

# “¡No a la Violencia! ¡Si a la Vida!” No to violence! Yes to life!

## **Large Group Introduction**

This lesson is being taught both in El Salvador and in the US. It is a lesson we are all sharing together as sister churches.

The opening session will share a segment from a video which is posted on the Salvadoran Lutheran Church news blog. <http://esiglesialuterana.wordpress.com/> The video shows families from the Salvadoran Lutheran Church marching through the streets of their communities, calling for safety, peace and justice. The song in the video is

*Paz, paz, paz (Peace, peace, peace)*

*El mundo pide paz (The world asks for peace)*

*Logra la paz en tu interior (Achieve peace inside yourself)*

*Y derrámala en la tierra (And pour it out on the World)*

(In the section filmed in Guazapa, the students will see Pastor Santiago and many people from our sister church, Heroes of the Faith.)

## **Background for Classroom Teachers**

This year, the Salvadoran Lutheran Church has chosen the theme “No to Violence! Yes to Life!” This is a call to the people of the church to stand up against the forces of violence, and to advocate for the lives of children and youth. The pressures of poverty and lack of employment have led to increased gang violence in El Salvador, and the gangs are merciless in their recruitment of children and youth. Many young people live under the constant threat of violence against themselves and their families. The church is working together with schools, the local and national government, and social organizations to give kids the chance to be kids, to protect them from violence and to call for societal change.

This lesson will help children to know that when they build their lives on “the rock” of Jesus, they are saying YES to LIFE and will make choices in their lives which say NO to violence. The theme will be developed as appropriate for different age groups.

## **Scripture Passages which proclaim YES to LIFE!**

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**Isaiah 11:6-9** The wolf shall live with the lamb,  
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,  
and a little child shall lead them.  
The cow and the bear shall graze,  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.  
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,  
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder’s den.  
They will not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain;  
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord  
as the waters cover the sea.

**Isaiah 2:3-4** He shall judge between the nations,  
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;  
they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,  
and their spears into pruning-hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
neither shall they learn war any more.

**Matthew 5:9** 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

**Matthew 5:39** But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also;

**Matthew 5:43-45a** 'You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.

**Luke 6:27-38** 'But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

'If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

**John 14:27** Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

**John 16:33** I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!'

**Colossians 3:15** And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.

**Philippians 4:7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**Romans 12:21** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

## Key Scripture for this Lesson

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**Matthew 7:24-27** 'Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!' (NRSV)

## Drama/Storytelling Ideas for the Lesson

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### The Story

Begin with an introduction: Jesus was teaching people to be kind to each other, to love one another, to make peace between people, to love their enemies. In **Matthew 7:24-27** Jesus says...

Use any of these ideas for sharing the story:

- ❖ Teacher or helper reads the story from the Bible (NRSV or whatever version your class uses)
- ❖ Student reads the story from the Bible or Bible story book
- ❖ Teacher reads the story from the Bible and an actor (planned ahead of time) pantomimes the story with props
- ❖ Teacher reads the story, pausing to let young children to copy actions of the teacher or helper\*
- ❖ Incorporate a song or YouTube clip (see music & media section)
- ❖ Teacher read the story from the Bible while a helper does a science demonstration\*\*

### **\*Sample Story with Actions**

Jesus was teaching the people. He told them to be kind and loving (hug yourself). He told the people to listen to his words (put hands by your ears). Jesus said, Anyone who hears my words (put hands by ears) and follows my words and is kind and loving (hug yourself) is like a wise man who built his house (hammering motion) on the rock (slap both hands flat on the floor). When the rain fell down (rain fingers from head to the floor), and the floods came up (make wavy motions with hands like water), and the winds blew (make whooshing sounds and move hands back and forth like wind), the house on the rock stood strong (make muscle arms). Jesus said, Anyone who hears my words (put hands by ears) but does not follow them and is mean and nasty (fold hands across chest and make mean face) is like the foolish man who built his house (make hammering motion) on the sand. When the rains came down (rain fingers from head to floor), and the floods came up (make wavy motions with hands like water), and the winds blew (make whooshing sounds and move hands back and forth like wind), the house on the sand fell down (slump shoulders down).

