



Peace Day

A resource to give young people explore some of the ideas about peace that are found in a number of different world religions and traditions



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LESSON ONE

PEACE DAY

PREPARATION

As always it is important to strike a good balance between identifying similarities and differences – if we over simplify things, and say “all religions want peace”, then we miss out on the valuable opportunities to learn from the diversity of ideas that emerge – about what peace is, what it means to individuals, why it is important, and how it should be pursued or cultivated.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

This activity is designed to help students begin to explore some ideas about peace that are found in a number of different world religions and traditions. It is a precursor to reflection upon their own ideas about why peace is important, what it actually means, and where it comes from.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

The worksheets that accompany the activities below can be found at the end of the lesson.

STARTER ACTIVITY 1

PEACE QUOTES

PURPOSE

This activity encourages students to explore teachings by asking them to work with a number of quotes from texts, and contemporary practitioners. By the end of the session your students should know about different teachings about Peace from different faith and belief perspectives, understand similarities and differences, and have experienced reflection upon their own ideas about Peace.

RESOURCES

Worksheet 1.1: *Peace Quotes*

Worksheet 1.2: *Student Reflection Sheet*

STEP 1

Divide the class into small groups (ideally 4 students per group).

STEP 2

Cut up and divide the cards from *Worksheet 1.1: Peace Quotes* equally between the groups. It does not really matter how many quotes you use altogether, but try to ensure that you get a good mix of some of the themes that I have indicated above.

IN THIS LESSON

1. ACTIVITIES

PEACE QUOTES

2. WORKSHEETS

1.1 PEACE QUOTES

1.2 STUDENT REFLECTION SHEET

STEP 3

Each group should also be issued with one *Worksheet 1.2: Student Reflection Sheet* per quote (if you have given a group 2 quotes, give them 2 reflection sheets).

STEP 4

Give students five minutes or so to work out their answers to the questions on *Worksheet 1.2: Student Reflection Sheet* this should ideally be done cooperatively.

STEP 5

Invite each group to read their quote, and explain their answers to the questions. You could record the key ideas on a board, on sugar paper, or on a computer (ideally with diagramming or mind-mapping software. There are good open source programmes that may be used free of charge – [freemind](http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page) (http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page) and [xmind](http://www.xmind.net) (<http://www.xmind.net>) are good examples.

EXTENSION

Students should reflect upon their own understandings of Peace, and select one idea that is new to them from the range of ideas that have been covered. They could blog about this for homework.



There are a number of broad themes that emerge from these quotes. Some of the more obvious quotes that include these themes have been flagged up for your convenience.

TABLE 1 Number of Broad Themes That Emerge from These Quotes.

Theme	Obvious in quote number
Peace as state of being that religious teachings desire – being peaceful is the desired state for many religious traditions.	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14
Peace in here / Peace out there. Peace in here / Peace out there. Many traditions talk about peace as an internal state (i.e. peace of mind, or peace in the heart). They also talk about Peace as a social contract – describing the relationships between individuals and groups.	Within – 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 Without – 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19 Both – 10, 11, 18, 20, 21
Peacemaking – actively striving for peace is encouraged by many traditions and beliefs, many of whom suggest that this is at the heart of a spiritual practice, and something that might bring a person closer to God.	
Peacemaking - actively striving for peace is encouraged by many individuals, traditions and beliefs. It is seen as an act of individual responsibility.	12,14,15,16,17,18
Peace as a positive force - empowering and enabling people rather than the mere absence of conflict. This leads on to, and lies at the root of many social teachings from different perspectives and religious traditions.	18, 19, 20, 21

WORKSHEET 1.1

PEACE QUOTES (PART 1/2)

1) This is peace, this is the excellent, namely the calm of all the impulses, the casting out of all "basis," the extinction of craving, dispassion, stopping, Nirvana. Anguttara Nikaya v.322 (Buddhism)

2) May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. Numbers 6.26 (Judaism & Christianity)

3) And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4.7 (Christianity)

4) He it is who sent down peace of reassurance into the hearts of the believers, that they might add faith to their faith. Qur'an 48.4 (Islam)

5) Thou dost keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusts in thee. Isaiah 26.3 (Judaism & Christianity)

