

Five Lesson Plans for Peace Month

Grades 7-12



Distributed by the North Carolina Peace Resource Center

www.ncpeaceresource.org

These lessons were written by Kathy Adams.

Lesson Plan One

Theme: Peace and Justice

Learning Outcomes:

- Participants will define “peace” and “justice.”
- Participants will generate a list of ways that injustice destroys the circumstances that create peace.
- Participants will plan ways to create peace in their families, their communities, their nation, and/or the world.

Scripture Options: Amos 5:24; Micah 6:8; Psalm 106:3; Luke 4:18-19; Matthew 25:35-36

Notes to the teacher: This lesson is designed to give participants the opportunity to define “peace” and “justice” and to recognize the connection between the two. It is often best to allow participants to arrive at their own conclusions rather than giving them answers.

Introductory activity: The teacher will display the words “peace” and “justice” on large pieces of chart paper, poster board, or newsprint. Participants will write their definitions or synonyms for these words on Post-it notes or index cards. Each student will stick his/her contribution to the larger paper. The teacher will facilitate a discussion. After their discussion, the group will arrive at a shared definition of each term. These definitions will be written on the large paper.

Main instructional strategy: The teacher will display several newspaper, magazine, or Web-based articles that show conflict in families, the local community, the nation, and the world. Students will be placed in pairs or groups of three to read the articles. They will be asked to report back to the whole group regarding the following:

- What type of conflict is mentioned in the article?
- Who are the participants in the conflict?
- What are the causes of the conflict?
- Is there evidence of unjust treatment of one group by another group? If so, describe.
- How might the conflict be resolved?

Once the pairs/threes have had time to prepare their remarks, ask each group to present. After presentations, the whole group will generate a list of ways that injustice destroys the circumstances that create peace.

Closing activity: Share this quote with the group: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” ~ Margaret Mead

Ask participants to recall areas of conflict in their own lives. These conflicts could be in their families, their schools, their wider communities, etc. Provide an index card or slip of paper to each participant. Ask participants to write a one-sentence idea for a way that he/she might help to resolve the conflict. If participants are willing to share responses, give time for sharing.

Closing Prayer:**The Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi**

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Resources: Chart paper, poster board, or large sheets of newsprint paper; Post-it notes or index cards and tape; articles from newspapers, magazines or the Web that discuss conflicts that have arisen due to injustices.

Extended activities:

- Provide the names and addresses of elected officials who have influence over policies/decisions that affect the marginalized groups mentioned in the articles used at the beginning of class. Participants may write letters or emails to the elected officials encouraging them to take positive action to help resolve the conflicts. Letter-writing suggestions may be found at www.fcnl.org.
- Participants may join an advocacy group such as Progress NC (www.progress.nc.org), to identify ways to help create the circumstances of peace.

Lesson Plan Two

Theme: Peace in Our Personal Relationships

Learning Outcomes:

- Participants will identify causes of conflict in personal relationships.
- Participants will describe the tenets of “fighting fair.”
- Participants will explore ways to resolve conflict in their personal relationships.

Scripture Options: Ephesians 4:1-6; Galatians 5:25-26

Notes to the teacher: This lesson is designed to give participants the opportunity to identify the causes of conflict in personal relationships. It will also give participants some guidelines for “fighting fair” in their personal relationships. Finally, participants will brainstorm ways that they can resolve conflict in their personal relationships.

Introductory activity: If the equipment is available, show this video: *Fighting Fair-less*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RAccr5nimOQ> If the equipment is not available, ask two students ahead of time to role-play a family or school conflict. They might depict a married couple in conflict over money, division of chores, or other family issue. If they choose to create a role-play about a school issue, they may role-play a conflict over a perceived slight such as the betrayal of a confidence. As participants watch the video or the skit, ask them to identify the causes of the conflict. At the conclusion of the video or skit, list the causes of the conflict on a large sheet of paper.

Main instructional strategy:

Provide a hand-out with these steps:

Fighting Fair: Step-by-Step

1. Before you begin, ask yourself, "What exactly is bothering me? What do I want the other person to do or not do? Are my feelings in proportion to the issue?"
2. Know what your goals are before you begin. What are the possible outcomes that could be acceptable to you?
3. Remember that the idea is not to win but to come to a mutually satisfying solution to the problem.
4. Set a time for a discussion with your partner-in-conflict. It should be as soon as possible but agreeable to both persons. Springing a conversation on someone when they are unprepared may leave them feeling like they have to fend off an attack. If you encounter resistance to setting a time, try to help the other person see that the problem is important to you.
5. State the problem clearly. At first, try to stick to the facts; then, once you've stated the facts, state your feelings. Use "I" messages to describe feelings of anger, hurt, or disappointment. Avoid "you" messages such as, "you make me angry...."; instead, try something like, "I feel angry when you...."

