

Daily Lessons: Day 1—Go Deeper: Know Jesus, Know Peace

Welcome Kids!

Welcome each child by name. Play a game to help kids get to know each other. Form a circle of 8–10 people (kids and leaders), and pass a soft sponge ball (like a Nerf ball) to the person on the left. Each child says their name as the ball is passed around the circle. Next, the leader tosses the ball to anyone in the group, calling out their name before tossing it. The one receiving the ball calls out another person's name and tosses the ball to them. Keep playing until everyone has had a chance to catch and toss the ball at least once. On the next round, have kids call out where they are from when they catch the ball. On the last round, add a second ball, and again have kids toss the ball to each other, calling out names. See how fast the group can learn the names and toss the balls (safely).

Go Deeper Story

Invite everyone to sit down, and ask them what they know about Rainbow Fish (a popular story character). Share the book (also used in worship) *Rainbow Fish and the Sea Monsters' Cave* by Marcus Pfister, translated by J. Alison James (North-South Books, 2001), ISBN 0735815372. This may also be shared in the reunion worship service. In this story, Rainbow Fish bravely swims into the most dangerous place in the ocean to cure a sick “bumpy-backed” fish. Rainbow Fish finds that the scariest place is not so scary after all when it means caring for another.

Discuss:

1. What is the scariest place for you to go?
2. What is the scariest thing for you to do?
3. Tell of a time when you overcame your fear to help someone else.

Sometimes we need to go into a new place—a place that is deeper—in order to care about others. Sometimes we need to try harder than we've ever tried before.

Go Deeper with Jesus' Parables

When Rainbow Fish and his friend went deep into the sea cave, he was not only able to help someone, but he overcame his fear of going deeper. The same is true when we dig deeper with Jesus. Jesus taught many parables which had a deeper truth underneath the story. Let's dig deeper into Jesus' parables to find out what they mean. Send kids “swimming” around the room to find paper fish shapes where the scriptures below are printed.

Provide Bibles for kids to look up scripture references from the list below. They may work as teams on this project. They are to dig deeper to find the “story behind the story,” and can make a model representing their story from clay.* Kids may then lay their clay creations on a sheet of construction paper and write down its scripture reference. When all are finished, kids can explain what the parable means to them. Write their parable messages on poster board for all to see.

Jesus' Parables	Parable Message (Examples)
Build your house on a rock.—Matthew 7:24–27	Trust what Jesus tells you and do it.
God knows the number of hairs on your head. —Matthew 10:29–31	God cares about every bit of us.
A mustard seed becomes great. —Matthew 13:31–32	Even small things can do great things.
Buy the pearl of great price.—Matthew 13:45–46	Go for the best of what God has.
The widow's mite is worth more than riches. —Mark 12:41–44	Give with all your heart.
God finds the lost sheep and the lost coin. —Luke 15:1–10	God cares about each of us.
Jesus is the bread of life.—John 6:35	Jesus is what we need each day.

Jesus shared great ideas with us through simple stories. Jesus wants us to go deeper, be a little stronger, try something harder, take a risk, or push ourselves a little bit, just like Rainbow Fish did. When we do these things, then we help ourselves to grow, and we help others. This is what the peace of Jesus is all about.

*Use Crayola's® Model Magic, Play Doh®, or a homemade air-dry clay (see recipe below): Mix together 1 cup salt, ½ cup cornstarch, and ¾ cup cold water. Stir all ingredients together over low heat. In 2 or 3 minutes, mixture will thicken and can no longer be stirred. Turn out onto waxed paper or aluminum foil and cool. When cool, knead until smooth. If dough dries out, add water.

Know Jesus; Know Peace

When we know Jesus, we know what peace is all about. We learn about Jesus in his parables. That is one way we learn to be a peacemaker. Give each child a blank paper fish like the ones printed with the scripture references. Invite kids to choose a parable message from one of the parables, and write it on their fish. Then have them write what they are going to do *today* to share the peace of Jesus with others following this message. Have kids glue these messages onto a page in their scrapbooks. They may color the page to look like the Rainbow Fish's big blue ocean—using the book for inspiration.

