

## WEEK 1 LESSON GUIDE



### BIG IDEA

Making peace is part of God's game plan.

### BIBLE

**David and Abigail:** 1 Samuel 25:2–35;  
Psalm 33:12–22

## ABOUT THIS WEEK

To play a sport, you'll need a great coach with a good strategy to help you reach your goals. This week, we'll take a look at the time Abigail stepped in to bring peace between David and her husband, Nabal. By trusting God and sticking to the winning strategy, Abigail shows us how **making peace is part of God's game plan.**

## LARGE GROUP TIME

I'm Coach (*volunteer name*)! I'm so glad you're on the squad as we practice God's *Game Plan* together! During this series, we are going to be learning all about what God has to say as we play out our lives. While doing so we will be taking a very close look at one of God's team players, David. This week, we are going to be volleying back and forth with David, Nabal, and Abigail to learn what God would do in hard situations. Let's learn more about God's *Game Plan* for us!

### WHAT? What are we talking about today?

#### ACTIVITY | Balloon Volleys

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you'll need to inflate yellow or green balloons (tennis balls) and gather fly swatters (rackets). You can put some uncooked rice in the balloons to give them weight. You can use beach balls if any kids have latex allergies. You can also have kids decorate their own [rackets](#) using paper plates, glue, decorating materials like crayons or markers, and paint-stirring sticks or jumbo popsicle sticks. To play, have kids hit the balloons back and forth like they are playing tennis.
- **Have you ever been involved in a fight or argument with someone?** They're not really fun to be a part of. It sometimes feels like an endless game of tennis, going back and forth while hoping that we win.
- Peace can be difficult to feel or find when we're in situations like that. It can be as hard as getting the ball past a professional tennis player. Today's story will give us a game plan for finding the peace that God wants for us.

#### ACTIVITY | Tennis Shoes

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this game, you'll need to place plastic cones (or something similar) about three feet apart at both ends of the room to create goals. Divide your kids into two teams. To play, have kids place their shoes on their hands and pass a tennis ball to their teammates. They are only allowed to touch the tennis ball with their shoe hands and must roll the ball, not throw it. Have them try to score the ball into the other team's

goal. The team with the most goals wins!

- ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Make this activity more challenging for preteens by adding in obstacles to avoid, having to pass the ball between objects, or incorporating [wheelbarrow walks](#).
- ✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** To include kids using wheelchairs, provide a shoe on a foam noodle they can hold instead. Encourage them to have fun and be safe. Explain safety measures to take when swinging their foam noodle since other kids' heads will be close to the floor.
- Imagine what would happen if you all played this new game, but some kids didn't play by the rules! Some of you would be mad and not want to play. The best way to ensure some peace in any sport is for there to be rules to help make things challenging but fair. When people start breaking the rules, that's one guaranteed way to disrupt the peace!
- In today's Bible story, we'll hear about someone who had to find peace for her and her family. To do so, she needed to listen to God's game plan.

### QUESTION | What would you rather do?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask the following questions. You can have every kid shout their answer but then ask a few kids to share their answers with everyone. Comment briefly on their answers—and have fun with this!
- Peace can mean many things, depending on the situation, but for our Bible story today, we will talk about peace in terms of agreement and not fighting. We have peace when we choose to work things out together instead of holding grudges or acting out of anger. God's game plan for our lives includes us learning to be peacemakers.
  - **Would you rather have a game plan when you do something new, or just go for it without one?**
  - **Would you rather avoid conflict now to have a little peace, or talk about what is bothering you to have peace for a long time?**
- Let's see how these questions will help us in today's Bible story. We will talk about someone who had to make a "would you rather" decision, too. As we get into the Bible story, try to figure out what those questions could be.