6. Invite the other person to share his or her point of view. Be careful not to interrupt, and genuinely try to hear his or her concerns and feelings. Try to restate what you heard in a way that lets your partner know you fully understood, and ask your partner to do the same for you.
7. Try to take the other's perspective; that is, try to see the problem through his or her eyes. The opposing viewpoint can make sense to you, even if you don't agree with it.
8. Propose specific solutions, and invite the other person to propose solutions, too.
9. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each proposal.
10. Be willing to compromise. Allowing the other person only one option will make it difficult to resolve the concern. When you reach an agreement on a way forward, celebrate! Decide together on a time to check-in, discuss how things are working, and make changes to your agreement if necessary. If no solution has been reached regarding the original problem, schedule a time to revisit the issue and continue the discussion.

Retrieved from <http://cmhc.utexas.edu/fightingfair.html#2>

Place participants in pairs to read and discuss the steps to resolving personal conflict by “fighting fair.” Once participants have completed reading and discussing, bring the group together to discuss their responses. Ask: What are some of the suggested steps that make sense to you? Which steps are hardest for individuals to do? On a large sheet of paper, list their reactions.

Closing activity: Share this quote with the group: “The very first step in nonviolence is that we cultivate in our daily life, as between ourselves, truthfulness, humility, tolerance, loving kindness.” ~ Gandhi

Provide participants with an index card or slip of paper. Ask participants to identify a personal conflict and to write one sentence identifying a step they are willing to take to try to resolve the conflict. If participants are willing to share responses, give time for sharing.

Closing Prayer: O God, we bring our relationships before You, praying for peace in our lives. We pray that You will give us strength to create peace in our lives. Bless us spiritually so that we will hunger and thirst after You and Your peace. Bless our relationships and guard them under Your protection. Give us wisdom and patience as we learn to resolve our conflicts with others.

Resources: Television, computer, projector for showing video. Art paper, poster board, or large sheets of newsprint paper; Index cards or slips of paper.

Extended activities:

- Contact a local shelter for battered spouses/families. Learn what their needs are that could be met by your group. Plan a project to collect toiletries or other needed items to donate to the shelter.
- Explore the *Teaching Tolerance* Web site to discover ways that students and teachers can respond to school conflicts. <https://www.splcenter.org/teaching-tolerance>

Lesson Plan Three

Theme: Peace in Our Communities

Learning Outcomes:

- Participants will identify instances of conflict in the local community.
- Participants will describe the causes of the conflict.
- Participants will plan ways of creating peaceful resolutions to the conflict.

Scripture Options: Psalm 34:14; Luke 10:27; Romans 14:17-19

Notes to the teacher: This lesson is designed to give participants the opportunity to identify conflict in their local community. They will also discuss the causes of the conflict and plan ways of creating peaceful resolutions to the conflict.

Introductory activity: The teacher will display pictures or headlines from the local newspaper, Web-based articles, or other sources that depict protests, angry demonstrations, contentious school board meetings, or other instances of conflict in the local community. Participants will be asked to describe the conflict that is evidenced by the pictures/headlines.

Main instructional strategy: The teacher will hang four signs in different corners of the room, each with one of these words/phrases written on it: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree or Strongly Disagree. The teacher will read the statements below and ask participants to move to the sign that reflects their opinions. After each statement, participants will discuss their answers with the small group at the sign. Then the group will summarize and share their discussions with the other groups. There are no right or wrong answers!

1. There are groups of people in our community who feel “left out” because of their race, social class, gender, or other “difference,”
2. Some groups of people in our community have different opportunities based on their “differences.”
3. All students in our community schools have the same opportunities in spite of their “differences.”
4. I can describe a specific example of conflict in our local community.
5. I have had a personal experience related to a conflict in our local community.
6. I know people who are working to resolve the conflicts in our local community.

Once the exercise is completed, facilitate a discussion about the activity. Ask participants to identify areas of conflict within the community and the causes of the conflict. Discuss ways that the conflict could be resolved through peaceful means.

