

### THE PURPOSE OF **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

Through Christian education we invite people and communities of faith to be transformed as they are inspired and challenged to:

- Know and experience God through Jesus Christ,
- Claim and live God's promises, and
- Grow and serve as Christian disciples.

**Foundations:** *Shaping the Ministry of Christian Education in Your Congregation*

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up a mountain. He sat down and his disciples came to him. He taught them, saying:

- “Happy are people who are hopeless, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
- “Happy are people who grieve, because they will be made glad.
- “Happy are people who are humble, because they will inherit the earth.
- “Happy are people who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness, because they will be fed until they are full.
- “Happy are people who show mercy, because they will receive mercy.
- “Happy are people who have pure hearts, because they will see God.
- “Happy are people who make peace, because they will be called God's children.
- “Happy are people whose lives are harassed because they are righteous, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
- “Happy are you when people insult you and harass you and speak all kinds of bad and false things about you, all because of me. Be full of joy and be glad, because you have a great reward in heaven. In the same way, people harassed the prophets who came before you.

**Mark 5:1-12** (Common English Bible)

A quick Google search of the word *peace* yields millions of results. Yet many of them are not about peace, they are about the absence of peace. We live in a world that can be overwhelming with conflict, strife, death, violence, and grief. In the midst of this world, we also live in God's kingdom with the promise of hope, love, and peace through Jesus Christ. Our world is yearning for words of hope and peace and for people who will live as peacemakers in the world.

What is peace? Peace is so much more than the absence of conflict; it's even more than just living in peace with one another. From a Christian perspective, peace includes our relationships with God and one another and bringing reconciliation and harmony. It is a reflection of the peace that comes from God that surpasses all understanding. Peacemaking includes conflict resolution, understanding how we respect one another, understanding

how we are peacemakers in our homes or work, and modeling peace to the children and youth in our lives.

The 2017 Christian Education Week resource focuses on why we are called to be peacemakers and provides leaders in your congregation an opportunity to consider how they are or could be peacemakers. In our world that is full of anxiety, we have information at our fingertips, yet discernment is essential. Learning about and experiencing the source of true peace in Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit is more vital than ever.

This resource is designed to give people an opportunity to see the impact of peacemakers, both those who are well-known and those who are unsung heroes, and how each of us is called to be a peacemaker. The materials in this leaflet are intended to help you plan your Christian Education Week/

Sunday celebration. Check with your annual conference to determine if a date has been set for this occasion, and if the conference receives an offering to support educational ministries in your conference. This celebration may be combined with ministries in your church that are involved with peace. It is a great time to recognize and celebrate the unsung peacemakers in your church and community. Make this a joyous celebration of God's love and peace in your midst and God's call to be peacemakers in the world.



## Call to Worship:

*One: Come, children, listen to God.*

**Many: Let us learn about how to honor God.**

*One: Do you love life?*

**Many: Yes!**

*One: Turn away from evil! Do good!*

**Many: Seek peace and go after it!**

## Scripture:

- 2 Kings 8:1-6 (Elisha and the woman from Shunem)
- Psalm 34:11-14 (How to honor God)
- Matthew 5:1-12 (Beatitudes; Happy People)
- Colossians 3:12-17 (Peace of Christ)

## Hymns:

“Let there be Peace on Earth,” *UMH 431*

“Here is Peace,” *W&S 3123*

“Let Our Earth Be Peaceful,” *W&S 3159*

“I Have a Dream,” *W&S 3127*

“For the Healing of the Nations,” *UMH 428*

“Make Me a Channel of Your Peace,” *TFWS 2171*

“Blest Are They,” *TFWS 2155*

“We Are Called,” *TFWS 2172*

UMH = United Methodist Hymnal TFWS = The Faith We Sing W&S = Worship & Song

## Offertory Prayer:

O God, you pour out your grace, love, and mercy upon us each day. Today we pause to give thanks for the example of Jesus as peacemaker and for those who model for us what it means to be peacemakers. In response to the many ways that you work in and through us, we offer these gifts of generosity from our time, talents, and gifts. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Prayer

PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

*Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.*

*Where there is hatred, let me sow love;*

*Where there is injury, pardon;*

*Where there is doubt, faith;*

*Where there is despair, hope;*

*Where there is darkness, light;*

*Where there is sadness, joy.*

*O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek*

*To be consoled as to console,*

*To be understood as to understand,*

*To be loved as to love;*

*For it is in giving that we receive;*

*It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;*

*It is in dying to self that we are born to eternal life.*

## A Litany of Dedication for Christian Educators, Leaders, and Learners

LITANY OF DEDICATION:

One: Happy are people who make peace,

**Congregation: Because they will be called God's children.**

One: Today we remember we are called to teach and serve one another as we grow in our faith.

**Congregation: We give thanks for the students who desire to grow in their faith and relationship with God.**

One: As we learn and teach the stories of our faith, may we be ever mindful of how we model the peace of Christ in the world.

**Congregation: We give thanks for the opportunities we have to learn and model our faith. We pray that we may learn together how to be an example of Christ's peace.**

One: Help us work for peace, create it, and live it.

**ALL: Grant us wisdom and discernment to lead and model with Christ-like peace in our homes, classroom, community, and world. Amen.**

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## Sending Forth:

Go forth in the name of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, who loves us and calls us to be ambassadors of peace in our homes, workplaces, community, and world. May the peace that passes all understanding fill your heart and mind as you leave this place and go out into the world. Amen.

**Time:** 75-90 minutes

## Purpose:

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. describe peace and peacemakers through the lens of faith in Jesus Christ.
2. identify peacemakers in their community and world.
3. incorporate prayer practices for peace into faith formation and life

## Materials:

- Name tags
- Markers, crayons, pens, and pencils
- *God's Dream* by Archbishop Desmond Tutu
- The story of Sadako, [www.origami-resource-center.com/sadako.html](http://www.origami-resource-center.com/sadako.html)
- Current newspapers and/or appropriate magazines
- Origami paper (or thin paper cut into six-inch squares)
- Origami paper crane instructions
- Paper
- Newsprint/easel pad
- Tape
- *A Bead and a Prayer: A Beginner's Guide to Protestant Prayer Beads* by Kristen E. Vincent (optional)
- *Praying in Color: Drawing a New Path to God* by Sybil MacBeth (optional)
- Copies of handouts
- Refreshments (optional)
- Copies of learning center instructions
- Copies of *The United Methodist Hymnal*

## Preparation:

- Publicize the workshop and its purpose.
- Pray for those who will attend.
- Gather materials.
- Make copies of all handouts as well as instructions for each of the learning centers.
- Arrange chairs as desired (circle or around round tables) for total group time with newsprint or whiteboard and markers ready to use with the total group.
- Prepare learning centers. Ideally, each center will have its own table or space. If you have a large group, you may want to prepare two stations for each center.
- Place the needed instructions, handouts, and supplies for the learning centers on the tables

## Getting Started (About 15 minutes)

Invite participants to make name tags. If you have provided refreshments, point them out to people as they arrive. Provide newsprint with the words “peace” on one piece of paper and “peacemaker” on the other. Ask people to write their responses to each word on the newsprint. Invite people to take their seats, welcome them, and ask them to briefly introduce themselves by telling their name and what class or small group they lead. If the group is very large, you may need to break into small groups to complete the introductions in a timely manner.

Read Matthew 5:1-12. Remind participants that this section of Scripture is also called *The Beatitudes* and is part of the *Sermon on the Mount*. Following the teachings of the Beatitudes, or blessings, brings joy in life. Our focus will be on verse 9, “Happy are people who make peace, because they will be called God’s children.”

To begin, define peace in this context: Peace is not just the absence of conflict; peace includes our relationships with God and one another and how we bring reconciliation and harmony in the world around us. Discuss the responses on the newsprint. Ask participants, “How is our understanding of peace different because of our relationship with Jesus Christ?”

Describe the four learning activities briefly and suggest that participants choose activities to enhance their understanding of peace and being peacemakers. Tell the group they have forty minutes to explore the activities of their choice. They can choose one or all the centers. Participants may also take a break and enjoy refreshments as needed.

