



MISSING PEACE?

Missing Peace?

A Christmas Sermon Series



MISSING PEACE?



Dear Church Leader Friends,

Missing Peace? is an Advent and Christmas series that's adaptable for use in all kinds of churches, highly invitable, and full of the great news about Jesus.

Crossover exists to help Australian Baptists Share Jesus, and for the development of this series we partnered with three pastors - Miranda Dixon, Jason Hoet and Kerry Davies and a Cross-cultural worker - Luke Hutchinson (Baptist Mission Australia). The design work is by Bronwyn Parker.

The series holds together under a strong theme, but each gathering stands alone and the messages can be done in any order. Essentially, your church will be offering five invitable and accessible events to both celebrate and share the wonderful message of Christmas.

The series title Missing Peace? is of course a two-sided play on words. It calls to all who thirst for peace, and hints at a 'missing piece' which is Christ the cornerstone.

We hope you find it helpful. And if you've developed Christmas and/or Easter series that you're willing to share, we'd love to hear from you as we build our resource collection.

Much peace - and love and joy - in Christ this Christmas,



Andrew Turner

Director of Crossover for Australian Baptist Ministries

This pack includes:

5 sermon outlines (see pages 4-8 in this document)

- Four of these pick up on an aspect of Peace and could be used across the four Sundays of Advent.
- The fifth one (“Finding the Missing Peace”) could be used anywhere e.g. a carols event or Christmas Day Each sermon matches the theme, but stands alone and so the messages can be given in any order

A whole range of themed artwork (see pages 10-12 in this document and download folder)

- Artwork for promotion including social media tiles, posters and postcards
- Artwork for during services including slides themed for each week
- All artwork for print promotion and use in service is designed to be edited easily to include your church’s details, using Microsoft Powerpoint.

Sermon Outlines

Missing Peace

Outlines can be used in any order or combination.

Use as closely or as loosely as you wish.

We recommend the INTRO and CONCLUSION (especially) be shaped with stories / experience / language relevant to local congregation.

Each sermon has a Focus statement (what the sermon is intended to say) and a Function statement (what the sermon is intended to do).

Scenes are implicitly explained rather than outlined as points.

REV LUKE HUTCHINSON, CROSS CULTURAL WORKER (BMA)

FOCUS: While the world is missing peace, it will not be forever. At Christmas, the first coming of Jesus, we are reminded to look forward to the day when true peace will be a universal reality.

FUNCTION: 1) That hearers may acknowledge the absence of world peace, and the distress of this. 2) That hearers may trust in God's promise of a world where His peace will come, and live in the light of that promise.

INTRO - Where is the peace?

- Isaiah 9:6
- Jesus has come, but it can be easy to look at the world as it is, and wonder, 'where is the peace that was meant to come with him?' (Fill out with global stories from across the year)
- Global Peace Index - Australia comes 27th out of 163 in 2022. (For latest update visit www.visionofhumanity.org/maps)
- Clearly, the world is missing peace.

1. Don't be surprised by this missing peace:

- Matthew 24:6-7
- Jesus knew that wars, earthquakes etc are, sadly, par for the course in a broken world.
- While we should be grieved by this missing peace, we shouldn't be surprised by it.
- The nation of Cambodia (62nd on the Global Peace Index) has rarely known peace. It has long been a contested land, and living here, it is common to hear people express fear that they will one day lose their country and culture again – simply because it has happened so many times before. So even with the current comparative peace compared to times past, some fear that the end of this peace is not far away. A lack of geopolitical peace.
- And the traumas of the past live on in the lives of generation after generation. A lack of personal and interpersonal peace, too. Don't be surprised....

2. Instead, be expectant:

- Isaiah 2:1-5
- Like Jesus, Isaiah knew that the way things are, is not the way they will always be: Isaiah offered a vision – a promise – spoken originally to God's people, Israel, as they pursued a life apart from God.
- Swords will be beaten into ploughs – because swords won't be needed anymore!
- Isaiah and Jesus agree! This day is still to come: God's true and lasting peace will arrive.
- This is great news! To a Khmer (Cambodian) person, this is such good news it may not be easily understood: For many Khmer people – the vast majority are Buddhist believers – the path toward lasting peace is found only via the escape from suffering, achieved by the extinction of the 'soul'.
- The good news of coming world peace is unique, good news indeed!

