



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

Matthew 5:9

For our future peacemakers

Introduction

This year, our Christmas resources for children in church explore Christian Aid's peacebuilding work. Across the world in places of violence and conflict, we are working with local partners to help vulnerable people build peace.

As we are called by God to be peacemakers on this earth, we want children to understand that they can help too. Through their actions, they can build peace within their communities and around the world,

changing the lives of those affected by violence and conflict.

Use our activities here with the children in your church during Advent and link with our other resources as part of your wider church celebrations this Christmas.

Order your Christmas resources at
caid.org.uk/christmas-resources





[Presenter] Put your hand up if you've ever heard a grown up say: 'I just need a bit of peace and quiet.'

[Pause to give children a chance to raise their hands.]

[Presenter] But what is peace? Think about what peace is and why having peace is important. Where do you feel peaceful? Maybe it's when you are somewhere very still and quiet; maybe it's when you take time within the excitement of Christmas to stop and reflect on the birth of Jesus; or maybe you feel peaceful when spending time with your family watching TV, playing with friends after school, or doing homework in your bedroom.

Sadly, we don't live in a very peaceful world and there are many places where there is war and conflict. Sometimes people have to leave their homes and families to try and find peace. In fact, around 1 in 6 children in the world live where there is conflict and fighting.

[Show the picture of Hassan on page 3.]

[Presenter] This is Hassan. He is nine years old and lives with his father and grandfather in a country called Lebanon. He was actually born in a refugee camp in Syria but his family had to run away from the camp when he was just three years old because of the war there. Hassan's mother and brother had to travel to Europe to seek medical treatment, so Hassan hasn't seen them in four years.

Hassan has had little peace in his lifetime but, thankfully, he's been able to attend a children's centre run by an organisation called Association Najdeh in Lebanon, which is supported by Christian Aid. Staff at the centre help him learn, play and overcome his fears. Gradually, some peace is being restored in his life.

Children at the centre are able to do lots of arts and crafts, which gives them a safe space to be creative and express themselves and this helps bring some peace to their lives.

Hassan said: 'When I come here it makes me happy. My favourite teacher is Amal. She helps me in everything. She teaches us and plays with us. If I'm afraid and I come here, I lose my fears because I have fun.'

Thankfully, we live in a relatively peaceful country but we can still work on being peacemakers. In the Bible in Matthew 5:9, Jesus said, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.' We may not be able to end wars but we can try to be peacemakers in our homes and schools when there is conflict, and we can pray for peace in the parts of the world where there is fighting.

[Ask the congregation to close their eyes.]

[Presenter] With your eyes closed, think about a place in the world, or a situation, where people don't get on with each other. What could you do to help bring peace to that situation?

Finish by saying a prayer together:

Thank you God, that we live in a part of the world that is relatively peaceful but we pray that there might be peace throughout the whole world. We thank you for organisations like Christian Aid and Association Najdeh for providing children like Hassan with a place where he can find peace, away from the violence he has seen. Where we see conflict, help us to become peacemakers in this world. And as Christmas approaches, please help us to find some peaceful moments to reflect that you sent your son, Jesus, into this world so that we can know peace with you. Amen.



**This is
Hassan**

Get creative

Children like Hassan take part in arts and crafts activities at the children's centre to help overcome their experiences. Why not hold an arts and crafts session with the children in your church to help them engage with the topic of peace?

Give them free reign to make anything they like from a selection of materials, or create specific stations with different craft activities. You can use our dove of peace decoration on page 5 at one of the stations.

During the session, talk to the children about why making things can be peaceful. This session could be done as part of your regular group meeting or you could run a family Christmas craft afternoon. Turn this into a fundraiser for Christian Aid's Christmas Aid appeal by asking for donations to attend or in exchange for refreshments.

Bible study

In your groups, read Matthew 5:9. Ask the children what they think Jesus meant when he said this. Ask the children why they think peace is important. How do they think they could be peacemakers? Why does God want us all to have peace and sometimes times of quiet?

Write Matthew 5:9 on a large piece of paper and invite the children to write or draw places and situations where they think they could help bring peace.

If your church takes time during the service for a moment of sharing the peace, talk to the children about why this is done and what it means. You could invite your vicar or minister to speak to the children about what it means and why it is done. If the children aren't normally in the main church for that part of the service, then take them in to join in with it.

Peace prayers

Explain to the children that doves are often a symbol of peace. In the Bible, God uses a dove to show that peace has been restored in different situations. Using our dove of peace decoration on page 5, ask children to write or draw short prayers on the dove and then follow the instructions to turn the outline into a decoration. If you have time, make lots of the doves with messages of peace and give them out to members of your congregation. They could even be used as part of the church's Christmas tree decoration.



Play a peaceful game

Play Sleeping Lions or Guess When a Minute is Up – any games that include sitting and being quiet.