6) If a man sings of God and hears of Him, And lets love of God sprout within him, All his sorrows shall vanish, And in his mind, God will bestow abiding peace. Adi Granth, Japuji 5, M.1, p. 2 (Sikhism)

7) Just as a deep lake is clear and still, even so, on hearing the teachings and realizing them, the wise become exceedingly peaceful. Dhammapada 82 (Buddhism)

8) As rivers flow into the ocean but cannot make the vast ocean overflow, so flow the streams of the sense-world into the sea of peace that is the sage. Bhagavad Gita 2.70 (Hinduism)

9) We can never obtain peace in the outer world until we make peace with ourselves. Dalai Lama XIV (Buddhism)

10) If we are peaceful, if we are happy, we can smile and blossom like a flower, and everyone in our family, our entire society, will benefit from our peace. Thich Nhat Hanh (Buddhism)

11) The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes within the souls of people when they realize their relationship, their oneness with the universe and all its powers, and when they realize that at the centre of the universe dwells the Great Spirit, and that this centre is really everywhere, it is within each of us. Black Elk (Lakota Sioux / American Indigenous Spiritual teacher)

12) They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. Isaiah 2.4 (Judaism & Christianity)

13) Now is the gracious Lord's ordinance promulgated, No one shall cause another pain or injury; All mankind shall live in peace together. Under a shield of administrative benevolence. Adi Granth, Sri Raga, M.5, p. 74 (Sikhism)

14) Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Matthew 5.9 (Christianity)

WORKSHEET 1.1

PEACE QUOTES (PART 2/2)

15) He brings together those who are divided, he encourages those who are friendly; he is a peacemaker, a lover of peace, impassioned for peace, a speaker of words that make for peace. Teviggga Sutta (Buddhism)

16) If two parties of believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them. And if one party of them does wrong to the other, fight that wrong-doer until it returns to the ordinance of God; then, if it returns, make peace between them justly, and act equitably. Lo! God loves the equitable. Qur'an 49.9 (Islam)

17) If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other. Mother Teresa (Christianity)

18) Smiling is very important. If we are not able to smile, then the world will not have peace. It is not by going out for a demonstration against nuclear missiles that we can bring about peace. It is with our capacity of smiling, breathing, and being peace that we can make peace. Thich Nhat Hanh (Buddhism)

19) Peace is not the product of terror or fear. Peace is not the silence of cemeteries. Peace is not the silent revolt of violent repression. Peace is the generous, tranquil contribution of all to the good of all. Peace is dynamism. Peace is generosity. It is right and it is duty. Bishop Oscar Romero (Christianity)

20) Peace is not an absence of war, it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence, justice. Baruch Spinoza (Humanist Philosopher)

21) It is essential to know that to be a happy person, a happy family, a happy society, it is very crucial to have a good heart, World peace must develop from inner peace. Peace is not just the absence of violence but the manifestation of human compassion. Dalai Lama XIV (Buddhism)

22) I charge you all that each one of you concentrate all the thoughts of your heart on love and unity. When a thought of war comes, oppose it by a stronger thought of peace. A thought of hatred must be destroyed by a more powerful thought of love. Thoughts of war bring destruction to all harmony, well-being, restfulness and content. Thoughts of love are constructive of brotherhood, peace, friendship and harmony. Abdu'l Baha'i (son of the Founder of the Baha'i Faith)

23) Peace cannot be kept by force - it can only be achieved by understanding Albert Einstein

24) Peace demands the most heroic labour and the most difficult sacrifice. It demands greater heroism than war. It demands greater fidelity to the truth and a much more perfect purity of conscience. Thomas Merton (Christian Mystic)

25) I think that people want peace so much that one of these days government had better get out of their way and let them have it Dwight D. Eisenhower

26) May we be disciples of Aaron the priest, loving peace, and pursuing peace, love our fellow creatures and drawing them near to the Torah Judaism

27) I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality...I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

28) Peace is not a relationship of nations. It is a condition of mind brought about by a serenity of soul. Peace is not merely the absence of war. It is also a state of mind. Lasting people can only come to peaceful people. Jawaharlal Nehru

