

Today's Suggested Schedule—March 2024, Week 1

Today's Bible Story: Whenever, Wherever (Live in Peace with Everyone) • *Romans 12:18*

Today's Bottom Line: Make peace whenever you can.

Monthly Memory Verse: *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.* Romans 12:18 (ESV)

Monthly Virtue: Peace—Proving you care more about each other than winning an argument

Basic Truth: I should treat others the way I want to be treated.

Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Thank God for making peace with us through Jesus. Thank God for the promise to give us peace when we've done all that we can to live in peace with others. Pray for the kids in your group who may be experiencing ongoing conflict or tension. Pray they would find a safe place in your small group to experience and understand God's peace.

Check out our Pinterest page here <https://bit.ly/447HSZi> for a visual on some of the activities.

LARGE GROUP (35 minutes)

STORY: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways

WORSHIP: Inviting People to Respond to God

Hang Time
Welcome/Opener
Worship
Bible Story
Bottom Line
Prayer
Closer

SMALL GROUP (25 minutes)

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect

Story Exploration
Bible Story Review: Power Up Peace
Application Activity: Letter Together
Memory Verse Activity: Act It Out
Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

HOME: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)
Devotionals for Kids
Parent Cue App

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Use this if kids have questions about following Jesus.

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word gospel. Clarify that the word gospel means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

If a child has expressed interest in following Jesus, please let the parents know so they can be a part of the conversation that their child is having about faith.

What Now?

If you put your trust in Jesus Christ and believe in Him as the One who forgives your sins and makes it possible for you to know God, we are so proud of you! There is no greater single decision that you could make.

We believe that baptism is an important next step for you. Baptism is your way of telling your friends and family, “Hey, I'm a follower of Jesus!” If you're interested in learning more or participating in baptism, talk to a staff member about the next steps you should take.

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)

Story Exploration

Throughout Scripture, we can see how peace is something near to God's heart. Even though people chose to break their relationship with God, God made a way to fix that relationship through Jesus. And because we reflect God's image, making peace with others should be a priority for us as well.

This is a big challenge! Do as much as you can to live in peace . . . with everyone! Paul was stressing how important it is for us to do everything in our power to fix what is broken—and make connections with the people around us. After all, this is what God did for us through Jesus.

When God made peace with us through Jesus, God showed us that peace with others is possible. This doesn't mean that it will be easy, but living in peace with others is worth our best effort. We pray that kids will discover how they can show God's love by the way they make peace with the people in their lives.

- **True peace begins with reconciliation with God.** Through Jesus Christ, believers are reconciled to God, experiencing peace with him (**Romans 5:1**). This peace comes from the assurance of salvation, forgiveness of sins, and a restored relationship with God.
- Peace involves unity in relationships with others. It's characterized by love, forgiveness, reconciliation, and unity within families, communities, and societies. **Ephesians 4:3** urges believers to "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."
- The Bible also speaks of a future, ultimate peace when God will fully establish his kingdom. This is depicted in Isaiah 2:4, where it describes a time when nations will no longer war against each other: "They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks."

Looking at peace based on Romans 12:18

- **Responsibility for Peace:** This verse teaches kids about their responsibility in promoting peace. They have a part to play in it. It's a call to action, urging them to actively pursue peace in their relationships and interactions with others, whether it's with family, friends, classmates, teammates or strangers.
- **Emphasis on Personal Effort:** "As far as it depends on you" emphasizes personal effort. Kids can learn that they have control over their own actions and attitudes, even if they can't control the actions of others. They can choose to respond to conflicts with understanding, forgiveness, and a willingness to reconcile. (Colossians 3:15)
- **Witnessing to Others:** Living at peace with everyone can serve as a powerful witness to others. Kids who actively seek peace in their relationships demonstrate the transformative power of Jesus' teachings. Their actions can create conversations or inspire others to consider the message of Jesus and the difference it can make in their lives.
- Verses about peace: Philippians 4:7, John 14:27

1. Power Up Peace

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and/or working as a group

What You Need: “Power Up Peace” Activity Page; whiteboard and dry-erase marker or poster board and marker