CONCLUSION: This Christmas – look forward to lasting world peace

- Luke 2:13-14
- It can be difficult to live with this missing peace: We might feel anger, discouragement, powerlessness, impotence against situations and forces so far beyond our control.
- Or perhaps we're inclined to just look away or try to escape the peacelessness....
- But in announcing Christ's birth, the angels signal that peace with God through him is the key to all peace.
- That offer is available right now, even amidst the peacelessness; and it will be made inevitable at the return of Christ, for those "who walk in the light of the Lord" (Isaiah 2:5)

PASSAGE: Ephesians 4:32

FOCUS: Without forgiveness there is no true reconciliation and no true relational peace. We are called to follow our Father by forgiving one another as he has forgiven us.

FUNCTION: That hearers would be encouraged to take steps of forgiveness as their contribution towards relational peace.

INTRO – Relational peace is often missing

- Our culture values rights over reconciliation. Forgiveness must be earned. (Context specific examples)
- Christmas reminds us how lucky we are that God does not agree! He is prepared to bear the cost of reconciliation by sending his Son, extending mercy and grace through him to undeserving humans.
- Christmas can also point out our own failure to reconcile and forgive even those who are closest to us.

1. Forgive as in Christ, God forgave us

- Psalm 86:5. God's character and God's actions show his loving forgiveness
- Matthew 6:14-15. God has also made it clear that he wants us to follow his example, even to the extent of his forgiveness depending our forgiveness of others.
- Forgiveness is not about how we feel, or forgetting what happened or excusing the wrong.

2. Take some steps...

- Forgiving can be the hardest thing we will ever do (Example here)! PeaceWise (see resources p.9) suggests a framework for biblical forgiveness which involves two steps –
 - A decision to extend mercy – whilst recognising this mercy is undeserved.
 - An action to show mercy – whether or not the person responds well to these actions
 - in doing these, we are acting like God does and receiving God's action towards us. We're playing our part in a miracle of healing that God wants to do.

3. ... and make some promises

- PeaceWise offers four promises to help us live out forgiveness -
 - I will not dwell on this incident
 - I will not bring up the incident and use it against the person
 - I will not talk to others about this incident
 - I will not allow this incident to stand between us or hinder our relationship

4. ... keeping in mind...

- We must forgive wholeheartedly
- We can only be responsible for our part – reconciliation requires the other person's repentance
- Forgiveness doesn't replace justice – there may be actions or consequences which follow

5. Forgiveness blesses and heals the forgiver

- Every command of God is of benefit to us – forgiveness sets us free from hurt and bitterness
- Forgiveness brings peace to the forgiver as well as offering peace to the forgiven.

CONCLUSION

- To whom do you need to offer relational peace this Christmas, as part of the deep peace God wants you to know?

REV KERRY DAVIES, BAPTIST PASTOR

PASSAGE: Psalm 73

FOCUS: God's promises are lived out in a broken world, which can generate doubt and confusion sometimes, robbing us of personal peace. However, we will find personal peace in his presence.

FUNCTION: 1) That hearers will recognise any doubts they may have about God's goodness, and any associated envy or bitterness. 2) That hearers will bring their doubts to God and receive his promised peace.

INTRO – Is God's promise of peace for real?

We feel the tension between the promises made by God, who we believe to be good, and our life experiences e.g. bereavement, health struggles, financial problems, trouble in our marriages, singleness, or worries about our children or grandchildren and Christmas can these heighten tensions. (Fill out with relatable experiences).

1. God promises goodness and peace

- Psalm 73 v1 – This psalm testifies to God's goodness to his people (as do many e.g. Psalm 1:1,6)
- Deuteronomy 5:33 Promises of prosperity were given with the Law
- Matthew 5.8 – Jesus also promised that the pure in heart will see God

2. Yet God's own people often suffer hardship and turmoil

- Psalm 73 v4-5,13; the book of Job
- We can all think of examples of God's own people suffering. Perhaps we are suffering right now...
- This was Jesus' own experience – a 'Man of Sorrows' Isaiah 53

