Reunion 2013
Lessons for Youth
Format and Structure

The purpose of this course is to provide youth, ages 12 to 18, a deeper understanding of the ethics of Christ’s peace and how to live them. Through the foundational texts (Matthew 5, the Sermon on the Mount, and Doctrine and Covenants 163:4c), this course will explore right or righteous relationships, grace and generosity, God’s justice, and how living the ethics of Christ’s peace represents God’s reign on Earth.

This series of six lessons follows the Disciple Formation Guide lesson plan model (www.CofChrist.org/dfg/lesson template.asp). The lessons are for students ages 12 to 18, and include options for younger students (ages 12 to 14) and older students (ages 16 to 18). It is important to know the lessons and the students and adapt.

The background information for each lesson has been adapted from articles written by church leaders for the adult lessons in Live Christ’s Peace (order from www.HeraldHouse.org).
Focus
What is “Christ’s peace” and what does it mean to “carry the ethics of Christ’s peace into all arenas of life”?

Focus Scriptures
Doctrine and Covenants 163:4c

Objectives
THE LEARNERS WILL…
• become familiar with ideas of “Christ’s peace,” “arenas of life,” rules-based ethics, and principle-based ethics.
• connect the challenge of carrying the ethics of Christ’s peace into all the arenas of their lives.

Resources and Materials
• Flip chart easel and paper
• Markers (for both flip chart use and for student use)
• Pens and pencils (enough for all students)
• Paper (a supply based on the number of students)
• Bibles (including The Message)—one for each student, if possible
• Video that shows strange, funny, out-of-date laws or rules. A simple search of YouTube or other source using “strange laws” will help. Be sure to screen the video for images, words, and music that are appropriate.
• Six or more (depending on the size of the class) Hula-Hoops, 40 in/1 m in diameter or six pieces of rope each 10 ft/3 m in length (make 40 in/1 m diameter circles)
• Eight or more pieces of poster board
• Two or more water buckets, a source of water, and two or more larger containers
• Floor plan ideas from the Internet (search for arena floor plans using a search engine for images)
• Community of Christ Enduring Principles written on flip chart paper or poster board from Sharing in Community of Christ, 3rd ed. (or previous edition), or from www.CofChrist.org/ourfaith/enduring-principles.asp
• Several sheets of copy or lined notebook paper
• Picture of Jesus Christ
• Wooden, freestanding cross (large enough for students to apply several sticky notes)
• Song “I Am the Way” by Mark Schultz from his 2010 CD Mark Schultz
• Small sticky notes—enough for each student to have several

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS
Ethics refer to the principles or standards by which individual moral behavior is guided, evaluated, or judged. Ethics may also refer to standards promoted by a group (professional society, community organization, church, or other entity). Group members generally shape these stated expectations and standards. In the church, we often speak of Christian ethics as well as priesthood or ministerial ethics. These terms refer to mutual standards of conduct important in the church’s life. Ethics may be rule-based or principle-based.

Peace is at the heart of Christ’s mission. Peace is basic to the formation of those who follow him. Our challenge is to understand how to “carry the ethics of Christ’s peace into all arenas of life” (Doctrine and Covenants 163:4c) in our time and in the places where we live. Carriers of Christ’s peace interpret the world through a changed perspective. When we embrace Christ’s peace, the lenses through which we see and interpret the world change.

Taking on the life and mind of Christ means we embrace his peace in such a way that the challenge of Matthew 5:43–45 becomes possible: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’
But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven...”

Prior to class be sure to read “Christ’s Peace” by Rick Mau- pin in the adult reunion text for important foundational information on the topic of this lesson.

GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson

As students gather, show a video from YouTube or another source listing funny or outdated laws in your area. Be sure to prescreen the video for suitable words, information, and music. Ask students what they thought of the information in the video. Were the laws (or rules) just outdated or were they also strange? Ask them to explain what might be behind one law or rule they remember.

Ask students, What do you think of when you hear the word “ethics”? Record their responses on flip chart paper. Ask if any response makes them think of peace. Circle those responses. Share how this lesson helps us understand how we take the ethics of Christ’s peace into all arenas of our lives.

ENGAGE
Invites exploration and interaction

Read aloud the focus scripture for this lesson, Doctrine and Covenants 163:4c:

But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven...”

Ask students what they think the phrase “all arenas of life” means. Using a Hula-Hoop or a circle of rope, have all students hold it with one hand. Explain that in our “arenas of life” we meet people who all hold certain things in common. If I call this arena “school,” what things do you have in common with one another? (Allow students to call out answers.)

Ask what other arenas exist in their lives. Record the added responses on flip chart paper. If they are having difficulty coming up with answers, throw out another Hula-Hoop or circle of rope and say “If any of you have a job, move to this arena.” Ask the students gathered what they have in common with one another. Repeat as needed until they start coming up with other arenas on their own.

Help them keep the arena categories as broad as possible (for instance, “recreation” rather than “basketball”). Ask what other arenas they might add when they are adults. What other arenas might they have if they lived somewhere else in the world? Display the list of responses and keep it for work later in the lesson.

ETHICS

Ask students rhetorically, why do you do what you do. When we do something that people can judge as good or bad, we are making a moral choice. What is an act that you consider bad? Good?

Ethics is the understanding of principles, which are the basis for moral choices. In other words, why do you do what you do. We sometimes base our moral choices on rules and sometimes on principles. A rule typically answers the question “What?” and principles typically answer the question “How?”

Rules-based ethics relate to commandments and rules. One example from scripture is the extensive “Holiness Code” of the ancient Israelites found in Leviticus 17—26. Some cultures and religions depend heavily on lists of rules that spell out what actions are required, allowed, or forbidden. Rules and associated penalties control personal morality, community relationships, and religious life. A rule might be, “drive 30 miles per hour in this area.” If you drive too fast and are caught, you could be issued a speeding ticket and fined. The ticket and fine would be the associated penalties.

Another approach to ethics is principle-based ethics. This approach involves identifying and applying foundational principles to moral choices. A benefit of using principle-based ethics is that it draws on universal truths or en-
Depending on your students you may wish to choose the first activity for older students, the second for younger ones, and have both ages do the third activity.

**RULES OR PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE OUR COURSE**

Divide into two groups and assign one of the following to each, or complete both parts as an entire group sequentially:

Using rules-based ethics make a list of rules for the class to follow during the remaining lessons. Be sure to create rules and penalties for not following the rules. Write these out on poster board. Be prepared to share and explain each of the rules. Rules could include what time to arrive, what to bring, what is acceptable to do during the lesson, and when to leave.

Using principle-based ethics make a list of principles for the class to follow during the remaining lessons. If you are not sure where to begin, start with the list of Community of Christ Enduring Principles (found in *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd ed. (or previous edition), or from www.CofChrist.org/ourfaith/enduring-principles.asp. Principles could include how to arrive, how to act during the lesson, and how to leave.

Have each group share their lists and allow the group to discuss which of the two lists they would rather use to guide the class. What are the effects of using a list of rules? What is the effect of using a list of principles? Which is more comfortable for the class?

**GAME TIME**

Play a well-known game. This might include tag, duck-duck-goose, or a relay race involving water and buckets (this could represent “carrying the ethics of Christ peace”). Divide into two teams. Have one team write a list of *rules* for the game. Rules are specific and answer “What?” Have the other team write out a list of *principles* for the game. For ideas on principles, begin with Community of Christ Enduring Principles found in *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd ed. (or previous edition), or from www.CofChrist.org/ourfaith/enduring-principles.asp. Principles would answer “how” questions. Have the two teams play the game using the rules first and then the principles. Be sure to read them aloud before each game.

After playing the game both ways, ask students how it went. Expect that they might get frustrated with the principles-based game (especially younger students). Ask, what were the differences? What happens if someone doesn’t follow the rules? What happens if someone doesn’t follow a principle? Explain that sometimes rules are necessary (such as in games), but that sometimes in our lives principles are a better guide.

