

## Lesson 10: Peace - Do Not Worry

At this point, we are well into our Via Transformativa Peace unit. Along the way, we've explored several different ways to achieve peace.

One way to achieve peace is to prevent fighting. In our Native American Story, the Great Spirit built a bridge of peace between the two constantly-fighting tribes. And Loo-Wit maintains peace to this day by sitting between the two brothers who were turned into mountains. In our Sikh story, Bhai Sud tricked the robbers into returning home instead of pillaging the village, thereby using his wits to avoid violence.

Another way to achieve peace is to live in harmony with the world around us. We saw this in our Earth Day lesson, which focused on our connection with nature. But a similar message could also be found in our Buddhist tale, Four Harmonious Friends, when the animals learned to cooperate with one another.

Last week, we focused on the Biblical story of Jesus calming the storm. While that story might be construed as achieving peace through changing the weather, it's also possible that Jesus helped his disciples feel more peaceful by changing their perception of the situation. This week's lesson offers a similar theme as Jesus encourages people to worry less.

Please feel free to review the stories covered so far or the tidbits about Jesus posted in last week's lesson plan. If you would like to add some new information, consider offering these points about the Christian Bible. And if you have a Bible, please pull it out and show it to the kids.

- ❖ The Bible is the sacred text for Christianity (which is the religious tradition of Jubilee!)
- ❖ The Bible is a big book that contains lots of smaller books, so it's really more like a little library. The Bible was written over hundreds of years by many different authors, so each book is different. Some books are like poetry (Song of Solomon, Psalms), some books tell about the history of the Israelites (1 & 2 Judges, 1 & 2 Chronicles), some books tell one long story (Job, Ruth), some books tell lots of different stories (Genesis, Matthew), and some books are written letters (Colossians, Philippians).
- ❖ The Christian Bible is divided into two parts: Old Testament and New Testament. The Jesus stories are found in the New Testament. Jewish people read just the books in the Old Testament, which they call the Jewish Bible or the Hebrew Bible.

- ❖ The Jesus stories are found in the 1<sup>st</sup> four books of the New Testament. Those four books are sometimes called "Gospels," which means "Good News."

### **Story - Do Not Worry**

Before reading the story, talk to your kids about how difficult it is to feel peaceful when feeling worried. You might ask them what types of things they used to worry about when they were younger and what types of things worry them now. This is also a great time to check in about their level of anxiety regarding the current COVID-19 situation.

All humans have long worried about similar things. In this story, Jesus tries to help people worry just a little less by using the ravens and the lilies as examples. Believe it or not, lots of kids have no idea what ravens and lilies look like! So please feel free to share these images with them as you read.



Like many other Jesus stories, this one is short, easy-to-understand, and found in more than one book of the Bible. These links take you to the New Revised Standard Version of the passage. As always, feel free to use your own family Bible or to explore other free, on-line translations.

[Matthew 6:25-34](#)

[Luke 12:22-32](#)

If you prefer a video version of the story, try [this one](#) which is engaging but stays close to the Biblical text.

### **Thought Questions**

While anxiety reduction can bring peace, the truth is that "worrying" often keeps us safe. In the end, having a peaceful life relies on finding the appropriate balance between worrying and letting go. So, after reading the story, try posing a few questions to get kids thinking about where the appropriate balancing point is for them in different situations. Here are some of the questions we ask. Again, we're not looking for answers that are "right" or "wrong." We're just trying to help them work through some of these issues.

- ❖ Sometimes, we need to worry about things, but sometimes, we worry about things that aren't all that important. Have you ever worried about something that wasn't really all that important?
- ❖ How do you know when something is important enough to worry about? Do you have someone else who can help you decide when to worry and when not to? How do you decide when you need to tell someone else, like an adult, about your worries?
- ❖ One of the ways God helps us is by giving us caring people in our lives. Who are the people who help you? What kinds of things do they help you with so you don't have to worry so much? Do they buy you clothes? Do they make you food to eat? Do they take you places?
- ❖ Being a peaceful person also means coming up with your own ways of feeling less worried. What kinds of things can/do you do to help yourself feel more relaxed when you are worried? Do you have a special place you can go? Do you have a special activity you can do or a special object you can hang on to? Do you have a song you can sing?
- ❖ Have you ever helped someone else to be less worried about something? How did you do that? What did you say/do? What could you say/do in the future?

