



Week 4 / Pre-teens KS3

Exile & Peace

Session plan

Core value: 'Do not be afraid for I am with you'

Key Verses:

Isaiah 43.5–7 (ESV)

'When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
When you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames
will not set you ablaze ... do not be afraid for I am with you.'

Resources:



Paper and pens



Something to make a
line for a stress scale



Two flashcards, one saying
'No peace' and the other
'So peaceful, I am serene'



Facilities to watch a YouTube video:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtrK2GnZyVg





Twirl of Love

Choose a volunteer and blindfold or have them face the wall (so that they can't see the other three volunteers about to be chosen). Choose another three volunteers (careful not to choose using their name), number them 1,2,3. Hand volunteer 1 this week's question – if not blindfolded they can read aloud, if blindfolded leader reads (with younger ones who find reading hard, leader may need to read). Encourage volunteer 1 to listen carefully to the answers 1,2 and 3 give. They must choose the best answer – whoever they choose, will be the one they share the 'Twirl of Love' with (any two-piece chocolate bar can be used).

This week's questions, based on last week's session, are:

What does the Bible say we are slaves to? (Answer: Sin)

What brings freedom according to the Bible? (Answer: Listening to God)

In order to listen to God, what do we need to do? (Trust him)

Listening and trusting leads to what? (Living out what God says)

Zoom tweak

- This can still be played – volunteer 1 simply needs to blindfold themselves on screen
- When you choose your three additional volunteers, write their names on paper and hold to the screen, so they can see and know who you have chosen
- Have a physical Twirl with you to show on screen and pretend to hand it to the final winners

Bible Starter

Reference the key Bible verse – if using paper, write out the verses on separate pieces of paper like the diagram below. Read the verse aloud together

Start each reading with these lines: '*The Bible is FULL of God's words. It is a marvellous treasure chest, full of beautiful and important things. What does it have to tell us today?*'

'So do not be afraid.'

Do not be terrified

I am your God.

I will make you strong

And help you

I will hold you safe in my hands

I always do what is right.'

Isaiah 41.10

Zoom tweak

- The easiest way to achieve this is to have the verse on a PowerPoint and share your screen
- You can also have it written on paper which you can hold up to the screen





Activity: Peace Similes

Remind the young people that a simile compares one thing with another thing using the words 'like' or 'as.' Encourage the young people to come up with similes for the word peace (e.g. 'as peaceful as a sleeping baby'). Allow them to be as creative and as funny as they want. Using their similes, identify some core qualities of peace (e.g. calm, reassurance, absence of worry and stress) and write them on a separate piece of paper.

Statement of Peace

Using the words the young people have used in their similes, come up with a definition of peace. You want something along these lines: *'Peace is an assurance and a calm no matter how bad the situation. It's an absence of things like overwhelming worry and concern. It's the ability to take a deep breath and face something dreadful face-on and still be able to breathe deeply and keep calm.'*

Practise Peace

Give the young people a little chance to 'experience peace.' Ask them to close their eyes and breathe in through their nose and hold for four seconds and then breathe out through their mouth for four seconds.

Repeat this several times. Then do some stretch exercises, all with eyes closed, all encouraging a slow breathing pattern

Application: Ask the young people how they feel? They should say relaxed, a little less stressed, calm, and maybe sleepy. Ask them if they like that feeling?

God's peace is a calm and a reassurance no matter what. Why? He says 'Do not be afraid for I am with you.' (Isaiah 43:5–7)

BIG QUESTION

Discuss: 'Is peace like this possible?'

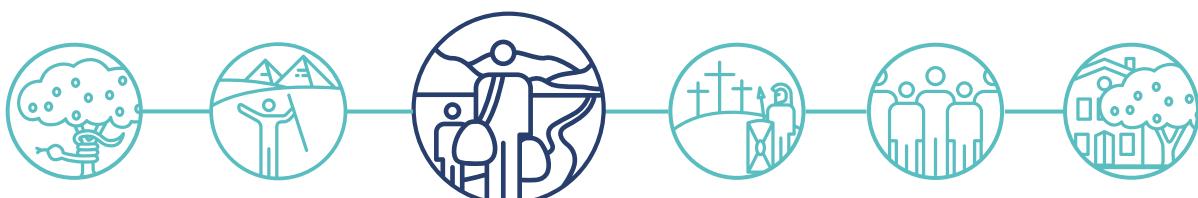
The Bible shows us time and time again that if we are in God's corner, he is with us always and so we don't need to be afraid. We can always know peace.