Games are different from real life—or at least if you are trying to carry the ethics of Christ’s peace they should be different. The guidance given to the worldwide church in Doctrine and Covenants 164:6 calls for a *principle-based ethics* approach to multiple issues. While helpful in many ways, principle-based ethics are challenging to carry out. This approach involves the willingness to listen carefully, to act selflessly, and to put the needs of the larger community above individuals. It requires spiritual maturity to seek and respond to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and to offer love and peace even in response to disagreement, negativity, and persecution.

**ARENAS OF LIFE**

Review the “arenas of life” from earlier in this lesson. Write one arena at the top of each poster board. These might include family, school, work, church, sports, recreation, or others as identified by the students. Divide the students into the same number of groups as arenas and provide groups with a collection of markers, pens, and pencils. Write Community of Christ Enduring Principles on flip chart paper. These are available in *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd ed. (or previous edition), or from www.CofChrist.org/ourfaith/enduring-principles.asp. Principles on flip chart paper. These are available in *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd ed. (or previous edition), or from www.CofChrist.org/ourfaith/enduring-principles.asp.

Have groups draw a simple floor plan for an arena which ties to the word at the top of the poster board. For instance, for “family” draw a floor plan of a living room, family room, or house. For church, create the floor plan for a congregation building, specifically a sanctuary. For sports or recreation, groups may draw the plans for playing fields or sports arenas.
Send
Explores how the lesson might be lived out

Have each group read the Enduring Principles and come up with one action, which they can choose to do in this arena which carries the ethics of Christ’s peace. Most of the Enduring Principles will apply in some way to each arena. Encourage creativity. Have them write their activity or action on or around the arena they have drawn.

Allow groups about 10 minutes to complete this activity with as many of the Enduring Principles as they can. Encourage some of the groups to start at the bottom of the list. Some in the group may continue to finish the arena while the group moves on. Afterward, have each group present a short report to the entire class.

Have students get into pairs and choose one of the four topics taken from the focus scripture: poverty, disease, war, and environmental deterioration. Make sure each pair has at least one copy of the Enduring Principles used before and found at the end of the lesson. Have pairs come up with at least one principle-based action for each of the Enduring Principles related to their topic.

As an example, for “poverty,” a principle-based action might be to contribute regularly using offering envelopes to the Mission Initiative Abolish Poverty, End Suffering.

Be ready to move between pairs helping them to move beyond any obstacles or stumbling blocks. Allow the pairs to work about three minutes. Ask the entire class to gather and have each pair shout out what they come up with and ask them to connect their responses to each principle to reinforce how they are using principle-based actions.

Enduring Principles

BLESS
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

Read aloud Matthew 5:43–45:

You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven...

Display a picture of Jesus Christ and a cross at the front of the class area. Listen to “I Am the Way” by Mark Schultz. After the song ends, give each student several small sticky notes and a pen and explain the activity. Ask students to write on their notes the name of one person they find it difficult to get along with right now. Have them place the sticky notes on the cross. Ask them as they do this to pray silently for the person. If a student cannot think of anyone, have him or her pray silently for those participating.

After the song ends, say a closing prayer, asking for the Holy Spirit’s guidance in carrying the ethics of Christ’s peace into all arenas of life.
Focus
How can we live in right relationships?
The concept of shalom includes right relationships with God, ourselves, others, and all of creation. What is a “right” relationship with others? How do the ethics of Christ’s peace affect this right relationship?

Focus Scriptures
Jeremiah 29:7, Matthew 7:12, and Doctrine and Covenants 163:4a

Objectives
THE LEARNERS WILL…
• explore shalom and how principled-based ethics have a positive impact on right relationships.
• explore what it means to be poor, displaced, mistreated, and diseased.
• consider responses in right relationships to the poor, displaced, mistreated, and diseased.

Resources and Materials
• Flip chart easel and paper
• Markers (for both flip chart use and for student use)
• Pens and pencils (enough for all students)
• Paper (a supply based on the number of students)
• Bibles (including The Message)—one for each student, if possible
• Principles for the class agreed to in lesson 1
• Spool of yarn or string
• Enduring Principles poster (from lesson 1)
• Bibles or copies of Matthew 7:12 and Leviticus 19:18 for each student
• Copy of Doctrine and Covenants 163:4a (or written out on flip chart or poster board)
• 30 ft/9 m or longer (depending on size of group) soft, thick rope
• Green piece of cloth, 24 in/60 cm square
• Copies of “The Cost of Living in Poverty” for each student or small group (at end of lesson)
• Poster board, one piece for each group of four or five
• “The Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi” written on flip chart paper or poster board

Background Information for Teachers
God invites us to be in relationship. Through relationship, we are open to receive the love and mercy God has for us. Acceptance of God’s love provides us with an abundance of love and mercy we can share with others. It helps us see others as God sees them and frees us to respond without reservation. Spending time with God helps us develop right relationships. These bring us closer to God’s reign on Earth. We explore this idea further in lesson 5.

In Matthew, Jesus provided instructions about living in relationship with others: “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets” (Matthew 7:12 NRSV). We also know this passage as the Golden Rule. Jeremiah 29:7 and Doctrine and Covenants 163:4a also shape our understanding of right relationships.

God draws us to relationship with one another. God’s word through scripture promotes increased awareness of our motives and actions and their effects on others. This awareness aligns our intent and desire to honor, nurture, care for, and love one another.

We express the peace of Jesus Christ as we respond to one another. May we choose to be intentional in refusing the way of individualism. May we choose to be responsive to the invitation of Christ to show mercy through signal communities of joy, hope, love, and peace.

Prior to class be sure to read “Right Relationships” by Barbara L. Carter in the adult reunion text for important foundational information on the topic of this lesson.
Welcome each student on arrival. Remind students of the principles they agreed to in the last lesson.

Have students sit in chairs in a circle as close as possible to one another, knees touching. Using a spool of yarn or string, have students answer a question when they have the spool in their possession. After answering, they hold onto to the string and throw the spool to another person. Repeat until each person has shared. Have each student respond three or four times:

- My name is...
- My favorite thing I own is...
- My friends and I like to...
- I know someone who...

After three or four rounds, point out to the students they have formed a web. What happens when one person stands up? What if one person drops the ends of the string? We might think of this web as a representation of our lives—how they are interconnected—and how the actions of one person affect us all.

From the first lesson, what do you remember about principle-based ethics? Write the responses on flip chart paper. This lesson helps us connect principle-based ethics to our relationships with others—creating “right” relationships.

Have a student read aloud this passage, Jeremiah 29:7, adapted:

But seek shalom and prosperity for the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare [shalom] you will find your welfare [shalom].

Share with students there is a human longing across cultures and religions for a renewed world. We see the world as it is—but hope, pray, and work for the world as it should be. There are different words for this longing and action, but the Hebrew word shalom might best describe it. Shalom is usually translated from Hebrew into English as simply “peace,” but it is much more than the absence of conflict or a feeling of comfort. Shalom is the restoration of the world to wholeness—as God intended. It is about the right relationship with God, self, others, and creation. Shalom includes well-being, harmony, wholeness, abundance, and justice.

Have another student reread this passage replacing the word welfare with well-being. How does this change the scripture for you? Repeat this using the words harmony, wholeness, abundance, and justice. Ask each time how substituting the new word changes the meaning. What does this mean?

This passage helps us understand what it means to have a right or righteous relationship. If we live out this scripture (act) using any of these words, what would it look like? Write the responses on flip chart paper. Have students look through the list of Enduring Principles (on flip chart paper from the first lesson). Ask if this act is principle-based, and on which of the Enduring Principles it is based. Provide examples to get them started. Allow discussion. Some actions may not relate to one of the Enduring Principles. Help them figure out other principles (see the first lesson if they need a reminder about principles compared to rules). Write down the principle next to each act.

