

Children and War - Children and Peace

Teacher's Resource Guide

For too long children have been the invisible victims of war. Because of their age, they are often overlooked and neglected. Though the issue has been long neglected, children have suffered greatly at the hands of war. Every aspect of their lives is disrupted. Children living in war zones face many challenges: their lives are endangered by violence; they may become orphaned; schools and health centres close; food becomes scarce; and too often children become soldiers or concubines to soldiers.

After a long period of neglect, the issue of war-affected children is beginning to gain international attention. International conferences are bringing the issue to the public's mind and numerous humanitarian organizations are implementing programming to assist these children.

Learning about war and how it affects other children is of great value to Canadian students. This subject teaches them about modern political issues and gives them a broader understanding of what the lives of children in other countries are like. It also helps them to empathize with children in Canadian schools who have experienced war.

This curriculum will inform children about some of the issues facing children in war zones and empower children to work for peace in their own lives. It begins by looking at the student's personal understandings of **conflict resolution**. It then introduces the concept of war and how war affects children in the **war and children** lesson. The following four lessons are thematic, teaching about four specific topics: **child soldiers, refugees, economic sanctions and military spending**. The final lesson, **building peace**, describes how children work for peace and encourages children to work for peace in their own lives.

Each of the seven sections has two or three photocopiable student handouts. The teacher's guide provides more information about each topic and further activities which will enrich students' understanding of the topics. Each theme can be taught independently of the others.

It is significant to note that what is tolerated in our homes, communities and schools is what is tolerated on the international level. The purpose of including the personal realities is to accentuate the fact that in order to address issues of child soldiers we must address video game violence, gangs which say that children engaged in acts of violence is okay in the video arcade or in front of the computer, or youth finding identity and a sense of family in gangs....

Please note that some of the themes contain sensitive material, and that some children may be upset by talk of war and death. The topics should be approached with seriousness and sensitivity.

Theme 1 - Conflict Resolution

Introduction

Conflict is a normal part of daily life. There are numerous ways in which to approach conflict, some of which are constructive, others destructive. This lesson encourages students to examine their preconceived notions about conflict.

Handout #1: Have students consider their understandings of conflict. You may want to emphasize that conflict is normal and that people can approach it in a healthy manner, respecting everyone involved.

Further discussion: How do you feel when you have a conflict with somebody? What are good ways to handle anger? Not so good ways?

Handout #2: This handout provides a four step process for approaching conflict.

Further discussion: The concept that conflicts can have win/win solutions can be introduced. Students can be asked for examples of conflicts and then encouraged to imagine possible outcomes, lose/lose, win/lose and win/win.

Handout #3: The skills that were introduced in handout #2 are applied to a story. Working in a group on these questions may be useful as the students can discuss possible outcomes of the conflict.

Extra Activities

1. Understanding Sources of Conflict: To expand students' understanding of "Step #2 - Define the Problem" have students brain storm a list of questions we need to ask to understand a particular conflict and to help understand the situation such as:

What is the conflict about? Who is involved? Where was it? What does person/party A want? What does person/party B want? How are they fighting? How did it start? Is anyone hurt? Why do they want what they want?

(Taken from Peace, Perspectives on Peace/Conflict for Classroom Teachers - K to 12, Bob Haverluck. Peguis Publishers: Winnipeg, 1990, p 10.)

2. Chocolate Kisses Game: This game teaches students that they can often gain more through cooperation than through competition. It is a good exercise to introduce the concept of win/win. Students assume "arm wrestling" position and are told that every time the back of the other person's hand touches the table or desk, they will win a chocolate kiss or other treat. In this game it is not against the rules to allow hands to touch the desk without resistance, nor for both partners to win prizes. Do not tell students this beforehand.

Materials: A few bags of chocolate kisses, grapes, raisins or other small prizes.

- ◆ Tell the students the game will involve sitting across the table from a partner, with their left arms resting on their laps, and their right elbows on the table with their arms up.
- ◆ Ask them to clasp their partner's right hand. Avoid using the term "arm wrestling" as it

denotes competition; simply describe the position. If students mention arm wrestling, say that the position is the same, but the game is different.

