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**Advent Week 2**

**Guided reflection – Peace**

**Teacher notes**

The traditional theme for the third week of Advent is the Old Testament Prophets.

Many of the Old Testament prophets spoke about the coming of a Messiah. Perhaps the most well-known of these is the prophecy of Isaiah. His words are used as a reading in churches and cathedrals at Christmastime. Isaiah said that the Messiah would be a ‘Wonderful Counsellor’, ‘Mighty God’, ‘Everlasting Father’ and ‘Prince of Peace’. This was not necessarily the kind of Messiah the people were hoping for. Under Roman rule, they were hoping for someone who would free them – a military leader perhaps. But Jesus was going to lead them in the way of peace and love. Peace will be the theme of this week’s resources.

It would be very good to have the book ‘War Game’ by Michael Foreman (which tells the true story of the Christmas truce during WWI) for the children to look at but the link to an animated version of the story is here (this is also embedded in the PowerPoint slide): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04HavrS3VOY>

**Reflection**

**PowerPoint Slide 1** Remind the children that in the previous week of Advent, we have explored the theme of Hope. This week, we will be exploring the theme of Peace. If you have made your own Advent wreath, you may wish to light the second candle and say these words (you may wish to build the words each week as the additional candles are lit):

As we watch and wait for the coming of Jesus,

We remember that he came to bring:

Hope where there is despair,

Peace where there is violence,

Love where there is hatred,

Joy where there is sorrow,

And light where there is darkness.

**PowerPoint Slide 2** Tell the children that this is an image of the Old Testament Prophet, Isaiah (the prophets told the story of God’s people but also related God’s message to what had happened or was going to happen). Part of his prophecy explains that a Messiah will come (Jesus) but that wasn’t going to be the kind of military leader that they wanted; he was going to lead them in the way of peace and love – he would be the ‘Prince of Peace’.

**PowerPoint Slide 3** These are the well-known verses from the book of Isaiah that are often read at Christmas. This week, our theme draws us to the proclamation that the Messiah will be the Prince of Peace.

**PowerPoint Slide 4** We are now going to hear a story that helps to understand the power of the Christmas message of ‘Peace on Earth’. It helps us to think about how we can be people of peace too, even in the most challenging of circumstances.

**PowerPoint Slide 5** Reflect on the quote from the story, ‘The whole world had gone topsy turvy’. When Jesus was born, God was probably feeling much the same! He needed to send a saviour in order to teach the world where we had gone wrong.

**PowerPoint Slide 6** Reflect on the quote from the story, ‘It lasted all of Christmas Day.’ This would have been an extraordinary experience for the soldiers, but the peaceful fellowship lasted all day – a long time considering the circumstances. They were then forced to return to fighting the following day. In contrast to this, the peace that Jesus offered lasts not just our whole lives but for eternity. How can we help our school community to be a peaceful one; not just for this week when we are thinking about this value, but for every day?

**PowerPoint Slide 7** Reflect on the quote from the story, ‘We’re gonna sort this mess out once and for all’. Although the war eventually ended, many have happened since, so we haven’t really sorted out the mess once and for all. But that is exactly what Jesus came to do as the Prince of Peace. He came as a way to enable us all to be forgiven for our wrongdoings and to know him for good – to be with him for eternity.

**PowerPoint Slide 8** We have learned that peace is something that can be achieved in the world if we make our choice to be peaceful towards each other. Jesus came Earth to model this for us too.

**PowerPoint Slide 9**

**Prayer and reflection**

I’d like you to just close your eyes and think about the things that we’ve talked about. Jesus tells us that whenever we ask for his peace, he will give it to us. In this season of Advent, how can you help peace be present in our school? Perhaps think of one thing that you could be determined to do.

I’m going to finish with a prayer now and if you would like to, you can make it your prayer by saying amen at the end.

Jesus said, ‘Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God’.

Dear Lord

We ask that you bless us and show us the ways of peace – thank you for Jesus’ example – The Prince of Peace. Help us to be loving, patient and kind and give us wisdom to know how to resolve conflict peaceably.

In Jesus’ name, Amen