

Peace in a Community

Key Concepts

Strand 1: God--the Foundation.

Students would know that God is one with a three-fold expression – Father, Son & Holy Spirit.

1A. God the Creator and Father. Students would know God as Creator and as their Heavenly Father. He has created each person for good works which He prepared for them to do. God is loving and merciful but He is also righteous, just and holy. The righteousness, justice, truth, love and mercy of God are the foundation of true peace. (Genesis 1:1; John 15:26; Ephesians 2:10; Psalms 36:5-6)

1B. Jesus Christ: God the Son. Students would know that the historical Jesus is the first-born Son of God who was raised from death, in order that He alone might have first place in all things. Through His death we are saved. He is the head of the church and Lord of all. Jesus died on the cross. God raised Him from the dead three days later. He appeared to many commanding them to preach the gospel and testify that He is the one whom God has appointed judge of the living and the dead. Everyone who believes in Him will have his sins forgiven through the power of His name. Through Christ we are reconciled to God and made friends with Him. Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross and his resurrection are the foundation of peacemaking because they make forgiveness and reconciliation possible. Each person who confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and believes that God raised him from the dead will be saved. (Colossians 1:18-19, Acts 10:38-43, II Corinthians 5:18-19; Romans 10:9)

1C. Holy Spirit. Students would know the Holy Spirit is part of the Godhead, one with the Father and the Son, and that He dwells in the Christian. He is our Helper, Teacher and Guide. It is the Holy Spirit who empowers Christians. The Holy Spirit reveals truth. It is through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit that we discern what God's will is and it is through the Holy Spirit's work in our lives that we are empowered to obey even in difficult situations. The enlightened discernment of the Holy Spirit should guide our peacemaking efforts. (Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:13, II Corinthians 3:16, John 3:16, Acts 10: John 14:26, John 15:26-27, Acts 1:8; John 14:16)

Strand 2: Love God

Students will know that the most important commandment is to love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength.

2A. Prayer and Worship. Students will learn the many expressions of prayer including adoration, thanksgiving, confession, supplication, intercession and declaration. Students would learn to express their love and adoration for God through worship. They would learn that there are many expressions of worship including song, silence, prayer, praise, service and mission.

2B. Scripture. Students will know the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given by inspiration of God and are the only divinely ordained authority. Students will learn to read, study, meditate on, and memorize scriptures so that the Word of God might guide their lives. Students will learn how to use Bible helps such as cross references, concordances and Bible dictionaries.

2C: Sin and Salvation. God chose to create men and women in the image and likeness of God, with the ability to choose to follow God or to disobey. Adam, the first man, yielded to the temptation of Satan and disobeyed, thereby allowing sin and death to come into the world. As children of the fallen Adam we all bear Adam's image and will bear the consequences of sin (death) unless we choose to obey God's command, "You must be born again." (John 3:7). Sin is the cause of pain, suffering, conflict and death in the world. Through Jesus Christ we have the power to overcome sin and be restored.

Strand 3. Core Values

Students would know that each person has the freedom and the responsibility to discern God's will for his or her life and to be obedient to God's leading. They would know that Friends have traditionally felt led to express their service to God and love for others through the following testimonies. These core values lead to peace with God and with others.

3A. Made New in Jesus Christ. Those who choose to follow Jesus Christ as Lord will repent of sins, be reconciled with God, and be obedient to him. True peace starts with this step of reconciliation to God which gives inner peace. Because God has forgiven them, Christians are empowered to forgive others and are enlightened by the Holy Spirit to discern God's will even in conflicted situations; to walk in love with others. A community of believers is needed for nurture, support, encouragement and accountability.

3B. Be Holy Students would know that followers of Christ are called to daily die to self and live for Christ Jesus. Holy living takes away many of the causes of conflict. Righteousness or holy living is defined by the commandments of scripture. The holy lifestyle should be demonstrated in every area of life including marriage, family, abstinence, simplicity and community.