One principle not directly related to the Enduring Principles is the Principle of Reciprocity, also known as the Golden Rule. Have a student read the following verse from Matthew 7:12 NRSV:

In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.

All major faith traditions around the world have this rule or ethic (although expressed in different words) as a part of their beliefs. Even though the Gospel of Matthew credits this to Jesus, it was known among the Jewish people.

...you shall love your neighbor as yourself...

—Leviticus 19:18, Hebrew Scriptures

This passage also helps us understand what it means to live in right relationships. Have students stand and form a circle, as close together without touching as possible. Have everyone turn right and offer a shoulder massage to the person in front of him or her. Before they begin, check for any negative responses and have those students define ideas such welfare, harmony, wholeness, abundance, and justice.
step out of the circle. Explain that allowing people to take part by choice is an ethical-related action. This is the Platinum Rule: treat others in the way they like to be treated.

In small groups, have students read Doctrine and Covenants 163:4a:

God, the Eternal Creator, weeps for the poor, displaced, mistreated, and diseased of the world because of their unnecessary suffering. Such conditions are not God’s will. Open your ears to hear the pleading of mothers and fathers in all nations who desperately seek a future of hope for their children. Do not turn away from them. For in their welfare resides your welfare.

Have each group answer the following questions, written on flip chart paper:

- How does this passage expand your understanding of a right relationship?
- How does this passage change when you substitute the words well-being, harmony, wholeness, abundance, and justice in place of welfare?

RESPOND
Takes the learners from hearing to doing

Ahead of time, tie a piece of green cloth (approximately 24 in/60 cm square) to the middle point of a long rope (a thick, soft rope is best). Lay it stretched out in a straight line. Take the class to an open area—ideally not on concrete. Be sure not to call this activity a game. Divide the class into two uneven teams—one with more players than the other, physically stronger on one side; make it obvious. Say: “Teams needs to go to opposite ends of the rope. Both teams are to pull on the rope until one team has the green cloth in their possession. Each person needs to grab onto the rope. (Pause) Go!” If asked, repeat the rules exactly as before. Be sure to have extra adults as spotters and be ready to stop the activity before anyone gets hurt. Another option is to stop if they are moving toward a tug-of-war.

Debrief afterward (or after you have interrupted). If the two teams go to opposite ends and begin a game of tug-of-war, ask them what relationship one team had with the other. What principles were underlying their choices? Was there anything else affecting their choices? Reread the instructions. What other ways of interpreting the instructions (principle-based rather than rule-based) are possible? What other outcomes might happen? Is it possible for two teams to be on the same side?

If the two teams cooperated from the start, or if they somehow altered their state (redistributed players, changed the rules) praise them for their effort. What principles were underlying their choices?

Sometimes we when we make a decision, there are moral choices attached, but we do not always think about them. Despite talking about ethics and right relationships, when presented with a situation that looks like tug-of-war we do what we know without thinking of the consequences.

THE COST OF LIVING IN POVERTY

Divide the class into groups of four or five and have them work out what they think it costs to live as a family using the handout “The Cost of Living in Poverty” found at the end of the lesson.

Provide each group with information about poverty in your nation or region. Specifically include what is considered the level of income for poverty for families of various sizes (including four or five if possible—the number of students in each group). After they finish, ask the entire class: How frustrating was it to work this out? What does this tell you about being poor or living in poverty? What would happen if one member of the family became seriously ill with lots of medical bills? What if one of those who made money in the family lost his or her job or was deported to another country?

SEND
Explores how the lesson might be lived out

Have a student read aloud Doctrine and Covenants 163:4a again. How are we to have a right relationship with those who are poor, displaced, mistreated, and diseased? How is our welfare or shalom connected to their welfare or shalom? Brainstorm what each of these mean writing responses on flip chart paper.

For poor, explain that many nations provide an income poverty threshold based on age, size of family, and other factors. In what other ways might someone be poor?
Displaced could include homelessness (temporary or per-
manent) from natural disasters, fleeing from persecution,
genocide, or war, or immigration (both legal and illegal)
for various reasons.

Mistreated may include physical, sexual, or emotional
abuse; human trafficking; and other forms of slavery.

Diseased could mean infectious diseases like HIV and
AIDS, smallpox, tuberculosis, hepatitis, meningitis; or
noninfectious diseases like cancer, heart disease, or dia-
betes. As students work on their reports encourage them
to include responses that relate to personally knowing
someone who is poor, displaced, mistreated, or diseased.
Remind them not to share personal information about
themselves or others.

Continue in the same groups as the past activity. Assign
each group to work on one of the four ideas (poor, dis-
placed, mistreated, and diseased) found in 163:4a. Give
each group a piece of poster board and markers, pens, or
pencils. Have them create a poster that briefly defines the
issue, explains some of causes, and gives ideas for having
“right relationships” with people who are affected.

BLESS
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

This prayer is credited to Francis of Assisi. Francis was
the son of a wealthy cloth merchant. He lived the life
typical of a wealthy young man, even fighting as a sol-
dier. While going off to war in 1204, Francis had a vision
that directed him back to Assisi, where he lost his desire
for personal possessions. On a pilgrimage to Rome, he
begged with others at St. Peter’s Basilica, the center of the
Christian faith then. The experience moved him to live
in poverty the rest of his life in solidarity with the poor.

Have students read one line at a time as a blessing to
close the lesson. While they do this, have the group post-
ers from the previous activity held up so all can see.

PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring love.
Where there is injury, let me bring pardon.
Where there is discord, let me bring union.
Where there is doubt, let me bring faith.
Where there is error, let me bring truth.
Where there is despair, let me bring hope.
Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.
Where there is darkness, let me bring light.

O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek to be
consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.
It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.
The Cost of Living in Poverty

Think of your group as a family that lives in a household together. (The size of your group will be the size of your household.) Make a list of what your basic needs are. Calculate the monthly costs of basic needs for your group’s family. Write them on the sheet where you have listed the items. Add up the monthly costs, and then multiply by 12 to find out the amount a family would need to survive in your community.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Needs Per Month</th>
<th>Cost in Your Area</th>
<th>National Average</th>
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<td>Food</td>
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Size of family: ________________________________________________________________

Total cost of basic needs per month in your area:______________________________

Total cost of basic needs per year in your area:______________________________

National poverty level:______________________________________________________

Minimum wage per hour:______________________________________________________

Annual income based on minimum wage:________________________________________

Wage required for worker in your area to meet basic needs:_____________________

Use this space for calculations:
Focus
How can we participate in God’s grace and abundant generosity?

Both the words and life of Jesus Christ challenge us to participate in God’s grace and abundant generosity. Grace and Generosity is one of the nine Enduring Principles of Community of Christ. Through teachings about generosity, we remember to share generously, save wisely, and spend responsibly.

Focus Scripture
Matthew 6:19–21

Objectives
THE LEARNERS WILL…
• explore the meaning of grace and generosity in many different ways.
• be challenged to practice grace and generosity during difficult times.
• express how grace and generosity work together and how they might express it in their lives.

