church activities that promote peace as believers who abide in Christ by studying God's word, singing praises, praying, and doing peacemaking activities.

II. Concept: The church promotes peace.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), song charts, pictures, bond papers, worksheets, coloring materials, drawing of a dove

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Greet the children as they come.
2. Opening prayer: "Lord, teach us to be gentle in all our ways. Help us to follow your ways by being instruments of peace to all the people we meet each day. In the mighty name of Jesus, we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "I've Got Peace like a River"
I've got peace like a river (2x).
I've got peace like a river in my soul, halleluia!
I've got peace like a river (2x).
I've got peace like a river in my soul.

B. Getting Ready

1. Write the word **PEACE** on the board and let the class write their thoughts about peace. Provide these guide questions for their use.
 - a. What is peace?
 - b. "What situations do you know that do not look like that there is peace?"
 - c. "Do you think God wants us to have peace in our life?"
2. Accept the answers of the class and organize them.

C. Learning Time

1. Divide the class into three groups. Provide each group each of the following situations (maybe written on index cards). Let each group discuss the situation and ask the members to tell how they can change these situations in order to pursue peace.
 - a. Group 1. Situation: It's playtime in school. You are waiting for your turn to go up the stairs and go down the slide. Suddenly, another pupil runs and cuts you and goes up the ladder. You push the pupil because it was after all your turn to use the slide. Action: Share what you can do to make peace in this situation. The small group shares what they would do to make peace in this situation.
 - b. Group 2. Situation: A big boy neighbor bullies you by calling you names. You feel hurt but cannot fight back. Action: What can you do to make peace in this situation?

- c. Group 3. Situation: There are toys in the cabinet. Each of you in your classroom is given a chance to choose one toy and play with it. You have chosen a particular toy. Your turn will come after the pupil in front of you. This pupil chose the toy you like and there are no more toys to play with. Action: What do you do to make peace in this situation?
2. Let each group present their actions. After the presentation, tell the class that when they are able to make peace in the different situations, they are now called peacemakers.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

1. Ask the children why they should pursue peace. Instruct them to read Matthew 5:9. Say: "Peace comes from God. It is made known to all believers through Jesus Christ upon his death and resurrection. When Jesus ascended to the Father, the Holy Spirit gave us the gift of peace. Christians are called to pursue peace in relationships. To have peace with God is the greatest gift that we can receive."
2. Discuss the three situations and compare the notes of the children in their presentations.
 - a. First situation. *Reaction of a pupil whose turn was taken by another pupil that resulted in a violent action.* Tell the class to refer to Romans 12:18-19: "If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'" Ask the class to paraphrase the verses. (The Bible tells us we are to do whatever we can to be at peace with others. We should never take matters in our own hands because God will avenge us and God will take care of us.) Let the pupil who pushed another pupil to apologize and seek forgiveness without mentioning what wrong thing the latter has done to the former.)
 - b. Second situation. *A big boy bullying a neighbor who cannot fight back.* Tell the class to refer to Hebrews 12:14: "Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord." Assist the children to paraphrase the verse: (The verse tells us to pursue peace always and with all people.) Draw from the class the idea that efforts (with adult supervision) should be made to ask the bully why he calls the neighbor names and in the process, you are showing the bully your desire to make peace with him.
 - c. Third situation. *The favorite toy that has been used by another pupil.* Ask the class to read 1 Peter 3:10-12: For those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit; let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." Lead the class to realize that using mean words will not solve the situation. There is need to understand that the pupil in front may want something similar to what the pupil next to him or her wants, too. God wants us to have peace with everyone.

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Say: God calls us children when we make peace with others. Ask: As peacemakers at home, in school, and in the church, how can we help promote peace?

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Tell the class that now that they know they can be at peace God, then it is their duty to share this peace to others. Let the class look for ways by which they make peace and share the peace of God in their hearts to others.
2. **For ME:** Provide cutouts of doves and tell the class to choose one person at home or in school that they are committed to make peace and share God's peace in their hearts. Let them write something about their peace effort. Make sure that they will be given to their chosen person.
3. **For OE:** Divide the class into two groups. Let each group choose a person in church or a neighbor that they can make peace and share God's peace in their hearts. Have them prepare peacemaking materials and share them with the person/s they have in mind. The teacher can assist the groups to present their work to the chosen persons.
4. For both groups, present the following situations for their reference or guide. Remind the class that asking for forgiveness and forgiving others is necessary to promote peace whether in prayer or in face-to-face encounters.
 - a. Your classmate and best friend are fighting.
 - b. You see a boy throwing his garbage on the floor.
 - c. Madison is very upset. She got a very low grade in Math.
 - d. You are anxious because you lied to your parents.
 - e. You provided bad information about a friend to destroy his or her image.

G. Closing Worship

1. Memory verse: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." (Matthew 5:9)
2. Offering
3. Closing song: "Let There Be Peace on Earth" (1st stanza only)
Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.
For God is our Parent, children all are we.
Let me walk with each other in perfect harmony.
5. Closing prayer: "Great and mighty God, thank you for your wisdom that inspires us to be peacemakers. Guide us as we begin to think of ways of promoting God's peace to others. This we pray in Jesus' peacemaking name. Amen."

