

Take Risks for Peace

1 SAMUEL 25:2-38

4



GOAL

Youth consider the roles of vulnerability and courage in creating peace.

- A Art
- AM Active/Movement
- AT Abstract Thinking
- C Conversation
- CT Concrete Thinking
- D Drama
- G Game
- M Music
- QC Quiet/Contemplative
- S Service
- T Technology
- X Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

Dear God, give me the courage to be vulnerable and to see others as courageous. Amen.

THIS SESSION

To create peace, we sometimes have to be vulnerable. The common humanity that we share with neighbors (and enemies) is discovered only through genuine and transparent self-revelation. Once we can articulate and share our values and sensitivities, we can begin the work of creating peace with those who act or feel different. Peace is not an elimination of conflict; it is a naming of the conflict in non-judgmental terms and a willingness to seek reconciliation. Taking risks can be challenging or uncomfortable unless one is rooted in the love of God and open to surprising outcomes.

THE BIBLE STORY

Nabal is a rich and mean sheep and goat owner. David's army has been protecting some of Nabal's shepherds while they sheared his sheep. David sends some of his servants to Nabal to ask for food, but instead Nabal prepares for battle against David. Nabal's wife, Abigail, hears of Nabal's refusal to feed David's people and, unbeknownst to Nabal, she takes food to David and his men. Abigail encourages David not to fight Nabal's men. He agrees, and even vows to protect Abigail's life. In this story, both Abigail and David take unexpected risks that lead to peace rather than violence.

CONNECTIONS WITH YOUTH

Youth are not typically good at being vulnerable. Like most adults, they opt for the safe and familiar rather than uncertain outcomes. Even though they may appear to take risks physically, they don't often take risks emotionally. They like to stay within known peer groups and activities rather than stepping out to create new connections. They have clearly defined ideas of who is the *other* or who is the *enemy*. Only the bravest of youth risk their own reputations to stand up to someone else in a way that leaves them open to ridicule. Throughout this session, affirm even small risks that might foster peace among youth.

SESSION PREPARATION

- "Graffiti Sheets" (p. 30): Prepare and post newsprint.
- Depending on the options you choose:
- "Risk Game" (p. 30): Prepare the room for the game.
- "Reviewing the Infographic" (p. 31): Prepare to tell about one of the people or movements from the *Make Peace* infographic poster (bit.ly/FMInfographicPosters, Year 2 Set).
- "How to Respond" (p. 32): Print Resource Page 3 and cut into strips as indicated.

GETTING STARTED

- ☐ Three pieces of newsprint
- ☐ Markers

GRAFFITI SHEETS

QC

Prepare and post three pieces of newsprint around the room. Write one of the following prompts at the top of each piece:

- Courage is . . .
- Some people who are courageous . . .
- One act of courage that I've seen is . . .

Welcome youth as they arrive. Give them a marker and invite them to walk around the room and write short answers to any of the prompts on the graffiti sheets that they feel comfortable answering. After all have arrived, point out some of the most frequent and some of the most interesting answers on each sheet.



INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

- ☐ Laundry basket (or empty trash can)
- ☐ Tennis balls
- ☐ Masking tape

RISK GAME

G A X

Prepare for this game by putting a laundry basket on one side of the room. Take three steps from the basket, about 3 feet, and put a piece of tape on the floor and write "1" on the tape. Move about 2 feet farther from the basket and put another piece of tape with the number "2" on the floor. Continue doing this until you reach the number "5."

Form teams of three, giving each member one ball. During a round, each team member will choose a number to stand on. From this number, the youth will attempt to toss their ball into the laundry basket. The three team members must choose three different pieces of tape. One person throws at a time, with the person on the lowest number going first. If the ball goes in and stays in, the participant gets the number of points that is written on the tape below their feet.

Choose a scorekeeper or keep score yourself. Announce the scores at the end of each round. Play two or three rounds. After the game, discuss these questions:

- ➔ How did you decide which piece of tape to stand on?
- ➔ How does the phrase "the greater the risk, the greater the reward" apply to this game?

- ☐ Copies of Resource Page 1

RISK SAYINGS

C

Distribute copies of Resource Page 1. Take turns reading one of the sayings out loud to the group. After each one is read, have the whole group give a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down if they agree or disagree with the statement. If there is disagreement, encourage discussion. When the final one is read, ask these questions:

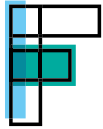
- ➔ Which saying is your favorite? Why?
- ➔ Which saying was the hardest to understand?
- ➔ Which saying did you like the least? Why?
- ➔ Our theme today is to take risks for peace. Is it different to take risks for something of value? Why?