**SO WHAT?** Why does it matter to God and to us?

### SCRIPTURE | 1 Samuel 25:2–35 (David and Abigail)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Set up an area that looks like a tennis court. Pretend that you are on a tennis court for the beginning of what is sure to be an electrifying match. Ask one kid to play the role of David and another to play Abigail. Have them stand on opposite sides facing each other on either side of the "net" (streamer paper, caution tape, or masking tape connected by two chairs). You will play the announcer. When they hear their name mentioned, they have to swing their racket! If more kids can participate, you can ask a third person to be one of David's men (his "doubles partner") and another to be Abigail's doubles partner, Nabal. They can swing their rackets to "return" David or Abigail's imaginary ball. At other times, they can be still, like a freeze frame, so they don't distract the audience. Alright! Let's take to the court!
- Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to a thrilling match! We are coming to you live from the courts at Maon, Carmel. How awesome is it to watch such famous athletes face off in the final round?
  - On this side of the net, we have David, representing the kingdom of Israel, which would soon be his responsibility.
  - David had been running from King Saul for a very long time. And Samuel the prophet, a good friend of his, had just died. David wasn't king yet, but he was on his way, and most people knew it. David wasn't a competitor to be trifled with.
  - On this side, we have Abigail, on behalf of ... herself and her husband, the notorious Nabal.

Abigail went up against David in this match because of something her husband did to anger David and his men, and now she'll have to find a way to make peace before things get ugly.

**Let's read 1 Samuel 25:2–11 to see how this match will play out!**

A tricky serve from the house of Abigail! Nabal did not want to play ball. It seems David did the respectful thing in sending his servants to ask Nabal for a favor. Nabal's response was ruthless! "Who is this David?" I'm guessing he hadn't watched the ESPN highlights to see some of the things David had done, including his battle with the giant Goliath!

**How do you think David felt after hearing Nabal's response to his request?** I'd imagine he was not too happy with it, that's for sure.

**Let's find out more in 1 Samuel 25:12–17.**

As you can see, David did not like what was said to his friends. He helped Nabal's shepherds when they were all in the same area, but Nabal was ungrateful. So, it's clear that David planned to repay Nabal's unkindness with more unkindness.

He's heading toward Nabal with some serious weapons. Who knows what might happen next? It's all tied up at this point.

**Let's read on in 1 Samuel 25:18–27.**

What an ace from Abigail! Abigail stepped in to calm David about what he planned to do. David may have done something he would later regret if she hadn't stepped in.

Even though Abigail hadn't done anything wrong herself, she saw she could be the peacemaker in this situation.

**Let's see what else she does in 1 Samuel 25:28–31.**

Another tremendous return from Abigail. Abigail could have kept the peace and kept quiet. But that wouldn't have solved anything.

She actively made peace. Not only did she bring gifts, but she used wise words to calm David's anger toward Nabal. Spectacular save!

**Let's check out David's return to Abigail's beautiful setup in 1 Samuel 25:32–35.**

That was a close one! David accepted Abigail's gifts and thanked her. I'm thinking Nabal's household was thankful, too! David's final response to Abigail was, "Go in peace." Abigail was a peacemaker in what could have turned out to be a match that ended badly.

**Who do you think won that match?**

No matter whose fan you are, we saw peace is only possible because someone was brave enough to choose peace. Peace is something we can only serve up with God's help!

**BIG IDEA | Making peace is part of God's game plan.**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a large piece of butcher paper to each team of three to five kids. Assign each team a word or group of words from the Big Idea. Give them five minutes to design a banner with their word in large letters in the middle. Other things on the sign include "Go team!" or "Yeah, sports!" and fun sports-themed doodles. Afterward, line up the teams in order of the Big Idea words, and have two of the team members hold the banner while a third runs through the middle of the banner, tearing it and yelling their word. If you are short on time, create the banner beforehand and invite kids to run through it together. Afterward, chant the Big Idea together as a cheer.

✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** For each Big Idea reveal for this series, prewrite the Big Idea words in large letters on pieces of butcher paper. Provide a variety of objects of different textures for kids to glue onto the letters of each word. Objects can include pre-cut pieces of ribbon, pom

poms, bubble wrap, tissue paper, sandpaper, and fabric pieces.

