

Lesson 7.26- Faithfulness: A Strategy for Peace

Topic: Conflict Management

Subtopic: Faithfulness

3F. Spiritual Gifts: Evangelism and Service

4E. Leadership and Power

Class: Standard VII (Grade 7)

Objectives: **Knowledge:** Students will be able to give examples where perseverance in peaceful work for justice brought change.

**Attitude:** Students will persist in working peacefully for justice even when it is difficult.

Materials Needed:

Blackboard and Chalk

Exercise book

References: Matthew 24:45-51

Memory Verse: Matthew 22:37-39

### Teacher Activities

**Introduction:** *Optional* Song(s) and prayer  
Read the true story found in the Teacher's Notes under *Introduction*. Pause to let the students answer the questions.

**Bible Story:** *Parable of the Faithful Servant*  
In Matthew 24, Jesus is on the Mt. of Olives and talks about the importance of being willing to be a faithful servant in the midst of hypocrisy and persecution. A Christian with a transformed heart will be found faithful to God and others and it will be seen in their loving service.

*Discussion Questions:* Follow the guide in the Teacher's Notes

**Application:** Being faithful requires walking in love even when those around you are being unloving. Peaceful resistance to unfair laws has often been used to change those laws. Share and discuss the story of Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King. Share excerpts from King's *I have a Dream* speech. Assign journal writing.

**Evaluation:** Are you personally committed to faithfully pursuing justice while walking in love? Are you seeing more commitment to peace in your students?

### Student Activities

**Introduction:** Listen to a story and discuss it.

**Bible Story:** Read Matthew 24:45-51 and discuss the importance of faithfulness in God's servants.

Read the memory verses. God has commanded us to walk in love even when it is difficult.

**Application:** Listen to the story of Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr. and excerpts from King's *I have a Dream* speech. Students write their own dream for their nation which begins with "*I have a dream...*"

**Evaluation:** Do the student journals reflect a desire for peace? Are students beginning to value peaceful ways of working for justice?

**Extension Activities:** *I have a dream.* If you have access to a computer, the *I Have a Dream* speech is easy to access in video format. You may wish to play the whole speech or the last half of the speech for your class.

*Alternative stories.* If you have stories from your own culture showing where faithful, peaceful perseverance has successfully brought justice, share these stories with your students.

*Memory Verses.* The key to being a faithful servant is to walk in the power of love as these verses require. Spend sometime discussing how difficult this would be for people like Rosa Parks, the children of Temple Street Meeting and others who are treated unjustly. Write phrases from the verses on strips of paper. Hand out the strips of paper in random order and then have the students line up in the correct order without talking. (They can use gestures to communicate.)

### Notes for Teacher

Today students will listen to stories of faithful servants--both from a parable in scripture and from true life situations. Being faithful requires walking in love even when those around you are being unloving. These stories will help students understand how walking in love can result in righting wrongs and bringing justice if they will be persistent and faithful.

Key Points: Peaceful resistance to unfair laws has often been used to change those laws but it requires faithful perseverance.

Introduction: To introduce the importance of perseverance in peacemaking, share the following true story. Use the questions to guide the discussion.

In 1681 any person over the age of 16 not attending the State Church of England could be sent to prison. In the town of Bristol there were six dissenting meetinghouses in the city, two were Baptist, two Friends, and one Presbyterian. [The members of these meetings did not attend at the State Church of England but had their own worship services.] The meetinghouses were plundered by soldiers and their meetinghouses seized and nailed up for the King. The Friends continued to meet although it meant they could be arrested, fined, and their personal property seized. By June, 1682 the number of Friends in prison had reached about 150.

***Let's say you were one of the young people in that meeting. Your parents and almost everyone over 16 is in prison. What will you do?*** (Let the students discuss their options briefly. Then say, "Let me read to you what happened next.")

By July, the Temple Street Meeting consisted primarily of children. On July 23, the boys' hats were thrown into a neighbor's yard. Eight boys were placed in stocks for two hours. On July 30, the Friars meeting was held by 7 women and about 50 children. At times the children were imprisoned.