- ◆ Make sure the students are in the proper position before giving them the rules. Some variations of the game allow no talking once you have explained the rules. The rules are as follows:
 - 1) You receive a prize each time the back of your partner's hand touches the desk.
 - 2) Keep track of your own "kisses."
 - 3) You have thirty seconds after the teacher says "go" to win as many prizes as possible.
- ◆ After the students have played the games, ask them to describe their strategies.
- ◆ Ask them to write their reactions (e.g. this was fun, stupid, etc) and method of playing (e.g. I didn't really try). Students might ask themselves if the way they behaved in this game reflects the way they behave in other situations. What parallels do they see? These observations can be written privately with time then given for volunteers to share insights.
- ◆ Explain the way in which both partners can win kisses through cooperation. Ask students to notice the language of the rules, especially the use of the word "partner." Why did people assume it was a game of competition?
- ◆ **Questions for discussion:** Were you frustrated? What did you stand to gain or lose by cooperating? Is there a place for win/win in the world? (Some students think it takes the fun out of playing.) What is meant by fun? Are there other kinds of fun? Why do we often hear adversarial language when there are two groups or two individuals? Consider how in each game neutral parties, even friends, become adversaries. Why does the language of competitive games spill over into the rest of our lives? Do we have a competitive society? Do we need to foster our cooperative side?

3. Cooperative Musical Chairs: This game is played in the same manner as the traditional version of musical chairs with a unique twist. It begins with an equal number of chairs and players. Each time the music stops a chair is removed **but not a player**. Any player who cannot find a chair sits on the nearest person's lap. The game continues until only one or two chairs are left. As the number of chairs decreases, the level of cooperation between players must increase. (Note that this activity particularly requires cultural and gender sensitivity, as it may be objectionable to some.)

Questions: In what ways was the game different from the conventional game of musical chairs? Which version of the game requires cooperation? Competition? What kind of skills and attitudes did the cooperative game require? In what situations in daily life is cooperation needed or used? Draw a list of the benefits and costs of cooperation and competition.

Theme 2 - Children and War

Introduction

This section provides a general introduction to the concept of war and how it affects children. Most children have some idea of what war is. Officially, a violent conflict becomes a war when the number of people killed in consistent fighting reaches or passes one thousand. However, for the purposes of this kit, war should be considered violent conflict between two or more groups where a large number of people have died and are affected.

Begin by asking children what war is and if anyone they know has been affected by war. Children will likely need ample time to talk about this subject.

Handout #1: This handout describes the nature of war today. Contemporary wars are usually civil wars. Very few recent wars have been fought across borders. The fighting is often of the “guerrilla warfare” nature. This is different from wars fought even fifty years ago, which were mainly cross-border conflict, fought between armies, with the majority of casualties being soldiers. Because of these changes in the nature of war, modern warfare affects civilian populations greatly. The handout introduces the concept of war-affected children by asking children to imagine what childhood is like for children living in a war zone.

Handout #2: This handout gives students a general overview of children and war.

Extra Activities

1. Media File: Have students begin a media file of newspaper and magazine clippings that refer to violent conflicts. They can also keep a journal of items that they hear on the radio or see on television. Students can keep the file throughout the use of this kit, keeping an eye out for items on sanctions, child soldiers, refugees and the arms trade as well as any items that refer to children.

2. Geography: Have students locate the countries experiencing wars that they hear or learn about on a large world map (a violent conflict map from Project Ploughshares, www.ploughshares.ca, is included in this kit). Read about these countries in an encyclopaedia to learn about their people and geography.

3. War Movies / Video Games: Discuss any movies or video games that students have seen / played that take place in a war zone. Do students think that they are realistic? What elements of modern war that were described on the handout are missing from these media?

Theme 3 - Child Soldiers

Introduction

In many of today’s conflicts, children (people under the age of 18) are recruited as soldiers. There are many reasons for the current upswing of child soldiers, the foremost being the proliferation of small light-weight weapons that are easy for anyone, including a child, to use. These weapons, such as the AK47, are cheap and readily available. Children are also preferred as soldiers because they have less fear in battle and readily follow orders. Another reason for the proliferation of child soldiers is the nature of war today. The vast majority of wars are fought within a country. The smaller pool of potential soldiers leads groups on all sides of the conflict to look to children to fill their ranks. In civil wars rebel groups and armies often break rules of conduct which might be more binding in international conflict.

Children become soldiers for many reasons. Many are kidnapped or forced to join fighting groups. Some parents give their children to rebel or paramilitary groups. Parents may do this for protection, payment, loyalty to the cause or belief that these organizations can provide a secure

future for their children. Some children voluntarily join armed struggles for similar reasons: to have their families protected or provided for; belief in one side of the struggle; or promise of payment and opportunity. Orphans or those separated from their parents are particularly vulnerable as their fellow soldiers can seem like family and give a sense of belonging.

