

Session 1

The Big Picture

Compact 35 mins

In-depth 60 mins

Custom

Session overview

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<div> Film p3 5-10 mins</div> <div>Young people's perspectives on being a peacemaker</div>			
<div> Bible passage p4 10-20 mins</div> <div>The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12)</div>			
<div> Bible verse p6 5-10 mins</div> <div>Matthew 5:9</div>			
<div> The big picture p7 10 mins</div> <div>Explore the idea that we don't see the whole picture</div>			
<div> What's a peacemaker? p8 10 mins</div> <div>Fingers on buzzers! Unpack the meaning of being a peacemaker</div>			
<div> The walk p10 10 mins</div> <div>Reflect on our own uniqueness and our diversity as a group</div>			
<div> Vision board p12 5 mins</div> <div>Reflect on this session</div>			
<div> Prayer and reflection p13 5 mins</div> <div>Reflect on the learning and habits</div>			

Session summary:

Key learning

God calls us to be peacemakers – becoming part of God’s reconciling story in the world

Application

Consider God’s invitation to be a peacemaker

Habits focus

Be curious about God’s reconciling story and our role within it

Before the session

You will need:

- Slides with close-up images and the means to show them to your group
[Optional– if you do **The big picture** activity]
- Your group’s vision board

Set up your room:

- Your group will need to be able to gather round the vision board to reflect together
- If you do **The walk** activity, you will need enough room for the young people to walk in a line side by side

Intro

 00:00

 5 mins

Aim of the course and the session

This session is called **The Big Picture**.

In this session we are going to:

- Explore God’s invitation to be peacemakers in a divided world.
- Be curious about how we can be part of God’s story of peace and reconciliation.



Recap

Recap the previous session and remind the group of the three habits of being curious, being present, and reimagining.

Ask your group what they remember from the previous session and if they have any examples of actions or stories from the past week.

Story

 00:00



Film

 5-10 mins

Discuss: What do we learn about being a peacemaker in this film?

Draw out examples of where your group see the habit of being curious
- asking questions; taking an interest; overcoming assumptions;
choosing not to judge.

Option 1



Bible passage Matthew 5:1-12

🕒 10-20 mins

Share the passage (the version below is from the NRSVA):

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

³ 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵ 'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷ 'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸ 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹ 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰ 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ 'Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Q **Questions for discussion** (choose as many as your group have time for):

- What is surprising or unexpected in what Jesus says here?
- Were there any words or ideas in this passage that were difficult to understand?
- What is a peacemaker? What's the difference between making peace and 'keeping the peace'?
- Why do you think Jesus talks about peacemakers being blessed?
- What is the point Jesus is making in this passage?
- Where do you see the need for peace?
- If you put this passage into action, how would it change the way you live?



Key learning

Please highlight the points below:

- This passage shows us that being a peacemaker involves longing for justice, honouring those living in poverty and the powerless, having humility – and getting challenged in the process!
- In this passage, Jesus is telling us that much of the world is upside down – God's kingdom is about putting things the right way up.
- The least powerful, the grieving, and those longing for a world made right may feel like they're 'last' now – in God's kingdom, they will be first.
- When we are peacemakers, we live out our identity as God's children. Being a peacemaker is one of the ways we show that we are part of God's family.

- Being a peacemaker is not about keeping quiet or maintaining the status quo – the point of Jesus' words here is that God's kingdom will shake up things as they currently are, so that peace, justice and good relationships are restored.
- Jesus will live out all the values we see here in his ministry – he shows us what it means to be a peacemaker.

Option 2



Bible verse Matthew 5:9

Share the verse (explaining that these are Jesus' words):

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." (NRSVA)



Questions for discussion:

- Why do you think Jesus talks about peacemakers being blessed?
- What is a peacemaker? What's the difference between making peace and 'keeping the peace'?



Key learning

- See the **Key learning** box on p40-41.

Slides 12



Activity
The big picture

 5-10 mins

Reflect on the idea that sometimes we see only a small part of the big picture

Start here



Slides 13-20

- 1 Using the slides, show your group the first image, which is a close-up section of a larger image.
- 2 Ask the group to guess what the bigger picture might be from looking at this zoomed-in image.
- 3 Show the larger picture and see if anyone got it right.
- 4 Repeat with the remaining images.