Resources and Materials
• Flip chart easel and paper
• Markers (for both flip chart use and for student use)
• Pens and pencils (enough for all students)
• Paper (a supply based on the number of students)
• Bibles (including The Message)—one for each student, if possible—or copies of scripture passages from lesson
• Individual prizes for each student (small flashlight with battery, art markers in fun colors, travel-size chess set, movie pass, small poster, unusual coin—such as US$1 coin)
• “Grace under Fire” supplies—adapt to what you have (see under “Gather” section of lesson).
  • One tennis ball for each pair of students
  • Several books
  • Package of balloons (check for latex allergies in advance)
  • Three or four beach balls
  • Three or four plastic teaspoons (same number as beach balls)
  • A live moth
  • Something rusty
  • Article from recent newspaper about a robbery or stealing in general
  • Three wood beams, 8 to 10 ft (2.5 m to 3 m) 4 in/90 mm square
  • Bricks, cinder blocks, or 6 in (15.3 cm) lengths of wood, 2 in x 4 in/40 mm x 90 mm for river rocks, strategically placed
  • A large Hula-Hoop to serve as the island
  • Two 30 ft/9 m lengths of rope to define the riverbanks
  • A big box or blow-up toy (so it’s not too heavy) to use as the treasure
  • Random junk to use as river trash (anything you can find that is clean and safe)
  • Poster board, markers, and pens or pencils for each group of three or four students
  • Craft supplies on a table (cloth, paper, glue, scissors, yarn, beads, and glitter)
  • Supplies for the Lord's Supper: loaf of bread; pitcher of grape juice, small cups; Communion prayers
BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS
Matthew 6:19–21 includes references to rust, moth, and thieves to explain where not to place your treasure. The author of Matthew tells us these can consume our treasure, or as another translation says, can corrupt it.

People of the first century, including the Christians who read Matthew’s Gospel, were aware of the effects of rust. Rust is the common term for corrosion of iron or alloys containing iron. The Greeks in the time of Jesus knew about the destructive impact of moths eating cloth and fur. They may have also been aware of the irreparable damage moths did to expensive silk coming from China through Europe, the Mediterranean, and North Africa. Both moth and rust take time to show their impacts. However, once the elements are present, there is certain destruction.

When we commit ourselves to engaging in Christ’s mission, our lives more closely reflect the attitudes and actions of Jesus. Our treasures become those things associated with mission. We demonstrate God’s grace through acts of generosity, including invitation. We invite others to experience God’s abundance through the blessings of generosity.

Prior to class be sure to read “Grace and Generosity” by Richard James in the adult reunion text for important foundational information on the topic of this lesson.

GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson
In the first lesson, we talked about carrying the ethics of Christ’s peace into the different arenas of our lives. In the second lesson, we talked about how the ethics of Christ’s peace have a part in our relationships with others, including those who are poor, displaced, mistreated, and diseased. This lesson builds on our response to others and the church through grace and generosity.

Ask, what do you know about “Grace and Generosity”? How is it part of our right relationships with those who are poor, displaced, mistreated, and diseased? Record the responses on flip chart paper.

GRACE UNDER FIRE
Tell students if they can complete the tasks you give them, they will win a wonderful prize. The prize should be something most would want (small flashlight with battery, art markers in fun colors, travel-size chess set, movie pass, small poster, unusual coin—such as US$1 coin).

Explain the way to win the prize is to complete all the tasks you give them, perfectly and within five minutes (or another short time frame). Make a list of impossible tasks for students. Have the necessary supplies for the ones you choose. Here are some examples:

- Students must find a partner and toss a tennis ball back and forth (from at least 10 ft/3 m) 10 times without dropping it. If they drop it, they must start the count over.
- Students must balance three books on their heads and walk across the room without dropping the books.
- Students must stand on one leg for one minute without any support from another object in the room or from other people.
- Students must cross the room by inflating a balloon and then releasing it and letting it go until it touches the opposite wall. They may only inflate the balloon again by standing where it lands and repeating the process. (Check for latex allergies in advance.)
- Students must spin in a circle 10 times then walk a straight line without stepping off the line from one side of the room or area to the other.
- Students must do 66 jumping jacks while saying all the books of the Bible in reverse order.
- Students must walk across the room while balancing a beach ball on a teaspoon without dropping the ball.
- Add any other creative ideas to add to the list to make it even more impossible.

When time is up gather the students into a circle. Ask them at what point they realized there was no way to carry out all the tasks in the appointed time. How do you feel about not being able to win the reward?

Give the students the prize you agreed to at the beginning, even though they could not complete the tasks.

Explain how despite all our efforts, God’s grace and generosity are unconditional. This is not to suggest that God gives us rewards for being good. Grace and generosity are part of God’s attributes; grace and generosity are how God loves all Creation. This is the grace and generosity God calls us to show others, as we give unconditionally and graciously receive the generosity offered by others.
Have one or more students read aloud Matthew 6:19–21. In this text, Jesus uses the words *rust*, *moth*, and *thieves* to explain where not to place your treasure. The author of Matthew tells us these can consume our treasure, or as another translation says, can corrupt it.

Show students a moth (or picture of one) and a piece of rusted metal. Have you ever had a moth (or something else from nature) destroy a piece of clothing? Did you ever leave something out in the rain or snow, only to have it ruined? How did you feel? Allow students to share.

Explain that Jesus teaches a higher standard of expectation for disciples about “treasure.” Jesus bases the standard on the capacity to be generous with what one has, rather than on material value. As followers of Jesus, should we collect and amass wealth to store and keep for ourselves, or should we share it with others? Allow students to respond. It is important that we learn to share generously, save wisely, and spend responsibly. We can develop good habits of behavior that allow us to be more generous like God is generous to us.

Have students get into groups of four or five. Have them read together Luke 12:13–21.

Have them respond to the following questions, written on flip chart paper:

- What would be some examples of “crops” today?
- What would be an example of “barns”?
- What verse shows the rich man’s ethics?
- How would you describe his ethics (the rule or principle behind his decision)?
- What other decision could the rich man have made?

In this passage, having wealth can tempt us into believing we need to acquire more wealth. We can also become enticed to trust our wealth more than we trust God, focusing our hearts and minds on material things. We can end up working on our wealth (or the barns that hold it) and not focusing on the mission of Christ.

Ask how the story in Luke 12:13–21 might have played out if the rich man had offered his crops and they were refused? Share with students that another important part of grace and generosity is the grace we demonstrate in receiving the generosity of others. How do you feel when you offer something to someone and they refuse? When we accept the gifts of others we allow them to be generous.

Have students read Doctrine and Covenants 162:7b and answer the questions that follow:

- How might you identify a person who is fearful and accumulates possessions?
- What possessions bring security?
- What ethics are at play here?
- How might fear and possessions interfere with right relationships?

**RIVER OF LIFE**

Before starting, make sure there is at least one solution. Imagine it is 1839 and you’re in a group of people trying to cross a wide river. The entire group must get across the river using the three logs and must recover a treasure chest off the island in the middle. The river is filled with rocks that can create rapids, which can support the logs. The group must try to get the treasure and everyone to the other side of the river. If someone falls into the river at any point, something horrible will happen to the person—ranging from a broken (unusable) leg or arm, to blindness or loss of voice (because of bacteria in the river), to finding trash in the river they must now carry with them on the rest of the adventure.

**Safety**

Be sure the playing surface is level and free from holes. Be sure the group is careful as they pass around the logs. Encourage them to lift with their legs and to be aware of both ends as the logs move. If you have a large group, consider having two groups go from opposite sides of the river or set up other stations.
**Equipment**

- Three 8 to 10 ft/2.5 m to 3 m long by 4 in/90 mm square wooden beams
- Bricks, cinder blocks, or 6 in/15 cm lengths of 2 in x 4 in/40 mm x 90 mm boards for river rocks, strategically placed
- A large Hula-Hoop to serve as the island
- Two 30 ft/9 m lengths of rope to define the river banks
- A big box or blow-up toy (so it’s not too heavy) to use as the treasure
- Random junk to use as river trash (anything you can find that is safe and clean)

**Consideration**

Use the following groups of questions to debrief as you go or afterward. The goal is to help the participants see grace and generosity at work using principle-based ethics and maintaining right relationships.

- Does the group take time to plan?
- What ethics are guiding them?
- How do ethics change as the group progresses?
- How are they treating one another (right relationships)?
- Do they work as a team or as individuals or in smaller groups?
- Who steps into leadership roles?
- Does the leadership transfer to others?
- How do they handle failure and frustration?
- Where do they place their faith?
- What do they value the most, the treasure, the adventure, or the people?


