

Orinimus Family Service notes; based on *Learn and I shall be with you* material; had used a couple of the sections of the material as kids talks during Advent; this rounds this sequence off...

Be a peacemaker

- What happened during the drama each time the stranger had a conversation with someone?
 - characters were **Dad, Mum, Sharon** and **Tom**
 - looking for "**peace**" came about somehow
- For peace to come, you can't just ignore the problem... **someone has to take the initiative!**
 - Jesus took the initiative in coming to earth to "**guide our feet into the path of peace**" (Luke 1:79)
 - and that initiative **cost him**, for to bring about real peace Jesus had to die on the **Cross**

Sierra Leone

- Get someone to come and open advent calendar for 21st
- *(OHP 6) "Umaro has attended a peace-building workshop run by the Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone, and you can see him here (on the right) chatting with Andrew, and EFSL staff member. Umaro was at school, hoping to become a teacher, when rebels killed his father. His dreams died that day too, since Umaro could no longer afford his education, but had to become a farmer instead. Thanks to EFSL, Umaro has a new sense of purpose as peace ambassador. He works with the village chief on court cases to try and stop heavy fines being imposed on guilty parties. He says, "We need to settle things peacefully and the community should be as one."*
- To make the peace of God your goal, rather than wealth, or presents, or fame or career, requires a godly change of perspective that realises significance lasts longer than success.
 - what we've suffered may seem to have fractured our dreams
 - but God can re-channel our desires so we find fulfilment in a different way
 - Umaro wanted to be a teacher but war took away that opportunity
 - now, as God uses him to bring healing to other people's lives, he's blessed and full of joy.
- **Peace-making is as much about being as doing**
- *How can we be peace-makers during these holidays?*

Peace be with you

Sierra Leone

- (OHP 7) *Joseph is a nurse and a Christian. He was captured by rebels in Kambia, a small town to the north of Sierra Leone. The rebels made him set up a medical centre to treat people injured in the fighting. Joseph only just escaped the bombs. "I had to sing hymns and pray", he says, "and I know God protected me." Now he is assistant pastor of a church in Bamway Junction Luma, a busy market town near Kambia. And a peace ambassador for Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone... Arguments often break out during trading, and Joseph works with the chief to settle them justly.*
- (OHP 8) *Peace in Sierra Leone isn't the end of the story. It's the beginning of a new chapter that includes rebuilding homes, schools, hospitals, businesses - the things needed for normal life to function. People are trying to put the past behind them and look to the future. And they ask for our prayers to help them do this, saying, "We are tired of war. We want a better society."*
- God shines his light on us and gives us the gift of peace:
 - through all the events of Christmas - Jesus coming - **see colouring sheets for kids, to present at offering...?**
 - **he then leads us out of our ways and into his**
- **And what is he taking us from?**
 - despair?
 - cynicism?
 - bitterness?
 - thoughts that limit our expectations of him or stop us forgiving others?
- **What does he lead us into?**
 - Joseph Kalokoh knows from personal experience that walking along the **"path of peace"** means to move on from the past
 - to forgive those who have wronged us
 - to learn to trust again
 - to show love to one another
- **Let's pray that this Christmas we can bring God's peace to those around us!**

Response

- Offering on Wednesday evening (Christmas Eve) will be split between local charity (Cyrenians?) and the work in Sierra Leone - not through Tearfund, but through the connection we have with Bill and Jan Roberts, who used to work with EFSL...