

WHAT IS PEACE?

Grades

- 4 to 6

Curriculum Themes

- Peace, Global Citizenship, Interconnectedness, Culture, Identity, Children's Rights

Overview

- This activity addresses the concept of peace and it can be used to celebrate the International Day of Peace on September 21st, during Remembrance Day on November 11th, or at any time during the school year to highlight how the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child aims to ensure children everywhere live in peace.
- Students will be asked to consider what peace means to them and to other children from different parts of the world. They will explore the concept of peace through different areas of the curriculum - visual arts, language arts, social studies, drama, music, and dance. The main objective is to help children understand that every child needs peace to live a full, healthy and happy life.

Materials

- Choose 5 **Pictures of Peace** printed in colour (pages 8-19)
- 6 sheets of chart paper
- Tape
- Markers
- World map
- Sticky notes of two different colours
- Variety of art supplies, such as watercolours, pastels, crayons, pencil crayons, paint brushes, and paper
- **Artist's Statement** handout (page 20)

Global Themes

- Interdependence
- Images and Perceptions
- Social Justice

Timing

2 hours

*"If we are to reach
real peace in this
world, we shall have
to begin with the
children."*

~ Gandhi

Background Information for Teachers

- United Nations International Day of Peace: un.org/en/events/peaceday/
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Teaching Resources and Activities: unicef.ca/en/teachers/article/elementary-resources
- United Nations Cyber School Bus Pictures of Peace: un.org/cyberschoolbus/gallery/peace/index.asp
- Playing For Change playingforchange.com/

Teacher Self-Reflection

Before bringing the concept of peace into your classroom and asking students to consider what it means to them, it may be helpful for you to take a few minutes to reflect upon peace on your own.

- Begin by quickly brainstorming a list of the first ten words or phrases that you think of when you hear the word peace.
- Then, consider the definition of peace from the Merriam-Webster online dictionary below. For each line in the definition, circle words or phrases from the list you made that connect.
- Next, try to define peace in your own words using one or two sentences.
- Finally, take a few minutes to reflect upon following points:
 - Think about a time in your life when you knew peace. What made this peace possible?
 - Was there a time when you did not experience peace? Why was peace absent?
 - When do you think you first became aware of the concept of peace? Has your view changed over time? If so, how has it changed and why?
 - How does the concept of peace connect to your classroom and what you are teaching? How might it relate to your student's life experience thus far?
 - How could you collaborate with other teachers about this topic?

¹peace noun \ˈpēs\
 1: a state of tranquillity or quiet: as
 a: freedom from civil disturbance
 b: a state of security or order within a community provided for by law or custom
 <a breach of the *peace*>
 2: freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions
 3: harmony in personal relations
 4: a: a state or period of mutual concord between governments
 b: a pact or agreement to end hostilities between those who have been at war or in a state of enmity
 5: used interjectionally to ask for silence or calm or as a greeting or farewell
 Source: merriam-ebster.com/dictionary/peace

Classroom Activity - Part 1 (45 minutes)

- **Step 1** (10 minutes) Silent Graffiti – Tape the five **Pictures of Peace** to the centre of pieces of chart paper and place them on desks in different areas of the classroom. Tell the students that they will circulate freely and in silence around the room to look at different artworks by children from all around the world. Tell them that all the artworks communicate the concept of peace. Their task is to interpret what peace might mean to each young artist and to share their ideas by writing words in the blank space on the chart paper around the artwork. The rule of a silent graffiti activity is that students write no more than three words to share their thinking. Tell students that before they write something on the chart paper, they should read the ideas their classmates have already wrote and decide if they can contribute something different.
- **Step 2** (10 minutes) As a whole-group, gather around each chart paper at the end and lead a discussion of what peace might mean to each young artist and why.

Activity continued on the next page.

