

Peace
within,
peace
around

**A special worship service in
support of Action for Children**

**May mercy,
peace, and love
be multiplied
to you.**

Jude 1:2

Dear friends,

By the time you're reading this I hope that we're all safely out of lockdown and returning to a sense of normality. It's been a challenging year for everyone, but I'm sure that happier, more hopeful times lie ahead.

Sadly, this isn't the case for many of the vulnerable children and families Action for Children supports. Even before coronavirus hit more than 4.2 million children were living in poverty. The pandemic has only made things worse, amplifying the many inequalities and injustices these children and their families face every day.

Our staff have worked tirelessly to support around 20,000 children through our Coronavirus Emergency Fund. Their work has only been possible thanks to the generosity of supporters like you and your churches. We're immensely grateful for your continued commitment in such difficult times.

However, there's much to do to help families in the aftermath of this crisis. I hope the theme of this year's Action for Children Sunday service, 'Peace within, peace around', gives you the chance to reflect on how we can create peace around us – in our communities – and within us, as we attempt to return to life as it was before.

I'd like to thank our Methodist District Advocates and friends for their invaluable support in developing this material: Reverend Sue Pegg, Steve Oliver, Elizabeth Bishop and Alyson Christy. I'd also like to thank Vickie and Chris Heydon-Matterface for creating engaging activities for children of different ages.

Thank you so much for your support – it really does mean the world to us.

I pray you have a lovely time of worship and may mercy, peace and love be multiplied to you in the name of Jesus Christ.

Blessings,



Karis Kolawole

Faith Partnerships Lead

karis.kolawole@actionforchildren.org.uk

The essentials

Planning your worship service

We hope this booklet will help you to plan a special worship service in support of Action for Children. You can use it on Action for Children Sunday, the second Sunday in July, or at any other time or event. Please feel free to choose different hymns, prayers and activities, or to change the format.

Your regional community fundraiser can help you with your planning. You'll find their details on the contact sheet enclosed with this mailing or at: actionforchildren.org.uk/support-us/fundraise-with-us/fundraise-in-your-church.

They can also send you lots of useful fundraising materials, including:

- Gift Aid envelopes.
- Posters.
- Bookmarks.
- Leaflets.

You can download extra copies of this booklet and PowerPoint slides from: actionforchildren.org.uk/support-us/fundraise-with-us/fundraise-in-your-church.

A great way to bring our work to life is to get one of our friendly speakers to talk at your church. Get in touch with your regional fundraiser to find out more.

Our YouTube channel – youtube.com/user/ActionForChildrenUK – also has a selection of fantastic videos about what we do. You can show them at your service or any other event.

Share the joy



We love seeing pictures and videos from your events. Send them to us or post them on social media (make sure you tag us!)

An outline for a worship service

Welcome

The worship leader encourages the congregation to welcome each other before explaining that the service will focus on Action for Children's work.

The theme of today's service is 'Peace within, peace around'.



Prayer

Loving God,

We give you thanks and praise for your abundant mercy and grace that we receive.

Lord Jesus, we ask you to give us peace in our mind, body, soul and spirit. Help us to bring healing to this broken world, bringing peace and hope to families and children in these uncertain times through the work of Action for Children.

Give those who work for the charity the wisdom to make the right choices for those they help.

Bring peace to those who are overwhelmed by circumstances that are sometimes beyond their control.

You are the Prince of Peace and we put our trust in you.

In the name of Jesus, we pray.

Amen.

Prayer by Elizabeth Bishop, Action for Children District Advocate for Yorkshire West District

Gathering activity: A thankful heart

Suggested activity on page 10.

Our Lord's prayer

Hymn

Come Now Is The Time To Worship

(Singing the Faith: 24)

Bible readings

The gift of God's peace

John 14:15-28

Peace of God that passes all understanding

Philippians 4:1-9

Opening the word

The minister or worship leader may choose to either prepare their own sermon or use the material on page 10 to explore the theme.