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**SEND**  
**Explores how the lesson might be lived out**

**MASHUP**

Have students get into groups of three or four and provide poster board, markers, and pens or pencils for each group. Make available for everyone a collection of craft materials (cloth, paper, glue, scissors, yarn, beads, and glitter).

Have each group work to define generosity. Then have each group define grace. Next have them do a “mashup” to merge the definitions (like songwriters, authors, or webpage designers who use parts of several works to create a new work). Tell how generosity and grace intersect and how we can live them out. Have each group create a graphic design showing the interaction between generosity and grace.

Have each group present their graphics and talk about their designs to the entire class. Thank them for their work and have them display their designs around the class space.

—Adapted from the online Disciple Formation Guide at www.CofChrist.org/dfg
Bring out a loaf of bread and a pitcher of grape or fruit juice. Explain that God’s grace and generosity is made real to us through the emblems of the Lord’s Supper, reminding us of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Share the bread and juice with students. Afterward, offer a short benediction reflecting on God’s grace and generosity through Jesus Christ.
BACKGROUND INFORMATION
FOR TEACHERS

Disciples of Jesus Christ have a responsibility to address injustice in the world and to work toward “God’s justice” or shalom. We often understand justice in relation to power. When two people or groups confront each other they are seldom equal in power. Wherever one person or group dominates, injustice can occur. God’s justice seeks to establish equity in relationships.

To help us understand God’s justice, the lesson presents four types of justice:

1. On the most basic level, all created beings have the right to be what and who God created them to be. In the article “God’s Justice” (see adult reunion text), Susan Oxley calls this “intrinsic justice” because it is “built-in” to all creation.

2. The second type of justice is “proportional justice” or “earned justice.” When people say, “He got his just rewards,” they are referring to this kind of justice. You get what you deserve.

3. The third type of justice is restorative justice. It seeks to restore wholeness, especially in situations where proportional justice has failed or been misused.

4. The fourth type of justice is “shalom justice.” It combines the grace of restorative justice with the accountability of proportional justice.

Prior to class be sure to read “God’s Justice” by Susan Oxley in the adult reunion text for important foundational information on the topic of this lesson.
Ask students, what do you think of when you hear the word justice? Write the responses on flip chart paper. Ask, what issues of justice can you think of facing the world? Write the responses on flip chart paper. Here are some examples:

- race relations
- immigration practices
- health care
- international relations
- children’s rights
- gender issues
- human slavery
- armaments
- political oppression
- religious abuses
- limited education
- rights for the physically, mentally, or emotionally challenged

GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson

ENGAGE
Invites exploration and interaction

What responsibility do followers of Jesus Christ have in addressing injustice? What kind of justice is “God’s justice?” We often understand justice in relation to power. When two people meet, they are seldom equal in power. Wherever one person dominates another, injustice can occur. Justice seeks to reestablish equality in relationships. Consider the four types of justice for this lesson: intrinsic or “built-in” justice, proportional or earned justice, restorative justice, and shalom justice.

Copy the handout at the end of the lesson describing each of the four types of justice. Divide the class into four groups and assign one type to each. Have them select a leader, read the description, and create a short skit (serious or funny) to explain the assigned topic. Alternatives to a skit could be to create a poem or song about their topics.

Before the groups present their skits, review the page with everyone and help them understand how intrinsic justice is the foundation for proportional justice which is the foundation for restorative justice which is the foundation for shalom justice.

Debrief: Ask the entire group what type of justice do they think most of the world practices? What’s the reason? How difficult would it be to always practice shalom justice?

RESPOND
Takes the learners from hearing to doing

Write the words Shalom Justice on a new flip chart page. Explain in your own words or have students read the following paragraph about God’s justice:

God’s justice seeks to restore both victim and perpetrator to wholeness and worth. It repairs broken communities with grace and generosity. It considers individual differences and shows partiality. Shalom justice recognizes the power of evil, names it, and seeks to restore right relationships. It combines forgiveness, accountability, transformation, and grace. It allows second chances, third chances, and resurrection as a response to crucifixion. God’s justice creates shalom. That is exactly the justice each of us needs in response to the brokenness in human life. It comes with accountability balanced by grace. It provides an ethic of peace to live by. It is love, delivering justice.

—Susan Oxley, “God’s Justice,” Live Christ’s Peace

Mathew 5:43–48. Explain to students they will be participating in a spiritual practice called “Dwelling in the Word.” Tell students you will read the passage aloud three times. Tell them Dwelling in the Word is not about wrangling out an intellectual answer, but listening for a response prompted by the Holy Spirit. Tell them after the third reading, you
RESPOND continued

will ask the following questions (write these out on flip chart paper) 

1. Where does your mind get stuck or where does it wander? (This is normal for everyone to do when we read or listen to scripture—ask them to pay attention to the word or phrase where they get stuck or wander off.)

2. How does this passage apply to you and today’s world?

3. How does this passage tell us something about God’s justice?

4. How does this passage call each of us to change?

SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived out

WALK A MILE (OR TWO)...

Have one or more students read aloud Matthew 5:38–42 NRSV:

You have heard that it was said, “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

Tell students much of the Sermon on the Mount would have been difficult for Jesus’ listeners. This includes Matthew 5:41. Roman law required a Jew to carry a soldier’s pack one mile. Some Jews would mark a mile in all directions from their home and would not go a step further. Jesus shocked his listeners. Jesus said go another mile!

Have students get into small groups of three or four. Tell them you are going to read a question and they are to respond in order around their group and as quickly as possible. After everyone has responded, then you can talk about your responses. Select one person in the group to respond first for the first question. Respond in a clockwise rotation. The second person will then respond to the next question first and so on.

1. Whom would you help while walking alone on a street: three elderly women or a teenage boy?

2. Whom would you choose to work with on a science project: a person who excels in sports or who excels in math?

3. Whom would you hire: someone who dresses like you or someone who dresses different from you?

4. Whom would you invite to your home: the homeless student in study hall or the wealthy student in algebra?

5. Whom would you ask for help fixing a flat tire: a man in a wheelchair or a strong looking woman?

Debrief: Repeat the questions to the entire group asking what students thought of their first responses. What were the “Aha!” moments? What ethics and form of justice shaped your responses?

Explain shalom justice or God’s justice is about always going the second mile when asked only to go the first. Ask the class when they or someone they know (personally or through media) has gone the “second mile” to help those who are poor and powerless. When have they or someone they know had to confront oppressive power? To stop violence and pursue peace? To restore outcasts to caring community?

BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

...IN MY SHOES

Walking in another’s shoes is the first step toward deeper understanding and commitment to God’s justice. Following this metaphor, first, we have to take off our shoes. Have the students remove their shoes. This means letting go of our understandings, positions, identity, and trying to understand the other person from his or her perspective. It can (but does not always) lead to forgiveness and reconciliation.

Offer a barefoot blessing, asking God to bless the feet of those who take shalom justice—God’s justice—to those who are poor and powerless, oppressed by the power of others, who are victims of violence and to those who are outcasts. Read Isaiah 52:7 NRSV:

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”
Four Types of Justice

Intrinsic or “Built-in” Justice

On the most basic level, all created beings have the right to be what and who God created them to be. Some call this “built-in justice” because it is “built-in” to all creation. In Matthew 5:48, the writer says Jesus told his followers to be perfect, even as God is perfect. The Hebrew word "teleios" translates as perfect, but it meant “to achieve an end or goal.” The verse could mean, “fulfill the potential of your being, just as God fulfills the measure of Divine Being.” In Community of Christ Enduring Principles we affirm the value and worth of each individual. These principles are built-in to us. When all creation fulfills its potential, intrinsic justice occurs.

Proportional or “Earned” Justice

The second type of justice is “proportional justice” or “earned justice.” When people say, “He got his just reward,” they are referring to this kind of justice. You get what you deserve.

