



Weaving God's Promises

LESSON 13

Isaiah Promises Peace And Salvation

Many of the Isaiah passages are poetry. The description of the Peaceable Kingdom may be most appropriate for young children. The other passages may be considered for the older children. The lesson can be divided into more than one class session.

Summary of Today's Story

Isaiah 9:1-7 is the well-known passage in which the author foretells the righteous reign of the coming

king: "For unto us a child has been born..." In Isaiah 61, the prophet tells how the deliverance will take place. This is the passage that Jesus quotes in the synagogue when he announces that he is the one to fulfill the prophecy: "He has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed..."

Isaiah 11 describes the Peaceable Kingdom that will come about when the spirit of the Lord rests upon the one who comes out from the stump of Jesse.

Where You'll Find Today's Story

In the Bible

We recommend the *New Revised Standard Version* Bible.

Isaiah 9:1-7, 61:1-4 (promise of a savior)

Isaiah 11:1-10 (Peaceable Kingdom)

**Isaiah 42:1-9, 52:13-53:12 (Suffering
Servant Songs)**

Isaiah 40 (comfort to the people)

In Children's Bibles

If you plan to use a children's Bible for storytelling, write the page numbers of today's story in the space below.

In Our Sunday Lectionary

Today's story is told in church on the following Sundays:

Promise of a Savior (Isaiah 9:1-7, 61:1-4):

Year A: Christmas Day I

Year C: Christmas Day I

Servant Songs (Isaiah 42:1-9, 52:13-53:12):

Year A: Monday of Holy Week

Year A: Palm Sunday

Year B: First Sunday after Epiphany

Year B: Palm Sunday

Year B: Monday of Holy Week

Year C: First Sunday after Epiphany

Year C: Monday in Holy Week

Year C: Good Friday

Isaiah 52:

Good Friday

Comfort to the People (Isaiah 40):

Year B: Second Sunday of Advent

The Servant Songs describe the savior who will bring salvation, who will be a light to the nations even as he suffers for our sins.

Finally, in Isaiah 40 we find a song of comfort to the people of Israel. This passage contains the lines “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord...”



Weaving Our Story with the Biblical Story

Isaiah has played a central role in Christianity, with his focus on holiness, justice, righteousness, salvation, promise, faith and peace. We also look to Isaiah for his visions of the new age, especially the coming of an individual savior, a suffering servant who will bring righteousness, justice and peace to the earth.

The book of Isaiah, like Ezekiel, was written during the dark days of the Exile. During this time, the promises of the prophet give the people a gleam of hope that someone will come to save them from their oppression and despair. Notice that because the situation was seen as an earthly one (political oppression), even though it was seen as punishment for Israel's sins and faithlessness to God, the people have come to expect a political savior who will set them free from their oppressors.

In Isaiah 9:1-7, the prophet promises to Israel a new and righteous Savior who will establish a kingdom of justice and righteousness, upheld by “the zeal of the Lord of hosts.” In Isaiah 61:1-4, Isaiah expresses the form that his deliverance will take: “...to bring good news to the oppressed...” We know the first passage as the prophecy foretelling the birth of Jesus and the second as what Jesus quoted in the synagogue when he announced himself as the fulfillment of this scripture (Luke 4:16-21).

Many people have heard of the Peaceable Kingdom, but not many have read it. From a Christian point of view, Isaiah here proclaims the coming of Christ and the peace and righteousness that will be on the earth upon his coming.

God's promise of salvation and the vision of the kingdom of heaven on earth was a great source of solace to the Israelites during this troubling time. It is still a great comfort to us now, as we look forward to a time when war and evil and hatred will end and the reign of God in peace and love will finally prevail.

Isaiah's Suffering Servant is the one who will bring about this kingdom. The Suffering Servant is an individual who will redeem us by his suffering, while himself being without sin. It is also interpreted as a vision of Israel, itself, as God's servant through whom redemptive truth would reach all people. Isaiah's writings about the suffering servant express his confidence in the power of God to intervene on our behalf, to heal our wounds and to forgive our sins, even though the cost is great.

Isaiah was a man who faced the worst disaster and the prospect of utter devastation and still maintained faith. He could see that for his people the way to life lay not through maneuvering for security but in the discipline of obedience to God and trust in God.



The Episcopal Thread

Isaiah's writings touch the mystic side of Anglicanism, and so Isaiah is a beloved prophet and much quoted in lectionary readings, in *The Book of Common Prayer* and even in hymns.

At the beginning of Holy Communion, the celebrant and people will always say or sing this hymn known as the Sanctus or "Holy, Holy":

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

This is what one of the seraphim called to another in Isaiah 6, when Isaiah tells of his call by God.

Quotes from Isaiah may be found in services of the Daily Offices (Morning and Evening Prayer), where some of the passages form three canticles. Quotes also may be found in the readings at the Great Vigil of Easter and in burial services, where Isaiah sounds a note of hope and promise, liberation and healing for a hurting people. In addition, passages from Isaiah are used often during Advent, when Christians see Isaiah's promise of redemption by God as the anticipation of the coming of Jesus Christ.

Hymns in *The Hymnal 1982* (New York, NY: Church Publishing, 1985) that tell of God's glory, power and majesty are reminiscent of Isaiah's message. But some hymns take their inspiration from Isaiah's words themselves. For example, in Hymn 324, "Let all mortal flesh keep silence," we sing:

At his feet the six-winged seraph;
Cherubim with sleepless eye,
Veil their faces to the Presence,
As with ceaseless voice they cry,
"Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, Lord Most High!"

The words remind us of the vision that Isaiah saw in Isaiah 6:2. Or look at Hymn 390, "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty," in which we sing about God "borne as on eagle wings, safely his saints he sustaineth." Here the words remind us of Isaiah's note of comfort in 40:31: "Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles..."



