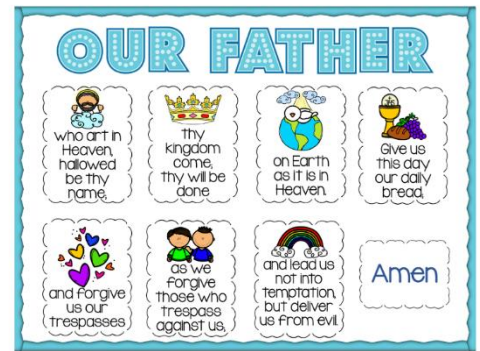


Peace and Unity

Word of the Week: Matthew 6:9-16

Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. "And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward."

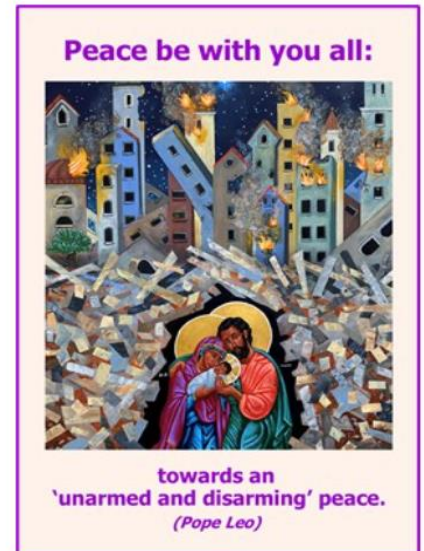


The theme this week in the Christian calendar is all about peace and unity. We are encouraged to use the words of the Our Father to create a path for peace and unity.

On Peace Sunday we take time to reflect on what peace really means. We recognize that peace is not only about the absence of war, but that instead peace is much more than this.

Forgiveness is essential for peace within ourselves and in our relationships. Holding grudges disrupts peace, while forgiveness heals and restores it. This week we deepen our understanding of the Lord's prayer, praying for peace in our lives, in our relationships and in the world. We can use the words of the Our Father as a tool for achieving peace in our lives and relationships.

Peace is also essential for unity, and we discover that all people can work in union with one another to strengthen bonds and cement a peaceful, inclusive world. Unity is vital in multicultural societies where we all share a common theme – we are all human and so we should unite by treating one another with equal dignity and respect.



Almighty God,
We thank you for your gift of peace. Your peace is 'unarmed and disarming' not victory or defeat, but fraternity and dialogue, the fruit of justice and forgiveness.
Open our eyes to see the world – not from the viewpoint of the mighty but from that of the widow, the orphan, the stranger, the wounded child, the exile and the fugitive. We pray for change to come – a new era, the dawn of your kingdom of justice and peace. Disarm our hearts, Lord, that we may have peace in ourselves and bring that gift to others. Amen



Prayers for the week

Dear Lord,

We thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit. May we grow in mutual affection and in the desire to announce the Gospel message more faithfully so that the world may come together in unity and peace. Amen

Dear Lord,

You are the maker of everything good. You know me far better than I ever could. Please settle me and fulfil me. Refresh me as I realise your peace in my mind, body and soul. Amen

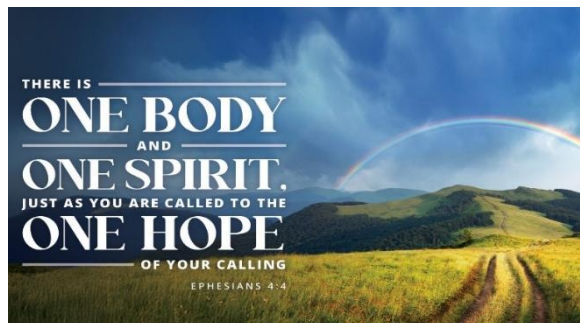
Dear Lord,

Join our hearts together so that it may be known that we are your children. May your presence be amongst us, and may we keep unity in the bonds of peace which you have given us in your covenant. Amen

Dear Lord,

We pray for peace in all corners of the world where hostility and prejudice still separate us. May the Spirit of unity move among all nations, religions, and ethnic groups to inspire true solidarity and a shared commitment to the common good. Amen

Being part of a community is all about making the world a better place for everyone we encounter. This can be in school, at home and in society. We are encouraged to take care of one another and to grow in our understanding of each other. During Christian Unity week we are called upon to support one another, listen to one another and share our similarities and differences.



Reflection Questions

- Do I truly mean it when I apologise to others for my words or actions?
- Do I show empathy to others?
- Do I stand up for fairness?
- Do I promote peace or do I make trouble for others?
- Do I spend time seeking peace in my own mind and life?
- Do I include everybody or do I make others feel they are not welcome?
- Do I treat every person that I meet with dignity and respect?
- Do I try to unite people or am I divisive?
- Do others look up to me as a good role model?



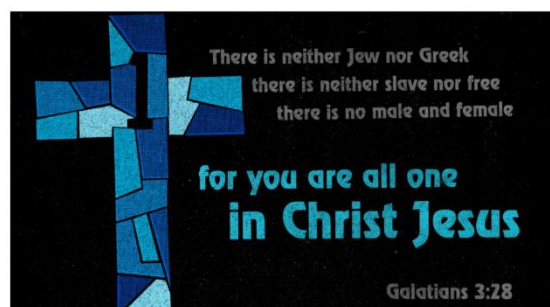
Shalom - Peace

Unity Hymn (Official Lyric Video)

Unity - Tom Mottershead (Lyrics)

"Love, peace is the unconditional acceptance, genuine love, and earnest nurturing of ALL God's children. To have peace you must seek the best even for your enemies. To have peace you must really love!"

**"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!"
Psalm 133:1**



Activities

What is peace?

Give each child a few pieces of paper or sticky notes. Ask them to write a different word, image or phrase that describes peace on each of their bits of paper. Gather these together and see if you can cluster them into similar ideas or themes. As a group, come up with your definition of what peace is.

When we're talking about peace, we can say it works on many levels. We can have inner peace, we can be at peace and living peacefully with those around us, and we hope to live in a world at peace with no war.

Ask the young people to describe what inner peace might be like, what peace at home or school might look like and what peace in our communities would look like.

Conflict tree

Ask the children to think of as many types of conflict as possible, for example war, or arguing with a sibling, or neighbours quarrelling.

Put the children into small groups and give each a large piece of paper and some pens or pencils. Ask them to draw the outline of a tree with roots, a trunk, branches and leaves.

Ask them to choose one of the types of conflict they came up with and write it in the trunk of the tree. Ask them to think about what can cause that conflict and write their ideas in the roots. On the branches get them to write the consequences or results of the conflict. In the leaves ask the young people to write ways you might try and resolve the conflict. It might be useful to go back and look at the roots for some ideas.

Bring everyone back together and ask each group to share their ideas.

Drama activity

Put the young people into groups. Ask them to come up with a short drama of about 30 seconds showing when two people have fallen out or been unkind to one another.

Get each group to show their drama to everyone and have the others guess what is going on. Then ask everyone to decide how the characters could now resolve their conflict or make up with one another.

Next, get the groups to create another 30-second drama showing how they decided to make up or resolve the conflict, choosing from the ideas they discussed previously. Get each group to act out their new drama.