Hymn

King Of Glory, King Of Peace

(Singing the Faith: 56)

or

I Will Run To You - Hillsong Worship

(<https://youtu.be/8Q6FTjogqE0>)

Talk about Action for Children's work

At this point, one or more of the following can be used to explain how Action for Children's work makes a difference.

- An invited speaker talks about Action for Children.
- Someone reads out Coral's story on page 9. You may wish to use the questions on page 12 to start a conversation about what you've read.
- A short video clip – supplied by the regional fundraiser or from Action for Children's YouTube collection – is played.



Offering and prayers for the work of Action for Children

Hymn

Peace, Perfect Peace Is The Gift Of Christ Our Lord

(Singing the Faith: 710; Songs of Fellowship Combined: 1500)

Prayer

Prayer for Action for Children

Ever-present God, we thank you that you are active in our world, declaring your love for all people through the work of Action for Children.

We earnestly hold before you today all those children and families that need to be supported – those surrounded by the horrors of abuse, neglect, violence, poverty, exploitation and other peace-shattering circumstances.

Every child and family member is precious to you and so we humbly ask for the work of the charity to continue to make a real difference in their lives. May they be blessed with all the things that will allow them to live and flourish as you intended, secure in the knowledge that they are loved and treasured.

We also hold before you the leaders, staff, volunteers and supporters of Action for Children. May every one of them continue to recognise the promptings of your Spirit as You guide them along the right paths to provide the life-giving support that is needed.

To struggle against the challenging circumstances of our time can be frightening, heartbreaking and energy-sapping – physically, emotionally and mentally – not only for the children and their families in need but also for those people in Action for Children who come into contact with them. And so we pray fervently that all involved may be instilled with your strength and your peace.

Lord of Peace, give them peace at all times and in every way, and may they know the hope that is possible through following Jesus.

Amen.

Prayer by Steve Oliver, Action for Children District Advocate for Manchester and Stockport District

Hymn

Peace Is Flowing Like A River

(Songs of Fellowship: 458; Mission Praise Combined: 554)

or

Make Me A Channel Of Your Peace

(Songs of Fellowship: 381; Mission Praise Combined: 456; Singing the Faith: 707)

Closing prayer

God of justice,

Help us to offer love and hospitality to the stranger.

Work in us to transform this world, where justice and peace will ever flow in all the nooks and corners of the world.

Grant us courage: courage and strength to make a difference in this world.

Take us and use us to love and serve you and all people, in the power of your spirit and in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

May mercy, peace and love be multiplied to us in the name of Jesus Christ (Jude 1:2).

Amen.

Prayer by Elizabeth Bishop, Action for Children District Advocate for Yorkshire West District



Coral's story

Coral is a single mum who lives in Northumberland with her six children, Ben, 16, Alisha, 14, Hannah, 13, Jack, 11, Bethany, seven and Ava, four. She first got help from Action for Children when Jack was diagnosed with autism.

“I was really struggling caring for Jack,” Coral explains. “But Louise, our support worker, was brilliant. She was there for us through the diagnosis, and it was a massive help.”

The family was just about managing before coronavirus hit. But when the first lockdown was announced, everything became so much more difficult. “When the schools closed, it was really hard having Jack and the other kids at home all of the time,” Coral says. “Jack can be disruptive and it affected the others. I found it hard to do things like shopping, too. I had to take all six kids with me.”

The pandemic also had a big impact on Coral's mental health. “I've had depression for a number of years, and the loss of freedom being stuck in the house was difficult. Mentally, I couldn't imagine what the kids were going through, either. I was so worried they'd become isolated.”

The family's Action for Children support worker, Louise, was there for Coral and the children throughout lockdown. “She asked the kids what would help and they told her they needed a new laptop because Hannah's was broken,” Coral explains. “Louise said she would look into it and then, one day, we had a delivery from her – the kids were so happy!”

“Knowing people care enough for you can change lives. It keeps people going and lets you know you're not as alone as you feel.”

“It was absolutely huge for all the family. It meant we could keep on top of the schoolwork. It helps us plan our days and provides the structure we've been missing out on.”

