

# Leave Well Enough Alone

**Virtue:** Peace—proving that you care more about others than winning an argument.

**Memory Verse:** “So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up.” Romans 14:19 NLT

**Bible Story:** Leave Well Enough Alone (Isaac’s wells) • Genesis 26:16-22,26-31

**Bottom Line:** Making peace doesn’t make you weak.

## Plug In: Focus the Energy (Small Groups, 10-15 minutes)

### FOR LEADERS ONLY

Many of us are under the impression that if you don’t fight back, you’re a wimp. You get picked on if you choose to back down from an argument. But (1) peace is proving that you care more about others than winning an argument. Making peace doesn’t make you weak. (2) Look at God. You would never call Him weak, and yet He chooses to show grace, mercy, and forgiveness to us when we don’t deserve it. (3) Throughout Scripture, God teaches us to love everyone, even our enemies. Jesus modeled that for us, but this teaching is present even in the Old Testament. For instance, Isaac could have chosen to use his power and might to fight for his land, but he took the high road instead. (4) When we do this, we show others that we’re not too weak to fight, but strong enough to make peace. We show others the kind of peaceful life that God offers.

### GET READY

- Gather the leaders together to pray before the kids arrive. Pray that each child would listen and learn the Bible truths presented during today’s session. If any kids arrive before or during the prayer, invite them to participate with the leaders.

### Early Arriver Idea

Ask the kids if they had any chances this week to hold back from starting a fight. Were they tempted to argue with anyone over anything? Did they succeed in not starting the fight? If not, did they ask God for forgiveness and smooth things over later? Invite the kids to put their offerings in the offering container.

### How Strong?

**SUPPLIES:** none

Lead kids in a strength and endurance competition. See how many jumping jacks, push-ups, sit-ups, etc. they can do in a given amount of time. Challenge them to come up with unconventional ways of testing strength.

### WRAP UP

**LEADER:** “Wow, this group is STRONG! What’s the opposite of strong? (*Weak*) **[Transition]** While we’re in large group I want you to listen closely. You might learn that something we would think makes us weak actually makes us strong!”

Lead your group to the large group area for worship and videos.

**Genesis 26:16-22; 26-31**

<sup>16</sup> Then Abimelech said to Isaac, "Move away from us; you have become too powerful for us."

<sup>17</sup> So Isaac moved away from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar and settled there. <sup>18</sup> Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died, and he gave them the same names his father had given them.

<sup>19</sup> Isaac's servants dug in the valley and discovered a well of fresh water there. <sup>20</sup> But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen and said, "The water is ours!" So he named the well Esek, because they disputed with him. <sup>21</sup> Then they dug another well, but they quarreled over that one also; so he named it Sitnah. <sup>22</sup> He moved on from there and dug another well, and no one quarreled over it. He named it Rehoboth, saying, "Now the LORD has given us room and we will flourish in the land."

<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile, Abimelech had come to him from Gerar, with Ahuzzath his personal adviser and Phicol the commander of his forces. <sup>27</sup> Isaac asked them, "Why have you come to me, since you were hostile to me and sent me away?"

<sup>28</sup> They answered, "We saw clearly that the LORD was with you; so we said, 'There ought to be a sworn agreement between us'-between us and you. Let us make a treaty with you that you will do us no harm, just as we did not molest you but always treated you well and sent you away in peace. And now you are blessed by the LORD."

<sup>30</sup> Isaac then made a feast for them, and they ate and drank. <sup>31</sup> Early the next morning the men swore an oath to each other. Then Isaac sent them on their way, and they left him in peace.

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## Power Up: Engage the Heart (Large Group, 20-25 minutes)

Power Up is designed to engage children in worship in a large group setting. Music, prayer, and an innovative approach to the Bible story are always a part of this interactive time.

**Power Up: (Large Group, 25-30 minutes)**

**Opening Announcements (Worship Team – 2 minutes)**

**Worship Time (10 – 12 minutes)**

**Video Lesson –Drop It (10 minutes)**

**Prayer (2 minutes) - Worship Leader**

**Prayer:**

**Worship Leader:** “Father, You are so strong and powerful, but You choose to show gentleness and love for us, even when we do wrong things, like being selfish or picking fights with people. Thank You for loving us. Help us to show Your love to the people around us; even people who we don’t think deserve it. Give us the strength to make peace when it’s hard. Thank You, God. Amen.”

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## Catch On: Make the Connection (Small Groups, 25-30 minutes)

*\* If you don’t have time to do all these activities, be sure to do activity #3. Activity #1 is particularly good for children who need to move in order to stay engaged (not just for boys).*

### 1. Memory Verse Nametag Switcheroo (*memory verse activity / great for boys*)

SUPPLIES: prepared nametags, Bibles

Help the group look up Romans 14:19 in the Bibles. Read the verse aloud. Encourage the kids to practice looking up this verse at home. Tell beginning readers that they can get their parents to help with reading if they need to. Challenge them to memorize the entire verse.

Divide your group in half. Put nametags on half of the kids. Guide the other half of the kids to put the “nametags” (i.e., their friends) in order of the memory verse. If you teach second through fifth graders, tell them to check their work in the Bible. If you teach kindergartners or first graders, you can help them by telling them what the next word is.

**LEADER:** “This verse says we should do all we can to live in peace. What does ‘all’ mean? (*Everything*) Does this verse make it sound like peace is really important to God? (*Yes. If we’re supposed to do ‘all we can’ to make peace, then peace is pretty important to God.*) Someone who does everything they can to live in peace with others is a pretty cool and strong person. **[Impress] Making peace doesn’t make you weak.** It actually makes you strong.”