### **Peaceful Meditation**

Mindfulness and meditation also offer paths to peace. Even young kids can learn to meditate, and many of the Nurture Program kids have meditation experience from their field trips to Urban Dharma. Rather than having kids sit still, in silence, for an extended period of time, consider trying this guided meditation.

Simply ask the kids to sit in a comfortable position and to focus on a single object. Any object can work. Figurines and objects from nature (like stones) work well; toys and "activity objects" work less well.

Also, guided meditations work best if the facilitator speaks from the heart, so feel free to adapt this, so it feels comfortable for you.

Let's start by sitting in a comfortable position. You might want to cross your legs or sit on your knees.

When we meditate, we need to be very calm and quiet. Let's start by looking at this object.

Try to keep your eyes on this object as much as possible. Try not to look around the room. And try not to listen to all the sounds you hear. Just focus on this object.

Keep looking at this object. Keep calm. Keep quiet. Just look at this object.

Now close your eyes. Try to keep them closed for as long as possible.

In your imagination, picture the object. Pretend that you can still see it, even though your eyes are closed.

Now, very calmly and quietly, place your hands on your belly.

Now take a deep breath in. When you breathe in, your belly should fill up with air. Focus on your hands and feel your belly getting bigger as it fills up with air.

Now, very slowly and quietly, let the air go. Breathe out. When you breathe out, your belly should get smaller. Focus on your hands and feel your belly getting smaller as you let the air go.

Now take another deep breath in and feel your belly fill up.

Now let the air go, very slowly and quietly, and feel your belly get smaller.

Breathe in. Feel your belly get bigger.

Breathe out. Feel your belly get smaller.

If your mind starts to wander, just try to think about your breath and your hands.

Now let's take a moment to meditate on the vast golden sea Hafiz wrote about.

As you breathe in, imagine yourself lying on a blanket of golden waves.

As you breathe out, imagine yourself floating.

Breathe in as you float on the blanket of golden waves. You are almost weightless.

Breathe out as you continue float on the wave - completely relaxed - just floating along on the lovely waves.

Now as you breathe in, think about the beautiful gifts God has given to you. Let your body float on the golden waves and try to see what beautiful things are floating past you on the golden sea.

As you breathe out, notice the beautiful things floating by.

Breathe in and float and notice.

Breathe out and float and notice.

Give them a few minutes to meditate/imagine on their own, in silence. The length of time will depend on both age and experience. Offer prompts every 10-15 seconds or so if needed.

Once it feels right, end the meditation by asking your meditators to open their eyes quietly and slowly.

You can also debrief by asking them what sorts of things came to mind while meditating. Many times, they will report sights and sounds that interfered with their meditation. That's OK, too. It's a *practice!*

### **Crafts - Ravens, Lilies, and Worry Stones**

If your child likes to color, there are plenty of bird and flower on-line coloring templates that you can print out. Some of them even look like ravens and lilies!

#### ***Handprint Lily***

Our younger kids enjoy making these handprint lilies. The only supplies you need are: a piece of paper (any kind, any color), a writing utensil, tape/glue stick, and a small stick/pencil.



- 1) On the piece of paper, trace around your hand and then cut it out. (Really young kids might need help with this part.)
- 2) Gently fold the handprint and use tape/glue stick to create the flower.
- 3) Wrap each petal, over and over again, around your pencil, moving away from the center of the flower. This will create petals that bend outward.
- 4) Insert your small stick or pencil in the bottom of the flower to create a stem. Tape in place.
- 5) Create as many flowers as you want and make a bouquet!!

### **Worry Stones**

If you happen to have clay at your house, these "worry stones" are fun and easy. We usually make them with our Upper Elementary group. We originally found them on a social work blog which suggested that rubbing these smooth, little stones could provide a bit of stress relief.



Any clay can work for these worry stones. We like Sculpey polymer clays which can be bought at any craft store. Craft stores have remained open throughout the pandemic, so they can provide a nice respite from quarantine life. Just remember to wear your mask!

The basic idea is to make a multi-colored ball which is then "smooshed." Add a thumbprint and bake according to the directions on the clay package! Easy-peasy!

Complete instructions can be found [here](#).