Louise also helped Coral to find Jack a place in school. She says: “Louise didn't give up until we finally got a place for him. Jack has been going to school for a couple of days each week and I can't begin to tell you the difference it's made to the family.”

“I want to say a huge thank you to everyone at Action for Children. Thank you for believing in us and not giving up – we feel so valued.”

All-age activities

You might like to include an all-age activity or two in your service. Here are a few ideas.

Gathering activity

Symbols of peace

This can be done either as an individual or a group activity.



Instructions

a. Individual activity

As people gather for worship, stewards or worship leaders hand out Post-it notes or tags. Everyone writes down a symbol of peace. The worship leaders collect the Post-it notes and read them out.

Alternatively, people could bring in items or pictures that symbolise peace.

b. Group activity

The worship leader asks people to huddle together in twos or threes. Each person gives an example of something that represents peace to them.

You could also ask each person to explain the symbol and what it means to them. Repeat the activity by mixing up the groups.

Top tip: hang the tags on a gratitude tree or stick the Post-it notes on a board.

At the end of the activity, explain that Action for Children works with thousands of children, young people and families living in poverty. The pandemic has made many children's situations worse. For some, the only symbols of peace they may see are Action for Children support workers, food bank staff and the emergency donations the charity provides. Donations today will go towards Action for Children's work to End Childhood Crisis.

Discussion about peace

Peace within, peace around

The coronavirus crisis has threatened our safety, health, wellbeing and many other aspects of our lives. It's disturbed many people's sense of peace.

Although life is beginning to return to normal, it's still important to find peace both within ourselves (i.e. in our heart and mind) and around us in our families and communities.

A. What can we learn from the Bible readings?

The worship leader may find the notes below helpful when sharing some thoughts about peace from John 14:15-28 and John 16:16-33.

God is with us in crisis

The Bible assures us that we can turn to God in times of crisis. In John 16:33, Jesus talked to His disciples about some of the unpleasant situations they might face in the future. He assured them that:

- Grief and pain will turn to joy.
- They can ask God for anything in His name.
- They will have peace.

Philippians 4:1-9 encourages us not to be anxious, but to pray about everything with thanksgiving. When we pray, God's peace – which is beyond all understanding – will guard our hearts and our minds.

Additional scriptures that talk about peace:

- 'For He Himself is our peace' – Ephesians 2:14.
- 'Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest' – Matthew 11:28.
- 'Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid' – John 14:27.



B. Discussion about peace

The worship leader may want to split people into groups so that each person has an opportunity to share their thoughts.

1. What do you do or where do you go to feel peace within?

Once we know what brings us peace as individuals, we can create the time and space to do it. Sometimes we have to step into a place of peace. Jesus Christ often retreated to a solitary place away from distractions for reflection and prayer (Luke 5:16; Mark 1:35-37).

2. What can you do to help others feel at peace?

Coral's story on page 9 is an example of how Action for Children's support brought relief to families during the coronavirus crisis.

After reading the story, the worship leader could ask:

- What challenges did Coral and her children face?
- What did Action for Children do to help solve them?

The worship leader could end by saying:

Action for Children has supported thousands of families through the pandemic. Their frontline staff have been a vital lifeline for so many. These dedicated people have offered face-to-face support and help online, keeping 99% of services open. Through the charity's Coronavirus Emergency Fund, staff have helped families to cover the cost of essentials like food, nappies, soap, and gas and electricity. The Fund also helped them to provide books, technology and other resources so that children can learn and play at home. Since launching in March 2020, the Fund has helped around 20,000 children and young people across the UK.

But more still needs to be done, right now, to support the most vulnerable children and their families. Your donations and campaigning actions can make a life-changing difference. You can help Action for Children to stop the pandemic from scarring a generation.

Activities for children

PEACE crafts and activities

Activities developed by Vickie and Chris Heydon-Matterface.

Notes to the session leader:

The activities centre around three symbols of peace: doves, boats in a storm, and peace among people.