**[Personalize]** Give the kids an example of something you do on a regular basis in order to maintain a peaceful relationship with someone.

### 2. Q&A (*application activity / review the Bible lesson*)

SUPPLIES: “Q&A” (Activity Page), Bibles, Baggie

Guide kids to find today’s Bible story reference: Genesis 26:16.

**Navigation tips:** Ask kids where the book of Genesis is. (*First book of the Old Testament*) Prompt them to turn to Genesis. Explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 26. Explain that the small numbers are verses. Help them find verse 16. Instruct kids to follow along as you read out loud verses 16-22 and 26-31. When you skip to verse 26 be sure to tell the kids so they are able to continue following along.

After reading the Bible story out loud, have each kid pull a question out of the baggie. Go around the circle and let each kid ask their question for the person on their right to answer. You may need to help younger kids with the reading. Instruct the reader not to give the answer away! Since they are pulling the questions from the container, they will be asked out of story order. Encourage kids to use their Bibles if they need help with the answers. If there are more questions than there are kids, ask for volunteers to pull the extra questions out of the container until all the questions have been asked.

**LEADER:** “Isaac was a pretty neat guy. A lot of people in his position would have taken what was supposed to be theirs! He could have kept those wells easily. He had a lot of servants, so he could have fought those other guys. But it was more important for Isaac to have a peaceful relationship with his neighbors than to get what he may have wanted. Isaac was not a weak man. The first verse in our story said that Abimelech [uh BIM eh lek] thought Isaac was stronger than him. Do you think that when Isaac handed over the wells to Abimelech’s people, it made him weaker? Not at all! **[Impress] Making peace doesn’t make you weak. [Apply] Making peace takes real power and strength.** Abimelech and his people were probably envious of what Isaac had. Being envious can lead to unpeaceful feelings. **[Apply] What do you have that could lead to conflict or arguing?** (Good grades? Good at a sport? Popular with others? Nice clothes? Getting the best part in a play?) **How could someone make peace in those situations?** (Don’t brag if you get good grades. Instead, encourage and be a tutor. Offer to practice with someone on your team. If you’re popular, be friendly to everyone, not just other popular kids. And so forth.) **Why do you think God wants us to make peace with someone who wants to start a fight with us?”**

**[Personalize]** Share about a time when someone took something that was supposed to be yours. Did someone else get a job that you wanted, cut you off while driving, or get the last item that you’d been waiting for? How did you respond—in anger and frustration or in peace? How does responding in peace make *you* stronger?

### \* 3. Peace Offering Bracelets (*application activity*)

**SUPPLIES:** string, bead ( red, blue, green & yellow beads)

Please note: I have changed some of the bead colors you may have one or both of the colors in your baggie.

Put the supplies in the middle of your small group. Give everyone a piece of string, telling them to make a knot a couple of inches from one end (so the beads won’t come off). Explain that each color of bead has a special meaning:

- **Red** or **Orange**: reminds us that it’s easy to lose our tempers when we don’t get what we want.
- **Blue** or **Purple**: reminds us that we’ll feel peace on the inside when we make peace with others.
- **Green**: reminds us that **[Impress] making peace does not make you weak.**
- **Yellow** or **Cream** or **Peach** reminds us that making peace with someone shows that person God’s love.

To finish the bracelet, tell kids to make a knot at the other end of the string. Tell kids they can make two peace bracelets.

**LEADER:** “These are peace bracelets. **[Apply]** One is for you, and one is to give away. You can give it to someone else as a peace offering. You can give it to someone that you have fought with, as a symbol of your truce and peace. Or you can give it to someone who you’re already living in peace with, to show them that you want to continue not to fight or argue with them. Giving your bracelet to someone should only be the first step to making peace. How could you continue to make peace with them afterwards? (Help kids consider ideas like: compromising, which means both people agree to change or give up some of their demands; talking a disagreement over with the person; getting help or advice from someone else, especially someone older and wiser; praying about it; etc.) Remember, **[Impress]** making peace doesn’t make you weak. **[Apply]** Some people may think that, but that’s not what God says. Remember what Isaac did? I think that’s why God put that story about Isaac in the Bible; to help us learn that sometimes you have to give something up or drop an issue that you may want to argue about. When you work hard at making peace with others, it makes you stronger on the inside.”

#### *Club 56 Discussion Questions*

If you lead Club 56, consider asking these discussion questions:

- Is holding a grudge a natural reaction? Why or why not? What about making peace?
- Think of one person you have a difficult time not fighting with. **[Apply]** Share with the group one thing you are going to do this week to keep peace. You don’t have to share the person’s name.
- What tends to make you more upset, when someone hurts you or when someone hurts a member of your family? In which situation is it harder to be a peacemaker?

#### **WRAP UP**

Bring together all the groups in your classroom so the Leader can conclude the session with a review. Be prepared to distribute this week’s GodTime and Fridge Door cards.

**LEADER:** “It’s not always easy to live in peace with the people around us. But it’s something that God has told us to do. **[Apply]** So how hard will you work at fixing something that may be wrong between you and someone else? What are you willing to do or give to remain at peace with the people in your life? Sometimes you have to give something away to make peace. Remember that **[Impress]** making peace doesn’t make you weak! Sometimes it takes more strength to walk away than it does to stay and argue. This week, practice putting your memory verse into action by doing everything you can to make peace with the people in your life and building others up!”

Distribute the GodTime and Fridge Door cards.