Closing activity: Share this quote with the group: “We aren’t passengers on Spaceship Earth. We’re the crew. We aren’t residents on this planet. We’re citizens. The difference in both cases is responsibility.” ~Apollo Astronaut Rusty Schweickart

Place students in pairs. Ask pairs to identify one local conflict that they would like to help resolve in their community. Provide an index card or slip of paper to describe:

- The problem
- Why it matters
- One thing you could do to help or make a positive impact

Ask the pairs to share their responses.

Closing Prayer:

Gracious God,
We pray for peace in our communities this day.
We commit to you all who work for peace and an end to tensions,
And those who work to uphold law and justice.
We pray for an end to fear,
For comfort and support to those who suffer.
For calm in our streets and cities,
That people may go about their lives in safety and peace.
In your mercy, hear our prayers,
now and always. Amen

Retrieved from: <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2149/a-prayer-for-peace-in-our-communities#sthash.EtcfdTdg.dpuf>

Resources: Signs that say: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree or Strongly Disagree; Index cards or slips of paper

Extended activities:

- Invite an individual who is working to respond to a conflict in the local community to come to the class to discuss the work that he/she is doing.
- As a group, attend a local community function such as a school board meeting, a town council meeting, or other function where participants can observe the evidence of conflict in the local community. Discuss ways to resolve the conflict.

Lesson Plan Four

Theme: Peace in Our Nation/World

Learning Outcomes:

- Participants will identify instances of conflict in the nation/world.
- Participants will describe the causes of the conflict.
- Participants will plan ways of creating peaceful resolutions to the conflict.

Scripture Options: Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 5:9; II Corinthians 13:11

Notes to the teacher: This lesson is designed to give participants the opportunity to identify conflict in the nation/world. Choose a particular area of conflict that is current and that you believe will engage the interests and passions of the participants.

Introductory activity: The teacher will select a national or international conflict that is of particular interest to the participants. Using YouTube videos, social media, or print media, the teacher will display information about the selected conflict. Suggested topics: Human trafficking, ethnic cleansing, armed conflict, income inequality, illegal immigration. The teacher will facilitate a discussion about the conflict.

Main instructional strategy: The teacher will facilitate the creation of a Graffiti Wall about the chosen topic. On a large roll of paper, students will create a wall of graffiti that describes their reaction to the chosen area of conflict. They may use the following as prompts for their words, phrases, symbols, and drawings:

- Write what you think the causes of the conflict are.
- Draw a representation of the conflict.
- Explain what the conflict makes you wonder.
- Make a prediction about what the outcome of the conflict may be.
- Outline what the conflict tells you about the people who are involved.
- Tell how the conflict reminds you of something in your own life or community.
- Describe how the conflict could be resolved peacefully.
- Write a response to someone else's graffiti thoughts.

Once the Graffiti Wall is completed, facilitate a discussion of the group's work.

Closing activity: Share this quote with the group: "A few really dedicated people can offset the masses of out of harmony people, so we who work for peace must not falter, we must continue to pray for peace and to act for peace in whatever way we can. We must continue to speak for peace and to live the way of peace; to inspire others, we must continue to think of peace and know that peace is possible. What we dwell upon we help bring to manifestation. One little person giving all of her time to peace makes news. Many people giving some of their time can make history." ~The Peace Pilgrim

Place participants in pairs or threes to discuss the quote. What is their response to the quote? How does the quote apply to the participants? What actions might they take to respond to the conflict that was the focus of the lesson? Ask pairs/threes to share their responses.

Closing Prayer:**A Prayer for World Peace**

Lord, we pray for the power to be gentle; the strength to be forgiving; the patience to be understanding; and the endurance to accept the consequences of holding to what we believe to be right. May we put our trust in the power of good to overcome evil and the power of love to overcome hatred. We pray for the vision to see and the faith to believe in a world emancipated from violence, a new world where fear shall no longer lead men to commit injustice, nor selfishness make them bring suffering to others.

Help us to devote our whole life and thought and energy to the task of making peace, praying always for the inspiration and the power to fulfill the destiny for which we and all men were created.

Retrieved from: <http://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=1700>.

Resources: Articles, videos, or other media portraying a national/international conflict. A roll of butcher paper, bulletin board paper, or other large paper that can be used for the Graffiti Wall.

