

# WHAT IN THE WORLD?

IT'S IN GOD'S HANDS



## PURSUING PEACE



Key Scriptures: Genesis 26:12-21; 1 Samuel 25; Colossians 3:12-13

### BIBLE BASIS FOR LEADERS

Countries may fight over resources or because citizens don't see eye to eye on certain issues. We sometimes don't get along with people around us for similar reasons. Use this lesson to remind kids that Christians are called to live at peace with others.

**Genesis 26:12-21** offers a perfect example of pursuing peace. In the dry land where Isaac lived, conflict over water wasn't unusual. What may have been unusual was how Isaac handled the problem. Isaac had become rich and powerful through God's blessing. He could have driven away the troublemakers, but Isaac gave up the wells and moved on, despite his rights. Remind kids that we need to get along with others, even if it means sacrificing some of our own "rights."

In **1 Samuel 25**, we see two examples of how to respond to conflict. David's reaction was anger and revenge. Thankfully, Abigail's reaction was humility and generosity. David responded to Abigail's advice and action with good sense, and they both avoided what could have been an awful situation for everyone. Use this story to help kids see that, with God's help, they can both *give* good advice and *listen* to good advice—even in moments of conflict.

**Colossians 3:12-13** reminds us that Jesus' followers are to do all we can to live at peace with everyone. We're called to show mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and forgiveness. Help kids understand that because God forgives us, we need to forgive others.

### THE LESSON AT A GLANCE

Lesson Sequence		What Kids Will Do	Supplies
1	(5 minutes)	Build relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• upbeat music</li> <li>• music player</li> <li>• snacks</li> </ul>
2	(10-15 minutes)	Play a game.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• upbeat music (optional)</li> <li>• music player (optional)</li> </ul>
3	(10 minutes)	Pretend to rule countries and see how conflict can arise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• whiteboard or bulletin board paper</li> <li>• dry-erase marker or regular marker</li> <li>• paper</li> <li>• pencils</li> </ul>
4	(25 minutes)	See what the Bible says about getting along with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bibles</li> <li>• small bags of plastic food</li> <li>• small, soft classroom objects</li> </ul>
5	(5 minutes)	Write advice from the Bible, and thank God for helping us get along with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• index cards</li> <li>• pencils</li> </ul>

## OPENING

Play upbeat music as kids enjoy snacks and friendship. Give kids this discussion starter as they eat. Say: **Find out which country each person would most like to visit.** Allow time for kids to talk; then play the three-minute countdown included with your download to let kids know how much time is remaining.

When it's time to get started, gather kids together and allow kids to briefly share which countries they would each want to visit.

Say: **Thanks for sharing your travel plans. Let's play a game where we all have to travel a little.**

Arrange kids so they're standing in a circle in the center of the room, facing out. As much as possible, alternate boys and girls. Have kids lock arms with their neighbors. There should be people facing all four walls in the room.

Select four people to serve as Taggers, making sure the Taggers are facing four different walls. Assign a Tagger to each of the four walls.

Explain that on your command, each Tagger will try to be first to tag his or her assigned wall. The trick is that at no time can the circle be broken. Explain that while one Tagger may be trying to reach his or her wall, the other three Taggers will also be trying to reach their walls.

Have kids play and watch as each Tagger pulls against the others to try to win. You may want to play music while kids are playing. Repeat with different Taggers. Then have kids form trios to answer the following questions. After kids discuss each question in their groups, ask a few willing kids to share their answers with everyone.

Ask: **What was the biggest struggle you faced in this activity?**

- **What would have made this experience easier?**
- **How was this activity like or unlike how people or countries sometimes get along?**

Say: **In this experience, it was hard to keep the circle together with four Taggers pulling in different directions. In real life, it can be hard to work together when others are pulling against you.**

Ask: **When is a time you were in a situation where another person was pulling against you? Maybe your brother wanted to play with the same video game you had already started, or maybe a friend wanted to watch a different movie than you. Talk in your groups.**

- **In the situation you described, how were you able to solve the problem? Or maybe you didn't solve it. Tell your group what happened.**

Allow time for discussion. Then ask a few willing kids to share what they talked about.

Say: **Conflict is nothing new—it happens to everyone. And the Bible has great advice about how to solve conflict and get along with other people. We'll get into some specifics in a few minutes. But right now, let's look at conflict on a much bigger scale. I'll show you what I mean.**

## BIBLE STUDY INTRODUCTION

Ahead of time, write the following list on a whiteboard or large sheet of bulletin board paper:

- Water: 55
- Toys: 20
- Schools: 60
- Computers: 40
- Hospitals and Doctors: 40
- Money for Entertainment: 45
- Cars: 85
- Food: 55
- Money to Pay Salaries: 50
- Candy: 25

Have kids stay in their trios, and give each group a sheet of paper and a pencil.

Say: **Let's play "Who Gets What?" Your group is now a new country. First, choose a name for your country.** Allow time.

Then assign each group a point amount between 100 and 500. Make sure some groups have only 100 points and at least one group receives a full 500 points. Let everyone hear you assign the points.

Say: **Now decide how you'll "spend" your points, according to this list.** Display your list where everyone can see it. **You might not have enough points for everything, so you'll have to make tough choices based on what you think the people of your country need. Choose one person in your group to be a Scribe who will write how you decide to spend your points.**

Allow time for groups to write how they'll spend their points. Then ask each group to stand, say the name of its country, and describe how it spent its points. Then have the group name one other resource it might have bought if it had had enough points.

Have kids discuss the following questions in their groups. After each question, ask a few willing kids to share their group's answers with everyone.