Weaving God's Beloved Community

The peace that Isaiah promises is one which is established by the fulfillment of God's dreams of justice and righteousness, and of faithfulness to God's values of compassion and mercy. When it comes, it will be "good news to the oppressed." He envisions a land ruled by the love of God.

This is the image of God's Beloved Community, where all creation—like the animals in his Peaceable Kingdom—live together in harmony and without harming one another. Central to this image is the savior who will redeem the world by the savior's example of humility and service.

Topics that can be discussed with children:

At home and in school, there are rules that help everybody to be together in harmony and peace. Can you think of any of these rules?

There are rules that keep people from hurting each other. What are some rules that bring people together? Rules about how to share, for example, or how to enjoy a fun meal together?



Gathering

As the children enter the classroom, engage them in a simple activity to help get their

attention focused on the coming of the Messiah. On page 11 you'll find a Gathering Activity handout to use if you wish. Or you might have the children fold a sheet of plain paper in half and draw a picture of hard times or war on one side (younger children can draw a picture of a sad or angry time), a picture of peace on the other. Or have them make a few ornaments for a Jesse Tree. (You'll find directions for making a Jesse Tree and ornaments on p. 16 in the activity section at the end of this lesson.) If you have a class Advent calendar, use it to count down the days until Christmas.

As an option for the older children, you might offer a brief fellowship time, giving them an opportunity to visit with each other and catch up on the past week's happenings. This social time is important for building relationships and community.

After all the children have arrived, gather them together and say a simple opening prayer, such as:

- Thank you, Lord, for bringing all of us together. We pray that you will watch over us as we learn about how you have led your people, and as we wait in expectation of the coming of your Son Jesus Christ on Christmas. We pray this for the sake of your Son. *Amen.*



Telling the Story

Today's passages are fairly long. You may want to choose just a few to focus on, or you may read them all in the

context of the expectation of the coming of Christ. Read aloud from a children's Bible, showing the pictures, tell the story in your own words, or read from the version of the story we provide, found on pages 8-10.

This is an important set of readings, but difficult to make concrete, so will take some reflection. Using a few story aids may be helpful. For example, use of symbols, even Christian symbols such as the cross, may help children relate the words to our Christian message.

The Peaceable Kingdom is an excellent passage to read or tell. If you can find the passage in a children's Bible, show the pictures as you read the story. You might use miniature figures to make the scene come to life. Other ways to bring the story to life can be found on page 2 in the Appendix on the Website.

After reading the passages, proceed to Prayer, saving any discussion for later, while having snacks or doing an activity.



Prayer

Set up a small worship center in your classroom.

Materials

- small table with a cloth to cover it
- 2 candles
- Advent wreath with Advent candles or 1 large Christ candle
- matches
- Bible
- cross
- optional*: flowers (real, fake or handmade by the children)

Have the children set up a simple altar with the materials listed above. Invite them to place on the altar any drawings or crafts that they created during Gathering time. Then light the candles. If you are using an Advent wreath, light the appropriate number of Advent candles.

Read one or two verses from today's scripture to help the children connect the story that they just heard with the Bible. If working with older children, you might expand the reading to several verses.

Suggestions for the reading:

For younger children: Isaiah 11:6-7

For older children: Isaiah 9:6-7 and Isaiah 11:6-9

Help familiarize the children with our liturgy by doing the reading as it is done in church. Read as follows:

Reader: A reading from the book of Isaiah: (*Read aloud the selected passage.*)

Reader: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Invite the children to sit in a circle and join in prayer. Say a brief prayer yourself then invite prayers from each child in the circle:

- Invite prayers of thanks for God's work in our lives during the past week.
- Welcome intercessory prayers, asking for God's help or presence. Encourage children to pray for themselves or for others who are in any need or trouble.
- Ask if anyone has had a birthday or celebrated a special day during the past week and give thanks for these special times.
- End the prayer time by praying together the Lord's Prayer.

Carefully extinguish the candles.



Sharing

Pass out snacks and say a simple grace, such as:

- Give us grateful hearts, O Lord, for all your gifts, and make us mindful of the needs of others. This we ask in Jesus' name. *Amen.*

This is a good time, while sharing a snack, for the children to begin reflecting aloud on the passages that they have just heard. Older children may wonder at the power of prophecy. All can relate to the picture of peace in the Peaceable Kingdom.

If you read other Isaiah passages, you might ask the older children to think about the images of the servant. We as Christians cannot help but think about Jesus, who has since the beginning been depicted as the Suffering Servant of God. Isaiah probably had in mind Israel, itself, as a suffering servant and a light to other nations. Ask:

- What do we think of when we hear these passages?
- How do we connect to that Suffering Servant?



Memorization

There is no memorization for this lesson, but if older children wish to memorize a passage, have them learn Isaiah 40:3-5. Martin Luther King, Jr. quotes this passage in his speech "I Have a Dream." We will come across these verses again when we learn about John the Baptist.



Weaving Our Faith

Before the closing prayer, take a few minutes to help the children think about today's lesson and what it teaches us about God by asking questions such as:

- Who did we talk about today?
- What happened to him?
- How was God present in the passages you heard today?
- What was God like?

Encourage the children to recall key words or phrases from today's lesson such as: *peaceable kingdom, peace, promise, hope, comfort, savior.*



Closing Prayer

Before the children leave, say a closing prayer to send them into the church worship service or back to their homes with God's love and blessing. The prayer can be very simple, such as this one:

Gracious and merciful God, you prepare us for the coming of your only Son Jesus Christ to live with us and in us. Help us to keep you in our hearts this week so we can always remember to walk in his steps and follow his path of peace and justice. This we ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

End the class with a dismissal that is used in church, such as:

- The peace of the Lord be always with you.