Children who cease to be soldiers face numerous difficulties. They may not be accepted back into their communities because people are afraid of them or are angry for what they did as soldiers. Children also face emotional and psychological difficulties trying to readjust and cope with normal life. After a conflict ends, former child soldiers often find that their only known livelihood--life behind a gun – is their best prospect for survival, either as criminals or as soldiers in another armed group. There are other long term consequences of using children as soldiers. Evidence from Afghanistan suggests that military involvement of large numbers of children over several generations may contribute to continuing conflict. Luckily, because this issue has gained more prominence in international circles in recent years, several humanitarian organizations such as UNICEF and CARE now have programs to assist child soldiers with the transition back to peace.

Handout #1: Provides a description of the problem of child soldiers, two accounts of child soldiers, and questions which encourage students to think about the experiences of children who are soldiers and why children become soldiers. Classroom discussion can focus on these questions. Students can also be asked how old they thought the child soldiers were. (The Bosnian girl was 17 when she told her story and Solomon was 8.)

Handout #2 : Contains more information about why children become soldiers and the problems that face former child soldiers. The action plan that students are encouraged to create can be put on the wall, or can be typed and sent to Kofi Annan at the United Nations or The Prime Minister's office.

Handout #3: Helps students to see the incongruities of childhood and being a soldier by having them brainstorm adjectives about childhood and soldiers and combine these adjectives in a poem.

Extra Activities

1. **Child Soldier Letters:** (a) After discussing child soldiers divide the class into three groups or more groups, depending on the number of photos of child soldiers. (Pictures of child soldiers are available from UNICEF and on the Internet.) Have students in each group write down adjectives which describe what they see and feel when they see the images. (b) After studying the pictures have the children write an imaginary letter to the child in the photo. (c) Display the letters next to the photos in the school as part of a peace awareness campaign or for Remembrance Day.

2. **Children in Canada's Military?** Canada has ratified/adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and allows people over 18 into the military. Yet on occasion 17-year-olds are also let into the military to begin training.

This is a controversial issue. The government claims that it needs to admit people under 18 in order to have them ready for combat by the time they are 18. However, when Canada violates the UN protocol it gives justification to nations who use child soldiers. Students can research this

issue on the Internet and explore the various implications of Canada's policy. Instead of a debate, children can set up two "sides" of this issue and use the conflict resolution skills of the conflict resolution lesson to try to find a win/win solution to the problem.

Those who decide Canada's policy is wrong can write a letter to the Defence Minister, Foreign Affairs Minister, and their member of Parliament (House of Commons, Ottawa ON K1A 0A6; no postage required).

3. War Toys Discussion: take a class inventory of war toys owned by students. What kind of games are played with these toys? What are common games at recess? Video games? What are these war toys simulating? What is the difference between war games and the experiences of child soldiers?

NB In Stop Teaching Our Kids to Kill psychologist and military officer David Grossman describes how today's violent movies and video games increase aggression in children. Moreover, the video games teach children the mechanics of killing and desensitize them to violence. Grossman informs his readers that these games are almost identical to the simulations used to train and desensitize soldiers. Students concerned about the impact of media violence on the violence which they experience in schools may wish to organize a television or video game "fast" or a discussion forum about these issues.

4. Gangs Discussion: Older children may benefit from a discussion about gangs. Reasons that children join gangs and the difficulties former gang members face are similar to those of child soldiers. Ask students why they think people join gangs and why they become soldiers. Use the blackboard to make parallel lists that highlight any similarities the students come up with.

5. Help Child Soldiers: If your class is very concerned about child soldiers and wants to make a difference, there are numerous groups working to assist them. Students can research these organizations on the Internet and hold an in-school bake sale or "garage" sale and donate the money to a chosen organization.

Theme 4 - Uprooted Children: The Refugee Experience

Introduction

There are millions of refugees and displaced persons in the world today. The vast majority of these people are displaced in their own countries or neighbouring countries. When people leave their homes behind they also leave their livelihoods, their possessions and their communities. Life in refugee camps is difficult, many adults suffer from boredom and frustration. The camps are often crowded and disease can travel quickly. Children may lack access to education and adequate health care.