Ask: **How did you decide how to spend your points?**

- **How was deciding how to spend your points like or unlike what governments deal with in real life?**
- **Based on this experience, why do you think countries sometimes have a tough time getting along?**

Say: **Some of your new countries had enough points to buy almost anything they wanted. Others didn't have enough to buy even the most basic things like food and water. When we look at our world today, it's easy to ask, "Why can't countries get along?"**

**And it's not just countries! Sometimes people—even friends—have trouble getting along when one person has more than another. Let's see how a guy in the Bible handled a situation like that.**

## BIBLE STUDY

Explain that you'll read a passage from the book of Genesis. At times you'll stop and ask kids to hop up and silently strike a pose that shows the emotions a character might have been feeling at that point in the story. Follow these instructions, having kids sit after making each silent pose.

Read aloud Genesis 26:12-13 from a kid-friendly Bible translation. Have everyone hop up and strike a silent pose to show what Isaac might be feeling.

Read aloud Genesis 26:14-16. Have everyone hop up and strike a silent pose to show what Isaac might be feeling *now*.

Read aloud Genesis 26:17-21. Have everyone hop up and strike a silent pose to show what Isaac might be feeling *now*.

Read aloud Genesis 26:22. Have everyone hop up and strike a silent pose to show what Isaac might be finally feeling.

Then ask:

**How was Isaac's situation like what we experienced with our pretend countries?**

- **What can you learn about handling disagreements from Isaac's example?**

Say: **Isaac could have stood his ground and refused to give up what was rightfully his. But he had plenty, and he chose to let others have what they wanted. Let's look at another example about how to deal with conflict and pursuing peace.**

Open your Bible to 1 Samuel 25, and show kids the passage.

Say: **This story stars a famous guy from the Bible named David. He eventually became king, but at this point in his life he's on the move, trying to keep away from the current king who wanted to hurt him.**

**David and his men were out in the wilderness, near land owned by a rich guy named Nabal. David heard it was sheep-shearing time on Nabal's estate, which was a time of celebration. So David sent 10 of his men with a message for Nabal, asking if Nabal would share some of his food.**

**Well, here's where the story gets sticky. Nabal was not only rich, but he was also mean! He sent back a nasty message, calling David names and saying he wouldn't share his food.**

**David was mad! "Get your swords!" he yelled. David and 400 of his men started off, planning to kill Nabal and all his men! Quick! I need your help for the rest of the story. Everyone hop up.**

Have kids form groups of three or four, and have groups gather at one end of the room. Have each group choose a person to be the Donkey, and have the Donkeys get down on all fours. Give each group a bag of plastic food. If you don't have a lot of plastic food, add small classroom objects such as stuffed animals, balls, and small toys. Make sure the objects are lightweight and have no sharp edges or points.

Say: **One of Nabal's servants ran to Nabal's wife, a sensible and beautiful woman named Abigail. The servant said that David's men were on the way and there was going to be big trouble! Abigail didn't waste a minute!**

**She gathered lots of food and loaded up her donkeys. Quick! Load the food in your bag onto the back of your Donkey! We have to get to David before he gets here!**

Have groups each place the individual items from their bags onto the backs of their Donkeys. (Make sure kids don't just place the bag on the Donkey.) Then have the Donkeys hurry to the other end of the room. If items fall off a Donkey's back, the Donkey must stop while group members reload the items.

As kids move, shout: **Hurry! We have to get to David while he's still on the road! We can't let him get here to kill everyone! Hurry! Get those donkeys loaded up! If we give David all this food, maybe he won't be so mad. Hurry!**

When kids get to the other end of the room, have them sit in their groups. Collect the plastic food and classroom objects.

Say: **As Abigail rode her own donkey into a mountain ravine, she saw David and his men coming toward her! She jumped off her donkey and bowed low to the ground.** Have everyone kneel with their foreheads to the floor. **Abigail said, “I accept all the blame in this matter. My husband is a wicked man. But you’re going to be a great leader—don’t let this be a blemish on your record. Don’t shed needless blood here and have that on your conscience. Please accept this gift from me.”**

**David was so thankful for Abigail’s good sense that he halted his men and changed his mind. He accepted her gift and went back without killing anyone.**

Ask: **Who do you identify with more in this story—David and his anger or Abigail and her desire for peace? Talk in your group.**

• **When is a time you tried to act like Abigail and bring peace to a situation?**

Say: **Thanks for sharing. It’s good to be like Abigail and pursue peace. And it’s even better to avoid situations where you need an Abigail. Let’s look at some advice from the Bible about getting along.**

Give each group a kid-friendly Bible. Help kids find the passage, if necessary, and have someone in each group read aloud Colossians 3:12-13.

Say: **This is such a great passage! It’s so simple, but I’ll admit—it’s not always easy to carry out.**

Ask: **Which part of this passage is the most meaningful for you? Why?**

Have kids talk in their small groups.

Say: **Whether it’s countries or individual people, God wants us to get along. The great part about trying to get along and forgive others is that God is always right there to help us! Let’s thank God in a special way.**

## CLOSING

Say: **Think of someone you have a hard time getting along with, or think of a situation where it’s hard for you to maintain peace. You won’t have to tell anyone your person or situation.**

Give each person an index card and pencil. **Look at our Bible passage again. On one side of your index card, write in your own words the best advice these verses give you for your own life right now.** Pause as kids write.

When everyone has finished writing, have kids fold their index cards in half with the writing on the inside. Then have all the kids stand in a circle, holding their cards in cupped hands.

Pray: **God, thank you for telling us how to get along with others. Thank you for sending Jesus to be our best example. We give these people and situations to you, Lord. Please show us how to bring peace. Thank you for loving and forgiving us. In Jesus’ name, amen.**

Find the Parent Page for this lesson included with this download. Print copies for kids to give to their parents, or send the file to parents via email.