

	The Peace
Introduction	<p>In church each Sunday during the middle of the service we say something called The Peace. There are lots of different ways The Peace is introduced but it usually ends with something like this:</p> <p>‘The Peace of the Lord be with you always’</p> <p>‘And also with you’</p> <p>‘Let us now share with one another a sign of peace’</p> <p>At this point everyone usually stands up and starts shaking hands with each other, friends and strangers alike. They might give people a hug or a peck on the cheek. They often say Peace or Peace be with you.</p>
Activity	<p>Why is it so important to share Peace with others? Why do we do it in church?</p> <p>We share the Peace for lots of reasons. It is a reminder of God’s love for us and of Jesus’ instruction to love our neighbour as ourselves. It is a reminder that we are part of something bigger, a family, a church, a community and children of God. It is also a reminder that we can do very small things that make a huge difference to people, all of those small acts of peace make a happy church where people know that they are loved and cared for even if at other times they might feel lonely or sad. Long ago (even before Father Jeremy was born) a handshake itself was a sign of peace because you cannot hold a sword and shake hands at the same time!</p> <p>What other reasons can you think of that sharing a sign of peace might be important.</p> <p>Now we can’t give each other a sign of peace in church, we can’t even go to church! Even when church finally re-opens, giving the Peace may look a bit different for a while. It is likely that there will be no hugging or handshaking for a while. But in times like this when everything is changing and people are worried about lots of things, giving a sign of peace is even more important.</p> <p>With a grown up take a walk around the roads where you live. What signs of peace can you see? They are everywhere!</p> <p>It could be the pictures of rainbows in people’s windows - the rainbow is a symbol of God’s love, of the hope for peace that came after the flood.</p> <p>It could be pictures of thanks to NHS staff or other people who help us.</p>

It could be a beautiful garden that someone has planted to bring joy to their neighbours.

It could be a painted pebble hidden by a stranger with a message of goodwill (we found some lovely ones hidden near the Symons medical centre)

It could be the Food share boxes that people have placed outside their houses to help collect food for people who need it.

Try and think of as many signs of peace as you can - talk about them with your grown-up.

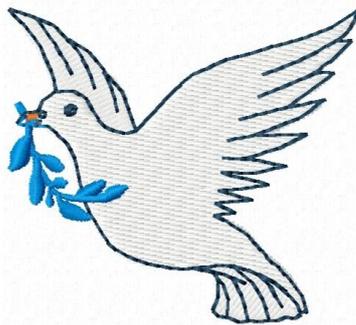
How can you give a sign of peace?

Try one of the following things this week to share a sign of peace:

Make a thank you card for someone who helps you - it could be your teachers, the postman / woman or the people who collect your bins (it could even be a special card for your dad or someone who is a dad to you, for father's day).

Ask a grown up to help you sort out some spare tins or other food for a neighbours foodshare box. Or sort out some old books or toys and ask a grown up if you can leave them in a box outside your house for other to take. You can make a sign to say people are welcome to help themselves.

Think about some symbols of peace that you could draw a picture of and put in your window. It could be a dove, a candle or even a rainbow:



Try and share the peace with the people in your house (as long as no one is ill).

As you do these things think about the peace that you are spreading. These small actions are helping to spread God's love to your family, neighbours and community.

Closing Prayer	<p>God of love and hope, you made the world and care for all creation, but the world feels strange right now. The news is full of stories about Coronavirus. Some people are worried that they might get ill. Others are anxious for their family and friends. Be with them and help them to find peace. We pray for the doctors and nurses and scientists, and all who are working to discover the right medicines to help those who are ill. Thank you that even in these anxious times, you are with us. Help us to put our trust in you and keep us safe.</p> <p>Amen.</p>
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