### **\*\*Sample Science Demonstration**

Needed:

2 cake pans

Rock with Bible verses or good words on it

Sand

Pieces of paper with "violence" words on them  
(bully, tease, gossip, hit, ignore, disobey)

2 Plastic or milk-carton houses

Pitcher of water

Before class:

Put the rock in one pan. Put the house on top. Make a sand hill in the other pan. Place the violence words into the sand. Put the house on top.

During the story:

At the right time, pour water on top of the house on the rock. It should stay.

At the right time, pour water on top of the house on the sand. It should sink.

After the story as part of the discussion:

Review the rock words and the sand words. (see discussion section below)

### **Discussion**

After the story has been read or acted out, talk with the class about what the story means. We are like the houses in the story, and the beliefs that we practice are like the rock and the sand. If we build our lives on the teachings of Christ, we are building our lives on the rock and when will have a strong foundation in times of trouble. When we forget or don't act according to the teachings of Jesus, we are building our lives on sand and are lost when hard times come. Have children think of examples of sand and rocks in their lives.

(Rock = kindness, helping out, sticking up for someone, saying no to bullying or teasing)

(Sand = bullying, teasing, gossiping, not obeying your parents)

### **Culture Connection: Photographs**

You may wish to have photographs around the room which show houses in El Salvador and houses in the United States. You do not need to talk about these directly in your lesson. You may wish to have photographs of children in the United States and in El Salvador who are building their lives on the rock of Jesus. You can use these during your discussion or have them around the room.

### **Sister Church Connection**

Our sister church, Heroes of the Faith, is actually built on top of a big rock. When earthquakes shake El Salvador, this place does not shake very much. When rains come, this place does not flood. Physically, it is a strong and good place for a church. This is a strong symbol in our sister church community of Jesus who is the rock for our lives. If you have time, or wish to substitute another reading activity for an art or music or game activity, share the story of ***The Easter Church***.

### **Prayer for Peace**

Invite the children to share stories of their experience with violence. Or have students write these on slips of paper and fold them and place them in a basket. Then pray for them and for all of those affected by violence, beginning with the prayer from the Salvadoran Lutheran Church –

*Dear Jesus, help us to follow your words and to say no to violence and yes to life. We cry to you for safety, peace and justice. Help us to build our lives on the rock and follow your teachings. (continue the prayers as appropriate for your students)*

## Games to Reinforce the Lesson

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### **Que Dice la Biblia? What does the Bible Say?**

Print or write one verse or several verses each on a different color piece of paper. Cut the verses apart into sections (the older the kids, the more sections) and have the students put the words into the right order. Teams of students could each have one or more verses (a long one and a short one, for example) and compete against each other for speed and accuracy. When the verse is in the right order, the team reads it aloud.

### **Cooperative Games**

These games teach cooperation and working together:

- ❖ Create a “casa communal” or community house of found objects – Use twigs, rocks, paper, straws, toothpicks and pieces of clay or marshmallows, playing cards, etc. to build a structure. Set a time limit, if you wish. Have the students see how durable or strong they can make it. This could be done as a whole class project, or in groups if the class is too large. When the time is up or the house is finished, see if it will balance on a big rock which you have brought in. Have a discussion about building on the rock. Did the team build a sturdy foundation? Did they work together as a community? Jesus says that when we listen to his teachings and when our actions are in line with His teachings, then we are building our lives on him, the rock. When a whole community behaves in this way, then there is peace and love and goodness in the community.
- ❖ Balloons in the Air – stand in circle and hold hands, keep balloon in the air without letting go of hands for as long as possible. (For a challenge, add more balloons). Discuss the experience of working together as a team. The balloon(s) could represent a person who is sad, or someone in trouble, or the problems we juggle. When we are strong and work together, we can hold each other up and solve problems together.

