**Not Peace, But Trouble**

**Aim:  To talk about choosing to follow Jesus and how to share Jesus with others**

**Occasion:** Ordinary 20

**Scripture: Luke 12:49-56**

**Game: (for the older children and younger children) human scale
Preparation:**a list of ‘would you rather’ statements eg would you rather eat something sweet or savoury?
**What to do:**get the children to stand in the middle of the room. Tell them that you are going to read a series of statements - and that without talking to anyone else - they have to go to the end of the room that represents their answer.

Next, read the first statement. (Would you rather play cricket or read a book?) Indicate which end of the room is for cricket, and which is for reading a book.

You might like to ask one child from each end why they chose it.

Then repeat the game with the next statement.

The purpose of the game is to make the point that it’s ok not to like all the same things that your friends do. It’s ok to be different.

**Story: (Luke 12:49 -56) Not Peace, But Trouble**

Jesus was once again, talking to his disciples.

“I came to set fire to the earth, and I wish it were already on fire! I am going to be put to a hard test. And I will have to suffer a lot of pain until it is over. Do you think that I came to bring peace to earth? No indeed! I came to make people choose sides. A family of five will be divided, with two of them against the other three. Fathers and sons will turn against each other, and mothers and daughters will do the same. Mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law will also turn against each other.

Then Jesus said to all the people,

‘As soon as you see a cloud coming up in the west, you say, “It’s going to rain,” and it does. When the south wind blows, you say, “It’s going to get hot,” and it does. Are you trying to fool someone? You can predict the weather by looking at the earth and sky, but you don’t really know what’s going on right now.”

**Talk:**How many of you have had a disagreement with a friend? What was it like? (pause for discussion) I have had disagreements with friends and it wasn’t very nice. Sometimes it can be over something as simple as what flavour ice cream you want; and then sometimes it can be over bigger things like who is the best at drawing or riding a bike.

In today’s story, Jesus told his disciples that he had come not to bring peace but to set the world on fire. What do you think he meant by that? (pause) Well, I think that Jesus was talking about making the choice to follow Jesus or not.

How many of you have friends that don’t go to church? (pause) Even though they don’t go to church, they are still your friends, right? (pause).

When Jesus asks us to follow him, he is giving us a choice. We can choose to follow him or not to.

Jesus also asks us to be Jesus to others in the world so that they can learn about his love and have the opportunity to follow him too.

Do you think that means that we shouldn’t have friends that don’t go to church? (pause) I don’t think that is what Jesus wants. I think Jesus wants us to be the best friends that we can so that people will want to know why, and we can then introduce them to our friend Jesus.

You might like to invite a friend to church with you sometime, or to an event that the church is running.

What I do think is important to remember, is that Jesus is the best friend you can have, and if someone asks you to choose between them and Jesus, Jesus would be the best choice every time.

Today we are going to practice being Jesus to our friends by making them a postcard telling them one thing that we really like or appreciate them for.

**Questions:**

* Have you ever had a disagreement with a friend? What was it like? How did it make you feel?
* Does everyone have to like the same things all the time? Is it ok to be different?
* What do you think Jesus meant by saying he ‘came to set fire to the earth’?
* What are some ways that you can be Jesus to your friends?

**Activity: I was thinking about you today postcards**

[ordinary-sunday-20-wksht.gif](http://www.strandz.org.nz/dox/ordinary-sunday-20-wksht.gif)(19.92 KB)

**What you need:**cardboard, template, wrapping paper, glue sticks, scissors, stuff to decorate with, stamps

**What to do:**give each child an A6 piece of card with the template stuck on the back.(that’s quarter of an A4 sheet).

Get them to decorate the front. They might like to draw a picture, write a favourite bible verse.

On the back, help each child to write a message to someone they know. It may be a friend from school, a parent, a relative, teacher, etc.

The message should say at least one thing that they really appreciate about that person.

Eg. I really like the way you always help me with my homework.

If they know the address, get them to fill it in, and put a stamp on it.

If they don’t know the address, leave that space blank and ask the parents to help fill it in when they get home.

If it’s a friend from school, they might like to give it to them at school on Monday.