

Teaching and Discovering about the Dignity, Diversity, & Divinity in All

Lesson Overview: Building on the goals of empowering student engagement, enthusiasm and engagement to build mutual respect, this introduction to Passages to Peacemaker profiles some guiding "Principles of a Peacemaker" to include and teach all students. Examples of this in the Teacher Introduction are statements such as: "Everyone is a Peacemaker"—You can be Proud of your Unique Strengths and Gifts...and share them with the others to the Greater Cause of Creating a Class/Culture of Peace and Respect for All. "Today we want to explore some of the many ways we can "Create a Culture of Peace" each of us using our own unique gifts and talents. We hope, by the end of the class, to learn something new about famous Peacemakers, but more important—how each one of us, in our own special and unique way can help to contribute and create our own classroom of peace and respect. Here are some of the activities that we will try together and ways to inspire you to think differently about yourselves and each other, in compassionate and creative new ways. We want to EXPLORE AND DISCOVER those special and unique differences in EACH OTHER—like how and where we come from, our families and special days, what makes us sing and how we can share the love and the joy together. We are a diverse and unique class—and so we want to make sure that we have PRIDE over PREJUDICE and that each person is honored for their own dignity and worth.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES OF THE DAY: **RAP FOR PEACE!**

CREATING A RAP FOR PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE: Our goal will be to use the words and ideas that prevent prejudice, stop stereotypes and promote equal rights, dignity and respect for all. We will build a word bank and then together, acting collaboratively, we will write a Rap, Spoken Word, Song, Personal Statement or Story using the "pearls" from our Rap/Poem-Song. We will also honor one person as we work together as a class. Here is an example: Such as Nelson Mandela's (in honor of his Birthday) and/or Ralph Bunche—Peacemaker who wrote a truce and whose life embodies the Principles of A Peacemaker.

Time Needed: 40 minutes (Note—Students can take their material to expand on certain people as Journal Entries, Special Reports or Projects—ways to "Be Ready" for Special Black History—or any More Than A Month Celebration such as upcoming International Youth Day, United Nations Day, International Women's Day.

Materials: Paper and Pen—better than pencil so no one feels like they have to stop and erase. As a writing project, we begin with a "Spill"—stressing that there are no errors or mess-ups when you are doing projects for peace. Everything is OK—it doesn't have to be perfect. No one walks on water. No one is better than any one else. We all have something to contribute—and we respect the silent ones, as they also have deep and intelligent thoughts/ideas. Everyone write and thinks at their own style—This is true of ALL PEACEMAKERS. Like all of you, they come from all cultures and have all different kinds of religions and faith—many have beliefs that are so different—but what they have in common is stronger than what divides them, because THEY ARE PEACEMAKERS...AND SO ARE YOU!

Note: Materials depend on teacher's availability—Also if the theme of respect or diversity can be worked into the existing curriculum. Discovering the cultures and multiple identities of Peacemakers (in respect to cultures, race, age, gender, class, and other diverse and multiple identities help the students to explore and discover together that the dignity and divinity of all Peacemakers is unique and not defined by any special privilege and/or class or race, etc. It is especially valuable to inform the youth of the changing social and political thinking about the need for peacemakers and the value of diplomacy. To many, "Peacemakers" win the Nobel Peace Prize. The goal is that in today's interdependent world—PEACEMAKERS ARE IN DEMAND and will be even more needed in their own lifetimes (Doctors can be Peacemakers, Scientists, Community workers, Mothers, Nurses, Teachers and Presidents. Students will need these skills of tolerance, respect, diplomacy and diversity awareness to be successful as people, parents, friends, and human beings. Also be aware that the world is changing—and they are the leaders that must now carry the torch SO IT IS WISE TO LEARN FROM ALL—and to prevent prejudice, promote dignity and respect, develop compassion and knowledge about other cultures and their practices and religions—and that by knowing more about each other, we understand and care more, fearing less about the so-called "others" and knowing we are all sisters and brothers—mothers, fathers, students—teachers and OTHERS.