### **Play Corner for Young Children**

Assemble a corner for play time. Encourage the children to build houses with strong foundations. Show what happens if you try to build a big house on top of little blocks. Jesus says that he is like a big rock or a good strong basement. When we build our lives on Jesus, he makes our lives strong.

- ❖ Duplo building blocks
- ❖ Wood blocks
- ❖ Cardboard boxes

## Art Ideas to Reinforce the Lesson

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Choose one or more of the following ideas for your class:

### Paper Peace Cranes

Children will think about the small steps that can be taken to resist violence and the hope that comes with each step by making a folded paper crane. The paper crane became an international symbol for peace after World War II because of the story of Sadako Sasaki.

Begin the art project lesson by telling children about Sadako:

*This true story is of a girl, Sadako Sasaki, who lived in Hiroshima at the time of the atomic bombing by the United States. She developed leukemia from the radiation and spent her time in a nursing home creating origami (folded paper) cranes in hope of making a thousand of them. She was inspired to do so by the Japanese saying that one who created a thousand origami cranes would then be granted a wish. Her wish was simply to live. However, she managed to fold only 644 cranes before she became too weak to fold any more, and died shortly after. Her friends and family helped finish her dream by folding the rest of the cranes, which were buried with Sadako. They also built a statue of Sadako holding a giant golden origami crane in Hiroshima Peace Park.*

*Now every year on Obon Day, which is a holiday in Japan to remember the fallen ones of the bombings of the United States, thousands of people leave paper cranes near the statue. On the statue is a plaque: "This is our cry. This is our prayer. Peace on Earth." (Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sadako\\_and\\_the\\_Thousand\\_Paper\\_Cranes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sadako_and_the_Thousand_Paper_Cranes))*




Paper cranes are also displayed in places throughout the world to remind people to pursue peace. For example, hundreds of cranes hang in All Peoples Church in Milwaukee. The church is located in a neighborhood that often suffers from crimes against people. The cranes mark the church as a place of peace in the middle of the violence.

Teach the students how to fold paper cranes. Each student can make one to take home and one for your classroom or worship space. You may wish to collect the cranes from all of the classes and connect them with string and hang them in your place of worship to proclaim peace.



## Instructions for Making Origami Cranes

Any kind of paper can be used to make the cranes, but thin paper works best. Begin by cutting the paper into a square.

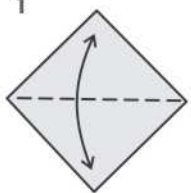


Origami **Cuyo**

# Grulla (Tzuru)

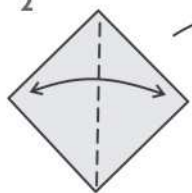
Figura Tradicional

**1**



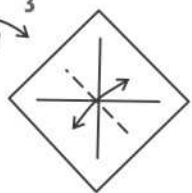
Doblar en diagonal.

**2**



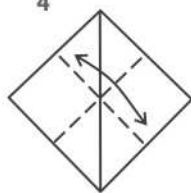
Doblar la otra diagonal.

**3**

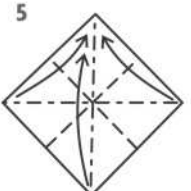


Dar vuelta el papel y doblar las dos mitades.

**4**

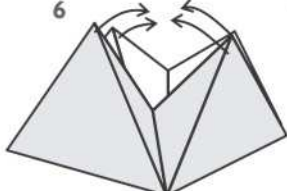


**5**



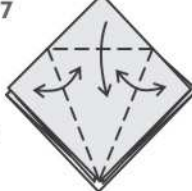
Unir las 4 puntas

**6**



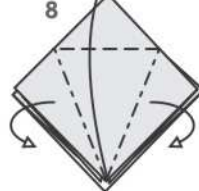
Colapsar.

**7**

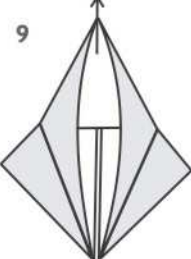


BASE PRELIMINAR  
Doblar y desdoblar.