- **Hold on, wait a minute —**
- **Get the Big Idea in it!**
- **Making P-E-A-C-E**
- **Is part of God's game plan!**

## VIDEO | A Clip Of Teaching Tennis To Kids

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this short [video](#), or something like it, about training kids to play tennis in Uganda. We always suggest viewing the clip beforehand to make sure you think it's a video that will be a good fit for your context! For more information on legally using copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- In most games that people play, there is usually a winner and a loser. We try our best to be the winner and not the loser. What can be different about looking to make peace is that we try to help others win.
- In this video, we see a group called Tennis For All Uganda teaching tennis skills to kids. It might seem like a small thing, but by doing this, they can move the kids' attention toward positive things instead of other things happening around them. They are making peace by standing in the gap, like Abigail did, between these children and a less positive way to spend their time. They're making peace through tennis!
- Even the small things that you think might not make a difference when it comes to being a peacemaker matter—after all, making peace is part of God's game plan.
- **How can you make peace in your community?**

## ACTIVITY | Love All

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you'll need two leaders to demonstrate a game of "Rock, Paper, Scissors," and have them keep track of their points using the tennis scoring system (Zero=Love, one=fifteen, two=30, three=40, Game). Whenever there's a tie, they use the word "all" (so if you both have two points, it's "30 all"). If you're tied at three points, it's called "deuce." Once you get to deuce, keep playing until one person wins two in a row. To play, have kids break off into pairs and give it a go!
  - ✦ **PRETEEN HACK:** Show [this video](#) of Venus Williams or [this one](#) with more athletes explaining the complicated tennis scoring system! We always suggest viewing the clip beforehand to make sure you think it's a video that will be a good fit for your context. For more information on legally using copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
  - ✦ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** Many kids have difficulty accepting the concept of losing. Self-regulation of emotions can be very difficult for kids with autism. When they can't regulate intense emotions, this can often lead to emotional outbursts or tantrums. Talk about winning and losing before any of the competitive games in this lesson. Teach them to embrace both winning and losing. Understand that this can be very hard for some students. Remember that potentially rude or inconsiderate behavior is not intentional but more likely due to impaired neurological functioning.
- Every new tennis match begins with the score "Love all." No matter what happened in the match before, the scoreboard is cleared to "Love all." When we make peace, it's like we clear the scoreboard. Loving others the way God wants us to involves not keeping score of how many times someone has hurt us or did something to annoy us.
- When we make peace with others, it's a way of saying we've both made some mistakes, and I'm willing to put it behind me because God's love for us is bigger than our problems with one another. *Love all!* When we show that we love all, we show that **making peace is part of God's game plan!**

## SCRIPTURE | Psalm 33:12–22

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the passage together. Choose volunteers to read each verse below in their best

*sports announcer or broadcaster voice when prompted.*

- It's time for today's "Top Five" plays of the day, brought to us by Psalm 33:12–22.
  - **Number five, let's read verse 12.** God is putting together the best squad to make peace in the world, and guess what? God chose us! Oh, what a pick!
  - **Number four, check out verses 13–15.** God is the best coach ever! Seeing every single thing that goes on. Nothing gets past God!
  - **Number three, oh what a play in verses 16–19!** People try to put their hope in things other than in God and oh! The shot is blocked. God doesn't just leave us to make peace on our own. God shows us the playbook and teaches us the skills we need to drop peace, like dropping three-pointers in basketball. *Swish!*
  - **And coming in at number two, verses 20–22.** We take the ball and run down the sideline toward peace-making! The runner waits patiently for God to open up a path, and wow! Look at God on the defense *and* offense! *Touchdown!*
- **And at number one, of course, all these top plays point to Jesus!** The GOAT ("Greatest of All Time"), the MVP ("Most Valuable Player"), the *legend*. Jesus always found ways to create peace when people tried to pick fights with each other. *Home run!* Jesus had all the right moves and invited us to play like him!
- When we do so, we can make peace like a true champion because **making peace is part of God's game plan!**

