

Pax Christi - Peace Sunday 2025



Activities and Prayers for Children

In this resource we offer some activities and prayers that could be used with young children at home, with a group, or as part of a liturgy on or around Peace Sunday. The themes are about forgiveness, reconciliation, hope and peace.

Activities

Definitions

Write the words 'forgiveness' and 'reconciliation' in the middle of a circle drawn on paper. Ask the children to say as many words or phrases as they can related to the two words. Write them around the circle.

Ask the children to come up with a definition of forgiveness. Ideas could be about forgiving people, not being annoyed or angry with someone anymore, treating someone well, not wanting revenge or punishment. Then ask if there is a definition for reconciliation. Many people might know the word in relation to the sacrament of reconciliation, but it is also about mending relationships after a time of disagreement or conflict.

Ask if they can give any examples of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Hope for the World

Set a picture of the world or a globe in the middle of the floor.

Ask the children to think of countries where there is conflict or violence. Go round and ask each child to say a country and write it down on a small piece of paper. You may want to pre-prepare some pieces of paper with names of countries on them. Ask the children to place the pieces of paper around the picture or globe.

Then ask the children what they would hope to see in the world instead of conflict and violence. Go round and ask each child to share their hope, draw a picture of what it looks like and then place it next to the picture or globe too. Take a few minutes to then discuss what small actions they could do that might help make these hopes a reality.

Drama activity

In small groups, ask the children to come up with a short drama showing a time where someone has done something wrong and has then asked for forgiveness.

After their drama, discuss how the child who was forgiven could have acted differently in the first place, and what they could do now to help mend the relationship.

You might want them to do a follow-up drama showing them putting into action their ideas of what could be done next.

Messages of Hope

Ask the children what makes them feel hopeful.

Sometimes it can be hard to be a peacemaker and to work for reconciliation, but hope can help us to carry on.

Ask the children to write an encouraging message thanking someone for working for peace and draw a hopeful picture on it.

Stories of Forgiveness and Reconciliation - Coventry Cathedral and Pax Christi

Coventry is a town in the centre of England. On the night of the 14th November 1940, during the Second World War, German planes flew over the city dropping bombs. Many buildings were destroyed and many people hurt or killed. The cathedral was also destroyed.

Two of the burnt beams of wood from the roof fell to the floor in the shape of a cross. They were attached to each other in that shape and put by the ruined altar, with the words 'Father Forgive' behind them. Three of the old nails from the roof were also made into a cross and became the 'Cross of Nails'. Over time this cross of nails became a sign of reconciliation and peace with people in Germany and across the world.

The Provost of the cathedral, who was in charge at the time, was Dick Howard. Instead of calling for revenge, he publicly called for forgiveness and reconciliation. This was surprising, as at the time the people he was saying should be forgiven were seen as enemies.

Today the ruins of the old cathedral are still there and a new cathedral has been built next to them as a sign of forgiveness, reconciliation and working for peace.

(Source: <https://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/our-story/history> and <https://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/our-story/the-story-of-coventry-cathedral>)

Pax Christi is an international, Catholic organisation that works for peace and reconciliation.

At the end of the Second World War a school teacher in France, Marthe Dortel-Claudot, felt called to set up a prayer group to pray for reconciliation between people in France and Germany. The prayer group grew and she met Bishop Pierre Marie Théas, who had also prayed for German people and asked others to, as well as having protested against the persecution of Jewish people. This was the foundation for Pax Christi, and Bishop Théas became its first president.

Today Pax Christi is made up of thousands of people working all around the world for peace.

Ask the children what stands out, or surprises them, from the stories. Why do they think Dick and Marthe decided to work for peace and reconciliation? Would they have done the same thing? Ask them if they know any stories of people who have worked for peace, reconciliation and forgiveness. You might want to research local stories and share them as posters or write them up and present them in a folder.

Prayers

Dear God,
You called us to love our enemies. Help us to forgive others when they have done wrong.
Help us to be peacemakers, working to bring reconciliation between people near and far.
Help us to resolve conflicts peacefully and be able to see the good in others.
Give us hope so that we may always trust in your love and have the courage to continue to work for a peaceful world.
Amen

For more resources for children visit:
<https://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-education/primary-schools/>
<https://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-education/secondary/workshop-resources/>

Dear God,
We thank you for giving us your peace.
Help us to spread peace at home and at school by loving and caring for one another even when we don't agree.
Help us to spread peace by sharing our time with those who are lonely and who need a friend.
Help us to spread peace by thinking about and praying for children who have no food or who are frightened and live in fear.
Let us pray every day for peace for our families, our friends and ourselves.
Amen