The children respond:

- And also with you.



Weaving God's Promises

God sits in the shade of a big tree and looks around. It is dark. People's hearts are dark, because they are afraid and they feel alone. They wonder, where is God? Will God help us?

God says, "Listen. I have some good news for you."

A child born for us (Isaiah 9:1-7)

My children,

You have been in the dark for a long time.

You have lived in the middle of a deep, deep darkness.

But now, look! A great light is shining on you!

What is this light?

It is the light of hope, and joy, and peace.

For a child has been born for you, a son given to you.

Call him Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace,

Because he will bring endless peace to you.

He will bring justice.

He will show you the right way,

And he will bring peace from God.

God's spirit on him (Isaiah 11:1-5)

God says,

My spirit will rest on someone special and beloved to me.

He will be wise and understanding.

He will know and love me.

And he will know and love the poor—the poor whom *I* love.

A kingdom of peace (Isaiah 11:6-9)

When that time comes, there will be peace in my kingdom.

Even the animals will know this peace.

The wolf will live with the lamb.

The leopard will lie down with the baby goat.

The lion and the calf will play together.

The cow and the bear will eat grass side by side.

Their babies will sleep next to each other.

And the children—oh! The children!

They will always be safe.

The children will even play near the snake,

And the snake will not bite the child.

No one will hurt or kill on all my holy mountain

Because everybody will know

That I am with them.

I will stay with them, no matter what.

What God's beloved one will do (Isaiah 42:1-9)

Now let me tell you about my beloved, the one I chose for you.

He will be strong for me,

But he will also be gentle for you.

He will open the eyes of the blind.

He will take the prisoners out of the dungeon.

He will lift the poor out of the dirt.

He will comfort those who are crying.

And for those with broken hearts, he will make those hearts whole again.

God's beloved will be punished for our sins (Isaiah 53:1-12)

But let me tell you about him.

He will not look beautiful or handsome.

No one will notice him. He does not look special.

And people will hate him.

They will punish him for the wrongs that they themselves do.

And he will not cry out or complain.

Like a lamb being taken away and killed,

Like a sheep that says nothing while its wool is cut away,

My beloved will not open his mouth,

Not to complain, or to cry.

He will be blamed for your sins,

Punished for your wrongs,

And even then he will pray for you and bless you.

He will save you.

And he will bring you to me, your God.

Through my beloved, you will know that I love you.

You too are my beloved ones,

And I will stay with you always.

So peace, my children!

Peace and blessing and salvation to you!



Weaving God's Promises

GATHERING ACTIVITY: PEACEABLE KINGDOM

Help the lion find the lamb in the Peaceable Kingdom.





Weaving God's Promises

PEACEABLE ANIMAL SCENES for Primary, Elementary, Intermediate

Children make a variety of animals out of pom-poms and arrange them on a paper plate to make a peaceable scene of animals.

Materials:

puffballs (pom-poms) of various sizes
googly eyes of various sizes
glue
pipe cleaners
felt pieces
feathers
paper plates

Directions:

Invite each child to make a peaceable scene of animals. Give the children these directions:

1. Make different animals for a peaceable kingdom, using pom-poms for heads and bodies. You can make caterpillars (4-5 pom-poms glued together in a line, with eyes on one end), bears (use smaller pom-poms for the arms, feet, ears and nose), spiders, even aliens.
2. To complete your animals, add googly eyes, felt for feet, pipe cleaners for antennae, feathers, etc.
3. Arrange your animals on a paper plate to make a peaceable animal scene.





Weaving God's Promises

PEACEABLE KINGDOMS for Primary, Elementary

Materials:

cotton balls
yellow, brown, green construction paper
scissors
brown, green, gray felt (animal colors)
markers
large paper plates
ribbon for hanging
hole punch

Directions:

Invite each child to make a peaceable kingdom. Give the children these directions:

1. Cut "grass" and other vegetation (like trees, bushes, flowers) out of construction paper.
2. Create a lush scene by gluing these pieces onto a paper plate.
3. Make animals out of felt, cotton balls and paper, then glue them into your lush scene.
4. Punch a hole at the top and string a ribbon through it for hanging.





Weaving God's Promises

LIVING IN THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM for Elementary, Intermediate

Children make animal noises while one player, who is blindfolded, tries to tag one of them by chasing their noises.

Materials:

handkerchief or scarf

Directions:

Invite the children to play the Peaceable Kingdom game.

1. Choose one person to be *It*. Cover his or her eyes with a handkerchief.
2. Have each player choose an animal and wander around the room making that animal's noises.
3. *It* tries to tag the other players by chasing the animal sounds. If tagged, the tagged player will be *It*.
4. Players change animal sounds at every round.



Weaving God's Promises

JESSE TREE for Elementary, Intermediate

Children work together to make a Jesse Tree for the classroom.

This craft does not need to be done all at one time. The tree and a few ornaments could be made today, then additional ornaments made in the following weeks during Advent. If the children do make all the ornaments today, some could be hung on the tree today and the rest added a few at a time each Sunday in Advent.

The Jesse tree represents Jesus' family tree. The name is taken from Isaiah 11:1, in which Jesus is referred to as a shoot coming up from the stump of Jesse, the father of David.

The ornaments on the Jesse tree tell of Jesus' ancestors and of the events leading to Jesus' birth. While it is hard to establish when and where the custom of the Jesse tree began, it most likely started in the Middle Ages as a way to teach Bible stories.

