

Fruit of the Spirit is Peace

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Begin by reading together Galatians 5:22-23.

Hold up a picture of the peace sign. Ask: What does this mean? Allow them to answer and discuss. Continue holding up the pictures and lead it into a discussion about the world's view of peace.

State: The world's view of peace includes an end to war or conflict, inner peace with yourself, and/or a state of complete relaxation (being at a beach or spa). All people long for peace in one way or another, whether it is just to experience a break from the worry of life or to end all wars. But the peace the world offers only lasts for a short while. War will never end on earth (until the peaceful reign of Christ) no matter how hard people try. A spa will never take all of the stress away forever. Meditation does not grant real peace.

State: But Christians have God's peace available to them, a peace that is greater than anything the world offers. Peace is a fruit of the Spirit, and as we abide in Christ, we can experience the perfect peace that comes only from God.

2. God Revealed (15 minutes)

You may want to write down each aspect of peace in bold on the board you are reading in Scripture as you are teaching them.

Ask: In order to understand true peace, what do we need to do? (Look in the Bible!) God's Word is our ultimate source of truth. We are first going to look at some verses that will define what peace is. Let's turn together to Philippians 4:4-7. Would anyone like to read these verses? (If they are new readers, pick several children to take one verse each so it is not too much for one child, or read it aloud together.) The following is combined NASB and ESV. This may be helpful for you to read aloud if your children cannot yet read:

Philippians 4:4-7, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice! Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made

known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

State: What can we define about peace based on these verses? (It comes from God, it comes as a result of prayer, it is the opposite of anxiousness, and it goes beyond our understanding. List out their answers on the board.)

It is definitely clear from Scripture that peace comes directly from God! Many of the books in the New Testament are actually letters written to different churches. In many of the letters, the writer begins and ends the letter with a blessing of peace. For example, 2 Corinthians 1:2, “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Second Thessalonians 3:16 states, “Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.” (See also Romans 15:33, 2 Corinthians 13:11, Philippians 4:9, Romans 15:13, 2 John 1:3.)

Ask: So why should we have peace as Christians? (Allow time for thoughts.) Let’s turn to Romans 5:1. Would someone like to read this for us? “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” A huge part of biblical peace is the fact that because of Christ we have been declared righteous before God and no longer have to pay the penalty for our sin (justification). Our relationship with God is one of peace and not of wrath. (See also Ephesians 2:14, Colossians 3:15).

State: Peace ultimately comes from God, has been made through Christ, and is available to us daily through the Holy Spirit’s work inside of us (John 14:27, 16:33; Romans 8:6, Galatians 5:22).

State: We are also called to live in peace with others. Romans 12:18 states it simply, “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.” (See also Hebrews 12:14, Ephesians 4:2-3, 2 Corinthians 13:11.) This is part of the fruit the Holy Spirit is producing in us as we abide in Christ. We have the ability through Him to live in peace with everyone.

3. Personal Pursuit (10 minutes)

State: Let’s go back and focus on Philippians 4:7, “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” I want to share with you a story from my life that really displays the truth of this verse. (Share story that demonstrates how a believer can experience God’s peace in such a way that goes beyond our understanding.)

State: Peace is such an amazing result of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives! Our

days can often be filled with worry and stress and fear. Biblical peace is completely opposite of all of these feelings! It is the absence of stress, worry, fear, and chaos. It is the resting and quieting of our souls before God as we remember who He is and trust in Him completely.

State: How is biblical peace different from the peace the world offers us? (It never ends, it is real, it comes from our God of peace, it is always available to us as we trust in Christ, it is expected of us as believers, etc. List their answers on the board.) There is nothing in the world that could ever compare to the perfect peace of God!

Option: If you have time, have them draw or write out situations in their own lives where they want to experience the peace of God. They could also draw two contrasting pictures: a picture of chaos verses a picture of stillness and peace that comes when we trust in God.)

State: We are also commanded to live in peace with one another. What does the verse mean when it says “As far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (Romans 12:18)? (Doing everything in our power to live at peace with the people around us. This could mean putting aside your own feelings and opinions for the sake of promoting peace.) Are you a peace-maker in your home? Why or why not? What are ways you can change?

State: We can experience the peace of God through the storms of life when we remember who He is, that He keeps His promises, He is in control over every part of our lives, and we have His Spirit within us who is producing the fruit of peace. I am going to start a beautiful song called Still that declares trust and stillness (peace) in God through the storms of life. Sing along as you learn the lyrics or just listen to the truth and beauty of their words.

Still by Hillsong, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6Fw8DgvTQA&feature=related>

4. Daily Knowing (7-10 minutes)

State: I want us to memorize together John 14:27, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (NIV). These are the very words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! We know we can trust and believe His Words are true. Let’s memorize this together now. (Use hand motions or write it on the board, erasing one word at a time until everyone is able to say it together without seeing it.)

State: When you are going through worry, stress, fear, or just a chaotic day, I want you to

remember these words of Christ, be still, and remember who your God is. Trust in Him, and you will experience His peace that surpasses all understanding.

Spend time in prayer together. Remember the specific situations your children are going through. Invite them to share if they haven't already. Praise God for the fruit of the Holy Spirit, the peace we are able to have because He lives within us.

Encourage the parents to work on this verse with their children. Send a notecard home with each parent with the verse written on it.

As each child leaves, bless them with the words of 2 Thessalonians 3:16, "Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way."