– **Doves** – remind us of when Jesus was baptised and the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove.

– **A boat** – when the disciples were afraid in the storm, they called out to Jesus to calm the sea.

– **Peace among people** – we pray for peace among all people of the world. In our churches, we sometimes offer each other 'The Peace'.



Origami boat hanging



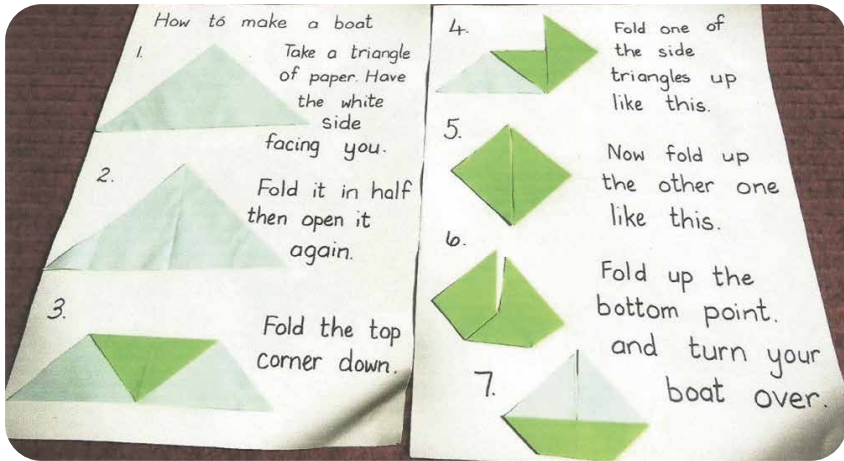
Wind farm pinwheels

Origami boat hanging (for ages 6-12)

What you'll need: Origami paper (ideally a different colour on each side) or any coloured paper. You'll also need cardboard, string and sticky tape.

Make a boat following the instructions below. You can make it any size you like but we recommend using paper that's 20cm along the longest side.

Making your boat



Finally, use the sticky tape to secure the folds in place. Why not make more boats in different sizes and colours?

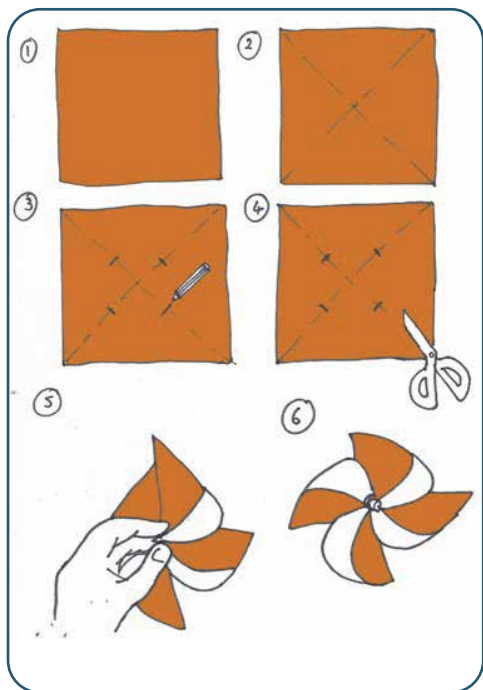
What's next?

- Write: 'Jesus, calm our storms' on a rectangular piece of card. Decorate this as much as you want to.
- Cut different lengths of string and attach a boat to the end of each piece using sticky tape.
- Finally, attach some string to the rectangular piece of card so that you can hang up your mobile.

Watch as the boats blow in the breeze. You'll notice when they become calm.

Make your own wind farm (pinwheels) (for ages 10-16)

What you'll need: paper, a pencil, scissors, a paper straw, garden plant green tie wire, and a push pin.