This dove of peace can be decorated with pictures, words or prayers and folded into a Christmas tree decoration. Share photos of your doves of peace online using **#WeAreThePeacemakers**



Put a dove and a collection envelope on every seat at your carol service.

Give the doves to parents at a school nativity.

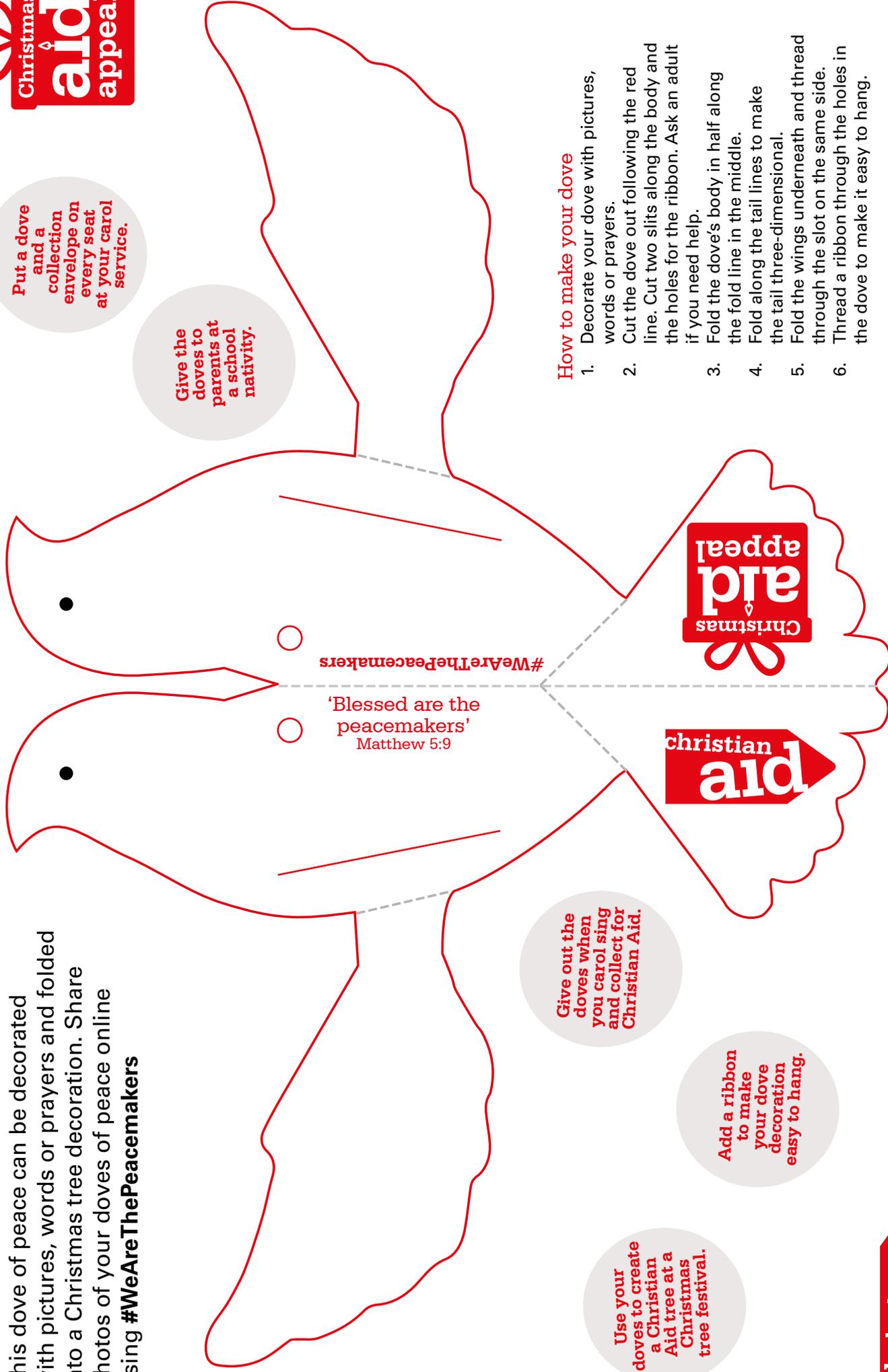
Give out the doves when you carol sing and collect for Christian Aid.

Add a ribbon to make your dove decoration easy to hang.

Use your doves to create a Christian Aid tree at a Christmas tree festival.

How to make your dove

1. Decorate your dove with pictures, words or prayers.
2. Cut the dove out following the red line. Cut two slits along the body and the holes for the ribbon. Ask an adult if you need help.
3. Fold the dove's body in half along the fold line in the middle.
4. Fold along the tail lines to make the tail three-dimensional.
5. Fold the wings underneath and thread through the slot on the same side.
6. Thread a ribbon through the holes in the dove to make it easy to hang.



To order dove decorations go to caid.org.uk/christmas-resources or phone **0870 078 7788** and quote **F2447**.