

GO FORTH K-5

MISSIONARY DISCIPLES OF PEACE

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OBJECTIVE:

Students will be **introduced** to the concepts of peace and peacemakers. They will **encounter** these concepts in three different settings, through the use of stories and factual information. They will begin to **apply** these in their own settings by discussion, putting on a play and creating peace poles.

STEP 1: PRAY

If possible, light a candle for your prayer times. For this prayer, refer to it as the peace candle. Tell students you are going to read this prayer and ask that they listen for the different feelings in the prayer. Then say it a second time, doing the motions for the feelings. If you use this prayer at other times, invite students to use the actions with you.

Dear Jesus, help me be a person who brings peace to the world.

Where there is sadness, *[make a sad face]*

Let me bring joy. *[look upward and smile broadly]*

Where there is fear, *[make an apprehensive face and hug self protectively]*

Let me bring hope. *[then open hands, palms up as if they are a cup, look upward and smile.]*

Where there is hatred, *[frown and shake a fist]*

Let me bring love. *[cross hands and place on chest, remain this way]*

Jesus, as I meet people, be with me so I can show others your joy, hope and love. Help me be a peacemaker. *[open crossed hands, and with palms, up extend arms to the world.]*

Amen.

(Adapted from Prayer of St. Francis. Learn more about St. Francis at DiscoverYourNeighbor.org)

STEP 2: MAKE PERSONAL CONNECTION

VOCABULARY FOR THIS LESSON:

Peace: a time without any fights or wars; when people feel safe

Peacefulness: a feeling of quiet or calm

Peacemaker: a person who settles an argument or stops a fight; a person, a group or a country that help to make peace and stop fights.

Violence: when a person, a group or a country uses force or great strength to harm another person or group of people, or damage something that belongs to others.

Harm: to hurt someone (usually on purpose); a person's body, mind, spirit or feelings can be harmed.

Ethnic group: a community of people who share the same cultural background, language or religion

Read *FAITH PERSPECTIVE* to your students. Discuss the differences between experiences of war and those of peace. What do your students have that these children do not? What did the Syrian children lose because of war? Does this story give you some feelings of sadness? Of fear? Of anger?



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Next, have students list some ways they experience peace, as the Syrian children did. If possible, provide art materials and have children draw a peaceful picture. This is especially important for the youngest students who may not be as able to express their fears and will need a way to reconnect with feelings of peace.

NEIGHBOR FOCUS:

[Intro to story]

Maryknoll Sister Rosemarie Milazzo volunteered with a Christian Peacemaker Team, an organization made up of Christians from a variety of faith traditions and countries. They work to promote peace in troubled areas of the world. In 2016, she worked with Syrian refugee children in a camp in Kurdistan, Iraq.

[Story]

Maryknoll Sister Rosemarie threaded her way through the camp, amongst rows and rows of tents.

Smoke rose lazily from outside stoves. Lines of clothing were drying in the sun. Women and children were hauling large jugs of water. A very little boy clutching a teddy bear and a piece of flat bread smiled at her.

Though there were many people, this was not a busy place. After the laundry and meals were taken care of, there was not much else to do. Sister Rosemarie saw women talking together. A grandfather sat on a blanket with a child on his lap, faraway looks on both of their faces. The oldest kids were not in school or playing sports. They sat. Everyone was waiting to find out when they could leave the camp and what country they might move to.

It had not always been this way. Before the war in their country, they had had homes, work, school, friends, food and fun. But a war had forced them to leave everything—and very quickly.

Now they lived in this refugee camp, a city of tents and dust. There was not enough food or water but plenty of time to miss their homes and the lives they were forced to leave.

Sister Rosemarie heard a child sobbing. The child's big sister was holding her. She explained, "My little sister is remembering the children she played with at home. They died because of the war."

Sister Rosemarie took a deep breath. So much sadness here! But she would help as much as she could. Gently, she said, "A group of people will be doing some drawing and painting. Want to come along?"

The big sister nodded and they joined hands with Sister Rosemarie. Though the little one was still crying, Sister Rosemarie noticed some laughter coming from a group of children.