Youth Level

I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. tell that peace comes from God, is made known by Christ, and is made available by the Holy Spirit;
2. affirm that a peace advocacy is anchored on justice, equality and fairness;
3. conclude that the effect of righteousness is true peace;
4. explain why the church advocates peace in its ministries and programs; and
5. participate in church activities that promote peace as believers who abide in Christ.

II. Concept: The church advocates equality and fairness in building peace.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), song/verse charts, manila paper or cartolina, pentel pens,

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time:
2. Opening prayer: We come into your presence, dear Lord, humbly asking for your wisdom. Teach us to be instruments of your peace, willing and dedicated to do your will. This we pray in Christ's mighty name. Amen.
3. Opening song: If available, use YouTube presentation of "Lord, Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace" or choose an appropriate song of peace. Inform the class that this poem was written not by St. Francis of Assisi but by an unknown person. It is, however, now called "Peace Prayer of St. Francis".

B. Getting Ready

1. Write the word **PEACE** on the board. Provide each student a **K** (Know)- **W** (Want) - **L** (Learned) chart. Tell the class to fill in the first and second columns only. The third column will be completed after discussion of the lesson. Have the materials available and accessible to the class.

What I Know About
PEACE

What I Want to Know About
PEACE

What I Learned About
PEACE

2. After the activity, set aside the work of the students for later use.

C. Learning Time

1. Present the following story to the class.

Perfect Peace

Author: Unknown

There once was a king who offered a prize to the artist who would paint the best picture of peace. Many artists tried. The king looked at all the pictures, but there were only two he really liked and he had to choose between them.

One picture was of a calm lake. The lake was a perfect mirror for peace. There were towering mountains all around it. Overhead was a blue sky with fluffy white clouds. All who saw this picture thought that it was a perfect picture of peace.

The other picture had mountains, too. But these were rugged and bare. Above was an angry sky from which rain fell, with lightning and thunder playing along with the heavy rainfall. Down the side of the mountain tumbled a foaming waterfall. This did not look peaceful at all.

But when the king looked, he saw behind the waterfall a tiny bush growing in a crack in the rock. In the bush, a mother bird had built her nest for her birdlings. There, in the midst of the rush of angry water, sat the mother bird and her birdlings on her nest in perfect peace.

Which picture do you think won the prize?

The king chose the second picture. Do you know why?

"Because," explained the king, "peace does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. Peace means to be in the midst of all those things and still be calm in your heart. That is the real meaning of peace."

2. Let the class read in unison Isaiah 32:16-18. Say: "God emphasizes that his kingdom is built on genuine and lasting peace. God wants us to do what is right (being just, fair, and promote equality for all), and to trust in God so that we may live in peace.
3. Present Matthew 5:9. Discuss the blessing of being a peacemaker and the promise of God to peacemakers in the here and now and in the future kingdom. Other related biblical verses explain the meaning of peace of God and the significance of seeking and pursuing peace.
 - a. Contrary to the world view of peace which is the absence of conflict, the Bible speaks about the peace in the midst of conflict and turmoil. John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you." This peace is making relationships whole again. It is more than making peace with others but more of making people make peace with God. We can only be peacemakers if we first make peace with God and share this peace to others.
 - b. Romans 5:2-5: "through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us"
 - c. Romans 12:18: "If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'"
 - d. Ephesians 2:13-17: "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, so that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near."
 - e. Hebrews 12:14: "Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord."
 - f. 1 Peter 3:10-12: For those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit; let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

1. Relate the perfect peace in the story with Isaiah 32:16-18.
2. What does Isaiah prophesy regarding peace as the effect of righteousness?
3. The following statements talk about peace. Which one do you agree the most and explain your choice.
 - a. Shalom is much more than the absence of conflict. It is the presence of everything good.
 - b. True peacemaking involves more than standing between two opposing parties and preventing them from killing each other. It is the work of reconciliation itself.
 - c. God charges us to be vessels of God's peace.
4. As young people, what do you think are the ways to promote peace?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Say: The church is called upon to build and promote God's peace. Ask: How can the youth become advocates in the call of seeking and pursuing peace?

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Discuss the KWL chart that has been prepared earlier. Discuss what the class know about peace and want to know about peace. Compare their answers to the biblical texts (Isaiah 32:16-18, Matthew 5:9, John 14:27, Romans 5:2-5, Romans 12:18, Ephesians 2:13-17, Hebrews 12:14, and 1 Peter 3:10-12:).
2. Let the class complete the third column in the KWL chart. Call on students to share their answers.
3. Tell the class to read the Peace Prayer of St. Francis. Then ask them to write their own peace prayer and commit themselves to be peace advocates. Present a sample prayer as a guide of the students in writing their own prayer of peace.
Dear God, we know that we make you unhappy when we fight others or when we are in conflict. It is really difficult to be a peace advocate. We know God's peace. We are aware that Jesus Christ lived it out. Please send your Spirit to live in our hearts so that we can make peace with God and share this peace in our hearts with others. May we be like Jesus in our peace advocacy. Amen.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "Let There Be Peace On Earth"
Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.
With God as our Parent, children all are we.
Let me walk with each other in perfect harmony.
Let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now.
With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow.
To take each moment and live each moment
With peace eternally, let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.
3. Closing prayer: "Dear God, you know us very well. We humbly ask that you will continue to inspire us to live the kind of life advocating what is equal, fair and just. Help us to do all these things so that we may live in peace with God and our fellow human beings. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."