Some of the scripture stories and symbols frequently used on the tree are:

Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:1-7)	apple	Ruth (book of Ruth)	Anchor (for faithfulness)
Noah (Genesis 6:13-22)	Ark or rainbow	Isaiah (Isaiah 11:1-9)	lion and lamb
Abraham (Genesis 12:1-12)	knife	Deborah (Judges 4)	tent peg and mallet
Isaac (Genesis 22:1-9)	Ram	Joshua (Joshua 6:1-15)	trumpet
Sarah (Genesis 12:1, 13:18)	tent	Daniel (Daniel 6:17-24)	lion
Joseph (Genesis 37:12-28)	colorful coat	Rebecca (Genesis 25:19-34; 27)	a well
Moses (Exodus 34:28)	Ten Commandments	Manna (Exodus 16:4-5)	basket of bread
David (Samuel 16:17-23)	harp	Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-55)	small home
Jacob (Genesis 28:10-22)	a ladder	Mary (Luke 1:26-38)	lily
Rachel and Leah (Genesis 29:15-30)	a veil	Joseph (Matthew 1:18-25)	hammer or saw
Miriam (Exodus 15:20-21)	tambourine	Jesus (Luke 2:1-20)	Greek Chi-rho symbol for Christ
Solomon (1 Kings 3:4-15)	crown		

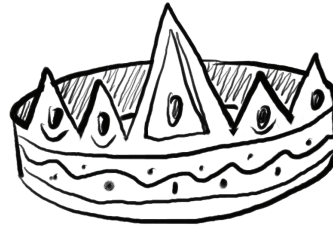
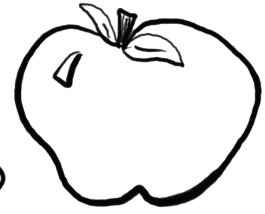
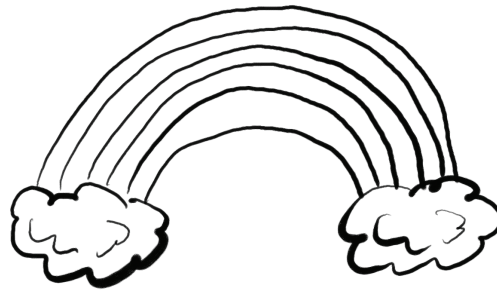
Materials:

pot of sand or small rocks
large bare branch
cardboard or construction paper
markers and crayons
glue
glitter, sequins and other decorative material
string
hole punch
scissors

Directions:

Invite the children to make a Jesse Tree. Give the children these directions:

1. Take a large bare branch and secure it in a pot of sand or rocks.
2. Out of cardboard or construction paper create ornaments that trace Jesus' royal line by making symbols for some or all of the people listed above. Decorate the ornaments.
3. Punch a hole in the top of each ornament and run a string through it for hanging on the tree.
4. Read the scripture citation given above as you hang each ornament.





Weaving God's Promises

SPINNERS for Primary, Elementary

Children make spinners with words or pictures.

Materials:

- poster board
- rubber bands
- markers
- scissors
- hole punch
- 3" circles (circle patterns, compass, drinking glasses or jar lids)

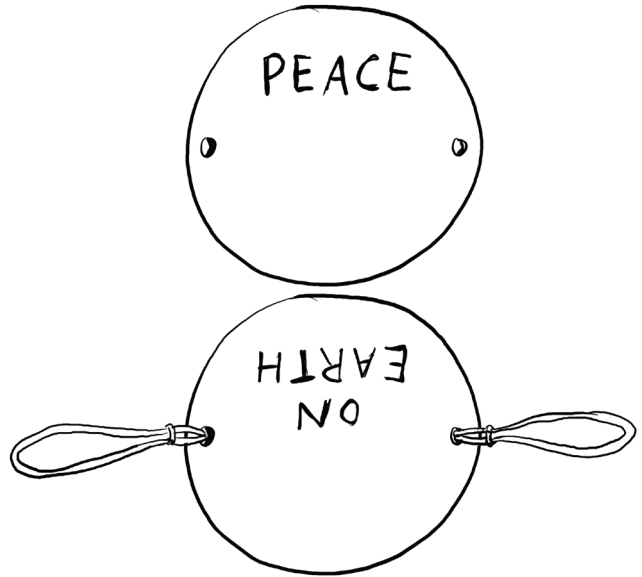
Preparation:

Cut two 5" x 5" pieces of poster board for each child.

Directions:

Give each child two rubber bands and two 5" squares of poster board and invite the children to make spinners. Offer these directions:

1. From each piece of poster board, cut a circle about 3" in diameter. Use a compass, a circle pattern, a drinking glass or jar lid to draw the circle.
2. Punch two holes in each circle, at opposite sides. Make sure the holes on one circle match the holes on the second circle.
3. Decide what message or picture you want to put on your spinner. Half of the message or picture will go on one circle, the other half on the other circle:
 - For a message spinner, write *PEACE* on one circle. On the other circle write *ON EARTH*, upside down. Or write *GOD* on one circle and *SAVES* (upside down) on the other. (The words should not overlap.) When spun, you will see the whole message: *PEACE ON EARTH* or *GOD SAVES*.
 - For a picture spinner you might draw a goldfish on one circle and a fishbowl, drawn upside down, on the other. When spun, you will see a goldfish in a fishbowl.
4. Loop rubber bands through the holes so that the messages are upside down in relationship to each other. Pull to make tight.
5. To spin the message, slip your index fingers through the rubber bands and wind tightly. Spread your hands apart and let the circles spin.





Weaving God's Promises

SALVATION DIORAMAS for Intermediate

Children make dioramas—three-dimensional scenes—of Isaiah's vision of peace and salvation.