Peace Definition

The reunion theme is “Share Christ's Peace.” What does this phrase mean? Write this definition on the board for kids to copy in their books, or print handouts for kids to include in their books:

Share Christ's Peace (sher krīstz pēs) 1. promises, hopes, and blessings of the gospel revealed by Jesus Christ 2. support of the Holy Spirit, Christ's promised presence with humans in his absence 3. freedom from fear, anxiousness, discouragement, or

alienation 4. opportunity for balance and wholeness for humans, communities, and all of creation 5. a source of hope and blessing to share with others

Discuss what “Share Christ’s Peace” means to the kids. This definition is derived from Steve Veazey’s introduction to *Go With Peace* by Kelly Guinan (Blair, NE: Kind Regards, LLC, 2005), ISBN 0-9719279-2-8.

Peace Prayers

On a poster board, have today’s scripture written:

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid” (John 14:27 NRSV adapted).

Invite children into a circle and affirm to them that Jesus will be with them in all that they do. Tell them Jesus gave his peace, comfort, and love to all of us. Before he went to heaven, he told his followers that he would leave his peace with them, so they would never need to be afraid. Read the scripture aloud, and ask children to close their eyes. Then guide the children through a meditation. Ask children to imagine feeling worried, scared, or afraid to do something new or something they don’t feel good at. Ask how their body feels—tight? tense? jittery? What are their minds and their emotions doing? Are they racing? worrying? feeling nervous? Now have them imagine what it feels like for a great big cloud of peacefulness to come over them. Have them relax their legs, arms, head, and neck. Have them quiet their minds and think about cool breezes and floating in big billowy clouds. How does this feel? This is the peace Jesus gives us.

Now walk around the circle. Touch each child on the shoulder and say, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.” Do this for each child individually. When done, children may write this scripture into their scrapbooks.

Scripture Story: Deep Foundation

Invite a child to read the following scripture story from Luke 6:46–48 NRSV adapted:

Jesus said, “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I tell you? I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words, and acts on them. That someone is like a man building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the river burst against that house but could not shake it, because it had been well built.”

Invite kids to put this scripture to the test. Give each kid some locking bricks (such as Lego or similar toy bricks), enough to build a small house. The brick houses could be built inside a large plastic-tub lid that can hold slightly damp sand. Outside, kids can build their houses in dirt or sand. In either place, they are to “dig deeper” to slightly bury their house in the sand or dirt to make it stronger. When all houses are built, pour a pitcher of water into the lid. If outside, simulate the flooding of a river as referenced in the scripture. Show the kids how their houses are not destroyed by the water.

Discuss: In this scripture, Jesus tells us to follow what he says. Because when the rough times come, we will not be shaken, hurt, or upset. We will trust in what Jesus has told us. Remember what Jesus told us in the parables? Summarize this from the poster board used with the parable-message activity.

“Go Deeper” Game

Play a game of going deeper. Set up a relay game where the class is divided into two teams. On a table across the room, set two glass or clear plastic jars filled with cotton balls. On just a few cotton balls (slightly more than there are kids on each team), make a colored dot with a permanent marker. Mix these marked cotton balls in with the others. Give each team a set of chopsticks. When the signal is given, kids race down to the table, dig for the marked cotton balls with their chopsticks, pick up a marked ball—when they find it—with their chopsticks, and race back to their team, dropping the ball into a basket at the starting line and handing off the chopsticks to the next player. The first team to finish with all of their players bringing back a marked cotton ball wins.

Labyrinth

Labyrinths are an ancient tool for personal, psychological, or spiritual transformation. They are made of a single path, unlike a maze, that lead people to the center and back out. Traveling the labyrinth gives people the opportunity to reflect, focus, find peace, increase energy, and feel more in tune with themselves and with the Spirit. More information may be found at the Labyrinth Society: www.labyrinthsociety.org.

If possible, create a labyrinth for kids to walk each day of reunion. This could be used by other reunion attendees, so several groups may wish to create one together. It can be drawn inside or outside with chalk, laid with bricks, marked with masking tape, or painted onto a parking lot.

Follow the pattern on the next page.

Kids may also create their own labyrinth in their books following the pattern below.

How to Draw a Labyrinth

