

## FIND PEACE

All Activity Sheets

### KEY WORDS

LOVE COMMAND PEACE ENEMY KEEP

### BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Luke 9:51-56

### LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the students understand that they should live in peace with others, even those whom they think are their enemies

### MEMORY VERSE

“Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me” (John 14:21a, NIV\*).

### PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

As adults, we tend to remember our childhood with nostalgia, forgetting the painful experiences and remembering the good times. It is through this lens that we imagine our childhood as a happy time, without doubts, worries, or violence. And it is true that most of it was a time without worry, although violence existed and at times fear invaded the lives of many children.

The children whom you teach are aware of the violence that surrounds them. They see it on television, they listen to it on the radio, it appears on the computer, and they hear adults’ conversations. When tragedy strikes, not only adults ask themselves, “Why?” or “How?”

With this session the children will begin to understand that violence was not part of God’s plan for his children. They will learn from the teachings of Jesus, that God has other goals for his people. He expects his followers to choose peace.

In this story, Jesus chose to move away from the Samaritans rather than confront them. This is so that the children, following his example, will move away from those who seek to fight in the playground, or who say mean jokes, or the adult who ridicules them. Peace is the best alternative to violence; and it is now, when children are small, that we have the opportunity to teach them to respond to violent situations with peace.

## BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

The fire threats from heaven remind Bible readers of the encounter between King Ahaziah and the prophet Elijah in 2 Kings, chapter 1. The two stories have important similarities and differences. The two narratives involve messengers. Jesus sent his messengers to a Samaritan city to make reservations for one night. King Ahaziah sent a messenger to investigate if the false god Baal-Zebub would heal his wounds. God was not at all happy with the king's action and gave the prophet a message for him.

Rejection plays an important role in both stories. God felt the rejection of Ahaziah when he consulted a false god, and instructed Elijah to tell the king's messengers that he was the king in Israel and that Ahaziah would not survive his wounds. The messengers of Jesus could not find where to stay in the village because the Samaritans hated and rejected the Jews.

The fire of discord was about to break out. Three times King Ahaziah sent his captains with 50 soldiers to try to bring Elijah from where he was and thus kill him. Two of the meetings ended with Elijah asking for fire from heaven, which burned the soldiers, proving that the prophet was indeed the man of God.

The disciples, hearing that they were not welcome in the city, recalled the experience of Elijah. And they asked, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven ... and consume them?" (Luke 9:54).

Here is the point where the two stories do not match. Jesus scolded his disciples. I can almost hear him say, "Definitely not!" And they continued on their way to another city where they were received.

This story raises an important question: How do we handle rejection when it comes, especially as a reaction to our Christian beliefs? Do we ask God for revenge towards those who do it? There are many psalms we're familiar with where the psalmist does exactly that. Or do we choose the way of Jesus? The way of Jesus was not to resist those who reject us (Matthew 5:39), not to take revenge, but to pray for our enemies (5:44), to forgive them the way we want to be forgiven (6:14-15). Of course, Jesus' way is the only way we expect Christians to react. This is how we should live! That is the way we want our students to live. In this era where violence and revenge are proclaimed, how can we focus on Jesus' non-violent solution in our teachings?

## INTRODUCE THE LESSON

### Mural of fire

This is another easy lesson to illustrate. You need glue, colors, markers, paintings, magazine clippings of tall buildings, houses and a city; and the children will draw trees, plants and people. In the middle of the buildings and the city, they can paint flames of fire, to illustrate a burning city that represents what Samaria would look like if fire had fallen from heaven as the disciples requested. At the bottom of the mural, write the Memory verse

"Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me" (John 14:21a).

With a mural like that, you can illustrate the lesson very well and make it vivid for your students.

## TEACH THE LESSON

### Friendly or unfriendly?

Jesus spent a lot of time teaching people about God's love. He told them how he wanted them to live. He also instructed them on how they should treat others. Jesus helped people and healed them.

The Lord was teaching in Galilee, but one day he had to go to Jerusalem to tell people that God loved them. Jesus knew that interesting things would happen in Jerusalem. One was that his death on the cross was approaching. He knew that the time of his departure to heaven was approaching. And, he told his followers, "It is time for me to go to Jerusalem."

So everyone began to prepare what they would need for the trip. One of the disciples asked Jesus which way they would go. "The fastest way is to cross through Samaria," Jesus answered. "It will take us three days if we go that way."

"But Jesus," said another disciple, "the Samaritans hate the Jews. If we go through Samaria we will have problems." "We'll go that way," said the Lord. "Samaritans and Jews were both created by God. He loves everyone equally. When we are near the city, someone can go ahead to talk to people. They can tell them that we will not hurt anyone, that we are people of peace."