Classroom Activity - Part 1 (continued)
(40 minutes)

- **Step 3** (5 minutes) Explain that they are going to make their own pictures of peace. But before we begin our artwork, we need to consider what peace means to each of us. We saw from the artworks that peace might mean something different to each child in their life. But is it possible to come up with a definition of peace as a class? We are going to create a concept chart to try to define peace. Draw a concept chart on chart paper such as the example below. Begin by looking up the word “peace” in the dictionary as a class and using the definition to help you fill in the middle of the concept chart. Rephrase or simplify the definition to make it easily understood by your students (see example below). Ask for your student’s input, e.g. “Is there anything we could add to this definition?”
- **Step 4** (5 minutes) Complete the characteristics/non-characteristics sections as a class by asking students to contribute their ideas and recording them in the chart. For characteristics, ask “What does peace look like?”. For non-characteristics, ask “What does peace not look like?”. In the example concept chart below, possible student responses are listed.
- **Step 5** (10 minutes) Give students two sticky notes of different colours and send them back to their desks to work on the next step individually. On one colour, ask them to write or draw a specific example of a time when they experienced peace in their life. On the other colour, ask them to write or draw a specific non-example of peace in their life (a time when they did not experience peace). When they are finished, ask them to return to the carpet and stick their sticky in the appropriate categories. Share a few examples/non-examples as a class. In the example concept chart below, possible student responses are listed.
- **Step 6** (5 minutes) Think/Pair/Share – Ask students to think about books you have recently read as a class that demonstrate the concept of peace. First, ask students to think silently to themselves about books that showed an example of peace. Then, ask students to turn to the classmate next to them and share their thoughts. Finally, share ideas as a whole group. Record the ideas of students in the concept chart under examples/non-examples from texts. **See examples below.**

Classroom Activity - Part 2
(45-60 minutes)

- Students create their pictures of peace! Students will have the choice of using a variety of materials to create a work of art on a piece of paper that communicates what peace means to them or what it looks like in their life. Ask small groups of students at a time to collect their materials at the art table. Have them write their names on the backs of their papers.
- When they are finished, they can create an artist's statement to display with their artwork. Provide the handout with the sentence-starter “ To me, peace is... By (name)”.

Sample Concept Chart

Examples of peace from my life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When I was playing with Mary and we were laughing a lot together - When I can sleep in on Saturday mornings - When my family spent the weekend relaxing together - When I met a new student and became friends 		Non-examples of peace from my life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When a bully made fun of me yesterday and I felt sad - When I got a headache because children were yelling too much - When I got lost at the grocery store and I was scared - When I pushed my brother 	
Characteristics (What does peace look like?) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having a nap - Reading a book during silent reading time - Sharing with my friends - Playing soccer fairly at lunchtime - Eating dinner with my family after a long day - When World War I and II ended and soldiers could stop fighting 	Peace is... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When it is quiet and I feel calm - When there is no fighting and everyone cooperates - When you feel free, happy, and safe - The absence of war between countries 		Non-characteristics (What does peace not look like?) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having a nightmare - When the classroom is too noisy - Having a fight with friends - Not sharing toys - When there is a bully on the playground and you feel scared - When you worry about something - War is still happening in other parts of the world
Examples from texts <u>Feathers and Fools</u> By Mem Fox <i>At the end, the baby swan and peacock decide to be friends and share their world. Despite their differences, they live in peace and co-exist.</i>		Non-examples from texts <u>Four Feet, Two Sandals</u> By Karen Lynn Williams and Khadra Mohammed <i>The two girls had to flee their home to live in a refugee camp because of war. They are not safe and feel sad about leaving their country.</i>	

Follow-up: Silent Gallery Walk (20 minutes)

- Display students' pictures of peace around the classroom and do a silent gallery walk. A silent gallery walk is a chance for students to circulate around the classroom and interact with the artwork without any speaking. It is also an opportunity for students to provide descriptive feedback to their peers in writing.
- Facilitate this process by giving each student two sticky notes to attach beside one classmate's work of art. Tell students that one sticky is for providing descriptive feedback by describing one thing they liked about the artwork. The other sticky is for asking the artist one question they have about their work. Explain to the students that each person will provide feedback on one piece of artwork only and that each work must have the two comments beside it at the end. This is to ensure that everyone is included.
- Provide sentence-starters on the board for everyone to refer to when writing their feedback, e.g. "I like..." and "What..." "How..." "Why..." "Who..." "Where..."
- Remind the students that this is a "silent" activity where you respond to the art silently by writing on the sticky notes. Allow students to circulate freely, stop beside one artwork, write on their sticky notes, and continue to walk around until the time is up. Stop the gallery walk after about 5 minutes. Ask students to go to their own artwork and read the sticky notes from their peers.
- Wrap-up the gallery walk by sharing a few questions and positive comments as a whole group.