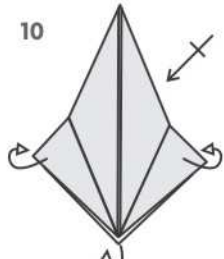
**8**



**9**

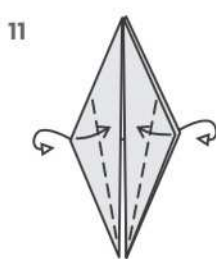


**10**



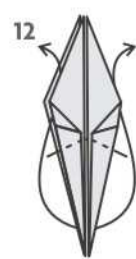
Repetir pasos 8 y 9 detrás.

**11**

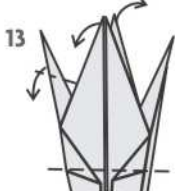


BASE GRULLA

**12**

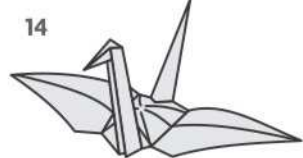


**13**



Abrir las alas y doblar la cabeza

**14**



La grulla simboliza esperanza, paz y prosperidad.

[www.origamicuyo.com.ar](http://www.origamicuyo.com.ar)  
[www.undoblezmas.blogspot.com.ar](http://www.undoblezmas.blogspot.com.ar)

## Other Art Projects for the Theme: “No a la Violencia. Si a la Vida.”:

### **Peace Chain:**

Cut strips of colored paper. Have children write or draw ways that they can say no to violence on each strip. Connect all strips together to form a colorful chain that can be displayed as a reminder to say no to violence. Be sure to take into account the ages and stages of the students in your class. “Violence” can be spoken about as “being mean,” “bullying”, “hitting”, or whatever words are meaningful to the students.



### **Peace Rock (a firm foundation):**

Talk about the characteristics and uses of rocks. Note that rocks are sometimes used as weapons. Then read from Isaiah 2:4 *He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.*

Remind the students of the story of the wise and foolish builders (Matthew 7:24-27) and talk about the firm foundation of God’s word.

Give each child a rock and tell them that it represents the house that was built on the rock – the life lived according to God’s message of peace and love.

Using paint, markers, crayons, glitter pens or whatever you wish, encourage the students to decorate their rocks with Bible verses that speak of peace. (For example, *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God*). They could also write the theme “No a la violencia. Si a la vida.” on their rocks. Tell them that these rocks have been transformed from weapons into symbols of peace.

**General Ideas for Using Drama and Storytelling to Teach a Bible Story**  
**(These ideas were developed for Sunday School teachers both in the US and in El Salvador)**

**Introduce the Bible story**

- ❖ Is the story from the Old or New Testament?
- ❖ What is the setting?
- ❖ Are there any words the children need to know? (for example: parable)

**Use a story book or pictures to tell the Bible story**

- ❖ If you do not have pictures or a book, you can make them
- ❖ Use the internet

**Read the story directly from the Bible**

- ❖ If the Bible story is long or difficult, only read a small portion, or simply tell the story
- ❖ Even if you do not read the story directly from the Bible, teach the children that the story you are telling them is **from** the Bible
- ❖ Consistently teach children that the Bible is God's word for us and is one way God teaches us about God's self

**Encourage the children to act out the story**

- ❖ Have children gather props or use props you have provided
- ❖ The children can dramatize the story while you or a youth reads the story from the Bible
- ❖ The children can speak the words of the story
- ❖ Use puppets or toys to dramatize the story

**Ask questions and explain the meaning of the story**

- ❖ Help the children to apply the story to their lives
- ❖ Allow the children to ask you questions

**Reinforce the story with coloring pages**

- ❖ Make photocopies of pictures from books in the resource center
- ❖ Find pictures to copy from the internet
- ❖ Draw your own pictures
- ❖ Have children draw their own pictures
- ❖ Idea that works: Reinforce the top of the coloring page, punch holes in it, and hang a piece of yarn from the top. Children can wear their pictures around their necks as a way to take them home and share them with their families.
- ❖ Idea that works: Allow the children to show off their coloring pages to the class, and have the children clap for work that is well done.