3. The tension between God's promises and our experience can lead to doubt, envy & bitterness

- Psalm 73 v2-3 – In the midst of suffering, envy beckons so that we no longer see God's goodness
- When we envy, we take our focus off God, and direct our attention to the lives of others instead
- Which only generates more envy ... and eventually, bitterness
- Bitter envy leads to all kinds of sin (James 3:14,16), causes trouble, defiling many (Hebrews 12:15)

4. Envy and bitterness can trigger a crisis of faith or hinder new faith

- Psalm 73 v 2-3,13,16-17, 21-22 Focusing on others' lives adds doubt in God's goodness
- v21-22 Bitterness causes us to ignore God
- Envy and bitterness are shameful emotions, so we don't easily confess them to God or to others
- Bitterness grows steadily in the darkness (with a diet of Facebook and Instagram)

5. But if we bring our faith crisis into God's presence, He transforms and strengthens us

- Psalm 73 v23-28 The psalmist finally comes into God's presence and the confusion clears
- The psalmist is now reassured that even though his flesh and heart may fail, God will not
- His transformed desire, above all other desires, is to take refuge in God
- The psalm concludes with one of the most beautiful declarations in the entire Psalter (v28).
- Even though our circumstances may not change, we can know and share the peace of God, which Paul says "transcends all understanding" and "will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."
- Jesus himself said "I have told you these things so that in me you might have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart – I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

CONCLUSION

Will we bring our troubles and doubts to God and receive his peace in exchange this Christmas?

REV JASON HOET, BAPTIST PASTOR

PASSAGE: Luke 2:39-52

FOCUS: The daily practice of trusting God our Father builds peace for the challenges in life.

FUNCTION: Hearers will value the ordinary life in forming our godliness and building our trust in God

INTRO – How does the Christmas story help us find peace for our daily demands?

There was spectacular activity around the birth of Jesus (Angels, Virgin conception, fulfilled prophecy, Visiting Magi and strange gifts). It can be hard to relate this extra-ordinary activity to everyday life. Maybe this is helpful escapism? But, in the dramatic Christmas story what can help us find peace for our daily demands?

1. When the family of Jesus returned from Egypt to Nazareth, did Jesus' life continue to be spectacular?

- There has been fascination and speculation over Jesus growing up, his 'hidden years'. Gnostic books like 'Infancy Gospel of Thomas' describe fanciful and uncharacteristic stories of Jesus bringing clay birds to life, (also referenced in Quran 5:110), raising people to life.
- In Luke's Gospel there is a more ordinary account of Jesus growing years. (v39-40)
- Jesus grew up in a poor Jewish home, hometown Nazareth was a rural area where people fished or farmed. It is here Jesus learnt and practiced the family trade of carpentry (Mark 6:3).

2. There is this interesting account of Jesus, aged 12.

- Unable to find Jesus as they returned to Galilee, Joseph and Mary rushed to Jerusalem, searched the busy city for their son. After 3 days they find Jesus, it is not hard to imagine their concern (v48)
- Jesus responds as a 12-year-old might - he wasn't lost, he knew exactly where he was: (Luke 2:49)

3. Jesus behaves in a way we do not expect of a 12-year-old

- Jesus stayed in Jerusalem to be in the temple (v43), was found sitting among teachers, listening and asking questions (v46-47).
- Jesus first words in the Gospels show he was aware. At 12 years old, Jesus knew God as "my Father" (v49). This is the bedrock of everyday peace. At age 30, what we see of Jesus at his baptism as God's "beloved son" (Luke 3:22), or when he faced temptation (Luke 4:9), Jesus already knew at age 12.

4. Jesus' growing years commends ordinary life as a wonderful way to grow a relationship with God.

- Jesus grew in a godly family, studied scriptures, worked in a community, had positive and honourable relationships. His birth was spectacular, but growing years were typical of godly Jewish families.
- Christmas is a special time of year, but most of life is ordinary. We see from our text, God uses our ordinary daily life to grow us, not just the spectacular seasons.
- As we approach a new year, what daily rhythms can grow our (or our family's) relationship with God?

5. We also see the boy Jesus had a different perspective on God's presence to his parents.

- Understandably, Mary and Joseph were anxious to find their 'lost' son. In contrast, the 'lost' son Jesus knew he was safe with God his Father.
- We could consider this 12-year-old naivety, but as Jesus grew older, he never changed. Whatever happened, Jesus trusted in God as his good Father in heaven. Even at the cross, Jesus completely trusted God, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit," (Luke 23:46).