Discussion

- How are our pictures of peace the same? How are they different?
- Does peace mean the same thing to everyone in our class? What about other children around the world?
- What did we learn from this activity? Why do all children need peace?
- Do you think all children are able to live in peace? Why or why not?
- Link the ideas to Remembrance Day, the International Day of Peace, or the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Extensions

Music and Dance

Playing For Change films and records musicians from different parts of the globe playing songs together. Their objective *is to inspire, connect, and bring peace to the world through music*. Numerous videos are available for viewing on the website and they are a great tool for learning about the universal power of music to break down boundaries and unite people of different countries, languages, and cultures. The videos can also lead students to the understanding that music can be used to voice a positive message about peace and have a global impact.



Suggested Videos: “A Better Place” and “Stand By Me”

- Discuss: What is the message of this video? How does it relate to the conversation we have been having about peace?
- Perform the songs “A Better Place” or “Stand By Me” as a class using different musical instruments, different types of dance, and singing. Share the performance in the school and community and send a message about global peace.
- Use the video as a starting point for ongoing learning about different dance and music traditions from different regions of the world.
- The videos show a great diversity of types of instruments and students could research one of them. They could explore the instrument’s musical tradition, its’ sound, style, and genre as well as the musical culture of the country it was being played in. The research could be put together into a class scrapbook about “Music and Instruments from Around the World”.
- Have students create their own hand-made musical instruments, such as the washboard being played in the video. They could use a variety of materials and describe its’ sound, style, genre, etc.

Drama

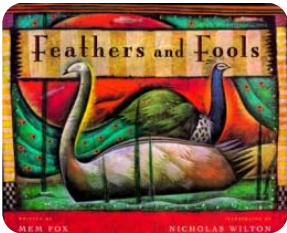
Use the drama strategy of tableau with your class to allow students to express their understanding of the concept of peace in a different way. Tableau is a 3-D frozen 10 second arrangement using only bodies, levels, space and facial expressions to communicate an idea.

- Students work in small groups to make a tableau that portrays the concept of peace. No props are used. Describe this activity as a “frozen picture” that students must hold for 10 seconds.
- Co-create criteria for a successful tableau with your class on chart paper to ensure that expectations are clear. For example, success criteria could include convincing facial expressions, staying in role for the entire duration of the tableau, remaining still and silent, using different levels, using their bodies to express the

idea, etc. It is also a good idea to set clear expectations for the audience. For example, active listening and respectful behaviour, saving applause until the very end, accountable talk, etc.

- Have students present their tableau in front of the class by first providing an oral explanation of their idea of peace in the tableau they are about to portray.
- Note: You may want to give students the possibility of creating consecutive tableau scenes to communicate their idea. For example, they could create one tableau scene that shows what peace looks like followed by a contrasting tableau scene that shows what the absence of peace looks like. Or they may want to perform a beginning/middle/end sequence.
- Teacher Tips: Count aloud or beat out a rhythm with a drum to 10 seconds while students perform their tableau. Use an imaginary remote control to press “play”, “pause”, “stop” to help students transition into their tableau and hold their positions until 10 seconds is up.

Language Arts



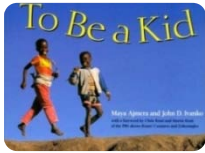
Feathers and Fools is the story of two flocks of birds, peacocks and swans, which begin to fear each other because of their differences. The fear grows until the birds become enemies and create weapons to protect themselves from each other. One day, panic strikes and war leaves no survivors. Peace seems to be lost forever until two eggs catch with a baby peacock and a baby swan inside. Unlike their ancestors, the baby birds see their similarities and decide to be friends who share their world “in peace and unafraid”.