Before distributing handouts, ask the students what they know about refugees. What is a refugee? How is a refugee different from an immigrant? How many refugees are there in the world today? (The United Nations High Commission for Refugees [UNHCR] puts the number at over 22 million. Other statistics place the figure over 35 million. Definitions of what is a refugee and a displaced person account for the differences. The student handout uses the UNHCR figures.) What do refugees want? (Most refugees want to return home.)

Handout #1: Provides information and statistics on refugees for students; asks a series of questions about the experience of moving in order to help students gain an understanding of the refugee experience.

Further discussion: Many children are separated from their parents in the confusion of fleeing their homes. Ask the students to share whether they have ever been separated from parents or guardians (if they got lost). What were the thoughts/feelings they were experiencing at this time? Did they think they would see their parents/guardians again? What did they do? (UNICEF and the Red Cross both provide services where children's photos are displayed for parents to look for their children. These programs have helped reunite many separated refugee families.)

Handout #2: Provides an account of a refugee's experience in Sudan. For further enrichment, students can locate Sudan on a map and learn about the conflict that is happening there. A good resource for learning about all conflicts is the yearly Armed Conflict Report on the Project Ploughshares website: www.ploughshares.ca

Handout #3: The refugee word-search familiarizes students with some of the places that refugees have come from. The geography component helps students to learn where these places or countries are and to become familiar with the world map. As political conflicts are always starting and ending, students should be aware that this is not a definitive list. People from some of these places may go home soon, while others may be refugees for many years. Have students place pins on the world conflict map on place names from the word-search.

Extra Activities

- 1. Assisting Refugees:** A fundraiser (bake sale or garage sale) like that described in the child soldiers section could also be held to assist an organization that assists refugees. Students could hold one sale and split the proceeds between organizations that help child soldiers and refugees. Several larger organizations such as UNICEF work in both areas.
- 2. Meeting Refugees:** Have someone who has come to Canada as a refugee of war speak to the class. The International Centre is a good resource in Winnipeg for learning about the international community. Perhaps there is a family in the class, or in the school, who are refugees and who would be willing to speak in class.
- 3. Discussion:** Highlight the difference between a displaced person and a refugee. A *displaced person* lives in their country yet cannot return home or be with his or her family due to political reasons. A *refugee* lives in a different country.
- 4. Forum:** Should Canada allow more people into the country as refugees? Have students research the issue, answering questions such as: How many refugees does Canada accept every year? What are the reasons for limitations? How do refugees contribute to Canada? Students can ask their parents and other adults and children their opinion on the issue and then return to the classroom and discuss the issue.

Theme 5 – Sanctions

Introduction

Sanctions are being used more and more regularly as a means of forcing nations to comply with international standards. Sanctions are a complicated issue and this lesson attempts to give students some understanding of the pros and cons of sanctions.

Sanctions are most effective when they are specific, such as just eliminating military imports or placing travel and diplomatic restrictions on a leader of a country. They are also most effective when they have the support of the nation's people, as was the case in South Africa. Burma is a contemporary example of a country whose people are asking the international community for sanctions and boycotts in order to loosen the grip of the military dictatorship. There have also been consistent calls for military sanctions and sanctions against the leaders of Indonesia.

Unfortunately sanctions are a blunt weapon. Broad-based economic sanctions hurt the people who are most vulnerable in society. Food and medicine can become difficult to obtain or expensive. Children's organizations such as UNICEF report that child malnutrition rates generally rise and children are often forced because of economic hardship to discontinue their studies and work for their families.

Two of the handouts in this section mention sanctions against Iraq. The example of Iraq is the leading contemporary example of the ill effects of sanctions. The economy of the entire nation has been destroyed and an estimated 250 children die every day as a result of unclean drinking water, inadequate nutrition and lack of medicine. Sanctions continue despite the fact that Iraq has withdrawn from Kuwait (the original stipulation of the sanctions) and its nuclear weapons program has been dismantled. Former arms inspector Scott Ritter claims that the biological and chemical weapons program has also been destroyed to the extent that Iraq could not launch an attack against another nation. Despite these facts, Iraq remains under sanctions. While the government of Iraq has a record of human rights violations and improper conduct, the sanctions are not shaking that government's hold on power and are instead solidifying it, as the people of Iraq blame the United States for their suffering. It is notable that while Iraq's violations of international law are commonly cited as the reasons for the sanctions, other countries with similar violations are not sanctioned. This leads to questions about the political interests which come into play when the decision is made to sanction a country. There are vast amounts of information about sanctions against Iraq on the Internet. The Iraq Action Coalition has many links to other sites. Their address is <http://leb.net/IAC>.

