

What is Peace?

by Angela Orlando

In this issue, the word “peace” is used in a broad way. Peace can be both personal and social. What it means to each of us will vary because we come from different cultures. We have included articles in this issue about the inner state of being at peace with oneself, about peace as the absence of war or conflict, about anti-war organizing, people working for justice and human rights, and peace as the existence of harmony between peoples in the world. There are many definitions of peace. Here are some activities to help you discover what you think about peace.

Writing about Peace

Ask students to write individually about one of the following topics:

1. Write four sentences that start with “Peace is . . .”
2. Write about a time when you felt peace in your life. What caused you to feel at peace? How did it affect your behavior, attitudes, family life, and interactions with others?
3. Write about a time you worked for peace (as defined in the opening paragraph). What did you do or say to promote peace? What did you need to know in order to do this work? How did this work make you feel? What are some different ways that people can work for peace?

Talking about Peace

Ask students to read “Peace Quotes,” selecting two or three that they like the best. Divide students into small groups. Ask students to choose one quote from the list that they like the best and tell others in the group why they picked that quote and what they like about it. Use a “round robin” format giving each student a minute or two to share their thoughts.

Take it Further

1. Ask students to restate the main idea of the quote they chose in their own words. What does this quote mean to them?
2. Then, ask students to write down what people need to do to bring about that type of peace. Write down activities or actions for each of the following: nations, governments, communities, families, individuals. See the example on the next page.
3. Post each of the students’ worksheets around the classroom and do a gallery walk.

Class Reflection

Bring the class back together and ask students to share on the following:

- What strikes you after reading others’ ideas about how to make peace possible?
- Who has to be involved to make peace a reality?
- Do you see a role for yourself?

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