Extended activities:

- Explore the history of the Nobel Peace Prize. Discover who the winners have been since 1901. Learn about their contributions. Information can be found at <http://www.nobelprize.org/>.
- Create a drama about the journey toward peace. Instructions for using “process drama” can be found at <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/peace-journey-using-process-269.html>

Lesson Plan Five

Theme: Working for Peace

Learning Outcomes:

- Participants will explore the lives and contributions of individuals who have worked for peace.
- Participants will identify ways that they can make contributions to building a peaceful world.

Scripture Options: Romans 12:18; I Corinthians 7:15; Hebrews 12:14

Notes to the teacher: This lesson is designed to give participants the opportunity to explore the lives of individuals who have worked for peace and to encourage students to commit to working for peace.

Introductory activity: The teacher will display biographical information on several individuals who have worked for peace. (Web-based articles are linked for each of the peacemakers highlighted below.) The teacher will ask students to select the individual that they are most interested in learning more about.

Main instructional strategy: The teacher will provide copies of articles about the selected individuals to pairs or groups of students. Participants will use these symbols as they read and discuss their articles together:

- + I agree with this.
- I disagree with this.
- ! This surprises me.
- ? This would make for good discussion questions.
- ☺ I could do something similar to this.

Malala Yousafzai is a Pakistani school pupil and spokesperson for women's right to education. In retaliation for her high profile campaign for education and criticism of the Taliban, she was shot in the head at close range by a Taliban gunman. She survived the gunshot wound and has become a leading spokesperson for human rights, education and women's rights. She has received numerous peace awards, and received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 along with Kailash Satyarthi, an Indian children's rights activist. Additional information can be found at <http://www.biographyonline.net/women/malala.html>.

Desmond Tutu was born in Klerksdorp, Transvaal in 1931 in South Africa. As a vocal and committed opponent of apartheid in South Africa he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984. After graduating from school he studied at the University of South Africa. With a degree he became a high school teacher. Desmond Tutu then took up the study of theology and spent several years in England to further his theological study. In 1975 he was appointed Dean of St. Mary's Cathedral in Johannesburg, the first black to hold that position. From 1976 to 1978 he was Bishop of Lesotho, and in 1978 became the first black General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches.

Additional information can be found at <http://www.biographyonline.net/spiritual/desmond-tutu.html>.

Betty Williams was a co-recipient with Mairead Corrigan of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1976 for her work as a cofounder of Community of Peace People, an organization dedicated to promoting a peaceful resolution to The Troubles in Northern Ireland. She heads the Global Children's Foundation and is President of the World Centers of Compassion for Children International. She is also the Chair of Institute for Asian Democracy in Washington D.C. In 2006, Williams was one of the founders of the Nobel Women's Initiative

along with sister Nobel Peace Laureates Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Shirin Ebadi, Wangari Maathai, Jody Williams and Rigoberta Menchu Tum.

Additional information can be found at <http://www.biographyonline.net/humanitarian/betty-williams.html>.

After participants have explored their articles, have each group to share their reactions to the articles.

Closing activity: Share this quote with the group: "Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events. It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance." —Robert F. Kennedy

Provide index cards or slips of paper to individual participants. Ask each participant to write a one-sentence response to this prompt: If there is to be peace on earth, it will begin with individuals. I promise to work for peace by _____.

If participants are willing to share responses, give time for sharing.

Closing Prayer:

"A Prayer for the World"

"Let the rain come and wash away the ancient grudges,
the bitter hatreds held and nurtured over generations.
Let the rain wash away the memory of the hurt, the neglect.
Then let the sun come out and fill the sky with rainbows.
Let the warmth of the sun heal us wherever we are broken.
Let it burn away the fog so that we can see each other clearly,
So that we can see beyond labels, beyond accents, gender or skin color.
Let the warmth and brightness of the sun melt our selfishness,
So that we can share the joys and feel the sorrow of our neighbors.
And let the light of the sun be so strong that we will see all
people as our neighbors.
Let the earth, nourished by rain, bring forth flowers to
surround us with beauty.
And let the mountains teach our hearts to reach upward to heaven."

- Rabbi Harold S. Kushner

Resources: Copies of Web-based articles on individual peacemakers. Index cards or slips of paper

Extended activities:

- Explore the lives of other peacemakers.
- Invite an individual who has worked for a peacemaking organization such as the Peace Corps to speak to the group.