CONCLUSION

- Through Jesus we are brought into his relationship with God as our good heavenly Father. Like Jesus we can grow in trusting God, every day. Putting down deep roots of peace with God in the ordinary times, prepares us for the tough times, when challenge comes. A 12-year-old may be better at this than adults? But Mary and Joseph learnt something the day they found Jesus in his Father's house (v50). This was a moment Mary treasured in her heart. Now we can too.

REV MIRANDA DIXON, REV JASON HOET

PASSAGE: Luke 2:1-15

FOCUS: There is no true peace in this world without the Prince of Peace. His coming into the world at Christmas brings hope of peace both now and in the future.

FUNCTION: That hearers would understand that peace comes from Jesus and invite him to bring peace into their lives.

INTRO – Is Christmas a time of peace for you?

- Usually more like chaos, busyness, stress (examples, stories)

1. The angels announce peace

- Luke 2:1-15.
- The baby born to Mary in an unknown corner of a small town doesn't look like someone who will bring peace to the world.
- But the angels reveal who he really is – the promised Saviour whom Isaiah calls the Prince of Peace!

2. But it feels like peace is missing and Christmas can accentuate this

- global conflict
- broken relationships
- personal fears and doubts
- daily struggles (fill these out according to previous sermons as appropriate, reference Christmas)

3. The promised Prince of Peace has come

- Jesus is indeed the Prince of Peace.
- By his coming to this world and living, dying and rising for us, he offers us the way to peace with God – the most fundamental peace of all.

4. Jesus brings peace to those who are his both now and in the future

- He also brings personal and relational peace right now
- and final global peace in the future when he returns.

5. We can bring this peace to those around us

- He calls us to be his peacemakers in the world (fill out with practical contextual examples).

CONCLUSION

Will you accept the peace Jesus offers? Will you be his peacemaker in the world?

Resources

Global Peace Index: visionofhumanity.org/maps

Peacemaking Training resources

PeaceWise is a Australian based, non-denominational, biblical peacemaking organisation. The material referenced in points 2, 3 and 4 is taken from their Everyday Peacemaking training. To find out more about PeaceWise visit:

peacewise.org.au

Difference Course – Reconciling Leaders Network - difference.rln.global

Bible Study Guides

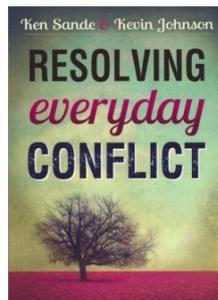
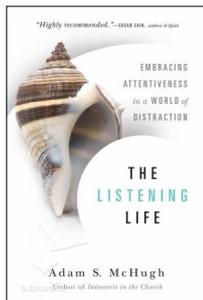
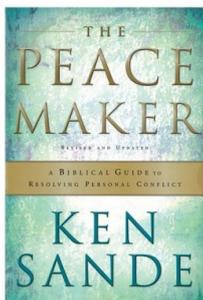
bible.com/reading-plans/17208-peace-on-earth-a-5-day-advent-devotional

bible.com/reading-plans/23174-missing-peace

bible.com/reading-plans/19051-experiencing-gods-peace

bible.com/reading-plans/12363-an-offer-of-peace

Books



Themed Artwork

(1) Artwork for digital promotion

Instagram (1080x1080px)



Facebook (1200x630px)



Twitter (1200x675px)



Gif/Movie (1080x1080px)



3 secs

Gif/Movie (1200x630px)

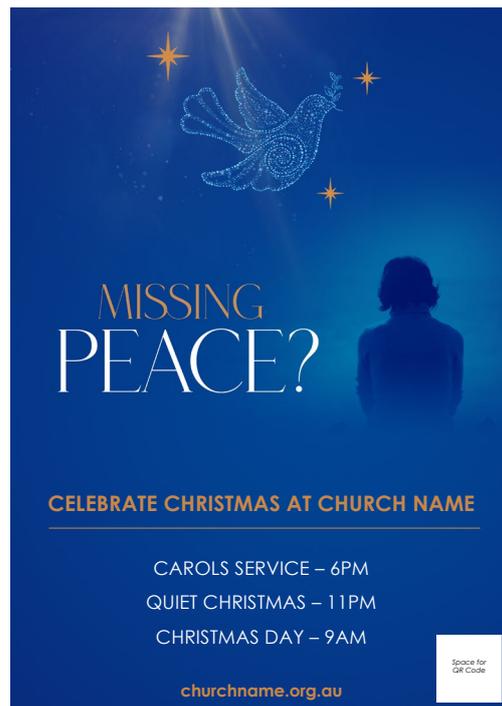


3 secs

(2) Artwork for print promotion

Artwork can be edited and customised using Microsoft Powerpoint.