Each student writes these six principles: Courage, Compassion, Faith, Dignity, Determination, Hope and Love.

Our goal as a class will be to collaborate at the beginning—with each student having the freedom and extra time to divert and "do their own thing" during our work time—(teacher writing words on the board)—while others are encouraged not to feel the pressure, have their own favorite words, but listen to everyone speak one at a time—all rules apply—first we get our word bank—no yelling out. And then we work together as a team to create the rap or poem. They know they can change and create their own—so no one feels locked in the box—or dubbed. The idea is that they hear each other and mostly discover the amazing and unique and so often unexpected contributions of "the others"

Sample words that students call out—(note—as teacher, you try and tell ways that suggested word might work in a rap or poem or piece about peace)

Skills addressed: listening to others, organizing thoughts and phrases from one "jump start word", knowing how to collect words, but not necessarily use them all, thesaurus, dictionary, using and utilizing the words, posters and images already on the board, seeing the staff and other students in a "new light" as peacemakers—or creative. Using critical thinking to connect ideas—honor a peacemaker in a polite way—manners and making collaboration less about competition—and more about coming together in the "right spirit" to make it happen. Whole group instruction that expands to individual identities and mutual cultural awareness.

Set up by writing big letter on the board, review the principles, sometimes we pause to honor someone who is a peacemaker in the school—a favorite nurse, principle, crossing guard, teacher... This stillness helps to set the tone—it is a time to center thoughts and do the project in a proper attitude or "vibe"/spirit of kindness. If the students know the final poem will be presented to a special person in the school—they are more likely to take it seriously earlier.

P E A C E maker

Students write lines such as:

"today I am a peacemaker" and their own names. We will honor...

Sample:

P—prevent prejudice, pride, purpose, promote common vision of hope for a more peaceful school, prevent violence—promote hope for joy and justice, people of the world, people (who are different or the same), prevent loss of life, purpose and pride (dignity inside), promise—potential—prevent prejudice by promoting understanding of our many cultures—

E—energy, excellent, education, equal in dignity and rights, economic and environmental justice, everybody unite, each one (care for "the other"), eternal (peacemakers never die).

A—avoid prejudice, awareness of each others unique backgrounds—values—culture/likes and dislikes... Always strive to understand "the other." All Together may mean all people unique and diverse together with a common goal or mission—like us today writing a rap. Always with pride, always with dignity, always with determination, always with respect for each other—Always to reach beyond the stereotype—it's OK to try and see what is different and special and sacred and unique (honor my privacy), the right to be treated in dignity and fairness, know you are not always treated fairly or within the law—to be AWARE—and act with courage and responsibly when you see another who is being mistreated unfairly.

C—courage, compassion, creative—collaboration makes diversity and the differences to discover exciting—Create and collaborate—(much better than command and control) communities are different (tell me about yours and mine) communities of faith and—communities are also about other things. How communities interconnect? Interdependent—within cities, beyond the boundaries—what happens when you cross. Are their borders even within our own minds? What are the racial communities—but also the very many kinds of cultural beliefs and background and life experiences that are special and unique to each person. Combinations? Collaborations? Create culture of peace by honoring the diversity—divinity and

dignity/rights of all—always with compassion (Big C word)—What Creates Prejudice and How can we prevent it? (Prejudice, Prevent—P words, good to start). C—Citizenship...what is global citizenship? This is a C word that can create new words that relate to our new roles as global citizens and how to Expand as Peace Makers in the Global Community...

E—Eternal: A Peacemaker is concerned about social justice and human rights. And they can inspire a whole world to do what's right—Sometimes, even though they have died, many people and faiths think of them as Eternal—as they illuminate a light of hope for human understanding and Peace for Future Generations. This is true even for someone you love—like your Grandmother, or my mother—who was the Peacemaker in my heart and my life.

This is a lesson an activity taken from Passage to Peacemaker Curriculum.

