

## 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: Making Peace
- Application Activity: Calm Down for Peace
- Memory Verse Activity: Possible Peace
- 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. Making Peace

### [Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

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

**What You Need:** Bible marked at Romans 12:18, butcher paper, pencils, and markers

#### What You Do:

- Give a volunteer the marked Bible.
- Invite them to open the Bible to Romans 12:18.
- Read the verse aloud for the group.
- Give each kid a pencil.
- Set out the butcher paper.
- Instruct the kids to gather around the butcher paper.
- Encourage the kids to draw a picture of a time this week when it was hard to keep the peace.
  - If the kids are struggling for ideas, prompt them with:
    - Maybe they argued with a friend. Maybe they got really mad at a brother or sister.
    - Name places they went this week (home, school, ball field, friend's house, etc.) or activities they might have participated in (ball game, dance recital, playing at the park, birthday party, etc.) to get them thinking about possible situations.
- As the kids draw, read the verse again.
- As kids finish, set out the markers for them to color their drawing as you talk about the verse.
- Review the who, why, when, and where for Romans 12:18.
  - Who wrote this verse? (*Paul*)
  - Why? (*to explain what it looks like to follow Jesus*)
  - When? (*This verse is part of a letter Paul wrote after he started following Jesus. He traveled around telling people about Jesus and starting churches.*)
  - Where? (*Paul wrote the letter of the book of Romans to a group of Jesus-followers in a city called Rome—some were Jewish, and some were non-Jewish, so they followed different traditions and didn't always agree.*)
- As the kids finish, instruct them to put down their pencils and markers and look at their drawings.
- Ask:
  - In this situation, did you try to find peace? Why or why not?
  - If you did, how did that help? If you didn't, what happened?
- Instruct the kids to grab a marker.
- Ask kids to think of a person who's hard to make peace with.
- Direct the kids to write the first letter of that person's name near their drawing.
  - Encourage them to sound it out or provide help where needed.
- In the center of the butcher paper, write the word "PEACE" in large block letters.
- Discuss the following questions.
  - What does Paul tell us in Romans 12:18? (*to live in peace with everyone*)
  - Does "everyone" mean the people in these drawings?
  - Does "everyone" include the people represented by the letters you wrote down?
- Set the butcher paper aside to save for the Pray and Dismiss Activity.

#### What You Say:

"Today's verse reminds us that when it's possible, we should live in peace with everyone. We should

choose peace as much as we can. That means that sometimes, we need to let go of what we want. We might need to let someone else go first. Or share. Or stop ourselves before we say something unkind that we don't mean.

"Keeping the peace means stopping to listen and understand. But one really important thing to remember is that God will help! When you follow Jesus, God promises that the Holy Spirit who lives with us will help us keep the peace. So, if you find yourself in situations like the ones you've drawn, ask God to help you **[Bottom Line] make peace whenever you can.**"

***[Make It Personal] (Share an age-appropriate example about a time when you chose to keep the peace, even when you were mad or frustrated. How did God help you in that moment to make that choice when you may have felt like reacting in the opposite way?)***

## Discussion Questions

**[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]**

*Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding*

**What You Need:** No supplies needed

**What You Do:**

**Ask:**

- How did God make peace with us?
- How does our relationship with Jesus influence our ability to live at peace with others?
- How do you feel when you're in conflict with someone?
- Who are some people who are hard for you to have peace with?
- Is it challenging to make peace with someone else?
- Why is it important to make peace?

## \* 2. Calm Down for Peace

### [Live for God | Application Activity]

*Made to Explore: an activity that extends learning through hands on experimentation and discovery*

**What You Need:** “Calm Down Strategy Cards” Activity Page, binder rings or yarn/string, scissors, and a single hole punch

#### What You Do:

- Instruct the kids to stand up in your small group area.
- Give an example of a situation where it’s hard to make peace.
  - You can use a situation from the butcher paper drawings in the Making Peace activity or share your own example.
- Invite the kids to make a face or strike a pose to show how they might FEEL like responding in that situation.
  - For example: a fighting stance with arms up, a grumpy face, arms crossed in anger, etc.
- Explain to the kids that calm down strategies can help us “make peace whenever we can.”
- Shuffle the cards from the “Calm Down Strategy Cards” Activity Page.
  - Be sure the parent card is removed from the stack.
- Put the cards facedown.
- Call on a kid to draw a card.
- Read the card aloud and then lead the group to practice that strategy.
- Repeat with most of the cards.
- Give each kid a page from the “Calm Down Strategy Cards” Activity Page and a pair of scissors.
- Instruct the kids to cut the cards apart.
- As they finish, use the hole punch to help the kids punch a hole in each card.
- Point out the adult notecard (encourage the kids to put that card on top) and explain that this is for their grown-ups to read at pick up.
- Give each kid a piece of string/yarn or a binder ring and help them run it through the hole on each kid’s set of cards to connect them.
- Encourage kids to take these cards home and practice them this week as a way to help them calm down to make peace!