What You Do:

- Tell the kids you’re going to create blanks to represent a word from the Bible story.
- Pick a word from the “Power Up Peace” Activity Page, but don’t tell the kids what it is.
- Use the marker to draw a blank line on the whiteboard or poster for each letter in the word.
- *Optional: Fill in the first letter of the word to help get kids started.*
- Invite kids to take turns guessing a letter.
 - If the letter is in the word, fill in those blank(s) on the board.
 - If the letter is not in the word, draw a part of the peace sign as shown on the “Power Up Peace” Activity Page.
- Challenge the kids to guess the word before you draw all five parts of the peace sign.
- Invite any kids who think they know the word to solve it at any time during the game.
- One the kids guess a word correctly, ask if they remember what it has to do with today’s story. (Possible responses listed below.)
 - Paul: *wrote a letter to a new group of Jesus-followers in Rome*
 - Letter: *Paul’s letter helped explain what it looks like to follow Jesus.*
 - Romans: *a letter written by the apostle Paul to the believers in Rome*
 - Peace: *a feeling of calm; proving you care more about each other than winning an argument*
 - Listen: *We can show peace by listening to people even if we don’t agree.*
 - Everyone: *Paul wrote: “If possible, live in peace with everyone. Do that as much as you can.” (Romans 12:18, NIV)*
- Repeat with each word from the “Power Up Peace” Activity Page.

What You Say:

“You all did a great job guessing some very important words from today’s Bible story! What were some of the words we found today? *(Pause for responses: Paul, letter, Romans, peace, listen, everyone.)*”

“Is it always easy to have peace? *(Pause for responses.)* It sounds like peace might be a little easier for some and a little harder for others. When we’re upset, it can sometimes feel easier to react quickly and say the first thing that pops into our head. But instead, we should pause and think about how we can make peace in that situation. You might not always have everything go your way, but it’s important to care about others and **[Bottom Line] make peace whenever you can.**”

[Make It Personal] *(Share about a time when you were in a situation that made you feel upset or frustrated, but you chose peace anyway. Maybe a sibling made you upset, or a friend forgot your birthday, or you got into an argument with a coworker. Talk about why it was important for you to care more about others and make the choice to keep the peace.)*

* 2. Letter Together

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment

What You Need: “Letter Together” Activity Page, pencils, and Bible

What You Do:

- Remind the kids that Paul wrote letters teaching people how to follow Jesus.
- Use the Bible to read Romans 12:18 aloud to the group. Remind kids in this verse Paul wrote about peace.
- Explain the kids will write a letter of their own about peace.
- Give each kid a “Letter Together” Activity Page and a pencil.
- Keep one “Letter Together” Activity Page for yourself.
- Read the letter on the “Letter Together” Activity Page out loud, saying “blank” for each blank.
- Instruct the kids to fill in the blanks in the “Letter Together” Activity Page to give advice on how to keep the peace.
- Once the kids have filled in the blanks, invite them to share their letters (with the whole group or with a partner), as time and comfort allow.

What You Say:

“Just like Paul, you all did a great job writing letters to share how to **[Bottom Line] make peace whenever you can!** Just like your examples showed, we can all make the choice to keep the peace. We can take a deep breath and pause before we speak. We can really listen to what the other person has to say. And if we ever get stuck, we can ask a trusted adult to help if we don’t know what to do.

“When you choose to follow Jesus, you can have peace with God. God sends the Holy Spirit to live within you. And God’s Spirit can help you make peace with others. Peace is a gift that’s given to us as we follow Jesus, and we can still have peace no matter how the other person responds.

“Your letters will help you remember the ways you can **[Bottom Line] make peace whenever you can!**”

3. Act It Out

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

What You Need: Bibles

What You Do:

- Make sure each kid has a Bible.
- Together, look up Romans 12:18, using the Bible Navigation Tips below.

Finding verses with 2nd and 3rd graders: Guide them to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. (Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like.) When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find Romans in the list under “New Testament.” When the kids find Romans, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find Romans. Help the kids find the page. When they find Romans, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 12. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 18 in chapter 12.