“Obedience theology,” a form of proportional justice, says God blesses the obedient and curses the disobedient. The writers of both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament warn people that God’s vengeance will follow disobedience. “…For he will avenge the blood of his children, and take vengeance on his adversaries…” (Deuteronomy 32:43 NRSV). Many passages in the Book of Mormon express obedience theology and emphasize God’s judgment on sin. Doctrine and Covenants 81:1 speaks of the penalty of God’s judgment. Other sections identify God’s punishment as justly earned for those who persecute God’s people or do not believe as we do.

Restorative Justice

The third type of justice is “restorative justice.” It seeks to restore wholeness, especially in situations where proportional justice has failed or been misused. God is not bound by human laws and concepts of justice. God’s intent for human beings is wholeness, so Divine grace overlooks what a person has “earned” and gives unbounded love, forgiveness, and restoration instead. Hosea forgave unrepentant Gomer when she was unfaithful, simply because he loved her. This undeserved mercy is like the grace and love of God toward Israel (Hosea 11:7–9). Isaiah assured Judah of God’s blessings despite the faithless people (Isaiah 30:18–26). The prophets continually called Israel back into covenant relationship with God.

Shalom Justice

The fourth type of justice is “shalom justice.” It combines the grace of restorative justice with the accountability of proportional justice. Shalom justice means liberation for people who have been oppressed or marginalized. What was the earned justice for the woman caught in adultery, the prodigal son, Peter’s denial, and those who crucified Jesus? Jesus taught that God’s grace and forgiveness exceeded God’s judgment. His proclamation of the kingdom reveals a God who replaces injustice with justice, transforms social structures, and defends the weak and those on the margins of society.

The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3–11) would have been shocking to many of the people of Jesus’ day. Obedience theology said the poor, the mourners, the meek, and the persecuted had received their just dues. Yet Jesus assured them of the blessings of God’s favor. God’s shalom justice is not in alignment with human expectations. Matthew 5:38–48 affirms that God’s love breaks the cycle of violence and God’s shalom justice is both restorative and revolutionary.
LESSON 5
God’s Reign on Earth

Focus
How can we participate in the reign of God on Earth?

The vision of Zion is to promote God’s reign on Earth, as proclaimed by Jesus Christ, through the leavening influence of just and peaceful communities.


Focus Scripture
• Matthew 6:5–15
• Doctrine and Covenants 163:3a–c

Objectives
THE LEARNERS WILL...
• explore the concept of the reign of God through the Lord’s Prayer and a model of kingdom building (adapted for youth) by Marva Dawn.
• explore how sin might slow down our responses to working to establish God’s kingdom on Earth.

• study Doctrine and Covenant 163:3a–c to understand ways of living out the vision of God’s peaceable reign.

Resources and Materials
• Flip chart easel and paper
• Markers (for both flip chart use and for student use)
• Pens and pencils (enough for all students)
• Paper (a supply based on the number of students)
• Bibles (including The Message)—one for each student, if possible
• One piece of poster board for every four to five students
• Copies of the handout with “Marva Dawn’s Model of Kingdom Building” (including Doctrine and Covenants 163:3a–c) for each student
• Small slips of paper, at least one per student
• Small box (like a shoe box or even smaller) from which to draw out slips of paper

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
FOR TEACHERS
The Lord’s Prayer is Jesus’ model for us to learn how we ought to pray. His teaching goes beyond mere words to be said. He taught how to focus one’s self in the presence of God. At the heart of the Lord’s Prayer is the declaration about God’s reign on Earth, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10 NRSV). Through Jesus’ teaching, we learn we have a role in bringing about God’s reign on Earth.

Theologian Marva Dawn provides a model that demonstrates the balance between spending time with God and then acting out of this encounter. A Sabbath way of life, consists of resting in the kingdom’s grace, ceasing by grace those attitudes and actions that hinder the kingdom, feasting so as to radiate the grace-full splendor of the kingdom, and embracing the kingdom’s gracious purposes (The Sense of the Call: A Sabbath Way of Life for Those Who Serve God, the Church, and the World, [Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006, ISBN 9780802844590], vii–viii).

God’s love comes to us through the gift of Jesus Christ. Sin is our unwillingness to receive this gift. Sin is all that stands between humanity and God’s reign on Earth. Our spiritual condition is connected to God’s reign on Earth. It wavers when we do not spend time with God.

The call to promote God’s peaceable reign is part of who we are as a people. When listening to God is not our priority, we become complacent about the vision of Zion as if it is not about the here and now. We forget we have a significant role in working toward its reality. Complacency makes the hope of Zion less compelling and our sense of urgency diminishes.

Prior to class be sure to read “God’s Reign on Earth” by Stassi Cramm in the adult reunion text for important foundational information on the topic of this lesson.

—21—
In the previous lesson, we discussed four different types of justice. What do you remember about “shalom” justice? Write responses on flip chart paper. This lesson connects shalom or God’s justice to the reign of God on Earth. In Community of Christ, we talk about building signal communities in which the mission of Christ is lived fully. We call this the vision of Zion.

Form small groups. Provide each group with a piece of poster board and markers. Challenge each group to create a poster about the reign of God on Earth. What would be included? Afterward, have the groups present their work.

Ask, what do you believe about the reign of God on Earth? Record the responses on flip chart paper. Ask, where did these ideas originate? Let’s look at some of the words credited to Jesus about the kingdom of God.

Jesus starts with prayer. Have two or more students read aloud Matthew 6:5–15. Change readers for each paragraph or more frequently.

And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. “When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

—Matthew 6:5–15 NRSV

We call the second paragraph the Lord’s Prayer. But it is not common to include the first paragraph when talking about the prayer. Have everyone turn to this passage. What does this first paragraph say about prayer? What is the overall theme? Write responses on flip chart paper.

Ask students what distracts them from praying. Record their responses on flip chart paper. Reassure them most of us struggle with distractions as a normal part of everyday life.

Let’s look deeper at the second paragraph. How does this prayer help us to focus our thoughts on the priorities of Christ’s mission? What do you notice about the prayer? What does this say about the reign of God? Write responses on flip chart paper.

Theologian Marva Dawn provides a model that shows the balance between spending time with God and then acting out of this encounter. A Sabbath way of life consists of resting in the kingdom’s grace, ending by grace those attitudes and actions that hinder the kingdom, feasting so as to radiate the grace-full splendor of the kingdom, and embracing the kingdom’s gracious purposes (The Sense of the Call: A Sabbath Way of Life for Those Who Serve God, the Church, and the World).

To live a Sabbath way of life is to be missional where missional is “a sacred community that is shaped and sent by their ongoing encounter with the Living Christ in relationship with one another and their neighbors, locally and globally” (from Leading Congregations in Mission project).

Form four groups and have students create and act out skits for each of Dawn’s four concepts:

1. Resting in the kingdom’s grace. How can you act out what it means to rest from distractions so you can focus on the reign of God?

2. Ceasing by grace those attitudes and actions that hinder the kingdom. What can you stop doing or what attitudes can you let go of that get in the way of God’s purpose? Act out how you can do this.

3. Feasting to radiate the grace-full splendor of the kingdom. Feasting is enjoying! What blessings do you think are
4. Embracing the kingdom’s gracious purpose. Identify the purposes toward which the reign of God will work. How can you act these out?

Allow groups 10 minutes to come up with their skits. Have groups act them out in order 1–4 as listed above. Debrief after each skit, asking the entire class:

• After skit 1, How can we find rest in God in our busy lives?
• After skit 2, What can you stop doing (attitudes and actions) that block the reign of God?
• After skit 3, What “blessings” do you enjoy? What could help you to “feast” more?
• After skit 4, What kingdom-concepts could you embrace? What would help you to do this?

SEND
Explores how the lesson might be lived out

Distribute pens or pencils to every student. Have students take out the handout you distributed earlier. Read aloud Doctrine and Covenants 163:3a–c. As you read, have students underline words or phrases they believe are things we are called to do to help build the kingdom of God on Earth.

