

Explore It

FOR LEADERS



PEACE

Luke 2:8-20 Some shepherds hear about Jesus

It can be difficult to find peace in our world. People have many worries, relationships have times of disagreement and stress, and people can be unkind. God promises peace through Jesus – peace with God, in ourselves, with others and on Earth.

Start It

● **Say:** At the time of Jesus' birth the Roman Empire was powerful and was ruled by Caesar Augustus.

Have a go at the Beano Ultimate Romans Quiz and see how many you get right as a team.

<https://www.beano.com/posts/the-ultimate-romans-quiz>

Sing It

● **Say:** The Roman Empire was ruled by ruthless leaders who were willing to do anything to keep their power. That's not the kind of kingdom Jesus came to create. When Jesus was born, God let the world know that there was a new way of doing things. Let's sing the song together and discover more about the kind of kingdom Jesus came to Earth to bring.

'Go tell it' (3 mins 39 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfFVdHUmCUE>

Tell It

● **Say:** In our first session we read Isaiah's prophecy about Jesus. Here's what he said: (Why not find out if the children can complete any of the lines for you.)

'A child will be ... [born to us.]

God will give ... [a son to us.]

He will be responsible for leading ... [the people.]

His name will be Wonderful ... [Counsellor], Powerful ... [God,]

Father Who Lives ... [Forever,] Prince of ... [Peace].'

— (Isaiah 9:6 ICB)

Ask:

→ What do you think the people imagined when they read the words 'Prince of Peace'?

→ How would you describe peace to someone who had never heard of it?

● **Say:** In the dictionary there are three definitions for peace:

1. a state of freedom from war or conflict
2. a state of quiet or calm
3. civil order and safety; law and order.

Ask: How were some of your answers similar when you described the word peace?

🗨️ **Say:** When Jesus was born, it was during a time in Roman history called the 'Pax Romana', or 'Roman Peace'. After lots of wars, conflict and fighting, Caesar Augustus reigned over a time of peace.

Ask: Knowing what you do about the Romans, how do you think Caesar Augustus made that peace happen?

🗨️ **Say:** In order to benefit from the Pax Romana (Roman peace), you had to do what Caesar Augustus said, follow his rules, give him your taxes and treat him with the respect he felt he deserved. If you didn't do that, then you were in big trouble. Anyone who didn't follow the rules of the Emperor often met a gruesome end.

Ask: Does the Roman idea of peace fit with the description you gave earlier? If so, why, or why not?

🗨️ **Say:** Let's read Luke 2:8-20 and find out more about the kind of peace Jesus brought to Earth.

Screen share: Luke 2:8-20 (ICB).

'That night, some shepherds were in the fields nearby watching their sheep. An angel of the Lord stood before them. The glory of the Lord was shining around them, and suddenly they became very frightened.

The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people. Today your Saviour was born in David's town. He is Christ, the Lord. This is how you will know him: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a feeding box."

Then a very large group of angels from Heaven joined the first angel. All the angels were praising God, saying:

"Give glory to God in Heaven, and on Earth let there be peace to the people who please God."

Then the angels left the shepherds and went back to Heaven. The shepherds said to each other, "Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened. We will see this thing the Lord told us about."

So the shepherds went quickly and found Mary and Joseph. And the shepherds saw the baby lying in a feeding box. Then they told what the angels had said about this child.

Everyone was amazed when they heard what the shepherds said to them. Mary hid these things in her heart; she continued to think about them. Then the shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking him for everything that they had seen and heard. It was just as the angel had told them.'

Ask:

➔ What description did the angels give the shepherds to help them find Jesus (v12)?

➔ The shepherds would have known what Isaiah said about a 'Prince of Peace'; do you think Jesus was what they imagined? Explain why you think that.

🗨️ **Say:** In verse 14 the angels praised God together singing: 'Give glory to God in Heaven, and on Earth let there be peace to the people who please God.'

🗨️ **Say:** Unlike the people of Rome, we don't have to try to please God in order that he won't get angry or use his power to hurt us. God loves us and sent Jesus to Earth for us, to bring a different kind of peace.

🗨️ **Say:**

➔ The peace of Caesar was full of fear.

➔ The peace of God is full of love.

Action It

🗨️ **Say:** Today we have been learning about peace and what it might look like in our everyday lives.

Discuss

- What areas of your life are peaceful?
- Sometimes it can be difficult to find peace. What kinds of things steal your peace?
- Now think about your local community, city or country. What kinds of things steal peace from the world we live in?

🗨 **Say:** Jesus came as the 'Prince of Peace' to bring us a new way to find peace. As a grown-up, when he knew that his death wasn't far away, he said these words:

'I leave you peace. My peace I give you. I do not give it to you as the world does. So don't let your heart be troubled. Don't be afraid.'

— (John 14:27 ICB)

Ask:

- How is the peace of Jesus different from the peace that the world tries to give us?
- In what ways could you bring the peace of Jesus to those around you this week?

Share ideas as a group, and then ask each child to choose one way they will try and bring the peace of Jesus to those they love this week.

Pray It

Ask the children to find a place to sit or lay down to close their eyes. Play the music and let everyone have a moment of peace.

'Prince of peace' by Hillsong London Worship (2 mins 56 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CSfB4GHEkGE>

Ask the children to bring to the next session an item that brings them joy.

Explore It

Remember to send home the Explore It (For Me) and Explore It (Together) ideas for children and families.