- 1 Cut a square of paper about 15x15cm.
 - 2 Fold the square from corner to corner, then unfold.
 - 3 Make a pencil mark 3cm away from the centre along each diagonal.
 - 4 Cut along the folded lines from the outside. Stop at the pencil marks.
 - 5 Curl every other point into the centre.
 - 6 Push the pin through all four points to make a hole. Make a hole about 2-3cms from the top of the straw.
- 7 Cut a length of garden wire about 15cm long (you might need an adult to help you with this). Tie a knot at one end.
 - 8 Push the wire through the hole in the centre of the pinwheel (from the push pin) and tie another knot behind the wheel.
 - 9 Push the remainder of the wire through the hole in the straw and tie a third knot. Trim off any excess wire.
 - 10 Blow on it to test that it spins.

Measuring wind energy

What you'll need: a hairdryer, fan, folded newspaper, cardboard box and Blu Tack.

- 1 Number or colour code each pinwheel.
- 2 Poke some holes in a cardboard box and push the pinwheel straws halfway through.
- 3 Secure the straws with Blu Tack underneath.
- 4 Draw a table (like the one below) on a piece of paper to record the results of your wind tests.
- 5 Use the hairdryer, the fan, the folded newspaper and blowing to move the pinwheels. In the table, put a tick next to each pinwheel that moves and a cross next to each one that doesn't. Make sure you test each pinwheel for the same length of time so the experiment is fair.
- 6 Which form of wind power moved the most pinwheels?
- 7 Which form of wind power made the wheels spin fastest?
- 8 Have a go at trying to control the wind power so they all spin evenly. This might mean changing the angles of the pinwheels in the box.

Pinwheel	Hairdryer	Fan	Folded newspaper	Blowing
Yellow				
Green				
Red				
Blue				

Peaceful hands (for ages 5-10)

What you'll need: paper the colour of people's skin tone (or white paper and crayons), scissors, glue and a pen.

Sometimes we greet a friend with a handshake. A handshake is a sign of peace between two people.



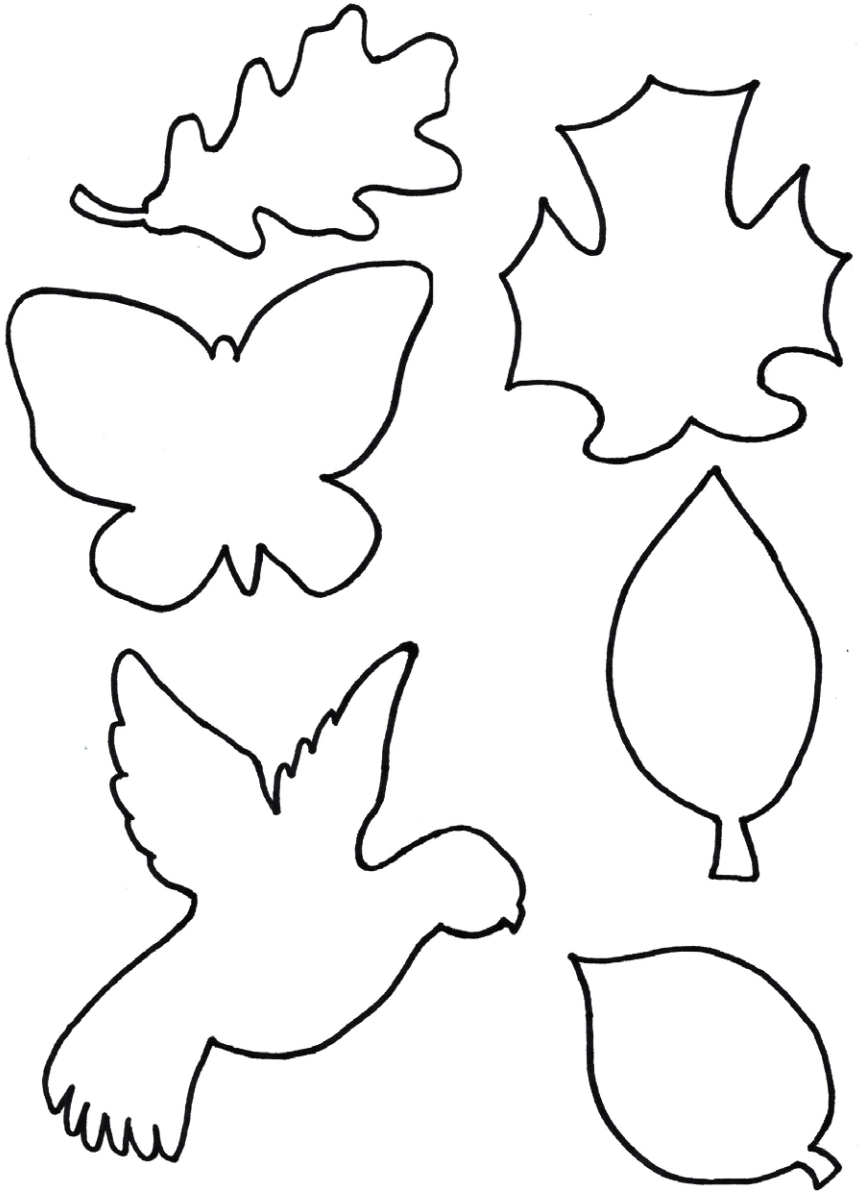
- 1 Draw around your hand. Then draw around a friend's hand. Cut them both out.
- 2 If you don't have paper the colour of skin tone, you can colour it in using crayons. Arrange the cut outs on a piece of white paper so it looks like holding hands.
- 3 Stick them down using the glue.
- 4 Write 'Peace be with you' above the hands and then say it to your friend.

