

## Introduction to Leadership Training

One of the goals of Peace in a Community for Standard VII (Grade 7) is to develop leadership skills and help students understand that true worship is a lifestyle that contributes to peace—not just something we do in church. If there is time, it is strongly recommended that you start each lesson with a short worship time led by the students. This might include songs, a short time of silent prayer and student led prayer.

*If you do not have time for worship, you will still want to **develop leadership skills by having student leaders read the scripture, lead the discussion groups, and, possibly, offer a closing prayer.*** Letting students lead helps them develop confidence and skill in leading. Allow students to take as much leadership as possible.

*Preparation.* It is important to prepare students for their roles as leaders by first modeling what you want them to do and then giving them clear expectations for what they are to do. For the first two or three lessons you will model leadership for the class. As soon as possible you will start letting the students lead.

*Here are some ways to let students lead:*

Singing – You may want to choose a theme song such as *Let There Be Peace on Earth* and begin every lesson by having a student lead the class in singing it. If you have enough time, let students lead additional worship songs. Singing helps to center God’s people in worship. As students lead worship it is important to pray about the songs you choose to sing. The first songs might be joyful, fast-paced songs while the last songs might be slower to usher the class into a more prayerful mood. If you know the theme of the day’s lesson, the songs of worship might reflect the topic of the day. You might plan to share the songs publicly outside of the class as a way of sharing with the community what you are learning about peace.

Scripture – Have a student read the scripture passage for the day. Tell students several days ahead of time so they can practice reading the Bible fluently. If other students have Bibles, encourage them to follow along as the scripture is read. Scripture is God’s Word to us which teaches and speaks to our hearts. Those who read Scripture are inviting us to take time and listen to the Word of God. Through Scripture we are trained for righteous living and we are equipped for every good work. The Scripture Reading often introduces the lesson.

Prayer – After the opening song, have one student open the class with a prayer. If you have more time, prayer leaders can ask the students in the class for prayer requests or praises. They can then provide a time of silent prayer and the leader can close this time with vocal prayer. Through praying for the needs of those in our group we invite God to work in our lives. Through praise we acknowledge God’s greatness. We are bound together as His people and are empowered for service. The students who serve as prayer leaders are fulfilling a vital role. *Alternative:* You might want to save the prayer time for the end of class. Have the small groups share prayer requests with each other and pray with each other.

If you have students who are not Christians, you may want to have the prayer time be a time of silent prayer so each person can pray in a way that is comfortable for them. Students could share prayer requests and then have a few moments of silence as everyone prays.

Discussion Group Leaders - Leaders of small groups are individuals who are able to respect and listen to other people. They are able to ask questions and explain the purpose of questions to the group. They remind their members to be respectful to each other, not to be critical, and not to gossip about what is said in their group. They start and stop the group when needed. They help us apply God's word to our lives. Sometimes quieter students make good leaders because they model listening effectively but they must be assertive enough to keep the group focused on the questions and make sure everyone gets a turn. *Each term, change the group membership so that students get to know other students in the class.* You may want to mix up the groups even more frequently.

Writers – Have a student write the Memory Verse and Discussion Questions on the board before the lesson begins or while you are singing the opening song. You might choose a student for this role who would not be comfortable giving vocal leadership. This allows everyone to contribute in some way.

Rotate leadership so everyone gets an opportunity. You will want to help students find what they can do best.