REVIEWING THE INFOGRAPHIC



☐ *Make Peace* infographic poster

Gather around the *Make Peace* infographic poster and invite any youth who researched someone in the infographic poster to tell what they learned. Tell what you learned about someone. Ponder with youth which people or movements relate to the aspects of making peace you have looked at in this unit (*Know Peace, Take a Step Back, Understand Others, and Take Risks for Peace*).



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

Choose one or both options.

READER'S THEATER



☐ Copies of Resource Page 2

Explain to youth that today's Bible story (1 Samuel 25:2–38) involves someone who took a risk for peace. Prepare to hear the story by distributing copies of Resource Page 2 and assigning the roles of Nabal, Narrator, David, Abigail, Nabal's servants (one or more), and David's soldiers (one or more). Give youth a few minutes to look over the script and think about how they will act out their parts. Have youth present the story to one another playing their roles. After hearing the story, discuss:

- What risk did Abigail take for peace?
- What risk did David take, if any?
- How do these risks lead to peace?
- When have you taken a risk that led to peace?

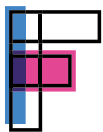
MAKING SOME NOISE



☐ Noisemakers

Begin by setting the scene for the youth. Nabal owns a lot of sheep. While his servants are shearing sheep, David's army takes care of them and provides protection against criminals who might steal the sheep. Pass out the noisemakers, instructing the youth that, as you read the story, they should play their noisemakers when they hear of someone in the story taking a risk.

Read 1 Samuel 25:2–38. Some examples of risks they may find are David's soldiers taking care of Nabal's sheep shearers, Nabal's servants speaking to Abigail, Abigail disagreeing with Nabal, Abigail bringing food to David, or David protecting Abigail. Each time you hear a noisemaker, stop and ask, "Who took a risk? What was the risk? How could that risk contribute to peace in this story?"



FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Choose one or more options.

DIGGING DEEPER



☐ *Make Peace* infographic poster
☐ Internet-connected devices

Gather around the *Make Peace* infographic poster and invite youth to select one of the people or groups they would like to know more about. Have them work alone or in pairs to use their phones and find out a little more about the person by searching for them on the internet. After ten minutes, gather as a whole and have each person or pair share what they learned.

Discuss who found someone who risked something for peace, and invite youth to name people or groups they know who take risks for peace.

☐ Internet-connected device



The story of Le Chambon is found in the foundational essay that begins on page 37. Consider reading it before leading this activity.

☐ Internet-connected device

LE CHAMBON

T C

Tell youth that Le Chambon is a town in France that took a big risk to hide Jewish people from the German government in World War II. Show the YouTube video “KHC: Conspiracy of Goodness: Life in Le Chambon” (bit.ly/FMLeChambon, 8:45). Ask the youth:

- ➔ What was the result of the risks taken by Pastor Andre Trocme and the people of Le Chambon?
- ➔ How did it affect Nelly, the narrator of this story?
- ➔ How did the risks taken by Le Chambon make peace?

HARRIET TUBMAN

T C

Show the YouTube video: “The Breathtaking Courage of Harriet Tubman – Jenell Hobson” (bit.ly/FMTubman, 4:48). Discuss these questions:

- ➔ What is significant about Harriet Tubman’s life?
- ➔ What are some of the risks that Tubman took?
- ➔ What person or groups of people are being mistreated today?
- ➔ What risks might you take to help them?



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or both options.

☐ Copies of Resource Page 3

HOW TO RESPOND

D AT

Form small groups. Give each group one of the scenario strips cut from Resource Page 3. Ask groups to create a short skit to tell the story of the conflict. In addition to telling the story, the skit should reflect at least one person who takes a risk for peace. Groups can decide for themselves whether the risk actually achieves peace. After everyone has presented, ask:

- ➔ What are other ways the situation could have been handled?
- ➔ How does it feel to take a risk?
- ➔ How do you know if taking a risk is worth it?
- ➔ What kinds of peace might you create in your own communities and schools by taking some of these risks?