Teaching Ideas:

- Before reading - ask students to brainstorm examples of how conflicts begin. They may consider conflicts on a personal, local, or global scale. Share with a partner, then as a class.
- During reading – stop reading and ask your students questions to check understanding. For example, why did the peacocks begin to make weapons? Why did the swans begin making weapons? Why were the two flocks afraid of each other?
- After reading – Use the “quick-write” strategy to identify the “main idea” and the “big idea” of the story. The main idea is the answer to the question “What was the story about?”. The “big idea” is the answer to the question “what is the story’s message?”. Students answer the questions by writing for a 2 minute time limit individually on a scrap piece of paper. Afterwards, they can share what they wrote with a partner. Allow them to make changes to their “quick write” responses before sharing them as a whole group. Record some ideas on chart paper for the class. The message may be about why understanding and respecting differences is essential to ensuring peace in the world.
- Follow-up: Get students to a make connection to their own knowledge and experience by writing in their journal about a situation in the real world that relates to the story *Feathers and Fools*.

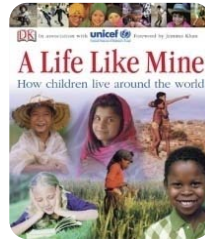
Social Studies

Consider using the following picture books to introduce your students to our global community and the diverse children and families that live in it. The texts allow students to discover that we live in an interconnected world where cooperation and respect for differences is essential to ensuring peace, which in turn allows all children to live a happy and safe life.



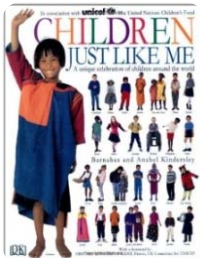
To Be a Kid
By Maya Ajmera and John Ivanko

Using colourful photographs and simple text, readers discover what it is like to be a kid in different parts of the globe.



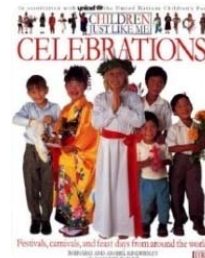
A Life Like Mine: How Children Live Around the World
By UNICEF

This book provides insight on how children in diverse places and of different cultures live their lives.



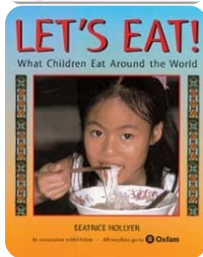
Children Just Like Me
By Anabel Kindersley

Discover the homes, schools, families, and cultures of young people around the world.



Celebrations
By Anabel Kindersley

Learn about the festivals, traditions and celebrations of children everywhere.



Let's Eat: What Children Eat Around the World
By Beatrice Hollyer

Learn all about the way children and their families eat!



Source: Alex Arbuckle, UNICEF Canada Intern 2013

Teaching Ideas:

- How are children, families, and communities different around the world? How are they the same?
- Discuss everyday life in another community. How do the people there meet their needs? How is this similar or different to the way we meet our needs in our community?
- How is our local community connected to other communities in other parts of the world?
- How can we contribute to peaceful relationships within a global community?
- Why does understanding and respecting differences to ensure peace?
- Give students the opportunity to reflect on their own heritage and cultural background and the traditions and celebrations of their own family, community, and country.
- Get students to research their family heritage by conducting interviews with grandparents or other family members.
- Locate your community, country, and continent on the world map. If your classroom is culturally diverse, create a world map using pins and string to connect student's names to their country of heritage.

Additional Resources

On pages 13 to 15 of UNICEF Canada's *Children's Rights and Social Justice Booklist*, you will find a variety of texts that address the theme of peace and the effects of war to use in your classroom.