There were no toys or playgrounds, but these children were making up games. She saw Aron, a child she had met yesterday. He was taking turns with others, running to jump over a large water jug.

Aron, his sister Este and their family had hastily left their home about a year ago, when he was seven. He remembered playgrounds back at home. He also had left behind some toys he wished he had now. And his green bike. How he missed his green bike! But at the moment, Aron was having fun.

Este noticed Sister Rosemarie. She shouted, "Here comes the art lady! She has paint and markers and paper! Let's go!"

Sister Rosemarie chuckled. She and the girls with her stopped and waited for those who were running to catch up. As they all walked altogether, Sister Rosemarie noticed that the little one had stopped crying.

They reached the art group where other volunteers had set out markers, paints and brushes and paper.

The adults were from different countries: Canada, Poland and the United States. The children were all from Syria.

"We are a peace team," Sister Rosemarie explained. "All around the world, people are looking for peace, and dreaming of what a world of peace would look like. What does peace look like to you?"

“Peace looks like me sitting with my family, altogether, with my big brother and my grandmother,” said Este. Aron saw sadness in her eyes. He missed them too.

“Peace looks like safety,” said Muhammed**. “Peace is no tanks and no rockets!”

Reza said, “Peace is playing outside by my home.”

Pili answered, “And going to school!”

“Peace means flowers and birds,” Miryam said softly, “And trees. I miss trees.”

Aron look around. There were so many tents, he could see no trees at all.

“Aron?” asked Sister Rosemarie. “Do you have a picture of peace?”

He thought for a moment. Suddenly Aron thought of his bicycle. “Riding my bike, my green bike, and the wind blowing my hair, and going fast and laughing—and not feeling afraid at all!”

Sister Rosemarie smiled at him. “These are wonderful ideas,” she said. “Now let’s all draw or paint these pictures of peace.”

Muhammed painted circles and lines and swirls in yellows, oranges and blues, colors that made him happy.

Miryam took markers and drew trees, flowers and birds. She used many different colors.

The two sisters had not said anything but both were calm now, bent over their drawings.

Pili and her brother Reza shared a large piece of paper. They drew a school with children playing outside of it and lots of houses with more children playing outside.

Aron looked at Este. She was painting lots of people holding hands. And she was smiling now.

He wasn’t sure he could draw a bicycle or a person on one. So he took the green paint, the color of his bike and of the trees and he happily began making big swoops of a peaceful color.

For now, everyone was relaxed and comfortable. They laughed, shared ideas

FAITH PERSPECTIVE

In Molo, Kenya, there are several groups of people. These are called ethnic groups. Very often, the groups in Molo fight each other. Up until recently, the children went to schools just for their ethnic group. They never played or laughed with children from the other ethnic groups. Adults told them that the “other” children were bad and scary.

Because there is so much fear among all the people, there is often violence. Some years ago, there was so much fighting, that thousands of people had to leave their homes and run to other places where they felt safe.

Now there is hope! Some of the townspeople, with the help of Father Lance Nadeau and others from Maryknoll, started Mutamaiyo Peace School. Parents from different ethnic groups worked together to build a school! Now their children go to school together. They can learn to be friends, not enemies.

Today there are about 250 children in the peace school! Some families choose to stay in the town because of the school. Parents hope that their children will grow up to become adults who work out problems together. Then their town may become a place of safety and peace.

Father Lance explains, “The children in Molo have experience of violence in their area. They understand what it is to be in danger.

They are learning that peace comes when people decide to work together. The children see themselves as examples of how to live peacefully with others. They have learned that each person can make a difference in the life of a community, an area, a nation.”

STEP 3: EXPLORE SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

SCRIPTURE based on 1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 2-13

EXPLAIN that you will be reflecting on a (paraphrased) letter that St. Paul wrote to people who were just learning about Jesus. St. Paul wrote several letters to help people better understand who Jesus is and how we can act in ways Jesus wants us to live. He wrote these letters long ago, but we read them now too and learn from them.

In the part of the letter we are reading here, St. Paul explains how all people are connected to each other. And that connection is all about God.

[Reading]

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We are called to do the work of God in the world.

God gives us “gifts” to help us do this important work.