Handout #1: Begins with a situation in which an imaginary country is violating human rights and international law. Students are asked to imagine how to get the country to comply with human rights without invading. This exercise stimulates thinking about how, without violence, a country can be persuaded to change. Prior to introducing this handout, the concepts "human rights" and "democracy" should be introduced. The handout proceeds to introduce the concepts of sanctions and boycotts.

Further Discussion: Before moving to handout #2 discuss the concepts of needs and wants with children. Have them write a list of five or more items they need and five or more items they want. Discuss the differences between these two and relate it to sanctions by asking: What is

the difference between denying people what they need and what they want?

Handout #2: Introduces the problems that come with sanctions. It explains that the citizens of a sanctioned country are often hurt by sanctions despite the fact that there are few or no changes in the governance of the country, and has students imagine what should and should not be sanctioned.

Further Discussion: Discuss with students how they think it would be possible to place sanctions on a nation without hurting children or other innocent people.

Handout #3: Under UN sanctions, many everyday items are not allowed to enter Iraq. All the answers to clues in this puzzle are items which are not allowed into Iraq because they may have a dual military use. While this may be true for many items (e.g. pencil lead may be broken down for its chemical components), many of these items are also considered necessities. Discuss needs and wants with the students again and have them imagine what life would be like without these items.

Extra Activities

1. Sanctions Forum: Either in a class or as a group, establish the scenario in which country officials are considering placing sanctions on another country which has child soldiers in its military (violating human/child rights). How would you place sanctions on this country to pressure it to release the child soldiers from the military, provide safe reintegration into their families and communities and ensure that no more children will be part of the military?

2. City Sanctions: Some cities have imposed sanctions on certain countries (not allowing anything made in those countries into the city until the country meets human rights standards). Common examples include not buying items from China because of its presence in Tibet and not buying things made in Indonesia because of its government's human rights record. What are good reasons for placing sanctions on a country? Come up with a proposal for your city to put in sanctions on a country.

3. Sanctions Day: Declare a Have Not/ Have day. For the first half of the day run the classroom with less materials (as if the country is under sanctions and these items are unavailable). Try having three students per desk, one pencil per desk, no chalk for the blackboard, have recess in a "safe" designated area as the rest of the playground is littered with landmines, rubble, broken glass etc left from bombings... spend time talking about what it is like doing without.

For the second half of the day consciously have more. Spend time talking about life under sanctions and the purpose of sanctions; how sanctions are calling for change politically yet are most often felt by people who have no power to change their government.

Theme 6 - Military Expenditures And The Arms Trade

Introduction

World military spending reached its height during the Cold War. At that time, it reached about a trillion dollars per year. Since the Cold War there has been some effort at reducing spending

on military. World-wide military spending has decreased to 780 billion per year. However, this figure is still very high and there have been increases in military spending in the United States in the past few years despite the decrease in war.

The US military budget is about 280 billion dollars and the commitments that President Clinton has recently made will increase spending by almost 100 billion over the next six years. This military commitment in the US affects Canada as the US military pressures the Canadian government to increase its spending.

Military spending can be broken into several areas, two of which are important in this lesson: spending on weapons (including research, development, purchasing and maintenance) and spending on the personnel of the armed forces. The Canadian government has been lobbied recently to increase spending in both areas, with complaints of outdated equipment and low wages for military personnel.

Handout #1: The first part of this lesson illustrates that there is a limited amount of money in a government's budget and that money spent for military purposes is taken from other programs such as education. The second section illustrates the fact that a weapon's manufacturing cost is not the only cost of a weapon. When a weapon is used, the damage done by it must also be repaired. Damaged buildings or infrastructure costs money to repair, injured people must be treated, and people who have died are lost to their families and communities.

Further Discussion: Use a pie chart drawn on the board to illustrate that the amount of money that a country spends is limited. Use a workable number depending on the math ability of the class and incorporate percentages if the class is studying percentages in math class. E.g. If a country has one million dollars and spends 500 000 dollars on military, what is left for education, health care, nutrition, roads, government, etc. (Canada spends about 7% of its budget, or 10 billion dollars, on military.)

