



Pax Christi - Peace Sunday 2022

Activities and Prayers for Children

Here we offer a range of activities and prayers that could be used in the family, with a group, or as part of a liturgy for children on or around Peace Sunday. The themes include: celebrating difference; uniqueness and gifts; thinking about what it takes to make peace, exploring the components; celebrating the gift of creation. Try one, or a couple, and let us know how it worked and how you improved the activity!

Activity 1 Difference is good - protect it!

To explore similarities and differences in a safe and supportive way

What to do

Sit the group in a circle. Have one less chair than people. One person stands in the middle and calls out instructions. All the people who belong to that group change places, including the caller. The person left standing calls out the next instruction.

Examples

All change those who

... have blue socks

... have two sisters

... like rap music

... wear glasses

... have dark hair

... like chocolate

... were born in the UK

... speak two languages.

Children can add their own.

Talk about

What did it feel like belonging to groups that were called out?

What did it feel like being left out of some groupings?

Do we all have to belong to the same groups all the time?

What are the good things about being in different groups?



Activity 2 Making peace happen - postcards for peace

This activity encourages children to think of what it takes to make peace - and to share these ideas with others: parents... local MP... teachers...

You will need blank postcards and coloured pens

What to do

Share this reflection with the children to help them think of the ways in which our behaviour / the things we do can be 'the enemies of peace' causing hurt to others, or to our earth.

A different child could read each phrase:

- Sometimes we bully others
- Or we have fights in the playground
- We say unkind things to or about each other
- We don't care for the plants and trees
- We do not always share our sweets and other things
- We sometimes laugh at mistakes others make



Things happen in our world that cause suffering

- We all know that war hurts people
- Refugee children suffer as they try to escape war
- Children suffer if their parents are killed
- Some young children have to work very hard to get food
- Some children are forced to do things they do not want to
- People suffer when they are turned away at the door of another country where they try to find peace.

Invite the children to think about *one* of these 'enemies to peace' and of what needs to happen to 'turn this around'. They are then invited to write or draw their response on a postcard under the heading 'To make peace we must...' The postcards can be collected and offered during the Mass or liturgy, or presented to parents, teachers, local leaders.

Activity 3 Rainbow Colours: God loves us all, and is with us as a sign of hope for the future

To help children explore the uniqueness of each individual person. This could be told as a story or acted out by groups of children, each group being given a coloured ribbon which it then represents. It could be presented as a drama/dance as part of a liturgy.

You will need

A rainbow peace flag or world map

Coloured ribbons or streamers

Percussion instruments for storm sounds

Narrator: Once upon a time, all the colours of the world started to argue. Each colour thought it was the best and most important.

Green said: I am most important - a sign of life and hope. My colour is used for the grass, the trees. I can be seen all over the countryside. Without me all animals would die.

Blue interrupted: You only think about the earth. What about the sky and sea? It is water that is the most important thing for life - it is drawn up in the clouds and then rains from the sky. The sky also gives us space and peace. Without my peace you would all be too dizzy and busy.

Yellow laughed: Don't be so serious. I bring happiness and laughter. The sun and the moon are yellow. Every time you look at a sunflower you want to smile. I bring fun.

Orange started to blow her own trumpet: I am the colour of health and strength - I am very precious. I carry important vitamins in food. And I am so beautiful at sunrise and sunset!

Red was getting impatient: I rule you all - in your blood. I am the colour of danger, and bravery. I bring energy and life to the earth.

Purple stood up, tall and straight: I am the colour of royalty and power. Rulers and leaders choose me - I am a sign of wisdom.

Indigo spoke: I am the colour of silence - you hardly notice me. I am always thoughtful - the colour of twilight and deep waters. I am needed for balance in the world.

Narrator: As all the colours continued to boast, their voices getting louder and louder, a storm began. There was a flash of light and a roll of thunder. It began to rain and all the colours crouched down in fear - drawing close to each other for comfort. *Percussion instruments could be used here to evoke the sounds of a storm.*

Then Rain spoke: You foolish colours, fighting among yourselves, each trying to be better than the rest. Do you not know that God made you all, each for a special purpose? God loves you all. God wants you all. Join hands with one another and come with me.

The rainbow flag / map of the world could be held by groups of children as this part of the story is told.

You will be stretched across the sky in a great bow of colour as a reminder that God loves you all, that you can live together in peace, a promise that God is with you, a sign of hope for tomorrow.

Narrator: And so, whenever God has used a good rain to wash the world, the rainbow appears in the sky and when we see it, let us remember to value one another.