MY SHOT

M

Play “My Shot” from *Hamilton*. Here is an example: “My Shot (Clean) Hamilton” (bit.ly/FMMyShotClean, 5:31). Many youth will already know the music. Encourage them to sing along. You may choose to listen to the song multiple times. After you listen to the song, discuss:

- ➔ What is the *shot* mentioned in this song? (*Alexander is trying to make a difference in politics in early America.*)
- ➔ What does it mean that Alexander describes himself as “young, scrappy, and hungry”?
- ➔ Why is Alexander trying to “rise up”?
- ➔ What *shots* do you think God may be wanting you to take?
- ➔ What are the risks involved in taking your shot?
- ➔ What shot will you take to make peace?



This activity is best for groups familiar with the lyrics from *Hamilton*.



FOLLOWING JESUS

CALL AND RESPONSE

Let the youth know that you will leave a moment of silence between each part of the prayer and invite them to speak their responses aloud or silently to God.

Dear God, we praise you for peace everywhere we see it and feel it.

We especially praise you for those who take risks to create peace . . .

We praise you for those who have courage . . .

We praise you for those who help others . . .

Be with all of us, especially those who need to find inner peace . . .

Be with those who need someone to stand up for them . . .

Be with those who feel left out . . .

Be with those who are uncertain about their future . . .

We know that all of our lives are in your hands and that you care for everyone you created. Bring us closer to one another and closer to you. Help us to be peacemakers wherever we go and whatever we do.

Amen.

Taking Risks

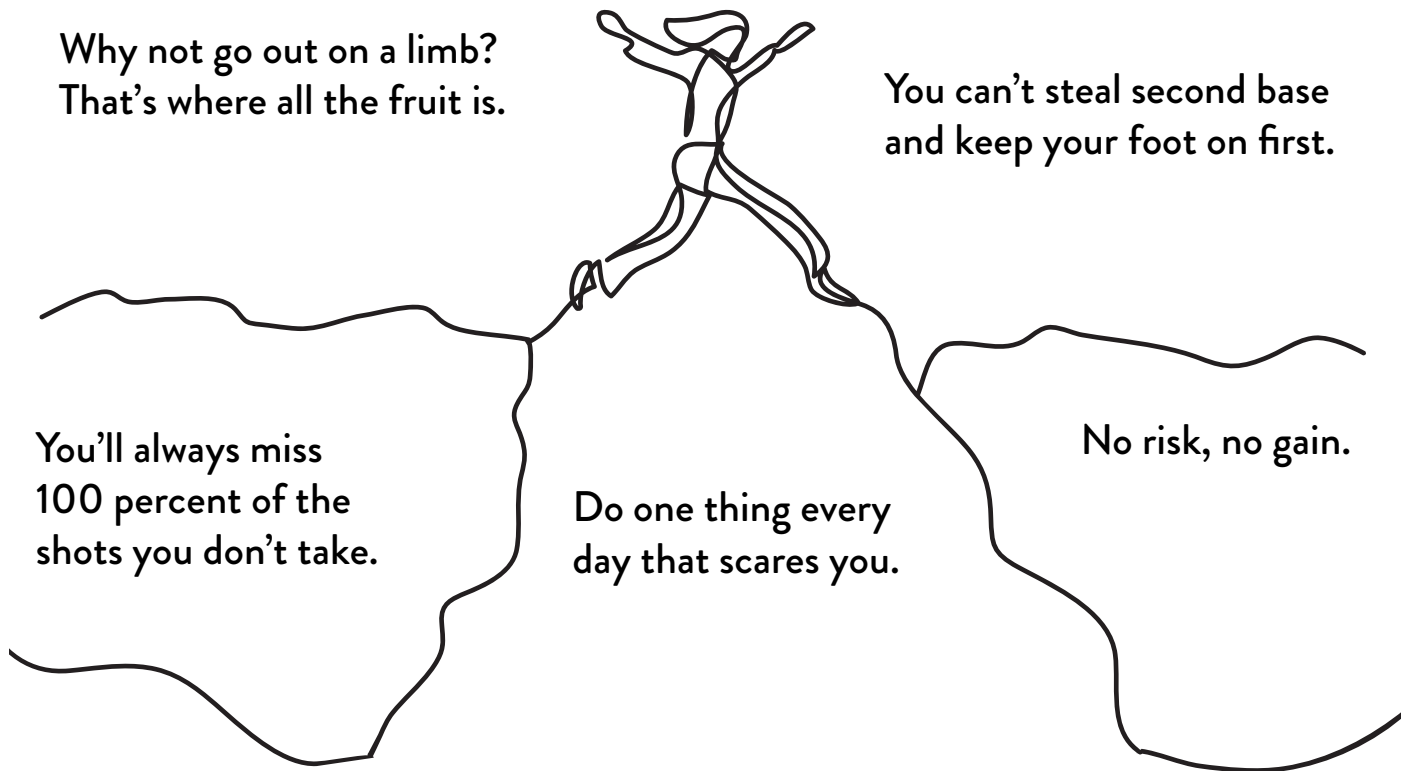
Read the following common sayings about taking risks. Which do you like the most?

