

REFLECTION (Accompanying scripture: Isaiah 9:6-9)

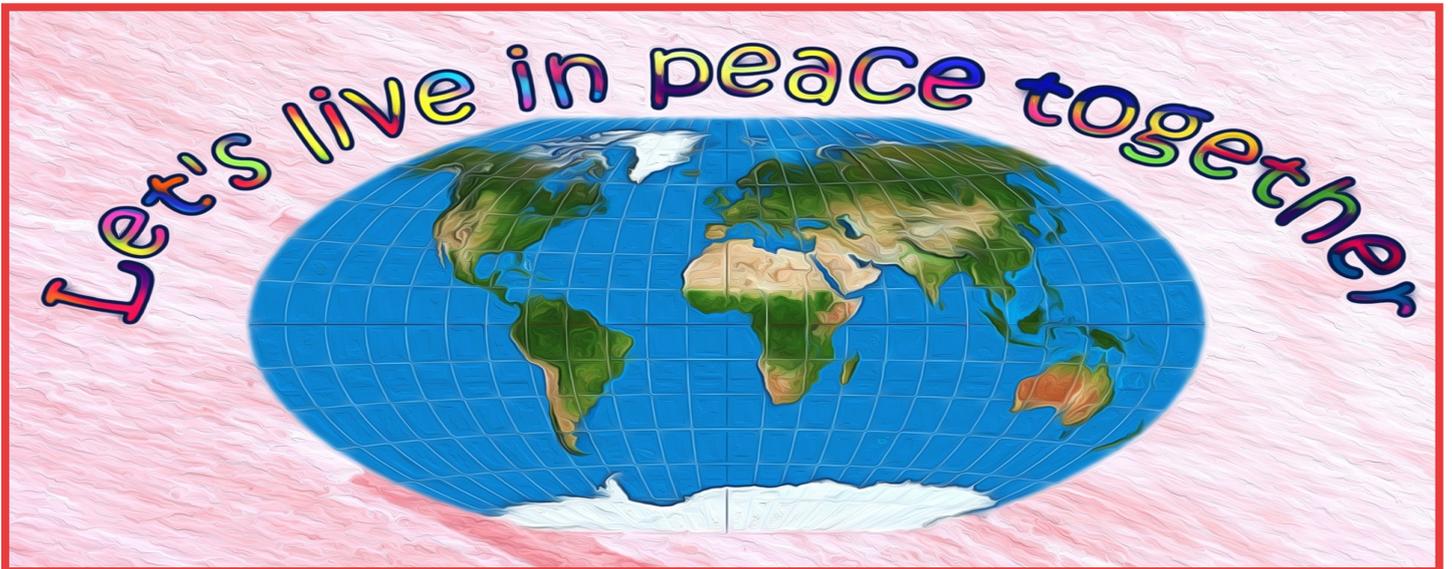
Begin this time of reflection by creating a calm and quiet atmosphere. You might want to play some gentle music or light the second candle on your Advent wreath. After reading the scripture, tell the children that today you will be thinking about peace.

Ask your class what 'peace' means. You may get responses like 'quiet,' 'friendship,' or 'no war.' Next, ask the children why peace is important. Elicit responses such as peace meaning that people are safe and can feel happy.

Explain to the class that there are many places in the world where people don't have peace. There might be countries fighting wars, or arguments that set communities apart. This is really hard for the people living there, especially the children who are not part of the fighting but have to live with it. In the second week of Advent, Christians are encouraged to think about peace, to thank God for it, and to pray and work for peace in places where it is lacking.

Jesus often spoke about the need for mercy and peace, and said to His followers: "My peace I leave you." We remember this when we make the sign of peace (shake hands) in church. What other signs and symbols of peace can the children think of?

Signs of peace can be giving someone a hug or apologising after an argument. Symbols include things like a dove and olive branch. Tell the children that today their class will make their own special symbol; a Peace Paperchain. This will represent their commitment to join together to create peace.



ACTIVITY

Cut pieces of A4 paper into strips, one for each child. On their paper strip invite the children to write a prayer for peace. This could be a prayer without an end. That is, the prayer has no closing line but is continued by another child on the connecting prayer strip. A prayer poem could make this continuity easier. Younger children could be invited to draw symbols of peace e.g. a dove, and /or write their name. Link the strips together to form a paperchain. Use this as a colourful Christmas classroom decoration, as a prompt to pray for peace in troubled parts of the world, and as a reminder that just as the class peace chain has been created by joining the children's prayers, so we always need to join and work together to create peace in our school, homes, communities, and our world.