(Adapted from *Training for Transformation*: Anne Hope, Sally Timmel & C. Hodzi)

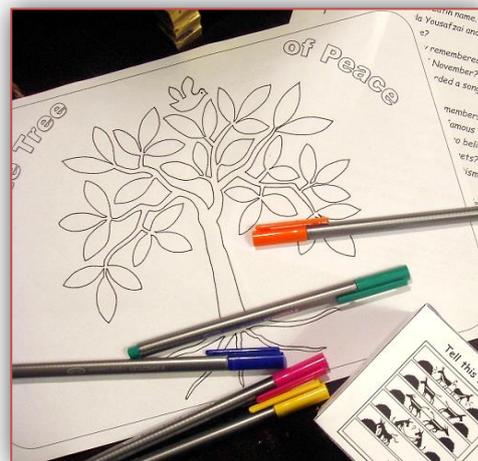
Activity 4 Create a tree of peace

To help children think about the elements of peace building

You will need

- Heavy-duty paper
- Long pieces of card, 15cm x 4cm which will become part of the roots
- Circular pieces of card which will become the fruits
- Coloured pencils

A large picture could be drawn of the roots, trunk and branches. This could eventually be displayed at the front of the church/hall or be creative and produce an actual tree! There is a Peace Tree template here: <https://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-sunday-2022>



What to do

Hand out strips of card to some and circles of card to others, and have coloured pencils ready.

What are the roots of peace? Draw these on the sheet or on the long strips of card if you make a tree. What are the fruits of peace? Think of the things that come about when we get our relationships with one another, with God, and with the earth, into good order. Write these words on sheet or on the pieces of card and place them on the tree.

Activity 5 All things bright and beautiful - an outdoor activity for young children

To help children see the beauty of creation, God as creator and our responsibility to care for our earth and to nurture peace by being grateful, thoughtful. Create a display of the children's resolutions.

You will need

- A copy of the words to *All things bright and beautiful* or *All the nations of the earth*

- A safe outdoor space
- Strips of coloured paper
- Squares of card and bread dough for sticking

What to do

Sing together: *All things bright and beautiful, or
All the nations of the earth, praise the Lord who brings to birth...*

Now take the children out into a quiet place to feel the sounds and signs of nature. They could collect leaves, feathers, berries, seeds... Use the items gathered to make one large or several small collages.

Ask these questions to encourage them to really think about where they are:

- What do you hear? What do you smell? What can you see? What do you like best?
- How do **YOU** care for these lovely things?
- What can **WE** do **TOGETHER**, in our school, family, church?

(Pause for some quiet time to allow the children to think about their own/their joint resolutions. Ask them to write these down to share with their nature finds).

- I will do my very best to...
- And **TOGETHER** we will try to...



Prayers

Jesus, you ask us to love our enemies
and pray for those who bother us.
And you showed us how to do it.
But it is so hard to do
and it means that no matter what happens,
I must respond with love, with peace.
It means that I must look more honestly at myself,
and take others as they are,
without passing judgment.
It means I must try to bridge gaps and
break down barriers rather than make them.

Teach me to see good in others.
Give me an understanding heart that helps me see
the one whom I thought to be an enemy as a friend.

*adapted from Families Caring: Parenting for Peace and Justice
Network, USA)*

Dear God
When we look around at our world
we sometimes see fights and wars.
Help us to try to bring peace to every situation.
Help us to take one small step for peace today, in
the way we treat each other, our families, friends,
our earth. Help us to be really involved in making
peace. Amen

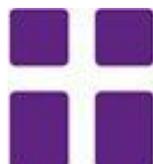
Dear God
We thank you for giving us your peace.
Help us to spread peace at home and at school
by loving and caring for one another
even when we don't agree.
Help us to spread peace
by sharing our time with those
who are lonely and who need a friend.
Help us to spread peace
by thinking and praying for
children who have no food
or who are frightened and live in fear.

Let us pray every day for peace
for our families, our friends and ourselves.

A Child's Prayer for the Earth

Thank you for the sun, the sky,
for all the things that like to fly,
the shining rain that turns grass green,
the earth we know, the world unseen,
the stars and night and once again,
the every morning sun, Amen.

From: Prayers for Creation: An Eco-schools Resource, 2008



Pax Christi
St Joseph's
Watford Way
London NW4 4TY
www.paxchristi.org.uk

For more resources for children visit:

<https://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-education/primary-schools/>
<https://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-education/advent-christmas/>
<https://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-education/secondary/workshop-resources/>