Materials:

shoe boxes
construction paper
other craft supplies: tissue paper, brown paper, pom-poms, etc.
scissors
glue
pencils, pens, markers
paint and brushes
optional: poster board

Directions:

Discuss with the class what Isaiah's vision of salvation was and what salvation on earth would look like to everybody in the class. What images come to mind? What scenes? Then invite each child to make a salvation diorama. Give the children these directions:

1. Turn the shoebox on its side and create a basic background and ground for the scene. Crumbled blue tissue paper may be used for water, shredded green paper for grass, brown paper for desert or ground, blue paper for sky. Paint in a background, if you wish.
2. Create and cut out the different elements of the scene (people, animals, trees, birds, plants, sun, etc.), leaving a 1" tab at the bottom of each piece that you want to make stand up.
3. Glue picture elements onto the background. You might also use 3-D materials (for example, a yellow pom-pom could be used for the sun.)
4. Fold back the tabs on the picture elements that will stand and glue them onto the ground of the shoe box. Some things, like birds, may be hung with string.

Variation:

Instead of shoe boxes, provide pieces of poster board. Have the children fold them in half to make a "stage."



Weaving God's Promises

HOPE MOSAICS for Intermediate

Children make a mosaic with words of hope embedded.

Materials:

construction paper or tissue paper
poster board
liquid glue
paintbrushes
scissors
pencils
rulers
paper bowls

Preparation:

Cut up the tissue paper or construction paper into $\frac{1}{2}$ " squares. Put all shades of one color together in a bowl.

Directions:

Set out the bowls of tiny squares and invite each child to make a hope mosaic. Give the children these directions:

1. Cut a piece of poster board into a square shape. It may be any size, but a good size to work with is 10" x 10".
2. Use a pencil to write the words *HOPE IN GOD* in large letters on the poster board square. Brush the words with glue and stick on the mosaic squares, one by one. These squares need to be the same color in order for you to read the words later.
3. Use a ruler to draw a simple geometric design around the words. You might also draw a 1" border around the picture. Then add other designs such as diamond shapes.
4. Brush each section with glue and add colored squares that contrast with the color of the words. Make sure that the squares stick down firmly and that they all fit together closely.

Design Ideas:

A mosaic of yellow words on a black background makes an interesting color-coded picture of hope. Or two shades of the same color could be used to show how our hope in God is imbedded in everything but isn't always easy to see.



Weaving God's Promises

JELLY BEAN PICTURES for Preschool

Children make pictures with jelly-bean frames to remind them of God's goodness.

Materials:

magazines with pictures of appealing things
jelly beans in various bright colors
glue
small plain white paper plates
scissors
hole punch
yarn or ribbon for hanging
optional: white frosting and plastic knives

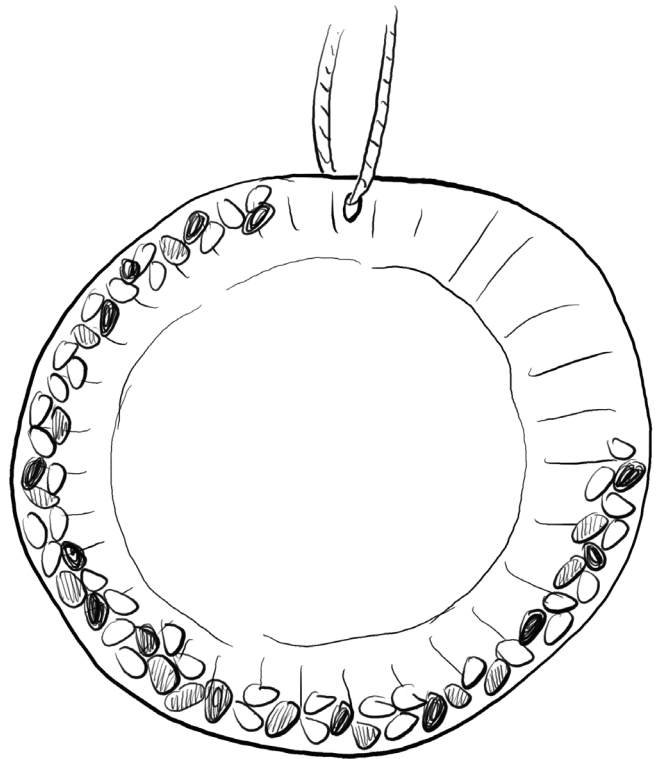
Preparation:

Cut lots of pictures of appealing things from the magazines.

Directions:

Set out the pictures and invite each child to make a jelly bean picture.

1. In the center of a paper plate, glue magazine pictures of the good things that God has made, things that remind you of how good God is to us. It could be one picture or many pictures in a collage.
2. Punch a hole at the top of the plate.
3. Cut a length of yarn or ribbon about 10" long, thread it through the hole and tie.
4. Spread glue along the outside border of the plate or use a plastic knife to spread frosting. Then stick jelly beans into the glue or frosting and let dry.





Weaving God's Promises

PEACE PINS for Primary, Elementary

Children make pins using ribbons in the colors of the rainbow.

Materials:

- jumbo safety pins
- small safety pins
- thin ribbons in rainbow colors: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple
- scissors

Directions:

Give each child one large safety pin and 6 small ones and invite the children to make peace pins.