A ship in harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are built for.

I am always doing that which I cannot do, in order that I may learn how to do it.

Why not go out on a limb?
That's where all the fruit is.

You can't steal second base
and keep your foot on first.



You'll always miss
100 percent of the
shots you don't take.

Do one thing every
day that scares you.

No risk, no gain.

Life is inherently risky. There is only one big risk you should avoid at all costs, and that is the risk of doing nothing.

The only way you can know where the line is is if you cross it.

Reader's Theater

An adaptation of 1 Samuel 25:2–38

Narrator: There once was a very lovely woman named Abigail who married a rather cranky rich man named Nabal.

Abigail: I really didn't have a choice in the matter. There were arranged marriages in those times.

Narrator: One day, some of Nabal's servants were shearing Nabal's sheep near an encampment of David's soldiers.

Nabal's Servants: Hey, soldiers! We are in distress! Can you keep us safe from criminals who would like to steal our sheep?

David's Soldiers: Sure! We can do that.

Nabal's Servants: (*When they finish shearing the sheep*) Thanks! We're all finished now. We're going back to Nabal.

Narrator: A few days later, David's soldiers were hungry and tired. David had an idea.

David: Hey, soldiers. Why don't you go to Nabal's house? Greet him by saying, "Peace be with you," and ask him if he will give you some food.

David's Soldiers: OK!

Narrator: So the soldiers went to Nabal's house.

Soldiers: Peace be with you, Mr. Nabal.

Nabal: Who are you? I don't care about you. I'm not giving you any bread or water. You are on my land. Go away.

Narrator: And so the soldiers went back and told David, who told them to strap on their swords and prepare to fight Nabal's men. In the meantime, Nabal's servants spoke to Abigail, Nabal's wife.

Nabal's Servants: David's soldiers protected us, but our master, Nabal, won't give David any food. David and his soldiers are now preparing to come and kill all of us!

Abigail: My husband is such a fool! I had better act quickly.

Narrator: Abigail had the servants prepare 200 loaves of bread, two skins of wine, meat, grain, raisins, and fig cakes, enough to feed David's army. Abigail and her servants took all these things and went out to find David. David, meanwhile, was angry.

David: It was in vain that I protected all this fellow has. He has returned me evil for good! I will kill all the males in Nabal's house.

Abigail: David! There you are. Please take mercy on me and my household. My servants and I have brought you and your soldiers food. I know what good you have done for us, despite my evil husband's response. His name *Nabal* means "Fool" and that he is! I have come to make peace.

David: (*After considering*) Yes. I accept the food you have brought. I grant you peace. No one shall harm you.

Narrator: Shortly after this, Abigail told Nabal what she had done. He was furious and died soon thereafter. Scene.

Scenarios for Peace

Cut this page into strips to give groups.

Setting

math class

You saw Tom, a boy in the class, steal Julie's phone from her backpack while Julie was listening to the teacher.

conflict

Setting

outside church, before worship begins

Amelia always walks into church and argues with her grandparents who make her sit with them. Most of the youth sit together during worship, not with their parents or caregivers. Amelia looks miserable.

conflict

Setting

high school football field between band practice and football practice

As football players arrive early, they make fun of Tony for playing the flute because he's a boy and the flute is a *girl* instrument.

conflict

Setting

outside church

The youth of your church would like to put a Black Lives Matter sign in front of the church. As you are discussing this, one of the church elders overhears and says that politics don't belong in church.

conflict

Setting

school hallway

Anna has just announced that she is female and is using she/her/hers pronouns. Prior to this week, Anna was called Adam and students assumed Adam was a boy. Now, Anna needs a place to use the bathroom where she feels safe.

conflict

Setting

outside school

Sam is a member of your youth group. Sam's parents have forced him to switch schools to your school. Sam always seems to be angry in his new school.

conflict