

Today's Suggested Schedule—March 2024, Week 1

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

Today's Key Question: Why is it important to make peace?

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.

SOCIAL: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (if time)

Just for Fun

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 (Communicator Script)

Key Question

Prayer

SMALL GROUP (25 minutes)

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect

Story Exploration

Application Activity: Take a Snapshot

Bible Story Review: Bible Story Extension and Discussion Questions

Memory Verse Activity: Verses to Take with You

Prayer Activity: Make It Personal with Prayer

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.

Just For Fun

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

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Direct the kids to sit in a circle, on their knees, placing both hands flat on the floor in front of them.
- Instruct each kid to take their right hand and cross it over the left hand of the kid to their right.
- Choose one of the kids to start the game.
- Instruct the kid to start the game by tapping one of their hands once on the floor.
- Direct the next kid in the circle, moving clockwise, to tap their hand once on the floor.
- Instruct the kids to continue tapping hands around the circle in a clockwise direction.
- Once the taps have gone around the circle, pause the game.
- Explain that as the tapping continues around the circle, anyone can choose to tap their hand twice, instead of only once. When someone does this, it reverses the direction of the tapping.
- Resume the game and try out this added rule.
- After a few minutes, pause the game once more.
- Challenge the kids to try to keep the circuit of tapping moving as seamlessly as possible.
 - Explain if anyone hesitates or flinches when it's their turn to tap, that person will have to remove that one hand, placing it behind their back and then the tapping will start over.
- Continue to play the game, keeping the circuit as steady as possible.
- As the kids get the hang of things, challenge them to speed up the circuit.
- The last kid (or last few kids) with a hand in the circle wins the game!
- Play again if time allows.
- For a visual demonstration of the game, click this link: <https://bit.ly/3sCXSpp> or scan the QR code below.



What You Say:

“Great job! In this game, we definitely had to work together to keep our circuit of hands moving. Whenever someone hesitated or flinched, it caused a disconnect in the circuit. **[Transition] Today, we’ll see what the Bible has to say about how we should do everything we can to stay connected. Let’s go to Large Group!**”

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

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. Take a Snapshot

[Live for God | Application Activity]

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

What You Need: Use the circuit kit put together for you. Raise and lower bar to break and connect circuit.

What You Do:

- Ask: “What are some things that can stand in the way of having peace?”
 - These could be personal or hypothetical examples, like the school bus (because kids often get into arguments there), or the baseball field, (because kids often get really fired up when they play).
- Invite kids to share an example.
- Talk about how we all have situations where it’s hard to make peace. Situations we experience one after the next can lead us to feel frustrated. It may all seem like a big mess.
- Ask: “What are some ways you can make peace in the situations you shared earlier?”
- Explain when we choose to make peace, it truly is powerful! But it takes our efforts to make peace. We can do that by relying on God’s love to help us switch on the power of peace!
- Pull the switch up to show how when we are disconnected from God, peace is hard.
- Compare the battery pack as a symbol for God, our Source of peace. When we aren’t connected to God, it breaks the circuit and makes it impossible to turn the light on.

2. Bible Story Extension

[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: “Circuit Story” Activity Page, “Circuit Story Leader Guide”, Activity Page tape, yellow highlighter or marker

What You Do:

- Spread out the “Circuit Story” Activity Pages around the floor of your group space (not in sequential order).
- Explain the kids will work together to put the pieces in story order and that the lightbulb is the final piece.
- Ask for a volunteer to start the circuit.
- Instruct them to look at all the pieces on the floor and choose which piece explains what happened first.
- Once a kid has selected a piece, hand them the roll of tape.
- Instruct them to use the tape to hang the page on the left side of the wall in your group space.
 - If you do not have a wall nearby, just lay them out in order on the floor.
- Ask for another volunteer to continue the circuit by choosing the second page and hang it (or place it) directly to the right of the first piece.
- Continue until all eight circuit pieces have been placed. (See the “Circuit Story Leader Guide” Activity Page for the answer key.)
- Invite any kids in the group to indicate if they think any pages have been placed incorrectly.
- Choose a volunteer to hang up the final piece at the end of the circuit, which displays a lightbulb and this week’s Bottom Line.
- Remind the kids that when Paul wrote this letter to the Romans encouraging them to live in peace, he understood that this was difficult to do. But he also knew how powerful it was to live in peace, rather than tension and conflict.
- Choose one more volunteer to use the yellow highlighter or marker to color in the lightbulb on the last piece of the circuit.
- Explain that peace is like the light bulb. It takes all the pieces of the circuit to work together to power it on.
- Ask:
 - Have you experienced any situations recently where you had to make peace? If so, would you like to share them with the group?
 - What are some ways you can you stop and make peace when you’re in the middle of a conflict?

3. 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?
- Do you feel stressed 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?
- Does making peace always mean you have to give up what you want?