**Teach a memory verse from the story**

- ❖ Reward children who memorize the verse
- ❖ Use a short verse for the younger children, and a longer one for the older children

## Music and Media Resources to Reinforce the Lesson

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### **YouTube story video for older students:**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hx5P1KtPh4&feature=related>

### **Song: I will call upon the Lord (Psalm 18)**

*This is a good song for older kids. Can be done as a round with actions.*

I will call upon the Lord  
Who is worthy to be praised  
So shall I be saved from my enemies  
*Chorus (2X)*  
The Lord liveth  
And blessed be the rock  
And may the God of our salvation be  
exalted

Invoco al SEÑOR,  
que es digno de alabanza,  
y quedo a salvo de mis enemigos  
*Coro (2v)*  
El Señor vive  
y bendito sea la roca  
Que Dios de nuestra salvación sea  
exaltado

### **Song: Wise Man Built His House Upon a Rock**

*A cute video of this song is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDhaAWHjVRM>*

The wise man built his house upon the rock (3X)  
And the rain came tumbling down

Oh,  
The rain came down and the floods came up (3X)  
And the wise man's house stood firm.

The foolish man built his house upon the sand (3X)  
And the rain came tumbling down

Oh,  
The rain came down and the floods came up (3X)  
And the foolish man's house went "splat!"  
[clap hands once]

So,  
Build your house on the Lord Jesus Christ (3X)  
And the blessings will come down

Oh,  
The blessings come down as your prayer go up  
(3X)  
So build your house on the Lord.

El sabio edificó su casa sobre la roca (3v)  
Y las lluvias cayeron.

¡O!  
Cayeron las lluvias y las aguas subieron (3v)  
Y la casa sobre la roca era firme.

El necio edificó su casa sobre la arena (3v)  
Y las lluvias cayeron.

¡O!  
Cayeron las lluvias y las aguas subieron (3v)  
Y la casa sobre la arena fue "¡plop!"  
[aplaudir una vez]

Construya su casa en el Señor Jesús (3v)  
Y las bendiciones que derraman.

¡O!  
Las bendiciones que derraman sus oraciones  
suben (3v)  
Así construya su casa en el Señor.

## An Easter Church

After eleven years of partnering together, spending time in each other's communities, and generating long and short term ministry plans together, we built a church. It's a simple cement block structure, with a metal roof and metal shuttered windows. The children helped choose the paint colors; they decided on using the colors of an Easter sunrise-- lavender on the front and yellow on the sides.



The church construction teams were organized by women, and included some professionals, women, men and teens from the community. All were invited to

help, even the gang members. This invitation was an act of grace, and recognition that the church is built on holy ground – ground claimed with a simple cross and a humble tin structure thirteen years earlier, ground now re-claimed by an Easter Church with the original cross mounted on the roof.

The ministry which happens in this community is not easy. The streets have been periodically claimed by one gang, then another, dividing the community, endangering lives, taking lives. The darkness has brought fear. Even the pastor has been threatened. Violence has been real. Death has been real.

Yet in this place, death shall not have victory. The Gospel message of life in Jesus Christ is boldly and loudly proclaimed by the words and actions of a pastor who works to build community, who works to bring a message of courage and hope and joy and celebration to this community.



Pastor Santiago trains and empowers lay leaders who are planting seeds throughout the community. Small groups of 12-15 women meet in homes. The youth group grew large, and now has 5 smaller groups of 10-15 meeting in homes and being led by older youth leaders with adult mentors. The men's group has blossomed into a support for fathers and an action group which plans events for children. The community is forging connections with social action groups, local government and nearby communities to combat violence. We recently received this message:

*Things are going really well right now. Thanks be to God there is no violence in the community...the men are planning a soccer tournament for the youth, the older youth are teaming up with the Red Cross, the local government, the national government and the women's groups to celebrate the Day of the Child with 350 boys and girls...*



The hope and resurrection in this community is made possible by the power of the Holy Spirit and the dedicated efforts of a very special pastor.

*This story was written by Linda from St. John's ELCA in Brookfield, WI. St. John's and Heroes of Faith are sister churches.*