PICTURES OF PEACE - 1

By Quinton

*United States of
America*

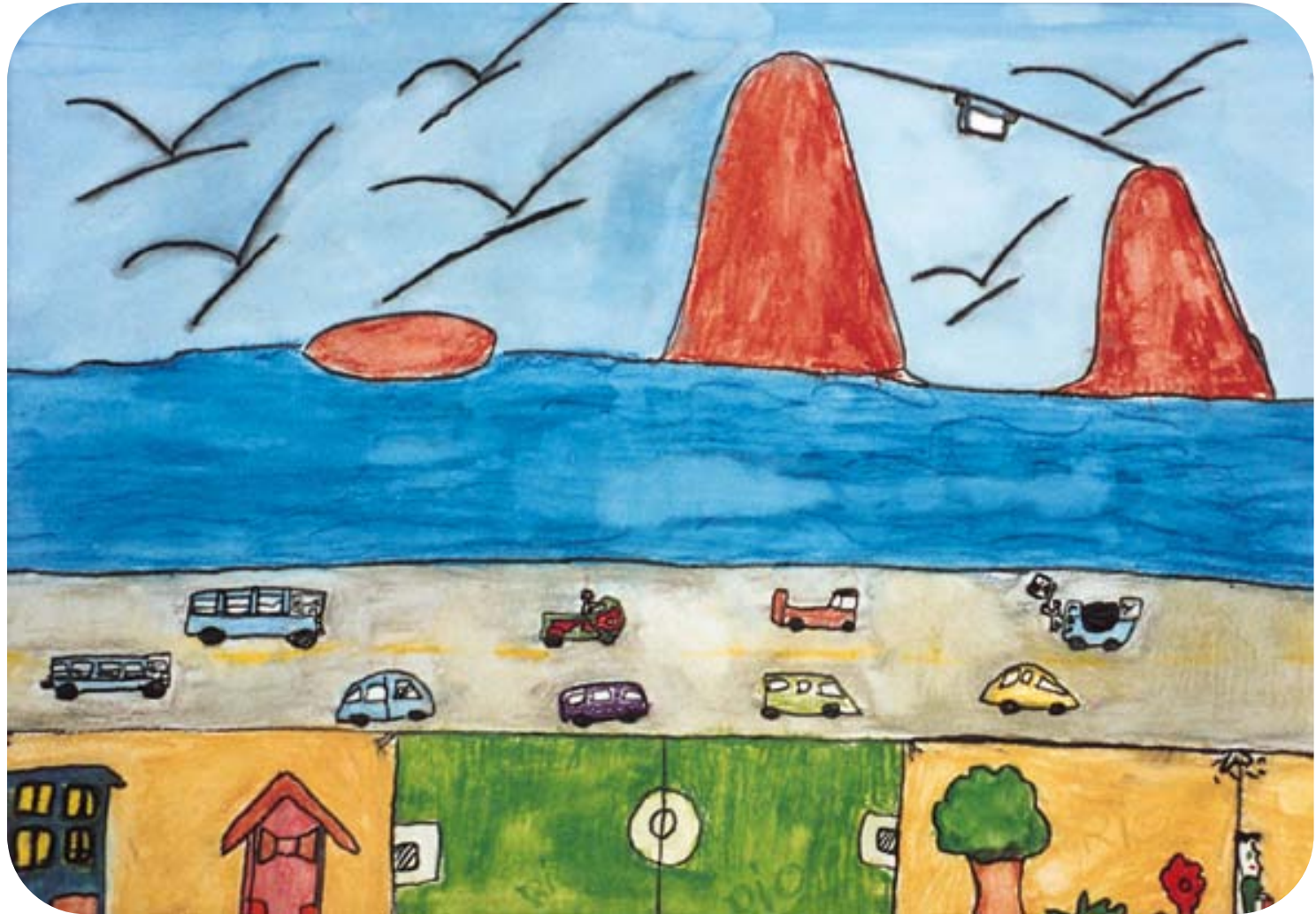


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PICTURES OF PEACE - 2

By Anderson

Brazil



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PICTURES OF PEACE – 3

By Nay

South Africa



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PICTURES OF PEACE - 4

By Timea

Hungary



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PICTURES OF PEACE - 5

By Sidik

*United States
of America*



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PICTURES OF PEACE - 6

By Valentina

Russia



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PICTURES OF PEACE - 7

By Relka

Namibia



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PICTURES OF PEACE - 8

By Shruti

India



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PICTURES OF PEACE - 9

By Inka

Slovakia



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PICTURES OF PEACE - 10

By Tanja

Russia



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PICTURES OF PEACE - 11

By Olivia

Namibia



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PICTURES OF PEACE – 12

By Midrot

Poland



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ARTIST'S STATEMENT



To me, peace is....

By _____

To me, peace is....

By _____

To me, peace is....

By _____

To me, peace is....

By _____