Dove wreath (for ages 9-16)

What you'll need: thick cardboard (like a box used for deliveries) for the base of the wreath. The template sheet (dove, butterfly and leaves), scissors, glue, string, feathers (optional) and colourful paper.

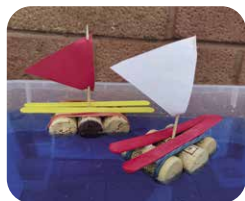


- 1 Cut a circle out of the thick cardboard. Make a hole in the middle so that it's like a ring.
- 2 Draw around the dove, butterfly and leaf templates (see page 18) on some colourful paper.
- 3 Cut these out and glue them to the circle of cardboard to create a wreath. You could try different textured papers and add effects, like feathers on the birds, to make them look more realistic.
- 4 Attach some string to the back with sticky tape. It's ready to hang up!



Boat prayers (for ages 6–10)

What you'll need: three corks (from wine bottles, for example), two lollipop sticks, a cocktail stick, paper and PVA glue, two elastic bands, scissors, and a push pin.



- 1 Line up three corks.
- 2 Tie an elastic band around them all. Take a second elastic band and secure them together tightly.
- 3 Use a push pin to make a hole in the centre of the middle cork (this will help to keep the cocktail stick in place).
- 4 Cut a triangular shape from a piece of paper to make a sail. On it, write something that you're grateful for (a 'thank you') and something that you want to pray for (a 'please').
- 5 Use the push pin to make holes in the top and bottom of the sail, and then feed the cocktail stick through both holes.
- 6 Push the bottom of the cocktail stick into the cork.
- 7 Place your boat into some water. See how well it sails in calm and rough conditions.

Hand-print peace dove (for ages 2–6)

What you'll need: coloured paper (any colour will do but we suggest a light 'sky' blue), white paper, scissors, yellow or orange paper for the beak, and a felt pen.



- 1 Ask someone to help you draw around your hand on the white paper. Cut it out.
- 2 The 'thumb' is the head of your dove and the fingers are the feathers. Stick your 'hand' on to the coloured paper.
- 3 Cut a small triangle out of the yellow or orange paper and stick it where the beak should be.
- 4 Draw an eye on with your felt pen. Your dove is ready!

Safe and happy childhood



Action for Children protects and supports children and young people, providing practical and emotional care and support, ensuring their voices are heard, and campaigning to bring lasting improvements to their lives.

Get in touch

Action for Children

3 The Boulevard
Ascot Road
Watford
WD18 8AG

[actionforchildren.org.uk](https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk)

0300 123 2112

 /actionforchildren

 @actnforchildren

 @actionforchildrenuk