## VIDEO | Game Plan, Episode 1

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).*

**NOW WHAT?** *What does God want us to do about it?*

## REFLECTION | Pass It!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need to gather kids in a circle and pass around a tennis ball or soft foam ball. The one who has the ball is the one who gets to speak. Start with the ball yourself, then ask the first question and toss or roll the ball to the person who wants to answer. Keep the ball moving around with all who wish to share.*
  - ✦ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Keep in mind that some preteens may have grown up feeling the responsibility of being the peacemaker in their home. If conversations around this arise, affirm them in their ability to be a peacemaker and also validate any feelings that they may not actively or openly express. God cares about their big feelings as much as about making peace.*
- **Making peace is part of God's game plan.** We might not have experienced anything exactly like what Abigail did, but we all have been and will continue to be given opportunities to choose peace.
  - **What would you have done if you were Abigail in the Bible story?**
  - **What do you think would have happened if Abigail did not make peace in this situation?**
  - **How do you think Abigail felt when she had to go to David to make peace on her husband's behalf?**
  - **Have you ever been in a situation kind of like Abigail's? Where? When? How? What did you do?**
- Following God in our Bible Story looked like someone who stepped in to diffuse a situation, even though they didn't really do anything wrong and promoted peace.
- **What might it look like for us in our day-to-day life?**

## RESPONSE | God's Plan Playbook

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need to print out the pages of the [printable](#) (double-sided to save*

paper) and staple them along the left side to create a booklet for each kid. During the activity, have kids turn to "Game One" and draw up a "play" based on a situation where they can make peace. Invite them to use Xs and Os to represent different people and arrows to indicate how they'll move or what they'd do. It can end up looking something [like this](#).

✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** In each response module for this series, offer X and O stickers for kids to use rather than drawing them. These stickers can be drawn on blank labels or stickers beforehand by ministry leaders, or they can be purchased.

- Okay, team, here's the situation: someone is threatening to take away our peace.
  - Maybe someone is being bullied in school.
  - Or someone is spreading stories about you or someone you know.
  - Or your friend is having a bad day and is losing their temper with you.
  - Or maybe it's you who's angry.
- **What is something we can do to be a peacemaker in these kinds of situations?**
- Draw up the play on your play sheet, using Xs and Os like the coach of a team would, and let's share what our "plays" might be for these peace-breaking situations!
- **Making peace is part of God's game plan!**

## MEMORY VERSE | Psalm 33:11 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Learn the memory verse together using any combination of the resources provided: [memory verse coloring page](#), [sign language motions](#), or choose from [this list](#) of our favorite memorization techniques!
- **"But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations."**

## PRAYER

- God, you are so great in giving us peace at difficult times. Please help me be a peacemaker with my family and friends. Thank you for always providing a game plan to show others your love. Amen.

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE

### DISCUSSION

- **SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS**
  - **What did David and his army do for Nabal?** *They had watched over his sheep and shepherds, making sure they stayed safe.*
  - **What was Nabal's response to David and his army coming?** *He insulted David, questioning who he even was!*
  - **How did Abigail make peace between David and her family?** *She went out and met David, offering apologies for what Nabal had done, and bringing gifts.*
  - **Read Psalm 33:20–22. What can we do when we find it hard to make peace with someone?** *We wait in hope, knowing God is the ultimate peacemaker and God's unfailing love is with us.*
- **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**
  - **Why do you think making peace is something God wants us to do?**
  - **When do you find it difficult to make peace?**
  - **Can you think of someone you need to make peace with? How can you start?**

### ACTIVITY | Peaceful Puppets

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you'll need to give each kid a tennis ball that has a precut slit to make a

[puppet](#). To make this, give kids googly eyes, buttons, pompoms, markers, pipe cleaners, construction paper, glue, and anything else you can think of to decorate their tennis ball puppets with eyes, noses, and hair. You may choose to set up hot glue stations to help secure some items.

✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Have preteens make a tennis ball trophy or award plaque by using hot glue to adhere a tennis ball on top of a [wood plaque](#) or on the bottom of a plastic cup. Provide paint, markers, or pieces of paper for them to color their trophy base before gluing the tennis ball on. Then, pass out a blank label or small piece of paper they can write the Big Idea on and stick it on their trophy base.

- What's more peaceful than a puppet—especially one made from a tennis ball? Use your puppets to play out pretend scenarios where you can make peace as Abigail did.
- Let your peaceful puppet remind you that you can be a peacemaker, and **making peace is part of God's game plan!**