



## OLDER CHILDREN (5TH-8TH GRADE)

### Peace & Global Witness Offering and the Table of Peace

#### Lesson Objectives—

At the end of the lesson, the learner will be able to

- identify a table of God’s people
- tell a story about a particular table of peace
- draw a table of a gathering of people

#### Resources and Equipment—

- Newsprint or black/white board
- Markers or chalk/dry erase markers
- Bibles
- Copies of Activity Sheet “Table of Peace” on white cardstock for each participant
- Markers/crayons
- Clear tape

#### Setup—

Table and chairs for coloring

#### Gather—

15–20 minutes

#### Entry Activities—

Telling the Story Over and Over Again

Setting a Table

#### Opening Prayer—*Open with this prayer or one of your own.*

Gracious God, throughout the ages you have been faithful and have provided for your people. May we continue to tell the story of your mighty acts and how you gather your people at tables of plenty and peace. **Amen.**

#### Telling the Story Over and Over Again—

Gather in a circle with the children. Tell them that you are going to play a game that repeats a story over and over again. Children may be familiar with the game “I’m Going to Grandma’s House.” This is a similar game in which the first person starts off by saying, “We are going on a journey and I’m bringing something that





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starts with the letter A, an apple.” Tell the children that when it’s their turn, you will provide a letter (see next paragraph). Each player will name an item beginning with the designated letter. The next player will repeat what the first person is bringing and add an item beginning with the next letter provided. As you give each person a letter, write it on a sheet of newsprint or black/white board for all to see.

The play continues with each person repeating the letter of each person before them, beginning with the first person, and adding their own item. Keep going until all the letters are used.

Use the letters in this order:

T-A-B-L-E-O-F-P-E-A-C-E.

If there are more than 12 participants, begin with the letters G-O-D-S. If there are more than 16, add the letters F-O-R-U-S at the end.

After you have completed the game, ask the children to decipher the phrase that the letters form. If this proves difficult, make slash marks (and an apostrophe, if necessary) between the letters so that the children read:

“TABLE / OF / PEACE”

or “GOD’S / TABLE / OF / PEACE”

or ” GOD’S / TABLE / OF / PEACE / FOR / US”

Tell the children that just as they told a story about a journey over and over again, adding new parts to the story, they will hear about how God’s story is told again and again. Today they will hear about how God provides a table for God’s people.

#### **Setting a Table—**

Engage the children in conversation about setting a table.

What would you do to set a table?

What items would you need for your table?

Encourage participation so each child adds to the conversation. When they feel they have set a table, move to the next question.

What would you do to set a table of **plenty**?

Allow some time for thinking and conversation.

What would you do to set a table of **peace**?





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Again allow some time for thinking and conversation. Tell the children that they will learn about the tables God provides for God's people.

#### **Explore—**

30–35 minutes

#### **Table in the Wilderness**

Tell the children that Psalm 78 is called a historical psalm as it recounts the history of God with the people of Israel. It tells the story of God's faithfulness over and over again. Hand out Bibles and help the children find Psalm 78. Invite someone to read Psalm 78:1–4.

What words or phrases indicate the purpose of Psalm 78?

Invite the children to silently read verses 12–16.

What story in the Bible do these verses describe?

If necessary, tell the children that the verses remind the reader of the psalm (and us) of God's saving the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt, through the waters of the sea and into the wilderness. The people were frightened and hungry in the wilderness. They felt that it might have been better to go back to Egypt than be in the wilderness. Invite someone to read verse 19.

Have the children turn to Exodus 16 and invite someone to read verses 11–12. Engage the children in conversation using the following questions:

What do you think this table in the wilderness looks like, and what is on it?

Who do you think is at this table?

What might be the issues at this table?

How might this be a table of peace?

#### **Table in the Presence of Enemies**

Have the children turn to Psalm 23 and read verse 5 aloud together. Engage the children in conversation using the following questions:

What do you think this table in the presence of enemies looks like, and what is on it?

Who do you think is at this table?

What might be the issues at this table?

How might this be a table of peace?





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#### Table of Jesus

Have the children turn to Luke 22. Invite children to read verses 11–20 aloud, taking turns reading one verse at a time. Allow anyone to pass if they do not wish to read aloud. Engage the children in conversation using the following questions:

- What do you think this table of Jesus looks like, and what is on it?
- Who do you think is at this table?
- What might be the issues at this table?
- How might this be a table of peace?

#### Tables of Peace

Invite children to sit at a table, if they haven't already been seated. Hand out copies of the Activity Sheet "Table of Peace." Tell the children that they are going to color their own tables and then attach them side by side to make one long table. Before the children begin coloring, ask the following question and then review and brainstorm some tables that they may want to use as inspiration for their drawing. You may want to write these ideas on a sheet of newsprint or black/white board for reference.

Where do you think a table of peace is needed?

- The table in the wilderness: The people were hungry and frightened and God provided food.
- The table in the presence of enemies: Is the table surrounded by enemies? Is it a safe space, or are those considered enemies now at the table? If so, does that change things?
- The table of Jesus: Who is gathered at that table today each time we celebrate the Lord's Supper?
- A refugee table: What would it look like? In the Presbyterian Giving Catalog, funds are collected to provide food for refugees. How will this change their table?
- A table in your community: Who is at this table?
- A table in a place of violence, hurt, and sadness: What does this table look like, and who is at that table?

Tell the children to choose one of these tables, or one they think of themselves, and use the table on their sheet to depict a scene with the following elements:

- Who is at this table?
- What is on this table?
- Is there a background or setting that they want to include as well?



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#### **Closing**

5 minutes

Gather the children together with their drawings. Using clear tape, fold the edges of the paper back along dashed lines, and attach the drawings together side by side so they look like one continuous table. Once the long table has been constructed, have the children stand behind their table drawing. Write the following sentence on a sheet of newsprint or black/white board: *And God has spread the table of peace.*

Tell the children that you will close this lesson with a litany. They will each take a turn saying what the table they drew represents. Then as a group you will all say the litany response:

**And God has spread a table of peace.**

**Closing Prayer**—*Close with this prayer or one of your own choosing.*

God of peace, God of plenty, throughout the ages and still today you provide for us. You set a table wherever we are and invite us to share in your grace. We are grateful. **Amen.**

*Written by the Rev. Meg Rift, Director of Christian Education, Fair Oaks Presbyterian, Oak Park, Illinois*