3C. All are Equal & Valued. Students will know that each person is created in the image of God and is his special creation; therefore, everyone has value and worth. When students are valued they demonstrate good self-esteem and are able to live in unity with others. Each person has the potential to accept Jesus Christ as Lord. In Christ Jesus all are equal. Because each person is valued by God, we must treat everyone with respect and honor. This will reduce many of the causes of conflict.

3D. Living Christ enlightens us. Students would know that through the Holy Spirit the Living Christ enlightens our hearts and speaks to us today. Discernment of the mind of Christ may be individual or corporate. Students would know the value of prayer, scripture and centered waiting on God to learn what his revealed will is. They would understand that peacemaking is possible because God gives us the wisdom and understanding to know what to do through enlightened discernment.

3E. Reconciliation and Peacemaking. Children of God are called to be peacemakers. Having been reconciled to God we seek to live at peace with others. We imitate our Heavenly Father who teaches us to repent, forgive and seek reconciliation with others. We are also called to help others find peace by acting in the role of mediator and peacemaker.

3F. Spiritual Gifts; Evangelism & Service. Students would know that God gives each person both gifts and a calling or Mission to fulfill God's purposes. We are called to be Ambassadors of Peace by telling others the good news of salvation through Evangelism and by demonstrating God's love and mercy through Service.

3G. Integrity, Honesty, and Justice. Students will know that integrity, honesty, and justice help prevent conflict. Lying, deceit, and injustice lead to conflicts and violence. God desires truth in our innermost being and the Lord loves justice. By being just and having integrity in both word and actions we reduce the causes of conflict. By working to establish justice and righteousness as defined by scripture we remove the causes of conflict. Friends encourage a lifestyle of simplicity which makes more resources available for others and allows more time for mission.

Strand 4: Skills for Peacemaking

Students would know and become proficient at using skills essential to peacemaking.

4A. Appreciating Differences. Students will recognize and value differences in personality styles, race, cultural and ethnic differences, and in spiritual gifts and callings. Students will learn to empathize with others' feelings. They will recognize that valuing others is important for peaceful relationships.

4B. Communication Skills. Students will use appropriate communication skills. Students will learn to use words to express feelings. They will learn the importance of listening, non-verbal language, and different types of statements. They will become competent at using these communication skills.

4C: The Problem Solving Process. Students will be skilled at using the steps of the problem solving process. They will: Ask, "What is the problem", and find common ground. Then they will Brainstorm ideas, Choose a Plan, Do the plan and Examine the results to see if it is successful. Students will be able to use the problem solving process for themselves as well as using it to mediate conflicts between others.

4D: Conflict Management. Students will use principles of conflict management. They will learn to manage their emotions and stress effectively; use peer mediation and arbitration skills; respond to bullying and peer pressure; and recognize inappropriate responses to conflict such as discrimination, scapegoating, blaming, making excuses, role reversal, and projection.

4E. Leadership and Power. Students will develop skills for effective leadership. They will learn that there are different types of power and which types of power should and should not be used in conflict situations. They will know that a leader must consider both the task and the process of decision making. They will demonstrate qualities essential to leadership. They will follow Jesus' example of servant leadership.

4F: Peace in the Home, school, church and community. Students would know that true peace in marriage and family relations is found by submitting to God's design for the family. God's best for the home is a husband and wife fully submitted to God and sanctified by the sacrament of marriage, raising their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. God's grace can bless those who fall short of this ideal when they prayerfully repent, receive His forgiveness, and follow His direction for restoring right relationships. A family that prays together, stays together.

When individuals experience the peace of God in their lives, they will live in peaceful relationship with others in the school, church and community. This will create an environment that offers safety and security for everyone.

4G: Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. Students would recognize that Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, is the one who will ultimately bring peace to the whole world. Students will stand for truth even when there is pressure to conform to the world. They will be willing to make sacrifices and even lay down their lives, if necessary, to proclaim Jesus as the Prince of Peace, and Lord of Heaven and Earth. Friends must not sacrifice peace with God for conformity and peace with the world.

4H. Making Good Choices: Students would make good choices which lead them to learn, to earn their own living, and to avoid conflict. They would choose to use their talents and resources wisely; caring for God's creation and sharing with others.