Activity: Peace Scenarios

Ask your young people to identify how much peace they might really know in the following scenarios.

Allow them to be real and honest – silly, if need be. If some of the scenarios are pastorally too close to some of the young people's experiences, then bypass them.

- You wake up on a Monday morning and realise you have totally forgotten about a science test that morning
- Your parents are arguing downstairs
- You have piano practice in 20 minutes and know you haven't bothered to practise
- Your house is on fire
- You are about two miles from home and a freak thunder and lightning storm hits
- Someone you love suddenly gets very poorly
- A flash flood hits and all you and your family own is gone
- You are on a camping trip and go for a swim in the river. Suddenly there is a surge in the river and the water depth doubles



**Read:**

'When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
When you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze...do not be afraid
for I am with you.'(Isaiah 43.5–7, ESV)

Application: Apparently, in all the situations above we can have a sense of peace.

Activity: Discussion Questions

(If on a Zoom session perhaps send the questions out ahead of the meeting, so the young people have time to think about their answers.)

Discuss the following:

- Can we truly know peace in desperate situations?
- How can you know peace in all circumstances? What do you need to have in place to make that work?

Part of the answer that you need to reach is that you have to trust in a God beyond your understanding (Philippians 4.7). You need courage and humility – a belief that 'God has got it', even if everything feels out of control.

Watch: Watch the following film about the life of Daniel: www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtrK2GnZyVg

Read or summarise Daniel's story in Daniel 6.

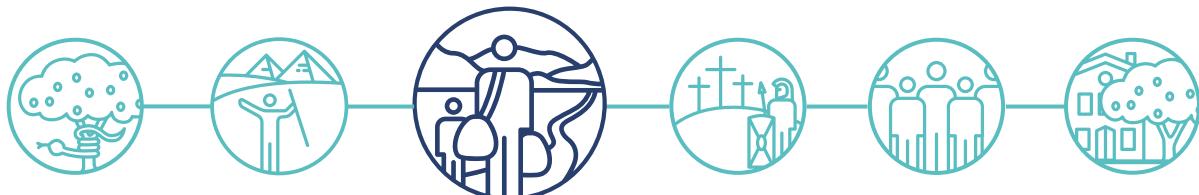
Daniel's story shows us the amazing power of God. How does this offer us peace?

People seek peace and fulfilment in getting rich, success, chasing after things that make them happy. Do you think peace be found in these things? Explain why or why not.

Consider: Daniel (despite being in exile) was wise and smart. The Babylonian king liked him and placed him in a position of power. However, even though the king liked him and gave him status and position in Babylon, Daniel would only seek God. He refused the best food that included meat (which may have been offered to an idol). Instead he drank water and ate vegetables. He refused to pray to the king. He would only pray to God which was dangerous and resulted in him being thrown into a lions' den. Daniel only ever sought what God wanted and that gave him peace in the most frightening circumstances.

How can doing as God wants bring peace – no matter the circumstance?

Application: God is in control. He is always with us so we don't need to be afraid. We can know peace no matter the circumstance.





Creative prayer

Place the young people in pairs. Partner A must be facing partner B's back. Partner A must use their finger to write, on the back of partner B, one letter at a time something that worries them (allow them to be silly or serious). Partner B must try and work out what the worry is. Swap round so Partner B writes on Partner A's back.

When both have had a turn, invite them to pray for each other.

Finish by praying for the group as a whole:

Pray

Lord, we thank you that you are always with us.

You are able to keep us calm no matter what we face.

Help us remember that you are Almighty, you are all-powerful.

Help us to trust you and only you.

We give all our worries to you now (pause for young people to share them in them silently with God)

And we receive the peace you bring.

Amen.

Zoom tweak

- Ask the young people to use their fingers to silently write out on their arm or on a surface near them their worry
- Pray the prayer above
- As a symbol of God taking the worry and replacing it with peace – ask the young people to wipe the arm or surface they wrote on with their hand
- Play some calm music without words and try a short breathing exercise that calms (breath in for a count of four and out for a count of four, very slowly)
- Allow the breathing to be a time of 'peace' offering the young people a chance to hear God and know his peace

Next Session:

Session 5: Messiah & Love