Adult Level

I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. compare the view of the world on peace and God's peace;
2. tell that peace comes from God, is made known by Christ, and is made available by the Holy Spirit;
3. point to the fact that the peace advocacy of the church aims to denounce injustices to establish genuine peace;
4. describe the church's experiences, challenges, and difficulties in doing peace mission;
5. participate in church activities that promote peace as believers who abide in Christ; and
6. demonstrate one's change of behavior when participating in peacemaking activities.

II. Concept: The church denounces injustices to establish genuine peace.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), song/verse charts, worksheets

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "Lord, open our hearts and minds today as we listen and understand your Word. Help us to realize our responsibilities in building your kingdom through peace and justice. In this we need your grace. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "A United and Uniting Church" (HFJ #244)

B. Getting Ready

1. Write the word **PEACE** on the board. Provide each student a **K** (Know)- **W** (Want) - **L** (Learned) chart. Tell the class to fill in the first and second columns only. The third column will be completed after discussion of the lesson. Have the materials available and accessible to the class.

What I Know About
PEACE

What I Want to Know About
PEACE

What I Learned About
PEACE

2. After the activity, set aside the work of the students for later use.

C. Learning Time

Tell the class to read the text in Isaiah 32:16-18 and Matthew 5:9. Let them discuss the verses using the given information.

1. Isaiah 32:16-18. The Bible talks about restorative and renewing justice that can lead to peace.
 - a. God wants us to have a relationship with God and others.
 - b. God wants us to repair relationships and restore the community—recognizing wrong doings, confession, repentance, and making amends toward reconciliation.
 - c. The truth of God's justice is in Jesus, a justice that liberates and restores.
 - d. Peace building is at the heart of the gospel.
2. Present Matthew 5:9. Discuss the blessing of being a peacemaker and the promise of God to peacemakers in the here and now and in the future kingdom. Other related biblical verses explain the meaning of peace of God and the significance of seeking and pursuing peace.
 - a. Contrary to the world view of peace which is the absence of conflict, the Bible speaks about the peace in the midst of conflict and turmoil. John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you."

This peace is making relationships whole again. It is more than making peace with others but more of making people make peace with God. We can only be peacemakers if we first make peace with God and share this peace to others.

- b. Romans 5:2-5: “through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us”
- c. Romans 12:18: “If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”
- d. Ephesians 2:13-17: “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, so that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.”
- e. Hebrews 12:14: “Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.”
- f. 1 Peter 3:10-12: For those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit; let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

1. Prepare the class to comment on the following table:

What the World Says	What the Bible Says	What Can Adults Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peace is the absence of conflict. • It is not good to get involved. Let people solve their own problems. • Justice is for the rich. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God’s peace, lived out by Jesus, and gifted by the Holy Spirit is the heart of the Gospel. Without restorative, liberating, and renewing justice, true peace is not possible. We are charged as God’s vessels of peace. • Shalom (peace) is much more than the absence of conflict. It is the presence of everything good. • True peacemaking involves more than standing between two opposing parties and preventing them from killing each other. It is the work of reconciliation itself. • As believers, we make peace with God first before we can make peace with others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get involved in the peacemaking activities at home and in the community by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Helping people get along and be friends. ➤ Taking time to tell people about Jesus ➤ Listening to people and helping them solve their problems ➤ Speaking well of others ➤ Taking part in nonviolent actions ➤ Taking part in resolving conflict ➤ Committing to responsibility of being peacemakers ➤ Being forgiving and always being ready to ask for forgiveness

2. Discuss the challenges and difficulties being experienced by your local church in building peace in your locality. How can you get involved in peacemaking activities as responsible adults in your community?
3. Look for local peacemaking groups. Are you ready to get involved?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: What is the way of peace? How can we denounce injustices to establish and build genuine peace?

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Tell the class to study the following peacemaking activities. Discuss each of them and ask the adults to choose any one that they can get involved. Let them explain their choices.

1. To persons suffering from worry, stress, or fear. offer to read the words of Christ to share God's peace in your heart.
2. Get involved in the prayer warriors in your church. List down the persons you will include in the prayer activities.
3. Prepare love notes to your family members to strengthen their trust in God. Include biblical verses that describe the peace of God.
4. Join peace and environment advocacies.
5. Promote the saying "Hate hurts, Peace heals."

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "Let There Be Peace On Earth"
Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.
With God as our Parent, children all are we.
Let me walk with each other in perfect harmony.
Let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now.
With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow.
To take each moment and live each moment
With peace eternally, let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.
3. Closing prayer: "We offer to you our commitment, O God, as your people. May you grant us courage, boldness, and faith in all we say and do as peacemakers. This we ask and pray in the mighty name of Jesus. Amen."