- Read the verse out loud a few times together.
- Instruct the kids to come up with hand motions and other movements to go along with the verse.
 - Kids can work in pairs or groups, or you can keep everyone together to share ideas.
- Give the kids a few moments to create motions.
- Recite the verse with the motions a few times together—allow the kids to lead when appropriate.

What You Say:

“That was so much fun! I loved seeing the motions you chose to go along with our Memory Verse this month. Keep practicing the verse and share it with your families too!”

“This month’s Memory Verse is all about peace, and it’s so helpful to remember to choose peace whenever we can. Choosing peace is a great way to treat others the way we want to be treated. When we choose to care about others more than we care about winning an argument, we’re choosing peace. Use this month’s Memory Verse to help you remember to **[Bottom Line] make peace whenever you can!**”

4. Pray and Dismiss

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Made to Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Say:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember?
- How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission?

What You Need: Paper; coloring supplies; LEGO® blocks; large, prepared poster or paper; small objects (rocks, buttons, pennies, etc.); music player; and peaceful background music

What You Do:

- Designate three spaces in your area for prayer stations.
- In one station, place the paper and coloring supplies. This will be the "Create" station.
- In another station, place the LEGO® blocks. This will be the "Build" station.
- In the third station, place the small objects on the "ANGER" side of the prepared paper. This is the "Reflect" station.
- Divide your group into three smaller groups.
- Assign each group to start at one of the three stations.
- Explain each station to the kids in the following ways.
 - **CREATE station:** Using coloring supplies, draw a picture of what **peace** looks like to you. What people and things bring you peace? What colors will you use?
 - **BUILD station:** Using LEGO® blocks, build a **place** where you feel peace (home, room, nature, etc.). As you put the blocks together, thank God for being able to have that place in your life. Take apart your creation before moving to the next station.
 - **REFLECT station:** Take an object (rock, button, penny) from the side of the paper labeled, ANGER. Hold the object and think about a time you've felt angry because some things were not fair. Then, place your object under the word PEACE. Think about what it would look like to choose peace in that situation. Then, close your eyes and practice listening to what God might be telling you about choosing peace in difficult situations.
- Play quiet music in the background.
- Instruct the kids to remain quiet (peaceful) so everyone can focus on their prayer station.
- After 2-3 minutes at a station, encourage the groups to move to another station.
- Continue until each kid has gone through all three stations.

What You Say:

"I loved this quiet time we were all able to spend with God! We can pray to God anytime—when we're coloring, or playing games, or riding the school bus, or falling asleep at night. And when you ask, God can help you choose to **[Bottom Line] make peace whenever you can.**"

“God, thank You for sending Jesus so we can have peace with You. Thank You for giving us Your Holy Spirit, who helps us make peace with others. This week, help us to stop and think about ways we can make peace with others instead of reacting quickly when we don’t feel peaceful. We love You and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage kids to share their letters. Invite kids to ask their family how they can choose to make peace in their lives.

GETTING READY

Here's everything you need to know to get ready for this week.

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

(Choose as many of these activities as you like.)

** If you don't have time to do all these activities, be sure to do activity #2.*

Story Exploration – No Supplies

1. Power Up Peace

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and/or working as a group

What You Need:

- Print “Power Up Peace” Activity Page on paper, one for each Small Group
- Whiteboard and dry-erase marker (or poster board and marker), one for each Small Group

*** 2. Letter Together**

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment

What You Need:

- Print “Letter Together” Activity Page, one for each kid and one for the Small Group Leader
- Pencils, one for each kid
- Bible

3. Act It Out

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

What You Need:

- Bibles, one for each kid

4. Pray and Dismiss

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Made to Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need:

- Paper
- Coloring supplies
- LEGO® blocks
- Large poster or paper
 - Before group time, use a marker to write the word ANGER on one half of the poster and PEACE on the other half.
- Small objects (rocks, buttons, pennies, etc.)
- Music player
- Peaceful background music

HOME: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

- Print on cardstock or email this week's devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resources: **Parent Cue app**