CHAIN OF KINDNESS

Lesson Overview: This activity teaches all students to reach across the boundaries of their classroom to express compassion for the others and honor them as special Peacemakers (those special students or staff who promote fairness, social justice or protect life). By honoring and thanking a special Police Officer at School as Peacemaker, a special crossing guard or community after-school parent volunteer, The V.I.P.'s—"Very Important Peacemakers" model community—building and cross-cultural efforts to promote inter-group harmony and a sense of community pride and purpose.

Grades: This is an activity that can be appropriate for any ages. Older children honoring school safety staff, older students often want to send a "Chain of Kindness " to a family member or student sibling who has been victim of a tragic crime or injustice. It is an act of compassion and an easy way for all to participate and for youth to assert their right to live in PEACE ZONES—free from the threat of violence and gang recruitment. The member of youth gangs often will want to help in larger efforts to promote Peace in the Community and it also represents an excellent time to offer new ways for reconciliation and healing—by writing a Rap/Truce—Chain of Kindness or other activity.

The Chain of Kindness can be sent to other countries from one to another. Example: Youth in Philadelphia that honored youth peacemakers in Liberia at the height of the War—as former youth combatants-turned-peacemakers laid down their arms and created a web site for youth voices—See the Child Soldier Project. The Chain of Kindness Project had Special Education Students create their own Chain for a Peace Center in Ghana—and the Children of War—responding with songs of gratitude. Students can be taught about youth empowering youth in all aspects of disarmament, re-integration into postwar society and the many heroic acts of youth peacemakers in war zones. (See "Beyond All Borders"—Sample theme for youth reaching across all borders to create a Global Youth Initiative for Peace—The goals are enhanced with activities such as the Chain of Kindness where each student writes an act of kindness—and a message of hope for peace and healing for others. Students can research a destination of disaster—or simply use the lesson to honor the Peacemakers in their community or school that have shown kindness to them and now they express gratitude. These simple acts of expressing compassion by and for all—helps to reinforce the students' sense of personal empowerment and engagement in making it a better world.

Procedure: 1. Activity—Who will we honor and express our gratitude to? The children of war in Liberia? Or shall we thank our Crossing Guard for helping us to make a safe place everyday? 2. Divide into small groups, if it works. Share materials such as small index cards—with three hole punch. Make the children really express their gratitude with pre-writing and thought. Rushing or racing the exercise is insulting to the true value of the project. Use many colors and materials to allow for individual expression—decorate one side—write the message on the other. 3. Pre-agree as a group who and when to present. This may be the ideal introduction to an assembly—or a way to send and connect to another school and share diversity across cultural and social boundaries. Schools can connect their Chains of Kindness and create a collaborative relationship that will honor the multiple identities and cultures/diversity and unique talents of all. The main point of the lesson is that they are creating something in unity for the community of school or beyond—it is an act of giving to others—and expressing gratefulness. Students can write further descriptions of themselves and send along with the Chain of Kindness more personal expressions reflecting pride in the project and place of origin—Our School, My Family, My Community, My hope and dreams for the future... This can be a cyber Chain of Kindness, with personalized messages of hope for healing and ways to build new cross border expressions. Use yarn or other natural material to arrange the chain—which can also be adopted to become a PEACE QUILT. Send to other schools, with the idea to build upon the message and present at a final day where all classes honor each others work—and /or it is sent forth to reach other schools to promote Global Citizenship. The Global Chain of Kindness helps youth of all religions and diversity to share in common hopes and dreams of a safer and more peaceful world. Also serves as a media model for inclusion and sharing of identities with respect for the dignity and divinity of all.

THE FEAST OF PEACE

Lesson and Activity taken from the Curriculum "Passage to Peacemaker":

Grades 1-6 (or above—Can be expanded on the lessons to create your own Legend of Peace—Storytelling and Myth—ways to build on ritual and create new celebrations that honor all students).