Doctrine and Covenants 163:3a–c (with examples underlined):

You are called to create pathways in the world for peace in Christ to be relationally and culturally incarnate. The hope of Zion is realized when the vision of Christ is embodied in communities of generosity, justice, and peacefulness.

Above all else, strive to be faithful to Christ’s vision of the peaceable Kingdom of God on earth. Courageously challenge cultural, political, and religious trends that are contrary to the reconciling and restoring purposes of God. Pursue peace.

There are subtle, yet powerful, influences in the world, some even claiming to represent Christ, that seek to divide people and nations to accomplish their destructive aims. That which seeks to harden one human heart against another by constructing walls of fear and prejudice is not of God. Be especially alert to these influences, lest they divide you or divert you from the mission to which you are called.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:3a–c

Afterward, ask students to tell which words or phrases they underlined. Write these on flip chart paper as you go. Help all students understand the underlined passages as shown in the paragraph above.

Tell students Doctrine and Covenants 163:3 helps us understand some things we can do to help God’s reign become a reality on Earth—focusing on grace and generosity.

1. Create pathways in the world for peace in Christ to be relationally and culturally incarnate.
2. Be communities of generosity, justice, and peacefulness.
3. Courageously challenge cultural, political, and religious trends that are contrary to the reconciling and restoring purposes of God.
4. Pursue peace.
5. Beware of that which seeks to harden one human heart against another by constructing walls of fear and prejudice and know it is not of God.

Share with students that to embody or live out the first four points, we must confess our parts in the fifth point. This is where the prayer focus discussed earlier helps us. As we listen to our Creator who calls us, we can confess and repent of the times we were guilty of “hardening hearts” and “constructing walls” either intentionally or unintentionally.

BLESS
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

Remind the students of the Lord’s Prayer from earlier in the lesson. Have the words written on flip chart paper for students to see. Explain you will close the class with this prayer as it calls our attention to God’s reign. Ask everyone to join you in reading it aloud.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.
Marva Dawn’s Model of Kingdom Building

1. **Resting in the kingdom’s grace.** How can you act out what it means to rest from distractions so you can focus on the reign of God?

2. **Ceasing by grace those attitudes and actions that hinder the kingdom.** What can you stop doing or what attitudes can you let go of that get in the way of God’s purpose? Act out how you can do this.

3. **Feasting to radiate the grace-full splendor of the kingdom.** Feasting is enjoying! What blessings do you think are part of the reign of God? How can you act out what it means to enjoy those blessings?

4. **Embracing the kingdom’s gracious purpose.** Identify the purposes toward which the reign of God will work. How can you act these out?
You are called to create pathways in the world for peace in Christ to be relationally and culturally incarnate. The hope of Zion is realized when the vision of Christ is embodied in communities of generosity, justice, and peacefulness.

Above all else, strive to be faithful to Christ’s vision of the peaceable Kingdom of God on earth. Courageously challenge cultural, political, and religious trends that are contrary to the reconciling and restoring purposes of God. Pursue peace.

There are subtle, yet powerful, influences in the world, some even claiming to represent Christ, that seek to divide people and nations to accomplish their destructive aims. That which seeks to harden one human heart against another by constructing walls of fear and prejudice is not of God. Be especially alert to these influences, lest they divide you or divert you from the mission to which you are called.
Focus
How can we “carry the ethics of Christ’s peace”? Together we are the light of the world—we as individual disciples and we as community—living Christ’s peace in all arenas of life.

Focus Scriptures
Matthew 5:1–15
Doctrine and Covenants 163:4c

Objectives
THE LEARNERS WILL...
• explore “Three Cities on a Hill” as a way of learning about living out the ethics of Christ’s peace.
• study and make tangible the focus scripture Matthew 5:1–15.
• discover how they might live out the ethics of Christ peace by writing a metaphor about themselves from a future perspective.

Resources and Materials
• Flip chart easel and paper
• Markers (for both flip chart use and for student use)
• Pens and pencils (enough for all students)
• Paper (a supply based on the number of students)
• Bibles—including The Message—one for each student, if possible (or use passages found in lesson)
• Potato chips/crisps or popcorn, both salted and unsalted, enough for all students to taste both
• A dark room large enough for all students to gather for a short period of time
• A small source of light, like a small flashlight or an electric tea light
• Copy of “A Tale of Three Cities on a Hill” for each student
• A set of nesting dolls or a set of boxes which fit inside one another
• Copy of “The Beatitudes: Around and Higher” for each student
• Community of Christ Enduring Principles poster from lesson 1
• Community of Christ Mission Initiatives (www.CofChrist.org/mission/) written on flip chart paper or poster board
• Three or four sheets of paper per student
• Art supplies (markers, colored pencils, pens, pastels, and pencils)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Begin with the end in mind. Jesus knows what he wants us to be. We are to be salt, light, and a city on a hill. Jesus teaches this early in the Sermon on the Mount. The eight Beatitudes preface this call of Jesus.

The Beatitudes guide disciple formation. The Beatitudes shape us individually and collectively into a people, a community, a “city built on a hill.” The Beatitudes are like a staircase or ladder to get us there (Jim Forest, Ladder of the Beatitudes, [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999]). As disciples, we should not be afraid to follow Jesus or do what is right (Matthew 5:10–16). The rest of the Sermon on the Mount is commentary on Matthew 5:1–15.

Prior to class be sure to read “Live the Ethics of Christ’s Peace” by Andrew Bolton in the adult reunion text for important foundational information on the topic of this lesson.
Toward the end of lesson 5, we discussed how we might spend more time focused on things of God. We talked about the impact that would have on us in working to bring about the reign of God. This lesson gives us an opportunity to expand on ways we can make a difference in our world.

Let’s begin with potato chips/crisps or popcorn. Provide the snack with and without salt. Put the snacks in unmarked bowls and ask students to taste each. Ask, “What’s the difference?” Once someone talks about salt, bring out a container of salt and say, “Oh, is this what you’re talking about?” Ask for volunteers to taste the salt by itself. What does salt do? Explain that salt by itself is not generally considered to taste good, but when added to things it enhances the flavor.

Next, take the entire class into a dark room or area. Use drapes or trash bags to cover windows, or go to a safe storage room that does not have windows. Before their eyes adjust to the light, turn on a small light, like a miniature flashlight. Ask if anyone can see anything. Draw attention to how your eyes adjust after time and you can see almost everything. What does this little light provide? When we decide to hide our light or not to let it shine to make a difference in the world, we are limiting what God can do.

Take the class back to the regular class area. Discuss how we can be like salt and light in the world. Record the responses on flip chart paper.

Have one or more students read Matthew 5:13–15. Reinforce the idea that we are called to be like salt and like light as we live out the ethics of Christ’s peace. Consider using The Message for younger students.

Matthew 5:14 includes the image of a city built on a hill. Many of the world’s great cities were built on hills, including Jerusalem and Rome. The main reason for this was defense—a city on a hill was easier to defend against an approaching enemy. But like so much of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus turned this around, too. A city on a hill is a good example. It can be visible from a great distance, and at night a person can use the lights of the distant city to guide them to it.

Also part of this message, when Jesus referred to a city on a hill he spoke of a new future, a new Jerusalem, a city that symbolizes the peaceable reign of God on Earth. The prophet Isaiah thought Jerusalem was the place where the nations of the world would come to end war, beat swords into plowshares, and learn the ways of peace (Isaiah 2:2–4). “A city on a hill” is what Community of Christ tradition calls signal communities. In such a place, the people are “…of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them…” (Doctrine and Covenants 36:2h–i).

A TALE OF THREE CITIES ON A HILL

Divide the class into three small groups. Have each group select a leader and a recorder. Provide each student a copy of the handout found at the end of the lesson. Assign each group one “city.” After reading the story, have each group respond to the following questions and record their responses. Have the recorders share their responses and other thoughts with the whole class.