***Would you be tempted to give up if week after week your worship meetings were disrupted in this way? What do you think these children did?***

Although they were persecuted, they "remained steadfast; and thus showed, in spite of their enemies, that God would not suffer that the Quakers' meeting should be altogether suppressed, as it was intended." Eventually, because Friends and others were persistent and faithful in doing what God had called them to do, laws were passed that made it legal for each person to worship as they felt led to worship. (From *The Second Period of Quakerism*, Edited by Henry J. Cadbury, pp. 102-103)

Bible Story: *Parable of the Faithful Servant.* Have a student Reader read Matthew 24:45-51.

Discuss the story. Some suggested questions are below.

- What was the servant's job? (He was in charge of all the other servants. He was to make sure they were fed and cared for.)
- What was the reward for doing the job well? (He would be given more responsibility; more opportunities for leadership)
- How would a bad servant behave? (He would abuse the other servants and take advantage of his position)
- What does this parable teach about leadership positions? (They are a sacred trust; we are to use positions of leadership to help others and demonstrate the love of God—not to advance our own position or to take advantage of others)
- Read the memory verse. What has Jesus told us to do while He is away? (love God; love others)
- How were the children of Temple Street Meeting (that we read about during the introduction) fulfilling the job of being faithful servants? (They didn't give up; they did not react to violence or respond with more violence; they continued to practice what they knew was right and to trust God to bring justice)
- What do you think about this kind of peacemaking? (Let students comment. They may feel it is very hard or that it might not always work.)

Application: Peaceful resistance to unfair laws has often been used to change those laws. It requires faithful commitment to follow God's way of love even if those around you are violent or verbally abusive. This kind of peacemaking is not easy and may require suffering but it has often been very successful.

*Share another example that shows how steadfast faithfulness to the principles of peace was useful in changing unjust laws.*

In the United States, after the Civil War, all the slaves were freed but there were many laws that were unfair. In Montgomery, Alabama there was a city law that said that black people had to sit on the back of the bus while white people sat on the front of the bus. One day a brave black woman named Rosa Parks decided to resist this unfair law and she sat in the front of the bus. She was arrested and put in jail. A pastor named Martin Luther King, Jr. took up her cause and organized people, both black and white, to resist the city by not riding the city buses until the law was changed. This was a hardship for many people who did not have cars to get to work but the people worked together, giving each other rides or walking to work. They refused to ride the buses for over one year. Finally, the Supreme Court of the U.S. said the law was illegal. After that, everyone could ride the buses as equals. This was the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement in America which changed many unfair laws. Other people were inspired by Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr. and they had similar peaceful protests against unfair laws until the laws were changed.

*Discussion.*

- How did Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King use peaceful methods to change unfair laws?
- How did they show faithfulness? Why does faithfulness require patience?
- Why would it be difficult to walk in love and peace in a situation like this?
- Do you know of anyone who has used peaceful perseverance (or faithfulness) to change something that was unfair?

- Why do you think Parks and King were able to stay calm and peaceful in this stressful situation? (They both were very committed to the ideals of peace and justice. They stayed focused on their goals and did not react in unholy ways. King was arrested over 20 times, assaulted at least four times and was assassinated in 1968. However, he maintained his commitment to peaceful resistance and was successful in changing many unfair laws. He inspired many others to follow his example of peaceful resistance. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts and did much to advance the cause of justice and equality.)

*Read the information below to your class and then assign them the writing activity.* Martin Luther King, Jr. became a leader in the Civil Rights Movement. His motivation came from his deep commitment to Jesus Christ and to his Christian principles. He was also inspired by the example of Ghandi who used passive resistance in India. In 1963 King led 250,000 people in a peaceful demonstration on Washington D.C. There he gave his famous *I have a Dream* speech. Read some or all of this speech to your students. Here are three quotes from that speech.

*"...there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.*

*... I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.*

*I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal."*

*... When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last."*

--Retrieved July 8, 2010 from

[www.worldwideschool.org/library/books/hst/northamerican/IHaveaDream/Chap1.html](http://www.worldwideschool.org/library/books/hst/northamerican/IHaveaDream/Chap1.html)

Journal Writing: After reading the above quotes, have students reflect on their dream for their own nation. After a few minutes of reflection have them write their own speech that starts with "I have a dream..." If you have time, let volunteers read their speech to the class.