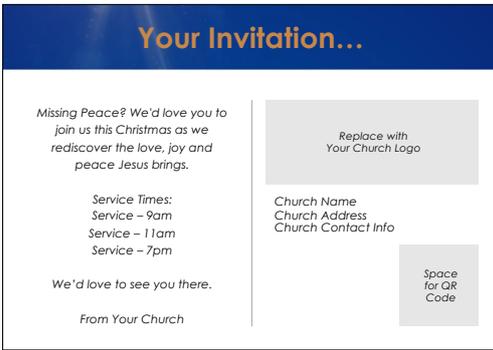
A3 Poster (Powerpoint)



(2) Artwork for print promotion (cont.)

Artwork can be edited and customised using Microsoft Powerpoint.

A6 Postcard (Powerpoint)



(3) Artwork for use in service.

Artwork can be edited and customised using Microsoft Powerpoint.

Church Promotional Slide 16:9



Church Promotional Slide 4:3



(3) Artwork for use in service (cont.)

Themed Artwork

Artwork can be edited and customised using Microsoft Powerpoint.

Church Sermon Slides 16:9

MISSING PEACE? TODAY'S MESSAGE
Missing World Peace
Series concept and artwork by Crossover (with thanks to Miranda Dixon)

MISSING PEACE? TODAY'S MESSAGE
Missing Relational Peace
Series concept and artwork by Crossover (with thanks to Miranda Dixon)

MISSING PEACE? TODAY'S MESSAGE
Missing Personal Peace
Series concept and artwork by Crossover (with thanks to Miranda Dixon)

MISSING PEACE? TODAY'S MESSAGE
Missing Economic Peace
Series concept and artwork by Crossover (with thanks to Miranda Dixon)

MISSING PEACE? TODAY'S MESSAGE
Finding Peace
Series concept and artwork by Crossover (with thanks to Miranda Dixon)

Heading

- Sub-point
- Sub-point
- Sub-point
- Sub-point

“
And there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them.
Luke 2:8-9

Heading

- Sub-point
- Sub-point
- Sub-point
- Sub-point

“
And there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them.
Luke 2:8-9

Church Sermon Slides 4:3

MISSING PEACE? TODAY'S MESSAGE
Missing World Peace
Series concept and artwork by Crossover (with thanks to Miranda Dixon)

MISSING PEACE? TODAY'S MESSAGE
Missing Relational Peace
Series concept and artwork by Crossover (with thanks to Miranda Dixon)

MISSING PEACE? TODAY'S MESSAGE
Missing Personal Peace
Series concept and artwork by Crossover (with thanks to Miranda Dixon)

MISSING PEACE? TODAY'S MESSAGE
Missing Economic Peace
Series concept and artwork by Crossover (with thanks to Miranda Dixon)

MISSING PEACE? TODAY'S MESSAGE
Finding Peace
Series concept and artwork by Crossover (with thanks to Miranda Dixon)

Heading

- Sub-point
- Sub-point
- Sub-point
- Sub-point

“
And there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them.
Luke 2:8-9

Heading

- Sub-point
- Sub-point
- Sub-point
- Sub-point

“
And there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them.
Luke 2:8-9

Finding this helpful?

We'd love you to partner with us

Help others like you to share Jesus more confidently, lovingly, clearly and effectively - this is what transforms lives and changes the world.

Crossover Supporters (ongoing donors of any amount) get 40% off all our resources, plus inside access to upcoming releases we can't tell the world about yet!



Scan for more →


crossover
Helping Australian Baptists Share Jesus

Email: crossover@baptist.org.au
Phone: 02 9868 9236
crossover.org.au