There are many different kinds of gifts.

Each of us is given some of these special gifts.

Because God gives us a variety of gifts, we can do God’s work in different ways.

To **DISCUSS** this letter from St. Paul:

1. Together, make a list of gifts, such as being good at listening, reading, climbing, and being patient.
2. Help students recognize types of skills that can be used for the good of others. Ask questions such as: What gifts do rescue workers need to help people who are sick or hurt? What gifts do teachers have? Farmers? Professed religious? Marine biologists? Doctors and other medical helpers? Road construction workers? Orchestra conductors?

Then continue this question by discussing how these gifts help us in the roles in our personal lives: a parent, a sibling, a neighbor, a friend.

3. Suggest students think of two or more gifts they have that could help others. Then give each a small piece of paper. Have them write down. Suggest they keep this list in a special place and read it from time to time to remember that they have much to give others.

4. How do all of these gifts help people be peacemakers?

WHAT DOES THE CHURCH SAY?

Pope Francis wants us to understand this:

Violence does not fix problems.

If someone or some group is violent to others, do not be violent back. It does not help. Often this makes the situation worse.

When a group of people harms another group, it brings on great suffering. Violence can cause people to be hurt badly. It can force them to leave their homes and towns, and to become hungry, sick and cold.

It can cost a great deal of money to be violent. So violence not only results in harm to people and places but it uses up money which could have helped to build homes, schools and hospitals, to grow food and feed people, get medicine, etc.

When a person or group is violent to another, it hurts both. Violence hurts the spirits of all people.

Paraphrased from Pope Francis, 50th World Day of Peace

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

Together create a list of ways to be peacemakers as classmates. First, ask students to name ways in which people can be mean towards one another at school. Avoid having this discussion become a tattletale session.

Then, brainstorm ways that will counteract this mean-spiritedness, such as:

- befriending someone who has been bullied
- creating a way for students to leave complimentary notes to other students about their work
- making small posters naming or portraying ways of peacemaking and displaying these in and near the classroom or around the school
- writing and using prayers about peace in school and in the world

FOR GRADES 3-5:

Father Lance Nadeau (see Neighbor Focus) suggests ways for the students in your school to become peacemakers:

- Learn what causes conflicts among people.
- Meeting and spending time with people who are different from ourselves, or people with whom our own ethnic or religious group has experienced social tensions or conflicts.
- By engaging in projects and campaigns that heal the sources of tension and conflict among groups.

Discuss what these suggestions are and how they might be done with your class.

RAISE YOUR VOICE

Put on a play about peacemakers from long ago.

TWO PEACEMAKERS

This simple play tells a true story of Saint Francis and Sultan Malik al-Kamil. A narrator tells the whole story, and the actors just mime actions. There need not be a large number of children acting the group parts, but if your class is large, each student can have a part.

This can also be read as a story, without actors.

For the play:

Narrator (an adult)

Actors:

Saint Francis
Sultan Malik al-Kamil
Soldiers
Civilians
Advisors

Props:

two chairs
simple costumes to symbolize Francis and Sultan Malik al-Kamil.

The narrator enters. If possible, have the narrator sit or stand near the stage, where the audience can see him/her. The narrator reads:

Eight hundred years ago, there were many wars. Like all wars, these were terrible. People got hurt or sick. They were hungry. Homes were destroyed. Many, many people died.

There is nothing good about war. Ever.

Wars are fought for many reasons. These wars, called the Crusades, were about how people believed in God! Can you imagine people fighting about that? But today there are still people who treat others badly because of their religion. So it is important that we learn about two good people from this long ago time, who discovered that while they prayed in different ways, they were alike in many ways. This helped both of them. Maybe it will help us too.

Enter St. Francis and some civilians. Francis goes up to them, smiling and greeting them in a friendly way, and wishing them peace.

Francis was a holy man living in Italy, but he knew about the war in Egypt. Francis hated war. Whenever he met someone, he would say, "May the Lord give you peace." He decided to go to the war to talk with others to end the fighting. He knew it would be dangerous.

The civilians move away, and Francis stands to one side and looks into the audience.