Key learning

Please highlight the points below:

- The Bible tells us that God is at work to restore all things – to bring reconciliation to all of creation – and we’re invited to be part of that story.
- Sometimes it can be hard to see how our own stories fit into this bigger picture – that’s something we’ll explore though *Difference*.



Activity

🕒 10-15 mins

What’s a peacemaker?

Unpack the meaning of being a peacemaker

Start here



→ Optional extra activity

Using the QR code, show the Bible Project animation on the Beatitudes.



Now begin the activity:

1

Each young person pretends they have a buzzer, which they are ready to push and make a buzzing noise.

2

Willing contestants have to speak for a minute on the topic of 'Being a peacemaker' without hesitating, going off-topic or repeating themselves – if anyone hears them do these things, they must press loudly on their buzzer! It's now the next person's turn.

3

After a few rounds, write a word cloud on a wipe-board/flip chart with participants offering their responses. Ensure that the word cloud includes ideas related to:

- Being active/engaged – not passive, 'keeping the peace'
- Justice – standing up for what is right
- Not something we do 'to' others – something we practise in our own lives
- Reconciliation – the healing and renewal of broken relationships
- Disagreeing well
- Peace is not simply the absence of conflict but the presence of fullness of life for everybody



Key learning

Please highlight the points below:

- The call to be a peacemaker isn't about 'keeping the peace' and avoiding conflict, but about getting involved in a messy, conflicted world – joining in with what God is doing.
- Trying to be a peacemaker won't always be easy – it can be frustrating, our attempts can go wrong – this is to be expected and is part of following Jesus' way of peace, but there is hope and possibility to be found as we pursue peace.
- Becoming a peacemaker is a journey – not an immediate transformation.



Activity The walk

🕒 10-15 mins

Reflect on our own uniqueness, the diversity of our stories and the fact that God invites us each to be peacemakers in our own contexts, with our own gifts and complexities

Start here



1

Invite your group to stand somewhere where there is space to collectively move forward in a straight line.

2

Give the participants the following instructions, encouraging them to be honest in their responses.

- Move forward if you have a pet
- Move backwards if that pet is a dog
- Move forward if you enjoy superhero films
- Move forward if you feel like a peacemaker
- Move forward if you enjoy drawing
- Move backwards if you like making music
- Move forward if you like taking part in sports
- Move backwards if you have a hero
- Move forward if you would like to be a hero
- Move forward if you are the class joker
- Move backwards if you believe in aliens
- Move forward if you have cried this year
- Move forward if you like to win/are competitive
- Move forward if you feel worried today
- Move backwards if you feel hopeful today
- Jump in the air/clap if you are a human being

3

Ask the group what they notice about the process.



Key learning

Please highlight the points below:

- As we set out on the *Difference* course we recognise that we are all different and we each have different starting points. We each bring our own hopes, hobbies, worries and wonderings. Over the next few weeks we will explore the subjects of peacemaking, conflict and flourishing from our different perspectives.
- Being a peacemaker is not about being superhuman, invincible, infallible and able to change the world. Instead we're invited to be fully human - we are fractured, conflicted, forgiven works in progress.
- We come to God's invitation - of making the world the 'right-way-up' - all unique, different and of deep value.
- We are invited to come as we are, and to be curious about God's story of reconciliation, in our own lives, in our relationships and in the world.



Vision board

🕒 5 mins

Guide your group through this activity using the instructions below:

1. Draw a large rectangle on your vision board, representing an 'invitation'. (Remember to leave enough room on your vision board for activities in future weeks!)
2. Inside the rectangle, leave a large space at the top, then write '...is invited to be part of God's story of peace and reconciliation in the world'.
3. Invite each member of your group to write their own name in the space at the top.



Key learning

Please highlight the point below:

- Each one of us is invited to come as we are, with our own story, to be part of God's story of healing, renewal and restoration in the world.



Top takeaway

Ask your group (to write down or say aloud):

What is something you want to remember from this session?
(Give them a minute to reflect before answering.)



Prayer and reflection

Please read this aloud:

Loving God, fill us with your Spirit now.

We think about what we have learnt about your story of reconciliation in the world.

Help us to **be curious** about others' stories – listening as often as we speak.

We think about what we have learnt about peace and how we can pursue it.

Give us the courage to **be present** – showing up and sticking around.

We think about your invitation to join with you by becoming peacemakers.

Inspire us to **reimagine** what's possible – finding hope, knowing that you can transform all things.

In Jesus' name. Amen

End of session 1

Notes