#### What You Say:

“When you’re frustrated or mad, it can be really hard to find peace. When that happens, we need some calm down strategies. There are some great ideas here for some specific things you can do in those moments to help you calm down so you can make choices that bring peace to the situation. Because it’s really hard to find a peaceful solution when you’re angry!

“Calming down first can help you live in peace with everyone. The more you practice calming down, the more peace you’ll bring. When you choose to follow Jesus, you can have peace with God. God sent the Holy Spirit to live within you. That means that God’s Spirit will help you make peace with others. God is always ready to help you **[Bottom Line] make peace whenever you can.**”

### 3. Possible Peace

#### [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

*Made to Create: an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing*

**What You Need:** Bibles, bubble art pages from Opening Activity, “Romans 12:18 Cut Out” Activity Page, glue sticks; *Optional: hair dryer*

#### What You Do:

- Instruct the kids to get in pairs.
- Give each pair a marked Bible.
- Together, look up Romans 12:18 using the Bible Navigation Tips below.

**Finding verses with kindergartners:** Guide children to open the Bibles to the marked page. Point to the word *Romans* at the top of the page as you say “Romans” aloud. Then guide children to find the big number 12 on the page. Explain that this is the chapter number. Finally, guide them to look under the big 12 for the little 18; this is the verse number. Tell them to leave their finger on the verse as you read the verse aloud. Then lead everyone to say the verse together.

**Finding verses with 1<sup>st</sup> 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.” You can help by telling them that Romans starts with the letters R-O. 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 together or encourage them to repeat after you.
- Point out the first part of the verse.
- Talk about how it is possible for us to control our side and do all that we can to live in peace. If we try and things aren’t getting better, we can always ask an adult for help.
- Give each kid the bubble art page they created from the Opening Activity.
- *Optional: If artwork is not quite dry, use a hair dryer on the low heat setting to speed up the process.*
- Give each kid a strip of paper from the “Romans 12:18 Cut Out” Activity Page.
- Set out the glue sticks.
- Point out the verse on the page.
- Invite the kids to glue the verse onto the center of their artwork to take home.
- Set them aside to dry for pick up.

#### What You Say:

“What are the first few words of this verse? ‘If possible,’ (*NIRV*) or ‘If it is possible’ (*NIV*)—that’s right! As much as possible, we need to try to make peace. Remember, as followers of Jesus, God has given us the Holy Spirit to help us bring peace. We can practice calming down so that we can respond in a kind way. If possible, we need to do everything we can to make a situation better—not worse. And if you try all these strategies and it doesn’t seem to help, you can always ask a trusted adult to step in and help you **[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?

**What You Need:** Butcher paper from Making Peace activity

##### What You Do:

- Instruct the kids to sit around the butcher paper, making sure NOT to sit in front of their own drawing.
- Remind the kids that God will help them **[Bottom Line] make peace whenever you can.**
- Encourage the kids to take a look at a picture in front of them and spend some time asking God to help the kid who drew it do all they can to make peace this week.
- Close your group time in prayer.

##### What You Say:

"Dear God, thank You for loving us and for helping us every day. This week, when we're in situations where we're frustrated or angry and we REALLY want our own way, help us to stop. Help us to take a moment to calm down and then work to make peace whenever we can. We love You, God, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to show off their calm down cards and Memory Verse artwork to share that we learned to **[Bottom Line] make peace whenever you can.**



## 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 #1 & 2.*

### **Story Exploration: No supplies**

#### **\* 1. Making Peace**

**[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]**

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

**What You Need:**

- Bible, marked at Romans 12:18
- Butcher paper, one large piece for each group
- Pencils, one for each kid
- Markers, enough for a Small Group to share

#### **\* 2. Calm Down for Peace**

**[Live for God | Application Activity]**

*Made to Explore: an activity that extends learning through hands-on experimentation and discovery*

**What You Need:**

- Print "Calm Down Strategy Cards" Activity Page on cardstock, one set for each kid, plus one extra for each Small Group (only cut that copy)
- Binder rings or yarn/string, one for each kid
- Scissors, one pair for each kid
- Single hole punch, one for each Small Group

#### **3. Possible Peace**

**[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]**

*Made to Create: an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing*

**What You Need:**

- Bibles, one for every two kids
  - Mark the Bibles at Romans 12:18 for Kindergarteners
- Bubble art pages from the Opening Activity
- Print "Romans 12:18 Cut Out" Activity Page on cardstock and cut apart, one strip for each kid
- Glue sticks, one for every two kids
- *Optional: hair dryer*

#### **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:**

- Butcher paper from Making Peace activity

### **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**