4. Verses to Take with You

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

What You Need: Bibles, prepared toilet paper tubes, and flashlight

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 4th-5th graders: Our verse is from Romans. Ask kids to tell you whether that's in the Old Testament or the New Testament. (*New*) So we know it's toward the back of the Bible. When they find Romans, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Tell them to find chapter 12. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Tell them to then find verses 18 in chapter 12.

- Read Romans 12:18 out loud several times together.
- Direct the kids to leave their Bibles open for reference.
- Place the 16 prepared toilet paper tubes (or 18 for the NIV), plastic-wrap side down, in a 4 x 4 grid. (For the NIV, you'll have 2 extra on a new row in the grid.)
- Lead the kids in a game of Romans 12:18 Memory.
- Choose a kid to take the first turn.
- Give them the flashlight.
- Direct them to look for the first two words of Romans 12:18.
- Allow them to refer to their Bibles as needed.
- Instruct the first kid to choose two tubes to turn over.
- Once they've turned over the first tube, direct them to point the plastic-wrap side of the tube in the direction of a light-colored surface (like the wall or floor), and shine the flashlight through it so the word written is projected on the floor or wall.
 - It may work better if kids hold the tube closer to the wall or floor.
- If they happen to get both of the first two words, instruct them to keep them as a match.
- If the kid does not get both of the first two words, direct them to return the tubes to their spots in the grid.
- Continue play with the next kid's turn.
- Repeat this process, allowing kids to take turns finding the first two words.
- Once the first two words of the verse have been found, instruct the kids to find the next two words of the verse.
- Play until all words have been found in verse order.
 - The last two words of the verse will be "Romans" and "12:18."
- The kid who finds the most matches is the winner!
- Instruct the kids to say the verse out loud together.
- Ask: "How can God's Holy Spirit help you make peace?"

5. Make It Personal with Prayer

[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: "Prayer Switch" Activity Page and regular markers in assorted colors

What You Do:

- Invite kids to sit together.
- Ask:
 - Is anyone experiencing a situation in your life where you need peace?
 - If so, how can we pray for you?
- Invite any kids who would like to share.
- Hand each kid a light switch plate (or the "Prayer Switch" Activity Page).
- Set out the permanent markers and washi tape (or regular markers if using the "Prayer Switch" Activity Page).
- Invite the kids to use the supplies to decorate their light switch plates.
- Encourage the kids to write: "Switch on the power of peace" somewhere on their plate.
- Encourage kids to take their light switch plates home and ask a parent to help them exchange it with a current plate on a light switch in their home.
 - If using the "Prayer Switch" Activity Page instead, invite the kids to hang it on the wall next to a light switch.
- Close your group time in prayer, making sure to pray specifically about any of situations that may have been shared earlier.

GETTING READY

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

SOCIAL: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (15 Minutes)

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today's story.

(Choose one or both of these activities.)

Just For Fun

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

What You Need:

- No supplies needed
- Note: Check out <https://bit.ly/3sCXSpP> for a visual on how to play the game.

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.)

Story Exploration – No supplies

1. Take a Snapshot

[Live for God | Application Activity]

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

What You Need:

- Batteries, type and enough to fill the battery pack for each Small Group
- Circuit Kit

2. Bible Story Extension

[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:

- Print "Circuit Story" Activity Page on paper, one set for each Small Group
- Print "Circuit Story Leader Guide" Activity Page on paper, one for each Small Group
- Tape, one roll for each Small Group
- Yellow highlighter or marker, one for each Small Group

3. 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

4. Verses to Take with You

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

What You Need:

- Bibles, one for each kid
- Plastic wrap, 16 pieces for each Small Group
- Permanent marker, one for each Small Group
- Rubber bands, 16 for each Small Group
- Toilet paper tubes, 16 for each Small Group
- Flashlight, one for each Small Group
- Before group time, prepare the toilet paper tubes:
 - Tear 16 pieces of plastic wrap.
 - On each of the 16 pieces, use a permanent marker to write each word of Romans 12:18. (“Romans” will be one word and “12:18” will be a separate word.)
 - Be sure to write the words small enough so that they fit in the circle opening of the toilet paper tubes.
 - For each toilet paper tube, choose a piece of plastic wrap that has a word from Romans 12:18 on it, and flip it upside down so that the word is backwards.
 - Position the word so it is centered over one end of the tube and tightly fasten the plastic wrap over the opening, using a rubber band.
 - Repeat this process until each of the pieces of plastic wrap have been fastened onto a toilet paper tube.
 - If using the NIV, make 18 prepared toilet paper tubes following the same instructions.

5. Make It Personal with Prayer

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

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

What You Need:

- Print “Prayer Switch” Activity Page on paper, one for each kid
- Or regular markers in assorted colors, one set for each Small Group

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**