## Learning Centers (About 45 minutes)

There are four learning centers: (1) Reflecting on Peace—Children’s Book; (2) Peacemakers; (3) Prayers for Peace; and (4) Symbols of Peace.

Depending on the number of people in your group, these centers may be done individually or in small groups. People may choose to do all the centers or focus on one. Encourage everyone to take home a copy of the Prayers for Peace handout, whether they participate in that center or not.

### Reflecting on Peace – Children’s Book

Supplies Needed: *God’s Dream* by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Douglas Carlton Abrams, reflection handout, pens or pencils.

Read the book *God’s Dream* as a group or individually. Then use the reflection page to respond to several wondering questions. (You may also substitute another book about peace for *God’s Dream* if desired.)

### Prayers for Peace

Read through the handout *Prayers for Peace* about different ways to pray for peace. Use one of the ideas, and spend time in prayer. Provide several possibilities for ways to pray for peace – breath prayers, praying with beads, praying in color, movement prayers.

*A Bead and a Prayer* is a great resource if you want to offer this as a way for participants to focus on praying for peace. You may provide all the supplies needed or purchase kits.

*(continued on next page)*

This short video is helpful to explain prayer beads:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTWtgzcsIxg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTWtgzcsIxg)

*Praying in Color* is another fantastic resource for praying for peace. This short video helps explain *Praying in Color*:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2WiQoKhhqM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2WiQoKhhqM)

## Peacemakers

Supplies Needed: Current newspapers and appropriate magazines, newsprint or easel pad of paper, tape, handout with examples of peacemakers.

Look through newspapers and magazines to find examples of stories of peace and people who are peacemakers. They may be well-known or unsung heroes. Tape the stories to a large piece of newsprint. Notice the many ways that people serve as peacemakers in the community, nation, and world. With another participant or with a small group, discuss the stories. How are they examples of peace or peacemakers? How might the story help individuals grow in faith?

Well-known peacemakers include Jesus of Nazareth, Abraham Lincoln, Dorothy Day, Elie Wiesel, Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, Betty Bigombe, Mother Theresa, and many others.

## Symbols of Peace

Read the story about Sadako, a young girl affected by the bombing of Hiroshima. You can print it from here:

[www.origami-resource-center.com/sadako.html](http://www.origami-resource-center.com/sadako.html)

Have participants use the instructions to create paper cranes as symbols of peace. Ask participants to talk to one another about other symbols of peace.

Have participants view this tutorial about folding a paper peace crane if they need help:

[www.origami-fun.com/origami-crane.html](http://www.origami-fun.com/origami-crane.html).

## Total Group Sharing (About 15 minutes)

Ask the participants to reassemble in the total group space. Invite people to share any insights they had to questions raised in the learning center activities. Then invite participants to brainstorm how they can be peacemakers at home, in their communities, and in the world. Write responses on the newsprint. Let the group know that you will send them a copy of the ideas in the coming week.

## Closing (About 5 minutes)

Invite participants to sing Let there be *Peace on Earth* (UMH 431). Close by reading the prayer for peace by St. Francis of Assisi.

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
To be consoled as to console,  
To be understood as to understand,  
To be loved as to love;  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
It is in dying to self that we are born to eternal life.

# Reflecting on Peace

Read the book *God's Dream* by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Douglas Carlton Abrams. Reflect on the following statements:

1. What do you dream about?

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2. What does God dream about?

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3. What does it look like when all people share?

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4. What does it look like when all people care?

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5. How does forgiveness help create peace?

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6. What does a world with peace look like?

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Prayer is a powerful tool to use anytime. We do not need the “right” words or even use words at all. Below are four different types of prayer that may be used to pray for peace within relationships, the home, at work, in the community, the nation, or the world.