What Francis didn't know was that Malik al-Kamil, the sultan, or king, of Egypt, was also trying to end the fighting. He was a peaceful person and was sad about the war.

Enter Sultan Malik al-Kamil. He stands on the other side, also looking into the audience. The two do not seem to see each other.

Then Francis walks around, but not close to the sultan.

After a long journey, Francis arrived. The war was much worse than he expected! He decided to ask to meet with the sultan. He would convince that powerful man that the war should stop—or die trying.

Enter civilians and soldiers. The soldiers mime fighting; the civilians flee from the fighting. Francis approaches some of the soldiers.

Easily, he could have been killed. But in his rough, humble clothing, the soldiers thought Francis was one of their holy men. They took him to the palace.

The soldiers take Francis by the arms and walk him to Sultan Malik al-Kamil.

"May the Lord give you peace," Francis said to the great sultan.

Sultan Malik al-Kamil was surprised. Francis' words were very like the ones he and others of his Muslim religion used: "Assalam o alaikum" or "peace be upon you."

Sultan Malik al-Kamil gives audience a surprised look.

Here was a man from the other side of the war who wanted peace too! The sultan invited Francis to stay and eat with him. They talked about Jesus.

Sultan Malik al-Kamil gestures to Francis to sit down on the chairs. Both sit. They appear to be talking seriously.

When the sultan's advisors heard this, they came rushing in. It was against the law to talk about that other religion!

The advisors burst in, shaking their fists.

One advisor shouted at Francis, "You are on dangerous ground if you try to get anyone here to become Christian!"

One advisor shakes his or her fist at Francis.

But the sultan had already heard enough from Francis to know that many things he himself believed about peace, Francis also believed.

The sultan gives a signal to the advisors to sit down on the floor and puts his finger to his lips to quiet them.

Enter civilians and soldiers who also sit down quietly.

So Francis was invited to stay. While the advisors and others listened, the two men talked and talked for days. They talked about peace and war. They discussed different religious ideas. They compared what they believed. They asked each other questions. Never did they argue.

The two leaders mime talking intently, nodding, gesturing mildly.

Francis learned things about Sultan Malik al-Kamil's religion that he liked and agreed with. Sultan Malik al-Kamil learned things about Francis' religion that he liked and agreed with.

The two leaders stand and shake hands.

When Francis left, he was still a Christian and the Sultan was still a Muslim. But they were friends. And peacemakers too. And each used what he learned to help his own people in the years to come.

The leaders move off into different directions, but pause and wave to each other before exiting completely.

BE A GLOBAL NEIGHBOR

Fr. Lance and the community hope to expand the Mutamaiya Peace School to grades nursery through seven. Local people will volunteer for the construction work. The expansion will make the school eligible for government teaching staff and free primary education. Find out how your school or church can get more involved in this project at MaryknollSociety.org

ENGAGE YOUR FAMILY

Help your children understand the importance of peace by creating a symbol together: a peace pole.

A peace pole is a sign of the hopes and dreams of our entire human family. You have probably seen them in a variety of places, as they are an internationally recognized symbol. They can be simple or elaborate, tall or short, and made of a variety of materials. What they have in common is that they display the words, May Peace Prevail on Earth.

This can be a fun family project. Suggestions:

Using paint stir sticks:

Using paint (tempera or acrylic), paint the sticks, using a variety of colors. Once dry, use a permanent marker and write on each side "May Peace Prevail on Earth" in two languages. (Find translations easily online.) Decorate further with ribbons, stickers, etc.

Using cardboard tubes from gift wrap (for a tall pole) or food wrap (for a short pole):

Cut paper to fit the length of the tube and enough to go around the tube. Help children write the words in two or more languages. They may add stickers, additional small drawings, etc. Adhere the paper to the tube with glue or tape.

These poles are for indoor use. Display in a base of play dough, or a flowerpot filled with sand, or add to the pot of a houseplant. The cardboard tubes can also be placed into a small can (with most of the tube visible), then fill the tube with sand for stability.

While you create the pole, listen to an instrumental version of "Dona Nobis Pacem", which is "Grant Us Peace". This melody is very meditation and calming.