Discuss the concept of cost. Some economic costs are relatively easy to measure, but how do you measure the cost of a child losing a parent in war? There is the economic cost to the child in that he or she loses economic security and may not be able to attend school. There is also the emotional cost which comes from the grief and life without the guidance of a parent. Knowing that, how can we measure the cost of a weapon?

Handout #2: Uses a bar graph to illustrate some ways in which money is spent in the world. To illustrate for students the disproportion of money spent on military and other items take the class outside or to a large room. Use a roll of toilet paper, with each square representing 1 billion dollars. Lay out the toilet paper graph on the floor/ground. Encourage students to revision the graph and take toilet paper from one category to give it to another.

Further Discussion: Ask students to estimate the ratio: How much do governments around the world spend per soldier compared to per student? (Soldiers 25 to 1 - [World Military Expenditures](#), 1996.)

Extra Activities

1. **Letter Writing:** Canada sells weapons to several countries with questionable human rights records, such as Turkey. Write letters to the Minister of Foreign Affairs who permits these sales. Ask Canada to stop selling weapons that kill people, families and children.

2. **Peace Factory:** Brainstorm in groups or as a class. Imagine that you were able to buy a weapons factory and decided that you do not want to make weapons and would rather create something that will establish or work for peace without losing any jobs.

3. **Resources and Arms Simulation Activity.** This exercise helps students understand that money spent on arms is taken away from other programs because resources are limited.

Materials: 20 poker chips/beans or paper clips per student, 1 activity sheet per student, chalk, chalkboard.

Activity: Invite students to play a game. Give each student 20 beans. Tell the class they will play three games of five to eight moves each.

- ◆ Divide the class into pairs of students and ask each student to sit so that his or her partner cannot see his or her chips. Tell everyone the purpose of the game is to end up with as large a resource pile as possible. A player wins if she or he has fifteen or more resource chips at the end of the game. Arms chips do not count as points at the end of the game.
- ◆ At the beginning of the game, have the students put all twenty of their chips in their resource pile. Tell the players that during each move, they may choose to (a) shift one bean from resources to arms; (b) shift one chip from arms to resources; (c) leave things as they are.
- ◆ Announce each move. For example say, "Make your first move." Once the pairs have completed four moves, ask, "Is there anyone who wants to attack?" A player can only attack if they have four or more beans in their arms pile. If a player wishes to attack they raise their hand and the results are recorded on the board.
- ◆ A *decisive battle* occurs when one player in a pair leads by four or more arms chips. The "loser" must then give six beans from their resource pile to the other player.
- ◆ An *indecisive battle* occurs when the players' arms chips are within three beans of one another's. No one "wins." Resources are unchanged and arms beans are destroyed.
- ◆ After any attack all arms chips are destroyed (permanently removed from the table).

Theme 7 - Building Peace

Introduction

In many conflicts children work for peace in various ways. They attend rallies, set up conflict resolution programs, write letters and take part in NGO programming like radio programs for peace. A children's peace group in Colombia was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. It is important for Canadian children to know how children are working for peace and to believe that they too can contribute to building a peaceful world.

Handout #1: Lists several ways that children can be peacemakers. The ideas on the list range from ways they can work for peace in their classroom to ways they can help with international

issues. Making a code of conduct poster for a peaceful classroom is an activity that can be done in groups, as the discussion as to which rules should appear on the poster gives the opportunity to practice conflict resolution skills.

Handout #2: An excerpt from Zlata's Diary describes children in the Bosnian conflict marching for peace. After answering the questions, children can conduct mock interviews at the peace march. Children can ask the questions on the sheet and make up two or three of their own questions. Volunteers can conduct the interview in front of the class.

Handout #3: This handout acts as a synthesis exercise for the Children and War curriculum. Students write a letter imagining they live in a war zone. The letters should contain ideas inspired from past lessons, such as child soldiers and sanctions. The second half of the letter provides space for children to imagine what can be done for peace. This should be the final exercise done after the supplementary activities give students an understanding of how to work for peace.