Give the children these directions:

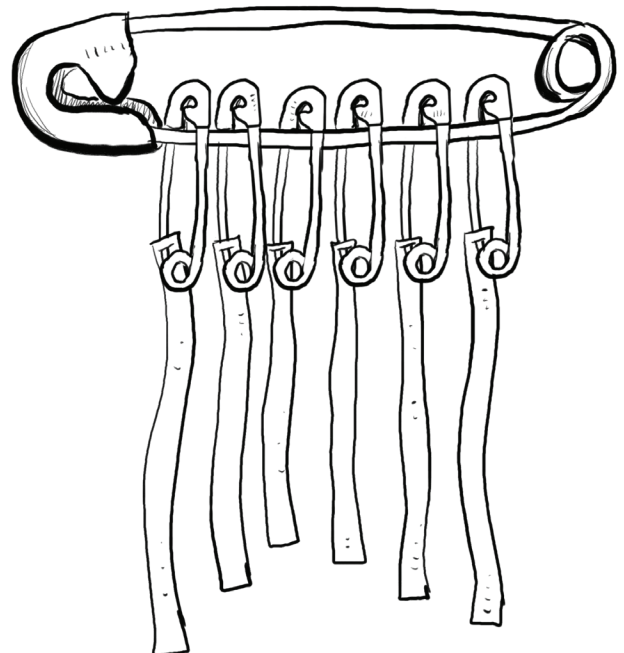
1. Cut the ribbons into lengths of varying size depending on the design that you want for your pin. The shortest length should be 1". See below for illustrations.
2. Poke a small safety pin through the end of each ribbon. Then hang the smaller safety pins from the large one, in rainbow order (red-orange-yellow-green-blue-purple).
3. Wear the pin as a reminder of God's promises to us.

Variation:

Provide a variety of colors and allow children to make peace pins out of any color combination they wish.

Advent pin:

Provide deep blue or purple ribbons and have children can make Advent pins.





Weaving God's Promises

PEACE T-SHIRTS for Preschool, Primary, Elementary, Intermediate

Children paint peaceful designs on t-shirts, using stencils and sponges or creating their own designs.

Materials

- plain white t-shirts
- fabric paints and brushes
- fabric pens
- stencils (of animals and trees, preferably)
- small sponges
- small bowls
- paint shirts (or cut neck and arm holes from large plastic garbage bags for shirts)

Preparation:

Lay down newspaper on your work space. Put tempera paints in small bowls.

Directions:

Give each child a paint shirt to put on and a t-shirt to decorate and invite the children to paint peace t-shirts. Help the younger children as needed. Give the children these directions:

1. Use the sponges and stencils to paint a peaceful scene on the front of your t-shirt. (*Older children can paint their own designs.*)
2. When the front is dry, decorate the back if you wish. (*Older children can autograph each other's t-shirts.*)



Weaving God's Promises

PEACE GARDENS for Preschool

Children make miniature gardens complete with tiny animals.

Materials:

small clay planters
potting soil
spoons for scooping soil
tiny plastic animals
small green plants
acrylic or tempera paints
paintbrushes

Preparation:

On the rim of each planter, write *GOD'S PEACEABLE KINGDOM*. Make one planter for each child.

Directions:

Invite each child to make a peace garden. Give the children these directions:

1. Fill the planter about half full with potting soil.
2. Add a small green plant.
3. Around the plant, place at least two tiny plastic animals.





Weaving God's Promises

PAPER BAG SKITS for Intermediate

Children pull items from a paper bag and use them to act out a story of entering into a Peaceable Kingdom.

Materials

- paper bags
- miscellaneous items, 10 for each bag

For more than one skit, use a new bag with 10 different items *or* use the same bag and items and see what a different team of actors can do.

Preparation:

Put the items in the bag before the class begins, and close the top.

Directions:

Invite the children to take part in this drama.

1. Choose two or more children to be the actors.
2. Give the actors a bag and have them take out the items.
3. Tell them to act out a drama of entering into a Peaceable Kingdom, talking about what they see there and what they experience. They must use all of the items from the bag in their skit.
4. Assign new actors to act out the drama and give them a bag of items—either the same bag or a new one—to use in their skit.



Weaving God's Promises

JOY FROM SORROW, BEAUTY FROM UGLINESS for All Children

Isaiah dreamed of a Peaceable Kingdom during a time of war. He dreamed about a time when there would be joy and justice and healing, at a time when there was sorrow and hurt. Can sorrow turn to joy, ugliness to beauty? Yes! Just as God can create something ugly like charcoal that can turn into something beautiful like crystal, God can also make bad things in our lives turn into good things. As we later find out, Isaiah's dream comes true in the coming of God's own Son to bring us joy and justice and healing.

Children observe how something ugly (charcoal) can be turned into something beautiful (crystal).

Materials:

- 2-3 porous rocks
- 5-6 pieces of charcoal
- measuring cup
- ammonia
- salt
- liquid bluing (a laundry supply)
- food coloring
- baking pan
- mixing bowl
- metal spoon

Directions:

Invite the children to observe this demonstration.

1. Spread newspaper to protect your work area.
2. Put the rocks in the pan, then the charcoal. Explain that the rocks are like our hard times and the charcoal is like the dark times in our lives.
3. Pour $\frac{1}{4}$ cup ammonia into the mixing bowl. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup salt and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup liquid bluing and mix. Then add several drops of food coloring. Pour this mixture over the rocks and charcoal and see the crystal form.
4. Explain that God's power is like the strong ammonia that works on the ugly rocks to make them beautiful. The carbon in the charcoal reacted with the chemicals to make crystal shapes.



Weaving God's Promises

RAINBOW PEACE SIGNS for Preschool, Primary

Children make beautiful rainbow circles to remind them of God's promises of peace and joy in his Kingdom.

