

HERE WE COME!

Arrange ahead of time for a letter that can be read to the children. It can be from a class member who moved away (a parent can help with the writing), someone in the congregation who is away at school or in the military, or someone who works with the children in other areas of ministry. It should include a greeting to the children, information about the writer's life at the moment, some connections to the children hearing it, and a closing that asks for God's blessing. It can arrive in an envelope or as an e-mail.

Talk about what the children remember about this person. What part does memory play in receiving a letter?

SCRIPTURE WORDS AND WORSHIP

The first scripture records what Jesus said to the disciples near the end of his time with them. He encouraged them to trust and not be afraid. The second scripture is a closing from Paul as he writes to his friends in the church at Philippi. Print the words on symbols of peace such as a dove.

STORY TALKING

Paul asked that the God of peace would be with the people when he wrote them letters. When the God of peace is with you, people will want to be around you. People are often attracted to a peaceful person or a peaceful place. There is something nonthreatening and relaxing about a peaceful attitude.

Animals can help us see how attitudes, the sound of a voice, or actions affect a response. Let the children take turns being the owner while the rest of the children are the pets. The animals get on their hands and knees and wander around in the classroom. The owner calls to them kindly, quietly, excitedly, angrily, using the tone of voice and body language to convey the message. How do the "animals" respond?

Peace Like a River

Traditional

1. I've got joy like a foun-tain, I've got joy like a foun-tain, I've got joy like a foun-tain in my soul. I've got joy like a foun-tain, I've got joy like a foun-tain, I've got joy like a foun-tain in my soul.

2. I've got hope like a rainbow. 3. I've got love like an ocean. 4. I've got peace like a river

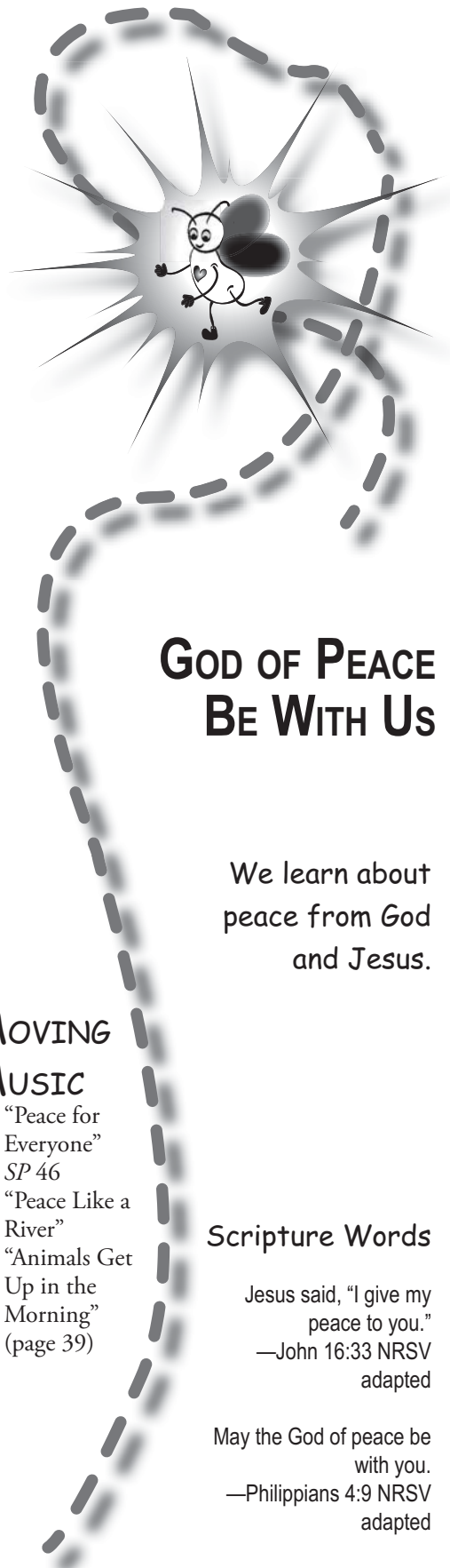
MOVING MUSIC

- "Peace for Everyone" SP 46
- "Peace Like a River"
- "Animals Get Up in the Morning" (page 39)

Scripture Words

Jesus said, "I give my peace to you."
—John 16:33 NRSV adapted

May the God of peace be with you.
—Philippians 4:9 NRSV adapted



GOD OF PEACE BE WITH US

We learn about peace from God and Jesus.

LIVE AND LEARN

Some of our missionaries travel from place to place and only visit in a congregation for a short time. People are always glad to see the missionary, and that person is always anxious to hear what has been happening with the church. The same was true in Paul's day. He loved to hear from his friends in the churches he had helped start. Usually the letters he wrote began with a greeting. He included specific people and needs, and then branched out into advice to help the church grow. He often closed the letter with a blessing. Share this story in letter form. Pronunciations for the two women are Euodia [you OH dih uh] and Syntyche [SIN tih keh].

My dear friends:

You are like my own brothers and sisters. I love you and wish I could be with you.

I miss my friends Euodia and Syntyche. Help these women in any way they need it. They have worked right beside me sharing the story of Jesus. So has my friend Clement and many others who are my co-workers in Christ.

I am so excited about the work. Rejoice in the Lord! Rejoice in the Lord always!

Be gentle, my friends. Jesus is always close to you. Don't worry about things. If you have a need, ask God for help.

We can never understand how filled with peace God is. It's beyond our imagination.

Here are some things to remember:

Think about being true and fair. Treat others this way.

Think about being good and kind. Treat others this way, too.

Keep on doing the things you learned from me. God, who is the God of peace, will always be with you.

Your friend, Paul

UP AND AT 'EM

Have assorted cards available with words on them. There should be a card for each child present, and several of each that say "mother, father, grandma, grandpa, brother, sister, friend." The cards can be placed on a display board with push pins or double sided tape. Draw an outline of a church building, an open book of scripture, or other shape that represents for the children coming to church. Let them take cards, one at a time, and place them in the "community."

SENSE-ATIONS

It was important for people to treat each other with respect and caring in the Christian community. This extended to all generations. Give each child a picture of the people to color. As they work, talk about parents, siblings, grandparents, and other family members who are part of the community of Christ.

THERE WE GO

Ask the children to share what they learned about peace with their families.



May the God of peace be with you.

—Philippians 4:9 NRSV adapted