Extra Lesson

Types of Peacemakers: Describe to students the various ways that people can work for peace:

1. Peace Keepers: police officers, judges, probation officers, military personnel, lawyers, veterans' organizations, politicians who advocate "peace through strength," the Guardian Angels, school administrators, staff of local regulatory agencies.
2. Negotiators: labour mediators, child advocates, diplomats, ministers, priests, rabbis, people from the neighbourhood tenants' organization, legislators, umpires, referees.
3. Social Activists: politicians, representatives from local political, environmental, human rights, or peace organizations, labour leaders, union members, political party workers.
4. Visionaries: musicians, poets, artists, writers, photographers, film-makers, and many of the people listed above.
5. Peace builders: those people in the community who live according to values of kindness, humanness and social concern, who simply "do good things" on a small everyday level as well as on a larger public scale. They can do this in their professions (civil servants, educators, physicians, etc.) or in their daily lives as citizens, neighbours and parents.

Highlight: Describe the vision, characteristics and skills of one individual who you perceive to have worked for peace and justice. Encourage the students to do the same.

Extra Activities

The activities for this section are practically endless. Perhaps the kids have their own ideas as well. There is no limit to the imagination and actions to be taken in creating peace. Peace is imaginable.

1. **Researching Peacemakers:** Students can use library or Internet resources to learn about individuals who have worked for peace. Peacemakers to research may include:

Rosa Parks; Martin Luther King Jr.; Mahatma Gandhi; Anne Frank; Colombian Children Peacemakers (nominated for Nobel Peace prize 1998); Archbishop Desmond Tutu; Zlata Filipovic; Colourful Wall: a radio program by children in Bosnia for children to reconcile their experiences of war.

2. **Create Posters** on a peace theme and ask neighbourhood shop owners to display them.
3. **Put on a play** or neighbourhood fair that has as its theme the prevention of war.
4. **Television or radio message:** Children could put together a TV and/or radio message about the nuclear arms race. They can create an advertisement or a short program(including interviews, information, songs) that could be aired on local stations.
5. **Peace stickers:** Using blank labels, have children design stamps or stickers that be affixed to envelopes that reflect a peace theme.
6. **Window Display:** Prepare a peace-theme picture window display with your children and find a bank or other public institution in which to place it.
7. **Peace Mural:** Have students design a peace mural. Ask the public library or town/ city hall to display it. Or with permission paint it directly on a blank wall (i.e. at a construction site).
8. **Peace Songs:** Learn peace songs and have your children present them as a concert for the school or community. Or arrange to sing the songs at the town hall or other government building as “peace-carols” for Remembrance Day. Also the songs could be sung at the manufacturers of military weapons or corporations that are doing business in countries at war.
9. **Comic Strip:** Have students create comic strips with a hero who causes the disappearance and removal of weapons of war. Since super-hero's power is not real discuss human “strengths” that could be used.
10. **Place mats:** Students may like to design peace place mats, have them laminated and placed in local eateries.
11. **Random Acts of Peace:** Place a box labelled “Random Acts of Peace” in the corner. Each time a student does an “act of peace,” write it down and put it into the box. After there are a pre-selected number of peace acts in the box, children can have a special event in the classroom.

Extended Focus: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Introduction

In addition to these lessons, it is useful for children to learn about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The UNICEF website offers some suggested classroom activities for this topic.

Background Information:

The *United Nations* (UN) was established October 24, 1945, by 51 countries committed to preserving peace through international cooperation and collective security. To date 188 nations make up the UN – nearly all the nations in the world.

The United Nations is central in global efforts to solve problems that challenge all people, working with 30 affiliated organizations, known together as the UN System. Every day these organizations work to promote respect for human rights, protect the environment, fight disease, encourage development and reduce poverty.

Each nation must accept the UN Charter when they become part of the UN.

The Charter contains four basic principles:

1. to maintain international peace and security;
2. to develop friendly relations among nations;
3. to cooperate in solving international problems and promoting respect for human rights;
4. to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.

United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) was established after World War II(1945) to help make the world a better place for children. UNICEF works in 166 countries, areas and territories on solutions to the problems plaguing children and their families and to offer all children the best possible start to life. The International Convention on the Rights of the Child is significant to the work of the UNICEF.

Internet Resources:

www.UN.org

www.UNICEF.org

Additional Resources

Videos

Dinner for Two, *National Film Board Canada*

Playing Fair Series, *National Film Board Canada*

Our Friend Martin, based on the life of Martin Luther King Jr. (PG) *20th Century Fox Videos*.

Books

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Greenberg, Elliot Keith. *A Haitian Family*. Lerner: Minneapolis, 1998.

Grossman, David. *Stop Teaching Our Kids to Kill*. Crown Publishers: New York, 1999.

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- Murphy, Nora. A Hmong Family. Lerner: Minneapolis, 1997.
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