Principle for Preventing Exclusion—Holidays that can be exclusive and painful for youth. The Feast of Peace allows each teacher to inspire the unique contributions that reflect or adapt from their faith holidays or personal experiences. For example—A Tree of Life or a Candle of Peace—A Feast of Peace would include stories and dances that reflect all the desires and dreams of children across the world for a more peaceful and happier world. Principles of inclusion, teaching multi-faith and those who do not celebrate holidays can engage in creating one that all students will enjoy. Parent ideas and other community members can be invited to contribute. This is a time to celebrate diversity and honor the very special and unique identities and journeys that Families and Friends share. A Feast of Peace helps to build positive community relationships with the schools, allows for the participation of all and creates new pathways of understanding and tolerance by creating a time to share and celebrate life and religious traditions, ethnic cultures or other special and unique family traditions.

BEYOND ALL BORDERS MULTI-MEDIA CROSS-BORDER STUDENT PROJECT TO PROMOTE TOLERANCE AND UNDERSTANDING

Students ask themselves "How can we reach across our racial, religious, social, and physical /cultural divides to create a new Culture of Peace, Respect and Tolerance for all?"

What is the Goal? Empowering and Engaging Youth and Educators for Social Justice—Ways to transcend differences that divide and honor the diversity, dignity and divinity of all people. Creating a multi-media cross cultural curriculum that builds of the goals of preventing prejudice and stereotypes, creates an open mind and heart...and fills each student with the wonder, knowledge, motivation and desire to Dare to Dream and to take bold and bright Actions for Peace.

PROFILES OF THE PEACEMAKERS

Lesson: Show how the principles of courage, compassion, faith, determination, dignity, hope and love guided the life work and accomplishments of these remarkable peacemakers. From different Nations of the World, they have left a legacy of light and illumination—instruction and inspiration to guide students and future peacemakers.

Upper School and Middle School Students can select a principle of the peacemaker that inspires them and illustrate a time in their lives that this gave them the necessary courage to continue and to accomplish their dreams to make a difference. Reports can be put together by one class and presented as a student book for publication. Teachers are encouraged to let the students visit and explore all sources of information, such as the UN. The principles that illustrate ALL STUDENTS and prevention of prejudice will allow individuals to also contribute in unique ways such as a Day or song to honor these VIP's (Very Important Peacemakers) (see sample song as example).

1. Ralph Bunche—African American UN Middle East Truce and Diplomat and Global Peacemaker—DIGNITY.
2. Herman Gmeiner—Austrian—Founded SOS Children's Villages—Worldwide Charity for Homeless and Abandoned Children—Created Villages and Homes—Global Peacemaker and Global Inspirational fundraiser—FAITH.
3. Angie Brooks—African Woman—First African woman to be President of UN General Assembly—DETERMINATION.
4. Mother Jones—American Woman—Miner's angel—Children's Rights—Social Justice—COURAGE—COMPASSION—DETERMINATION AND HOPE—DIGNITY AND FAITH—COMPASSION AND LOVE.
5. Kofi Annan—Former Secretary General of the United Nations, born in Ghana—global inspiration and Nobel Peace Prize winner.
6. Baroness Bertha von Suttner—Peace Activist and Founder of Noble Peace Prize—wrote "Lay Down your Arms!"—helped to convince Alfred Nobel to have a Peace Prize—for which she later won one—International Peace Bureau.

poem: **Who is the Other?**

who is the other
are you my brother?
my sister, my other?
are you are my brothers?
where are the mothers
the teachers, the others
discover
not to smother
the other

because I am the other
and you are the other
each other, one another
all together
the other

brothers and sisters and mothers and others
children and teachers and sisters of brothers
and more mothers and brothers and cousins
of the others

discover the others
for I am the other
and you are my sister
my brother
another, then
who is the other?
Am I the other
You try to smother?
discover the other
is your sister and brother
for we are the other
the sister and brother
the mother
and lover
the father
and brother
the child
and other
child and another
for you and we
are the others
brothers, sisters, mothers, children
don't smother the other
lift up the other
and discover
that you and I
we are the other