Materials:

- muffin pan
- food coloring
- water
- ½ teaspoon measure
- round coffee filters
- newspaper

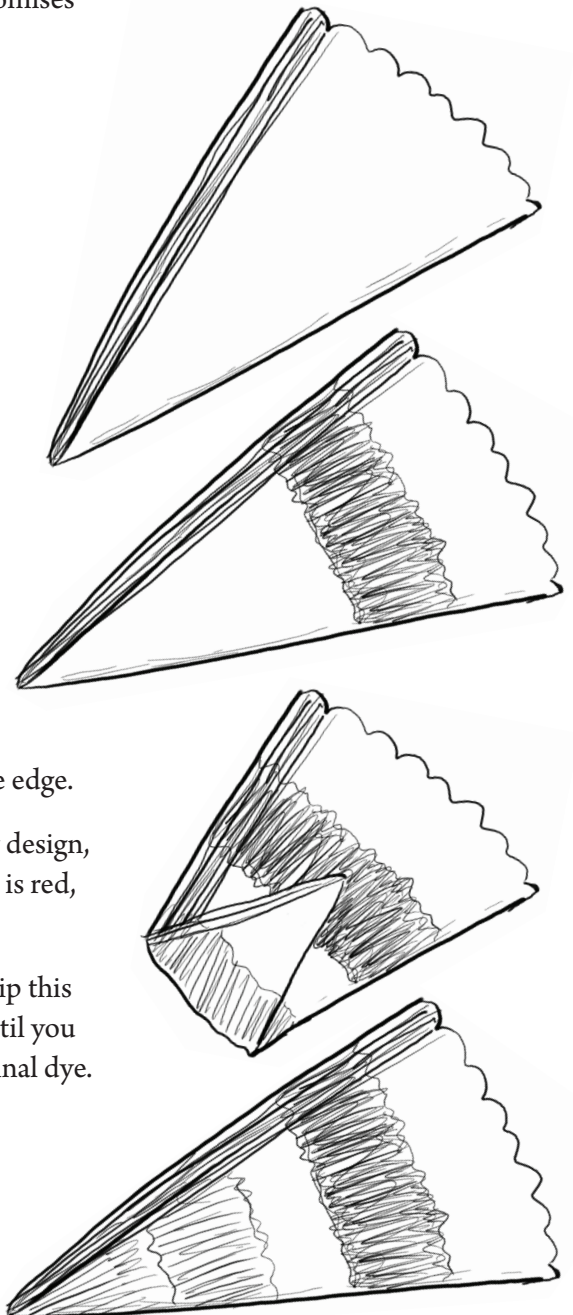
Preparation:

Protect your work area with newspaper. Add ½ teaspoon of food coloring to each muffin cup, then fill each cup with water. Have as many rainbow colors as possible.

Directions:

Invite each child to make a rainbow peace sign. Help the younger children as needed. Give the children these directions:

1. Fold the coffee filter in half several times so that the center comes to a point. Then fold the point up several inches toward the edge.
2. Dip just the fold into one of the dyes. If you are making a rainbow design, this color can be either red or purple. The order of rainbow colors is red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple.
3. Unfold the filter slightly, up to the line where the first dye ends. Dip this second fold into another dye. Continue unfolding and dipping until you reach the center point of the filter, which will be dipped into the final dye.
4. Carefully unfold the filter and let dry on newspaper.





Weaving God's Promises

CONVERSATION JUMP-START: PEACE BE WITH YOU! for Intermediate

Children describe what a peaceful world would be to them and take a look at what actions promote peace and what actions don't.

Materials:

My Peaceful World handout (pp. 28-29)
pencils or pens

Preparation:

Make copies of the *My Peaceful World* handout, one for each child.

Directions:

Invite the children to participate in this Conversation Jump-Start activity. Begin by saying:

- Isaiah had a picture of peace for Israel. He saw a land where a lamb could lie down with a lion and not be hurt. He also saw a land where a blind person can see and a lame person can walk again. But how do we get peace? What leads to peace? Look at the world around you, and think about it...

Hand out the copies of *My Peaceful World* and invite the children to complete the exercise. Then call the children together and ask them to share their answers.

MY PEACEFUL WORLD

The most important things in a peaceful world would be (name 3 things):

1.

2.

3.

Instead of a lion and a lamb lying down together, my picture of a peaceable world would look like this:

What is peace really?

Which statements lead to peace? Rate them 1 (real peace) to 10 (no way). Why did you rate them this way?

- _____ You saw a boy steal a candy bar from a store. He tells you, “Be quiet about it or I’ll beat you up.” You don’t want to make trouble, so you don’t complain. Peace is not being beaten up.
- _____ If Sarah is always losing this game, maybe we should change the rules to give her a chance to win sometimes. Peace is making everybody happy.
- _____ When somebody hits me, I just hit back to make things even. Peace is about staying even.
- _____ If someone tells me to do something wrong like give him or her answers on a test, it’s best to go along so I don’t make trouble. Peace is being quiet.
- _____ If somebody hits me, I should just take it and not hit back or tattle. Jesus said to “turn the other cheek” and that means that I should just take it. Peace is about taking whatever comes to you, without fighting it.
- _____ If I don’t think I’m being treated fairly, I should say so, even if it causes an argument. Peace is about being fair to everybody.
- _____ Ashley is so peaceful. She’ll do anything to not get angry, even if it hurts her. Peace is about not showing any bad feelings.

LESSON 13: ISAIAH PROMISES PEACE AND SALVATION



We Believe . . .

Isaiah's writings touch the mystic side of Anglicanism, and so Isaiah is a beloved prophet and much quoted in lectionary readings, in *the Book of Common Prayer* and even in hymns.

Here's one example of many: at the beginning of Holy Communion, the celebrant and people will always say or sing this hymn known as the Sanctus or "Holy, Holy":

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

This is what one of the seraphim called to another in Isaiah 6, when Isaiah tells of his calling by God.



Words of Faith

Peaceable kingdom—God's promise, through Isaiah, of God's coming reign of peace and love

Peace, hope, comfort—what God promises for God's people; what God brings to our lives; what we long for

Savior—one who redeems, rescues and restores; our Savior is Jesus, the Messiah, the Promised One of God

God is our salvation and promises us a world at peace.