## Breath Prayers

These simple prayers may be spoken silently or out loud as you breathe in and out. Examples are:

*Peace of Christ, fill my soul;*

*Turn away from evil, seek peace;*

*Happy are peacemakers, they are God's children;*

*Peace of Christ, control my heart.*

## Movement Prayers

Some people focus better when moving. One option is to go for a walk, and pray for peace for people and places as you pass by them. You may want to use breath prayers and pray for Christ's peace as you walk. Keep safety precautions in mind. Another option is to walk through the sanctuary and as you do, pray for those who participate in worship or other events that they will be peacemakers.

## Prayer Beads

- *A Bead and a Prayer* by Kristen E. Vincent is a wonderful book about praying with beads. This short video explains the use of prayer beads: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTWtgzcslxg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTWtgzcslxg)
- You may purchase prayer beads, prepare kits to make your own, or complete prayer beads to use in your prayer time. As you pray through your prayer beads, start by thanking God for life and the opportunity to make peace. Ask for forgiveness, and discern if there are places in your own life where you need to forgive others. Pray for peace in your own life, in your relationship with God, in your relationships with others, in your community, in your nation, and in the world. Pray for people who are peacemakers, both the well-known and the unsung peacemakers.

## Praying in Color

- *Praying in Color* by Sybil MacBeth is another fantastic resource for praying for peace. This short video helps explain *Praying in Color*: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2WiqoKhhqM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2WiqoKhhqM)
- To “pray in color, you will need paper, a pen, and markers or colored pencils. No artistic ability is required.

## Advocacy Organizations for Peace

### General Board of Church and Society of The UMC

[www.umc-gbcs.org](http://www.umc-gbcs.org)

### Kids for Peace

[www.kidsforpeaceglobal.org](http://www.kidsforpeaceglobal.org)

### Foundations: Shaping the Ministry of Christian Education In Your Congregation

[www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/foundations](http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/foundations)

Grounded in “Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task” as stated in The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, this is a statement of the biblical and theological foundations of Christian education.

### Intentional Faith Development: Establishing Standards for Christian Formation and Discipleship

[www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/intentional-faith-development-establishing-standards-for-christian-formation](http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/intentional-faith-development-establishing-standards-for-christian-formation)

To be used in conjunction with Foundations, this resource helps congregations as they develop standards as part of a comprehensive plan for faith formation.

### Teacher Development: A Comprehensive Plan for United Methodist Congregations

[www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/comprehensive-plan-teacher-development-for-united-methodist-congregations](http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/comprehensive-plan-teacher-development-for-united-methodist-congregations)

Assists congregations in identifying what teachers need to know, do, and be. Provides help in developing a congregational plan for development.

### Discipleship Ministries Webinars

[www.umcdiscipleship.org/webinars](http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/webinars)

These one-hour webinars focus on a variety of topics related to Christian faith formation and discipleship. Each webinar is recorded and archived at [www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/archived-webinars](http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/archived-webinars).

*You may order the following resources from Cokesbury, the Upper Room online bookstore, or Amazon.*

### ***A Bead and a Prayer: A Beginner's Guide to Protestant Prayer Beads*** by Kristen E. Vincent

This resource introduces readers with no experience to praying with beads as a way to deepen faith and connect with God.

### ***Praying in Color: Drawing a New Path to God*** by Sybil Macbeth

This resource introduces readers to praying in color, a way of praying through shapes, lines, and color.

### ***Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High*** by Ron McMillan, Kerry Patterson, and Joseph Grenny

This resource is about how to communicate effectively. A practical tool for communicating in times of conflict or learning how to create a non-anxious presence in times of high-anxiety.

### ***The Anatomy of Peace: Resolving the Heart of Conflict*** by the Arbinger Institute

Told through a fictionalized account of their workshops, this easy-to-read Arbinger Institute book diagnoses the components of peace for family relationships, work relationships, and even between countries.

### ***Blessed are the Peacemakers*** by Daniel L. Buttry

This book by Daniel L. Buttry introduces you to more than one hundred peacemakers from around the planet. Some of them are famous, but most are unsung heroes. The stories of courage and peacemaking are inspirational.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION WEEK is authorized by the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, but its observance is set by each annual conference. Check with your annual conference office to determine if your annual conference has set a specific date.

Produced by the Christian education staff of Discipleship Ministries.

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