As they walked towards Jerusalem, Jesus taught them. He wanted his disciples to understand that God wanted them to show love for one another, even for those who are evil or simply indifferent. They walked until sunset. It was time for them to stop and eat and rest.

"There's a town there," Jesus pointed out with his finger. "Please go and ask if we can spend the night there and if there is food."

Some of the disciples went to the village. A man shouted at them, "You are not from here; you are Jews. We hate Jews!"

"Look, we're going to Jerusalem," said one of Jesus' followers. "Our group is beyond the entrance to the village. We need a place to stay tonight. Can we stay here?"

"We already know where you are going!" said another Samaritan, "and that's what makes us so angry. You believe that we are not good enough to go to Jerusalem. Where we worship God is not good enough for the Jews!" The Jews thought that the Samaritans were wrong because they offered sacrifices to God on a mountain in Samaria. The Jews thought that the only correct place to offer sacrifice was in the temple of Jerusalem.

The disciples left the angry men and the town. They returned and told Jesus what had happened. "We cannot stay!" they said. "They do not want to have anything to do with Jews!"

James and John heard what had happened. "Who do those arrogant Samaritans think they are?" they shouted. James and John were known as the sons of thunder because they got angry easily. "Do not those silly Samaritans know who you are?" they asked Jesus. "You are more powerful than the prophet Elijah! I know what we will do. Call down fire from heaven! Let the whole town burn; that will give them a good lesson!"

Jesus sighed and shook his head. These two disciples did have a lot to learn about God's love. "You cannot burn people and their homes simply because they are bad," Jesus clarified. "That's wrong. I need people who understand about God's love! Evil actions will not help people understand God's love for them!"

"But what should we do?" asked James and John. "We'll go to another place, to another city," the Master replied. That day, Jesus taught an important lesson to the sons of thunder. They learned that God wants his people to live in peace with their neighbors, to show their love, even when others are not kind. We can learn from Jesus. We can choose peace and decide to turn away when others want to fight or argue with us.

## CONNECT THE LESSON

### Friendly or not friendly? Speechless

You will need for each child: picture of praying hands and a picture of a flame of fire, popsicle or ice cream stick about 15 cm, scissors, colored pencils, glue or tape. Ask them to cut out the flames of fire and the hands that you will have drawn or photocopied in advance. Then they can color them. Then glue or tape the sticks to their pictures.

When you ask the questions, the children will raise their prayer hands or flame depending on what they think the solution is for that situation. Fire for unfriendly, prayer hands for friendly. No one should say a word. Tell them:

1. Jesus listened to his Father, God. Friendly or not friendly?
2. Jesus obeyed God and went to Jerusalem. Friendly or not friendly?
3. Jesus and his followers spoke of the love of God. Friendly or not friendly?
4. Jesus sent some of his followers to Samaria. Friendly or not friendly?
5. The Samaritans hated the Jews. Friendly or not friendly?
6. The Samaritans did not want to host Jesus and his friends. Friendly or not friendly?
7. Jesus and his friends went to another city. Friendly or not friendly?
8. The disciples wanted fire to fall from heaven onto Samaria. Friendly or not friendly?
9. Jesus wants all people to love each other and not fight each other. Friendly or not friendly?

Ask the children to cut out, color and complete Student Activity Sheet #237. Encourage them to take home the activity and share the lesson with their families and friends.

### Practical task: "Gifts of Love"

Prior to this session ask the pastor about collecting some non-perishable food items to share with a needy family.

Tell the group to talk to their parents/ guardians about participating in this "Gifts of Love" project. If they are able, suggest each child to bring to the next session some non-perishable items (e.g. 1/4 kg, 1/2 kg or 1 kg rice). Emphasize that they will bring these gifts because we love God and his people.

Prepare to bring a large collection box and other small boxes/ bags for the next session.

## PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

### **Candy and biblical candies!**

Bring a candy for each child, on which they can paste or hang the Bible memory verse. "Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me " (John 14:21a). Have the children take the candy home and practice the verse. They can tell their mom, their dad or a sibling. When they know it by memory, they can eat the candy.

## **WRAP-UP**

### **Pray**

Pray for the children to be bearers of peace among their friends, in their family, and in any place where there are difficult situations. Ask the Lord to keep them from evil.

### **Encourage**

Encourage the children to look for ways to be bearers of peace in coming week.

### **Invite**

Say something interesting about the next session. Encourage the children to attend and to invite their friends.