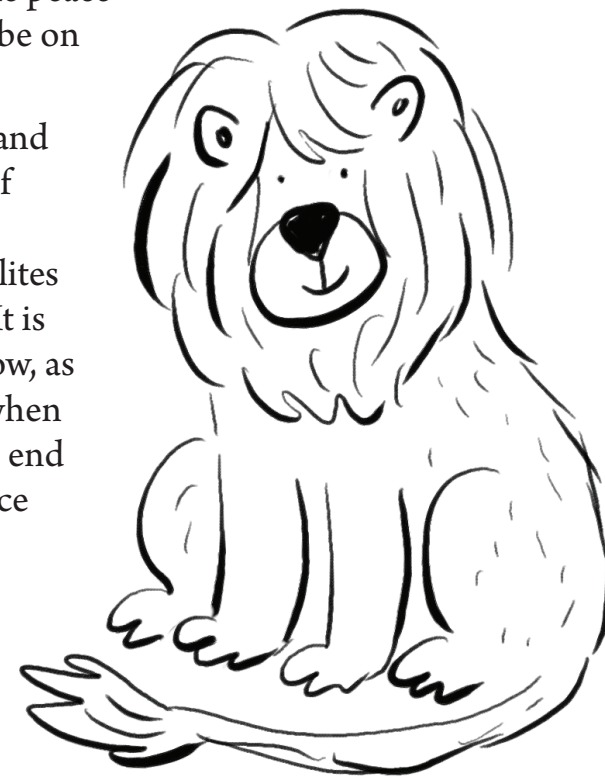
Today's Story:

Isaiah 9:1-7; 11:1-10; 40; 42:1-9; 52:13-53:12; 61:1-4

In Isaiah 9:1-7, the prophet Isaiah promises to Israel a new and righteous Savior who will establish a kingdom of justice and righteousness, upheld by "the zeal of the Lord of hosts." In Isaiah 61:1-4, Isaiah expresses the form that his deliverance will take: "...to bring good news to the oppressed..." We know the first passage as the prophecy foretelling the birth of Jesus and the second as what Jesus quoted in the synagogue when he announced himself as the fulfillment of this scripture (Luke 4:16-21).

Many people have heard of the Peaceable Kingdom, but not many have read it. From a Christian point of view, Isaiah here proclaims the coming of Christ and the peace and righteousness that will be on the earth upon his coming.

God's promise of salvation and the vision of the kingdom of heaven on earth was a great source of solace to the Israelites during this troubling time. It is still a great comfort to us now, as we look forward to a time when war and evil and hatred will end and the reign of God in peace and love will finally prevail.





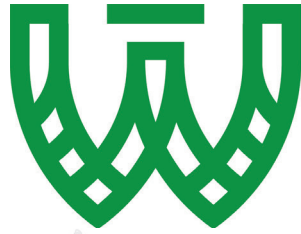
Sharing

Today's passages are fairly long. You may want to choose just a few to focus on, or you may read them all in the context of the expectation of the coming of Christ. If you chose just one, the Peaceable Kingdom is an excellent passage to read or tell. If you can find the passage in a children's Bible, show the pictures as you read the story.

Here is the breakdown of today's readings:

- **Isaiah 9:1-7, 61:1-4** (promise of a savior)
- **Isaiah 11:1-10** (Peaceable Kingdom)
- **Isaiah 42:1-9, 52:13-53:12** (Suffering Servant Songs)
- **Isaiah 40** (comfort to the people)

Reinforce the idea that God's promises of peace and salvation extend not only to ancient Israel, but also to us.



Weaving God's Promises



This Week at Home

- **Connect the Old and New Testaments:** First read the Christmas story as it appears in both Luke (1:26-56; 2:1-20) and Matthew 1:18-2:12. Then read these passages from Isaiah: 9:1-7 (savior) and 11:1-10 (peaceable kingdom). Where do you see and hear similarities?
- **Create a family mural** illustrating these beautiful, prophetic passages from Isaiah. Invite each household member to create one drawing or painting. Ask them to label their drawings with a few words from the passages they illustrated. When all the illustrations are done, arrange them in order on a wall. Add a title.
- **Find a recording of Handel's *Messiah*.** Listen to the selections from this most famous of oratorios where Handel sets the words of Isaiah to music. (Handel uses verses from Isaiah 7, 9, 35, 40, 53 and 60.) Invite everyone's reactions. If any of these selections from *The Messiah* are familiar to you, sing along! (And if interest holds, play the Christmas portions of the *The Messiah* as well.)
- **View the painting the *Peaceable Kingdom* by Edward Hicks.** You can easily find this by searching online. Try sitting in silence for a while, just looking at the image. Then ask household members to share what they're feeling or thinking. Share this info with everyone: Hicks was raised an Anglican, but became a Quaker preacher, better known in his lifetime for his preaching than his painting. True to his faith, most of Hick's paintings reflect peace and calm, rather than abrupt action. *Peaceable Kingdom* certainly demonstrates this aspect of his art.
- **Get a copy of *The Hymnal 1982* and look up "Isaiah"** in the "Scriptural References" index at the back of the book. How many hymns reference Isaiah? There are dozens! See if you can find hymns that included words from today's readings from Isaiah 9, 11, 40, 42, 52, 53 and 61. Do family members have a few favorites? If your family sings together, try singing a verse or two of the hymns you've found.



Household Prayer

Lord, we call you the Prince of Peace, the God of our salvation, our savior and our redeemer. In your world, there will be peace for everybody. Grant us your peace and your blessing today, and help us to work for peace and blessing for everybody we meet. *Amen.*