Questions:
• What can we learn from this story?
• How does the story of this city inform personal discipleship?
• How does the story of this city enrich the life of our congregations?
• How does this story add something exciting to our idea of God’s kingdom on Earth?
• How does this story help us understand the ethics of Christ’s peace?
Have one or more students share in reading aloud Matthew 5:1–10. For younger students have them read from The Message.

Explain to students the blessings in the Beatitudes come from being involved in the kingdom of God now and in the future. “Are” and “will” indicate that God is at work in our world. Those who face difficult circumstances now will be blessed as God’s kingdom is realized on Earth—and that we are part of that new creation.

Many metaphors might help students understand the Beatitudes. They are like musical scales, moving from one scale to a higher one with not just higher notes, but a change of key. In this metaphor, Jesus is like a tuning fork.

Another metaphor is that of Russian matryoshkas or nested dolls. This demonstrates more tangibly the “concept-within-concept” nature of the Beatitudes. Demonstrate this with boxes within boxes if a set of dolls is not available.

Use the handout “The Beatitudes: Around and Higher” at the end of the lesson, to help students connect behaviors in their own lives.

Ask students to focus on the innermost (first) Beatitude and then move outward until they have a short response for each one. Provide direction for each circle as the students respond (see handout). Even though the words inside the circles come from traditional scripture passages, help students understand these by sharing the equivalent messages from The Message version of the Bible.

After students complete the handout, ask if anyone wants to share any of their responses (don’t force). Ask if they see any evidence of how the first Beatitude leads to the second and so on.

Write out the Mission Initiatives (www.CofChrist.org/mission/) on flip chart paper and review with the students. Have them form pairs. Ask them to see if there are correlations between “The Beatitudes: Around and Higher” and the Mission Initiatives. Ask the entire class to regroup and ask a few students to share comparisons.

Send
Explores how the lesson might be lived out

Most young people will be familiar with Pokémon. Pokémon has animated characters with certain traits or abilities. In games and videos, participants collect the animated characters, train them, and send them into battle or competition with other teams. The collecting-training-battling routine is in almost every game or video rendition of Pokémon.

Provide students with one or more sheets of paper and a pen or pencil. Ask them to make a few notes about who they want to be, or what they want their lives to be like in 10 to 15 years. Next, have them draw a new Pokémon-like character that reflects who they want to be. Have them write a history of this character from the point in their lives they selected. Have them explain how they get from here to there. Encourage them to use the Enduring Principles and the Mission Initiatives (written out on flip chart paper from earlier) and “The Beatitudes: Around and Higher” to assign qualities, traits, abilities, and behaviors to their characters. Allow them five minutes to complete this.

Have them get into the same pairs as in the previous activity and share information about their characters. Ask them what they imagine the two characters would do together. Have them share in pairs and then share with the entire group. Next, have the pairs form groups of four and imagine what all four of the characters might do together. Have them share together, and then share with the entire group.

Remind students their Pokémon-like characters reflect who they want to be in 10 to 15 years, and praise them for what they have done in pairs or in fours.

Bless
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

As a closing for this lesson, offer the following prayer, based on the Beatitudes.
PRAYING THE BEATITUDES

Our loving, healing Redeemer. We come to you this day with many things on our hearts and in our minds. We come knowing you are a loving God who cares for us in ways deeper than we can understand, and who has a purpose for each one of us. You have promised that we can cast all our anxieties on you because you care for us.

For those who mourn—we pray that they would be blessed and comforted as you have promised.

For those who are hungry—physically or emotionally—that they would be filled.

For those who are poor—either in spirit or financially—that the kingdom of God would be theirs.

For those who show mercy to others—that they will be shown mercy.

For those who are pure in heart—that they would see God.

For the peacemakers—we pray they would be called sons and daughters of God.

For those who hunger and thirst to see right prevail—may they see right overcome wrong, and may they be filled with peace.

For those who suffer for doing good—may you strengthen and reward them.

For any of us—or our friends who are going through a particularly hard time. May you walk with us carrying us through this time in our lives. May we know your peace when things are in turmoil around us.

We remember those who are hurting. May they be filled with your amazing love and have a purpose to carry them through this stage of their lives. We pray for all who serve you in the church and community. For all, may your light shine in their lives and may you guide them on the paths you have for them.

For each of us may we know your healing within and your Holy Spirit in a real and powerful way in our lives. We ask that on this day, and through this week we will follow Jesus' example to love and serve. May we know we are redeemed by his love and forgiveness—that whatever difficulties we face we can call on you for help.

Today, Oh Lord, I say yes to you...to life...to all that is true and good and beautiful. Amen.

Le Chambon, France, in World War II
The village of Le Chambon in south central France had a Protestant Huguenot heritage. The villagers were persecuted by French Catholics but had a tradition of resistance, courage, and standing up for their faith and convictions. From 1942 to 1945, the villagers saved 3,500–5,000 Jews from the Nazi Holocaust and the Vichy Government of France.

Pastor André Trocmé and his wife Magda, with another pastor, Edouard Theis, led efforts to hide Jews. They smuggled people to safety in Switzerland. Many villagers and farmers helped. Trocmé was passionate about the Sermon on the Mount and this influenced his work despite the danger. Both André Trocmé and Edouard Theis were arrested and held for four weeks. Trocmé’s nephew, Daniel Trocmé, died in a Nazi extermination camp.

Providing Christian hospitality and shelter was a cultural habit in Le Chambon. It was a natural part of everyday life. The villagers did not think they did anything remarkable. In the Dark Ages, a monastery was salt, light, and a city on a hill.

Benedictine Monasteries
Benedict of Nursia became a monk as a young man. In 529, he founded a new monastery at Monte Cassino, Italy. There he wrote new rules to guide monastic life. Benedictine monastic life has two mottoes: pax (peace) and ora et labora (pray and work).

Monks and nuns formed unarmed communities that were enters of learning. They founded the first universities including Oxford and Cambridge. Benedictine monasteries improved agriculture. They showed it was possible to live in equality.

Hospitality was important. Benedict’s rule states: “All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ” (Rule of Saint Benedict, chapter 53). Monasteries were a “welfare net” that during bad times saved people who were poor.

Koinonia Community
The name Koinonia is the Greek word for fellowship. This Christian farming community in Americus, Georgia, was founded by Clarence and Florence Jordan and Martin and Mabel England in 1942. Clarence Jordan had a degree in agriculture and a PhD in New Testament. Together these two families intended to live the “demonstration plot for the kingdom of God.” They established a biracial community during a time of racial segregation in the American South.

Koinonia members believed racism was an insult to God. This belief and their communal life upset their neighbors. During the civil rights movement (1955–1968) the community was shot at and bombed. It also suffered an economic boycott that nearly forced it to close. But Clarence Jordan was a strong believer in Jesus’ teaching about loving enemies.

In 1965, Millard and Linda Fuller came to the community. They started Habitat for Humanity, an organization that has built over half a million homes for people living in poverty in over 90 nations. The recipients help build their homes.

Today Koinonia continues to give witness to people of all races working together. In 2008, Koinonia received the Community of Christ International Peace Award.
1. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Write something that causes you or others to be “poor in spirit.”

2. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Write down when you mourned.

3. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
Write down something that humbles you.

4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
Write one thing you really would like to know from God.

5. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
Write down a time when you have shown mercy or someone has shown you mercy.

6. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
Write down a time when you have truly repented, asked God’s forgiveness.

7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Write down a time when you did something to promote peace and justice.

8. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Write down a time when you or someone you know was persecuted (challenged, bullied, or put-down).

9. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
Write down a time when you have shown mercy or someone has shown you mercy.

10. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
Write down a time when you have truly repented, asked God’s forgiveness.

11. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Write down a time when you did something to promote peace and justice.

12. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Write down a time when you or someone you know was persecuted (challenged, bullied, or put-down).