

CULTIVATING PEACE

<http://www.cultivatingpeace.ca/main.html>

is a collection of **excellent classroom-ready Canadian-made education resources** that will encourage youth to:

- Respect diversity
- Think globally
- Value human rights
- Recognize injustice
- Respond to conflict with methods other than violence
- Search for a culture of peace in their homes, schools, neighbourhoods and the world

The resource is linked to curriculum guidelines across Canada for grades 10, 11 and 12:

- Social Science/Social Studies
- History, Geography and Politics
- Civics, Law and World Issues
- Sociology and Psychology

Teachers can select single activities, a group of activities that form one "lesson" or a set of lessons for integration within a course.

Here is a sample from pages 12 – 15.

Objectives/Expectations

Students will be able to:

- analyze the underlying cultural messages and the prevalence of peace or violence in our society
- construct a definition for a “culture of peace” that includes more than just the absence of war
- evaluate key components of a culture of peace and assess the need for local, national and global change
- examine personal beliefs regarding the ability of individuals to effect change in meaningful ways and the methods that can be used to do so
- identify multiple perspectives on taking action, the need for change and personal responsibility

Note to Teacher: For a thorough exploration of the definition of peace and causes of conflict, please refer to lessons 1 and 2 in the first module, Cultivating Peace in the 21st Century. See page 66 for a complete outline of Module One. Theme Overview

Activity 1: Cultural Messages

1. Students draw a vertical line down the centre of a piece of paper, title the left-hand column “List 1” and the right-hand column “List 2” and write the numbers 1–10 down each column. As the teacher reads each list out loud, students fill in as much as they can in response to each statement. If it says to “picture” something, students place a check mark on the list if they are able to visualize the item. The teacher reads the list at a relatively quick pace to encourage immediate responses.

This activity was contributed by Michael Hovey, Director of Social Justice and Peace Education for the Archdiocese of Detroit, Michigan.

Activity Materials Needed

1 Cultural Messages

Students respond to a list of common cultural items to explore the prevalence of violence or peace as the subtext to our culture.

2 Conditions for Peace

Through the analysis of a quote, students examine the conditions needed to attain a culture of peace and evaluate current media coverage to determine the extent to which these preconditions are in place in the world around them.

3 Personal Perspectives

By completing and discussing a survey, students examine their own beliefs regarding the nature of social transformation, the need for action and their personal ability to bring about change.

4 Perspectives of Others

Students work together to rate and analyze quotes on the need for action, the ways to effect change and the motivation for becoming involved.

- Picture Peace?** lists (included in text of activity) for the teacher to read aloud
- newsprint, markers and glue for each group of four
- recent newspapers, news magazines or news websites
- a copy of the *Taking Stock* survey for each student
- Words Into Action** overhead or copies for each student

Picture Peace?

List 1 List 2

1. Name a movie about war or violence. 1. Name a movie about peace.
2. Picture a war uniform. 2. Picture a peace uniform.
3. Name a high-school course where you study war. 3. Name a high-school course that studies peace.
4. Picture a war painting. 4. Picture a peace painting.
5. Name a television show about war or violence. 5. Name a television show about peace.
6. Name a war hero. 6. Name a peace hero.

7. Name a video game based on war. 7. Name a video game based on peace.
 8. Picture or name a war toy. 8. Picture or name a peace toy.
 9. Picture or name a war memorial or monument. 9. Picture or name a peace memorial or monument.
 10. Name a poem about war. 10. Name a poem about peace.
2. The teacher initiates discussion of responses and uses the following questions to debrief.

Possible Discussion Questions

- Were there any differences in the amount of information you were able to fill in on each list?
- How do you think these messages about violence influence our everyday actions?
- What do your responses reflect about our culture?
- Does the absence of war or violence mean that we have peace? Why or why not?
- Do you think that students should study peace and the underlying causes of violence in school? Why or why not?
- What do you think about the idea of establishing a federal Department of Peace? What might its responsibilities include?
- What do you think is needed for our country or our world to mobilize a culture of peace?
- Do you think that violence and aggression are a natural part of human behaviour and therefore will always be part of our culture?

Note to Teacher: The Seville Statement on Violence, drafted by leading scientists from around the world, examined evidence from evolution, genetics, animal behaviour, brain research and social psychology and determined that humans are in no way “wired” for aggressive behaviour, violence or war. View the full statement at www.unesco.org/shs/human_rights/hrfv.htm.

Activity 2: Conditions for Peace

1. Students are presented with the following quote, which is then displayed in the classroom for continuous reference.

A culture of peace will be achieved when citizens of the world understand global problems; have the skills to resolve conflicts non-violently; know and live by international standards of human rights, gender and racial equality; appreciate cultural diversity; and respect the integrity of the Earth.

Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice for the 21st Century

2. Working in pairs, students identify the preconditions for a culture of peace as laid out in the statement from the Hague. The teacher confirms these preconditions for the class on an overhead or board and then initiates a general class discussion.

Understand global problems Have the skills to resolve conflicts non-violently

Live by international standards of human rights Live by international standards of gender equality Live by international standards of racial equality Appreciate cultural diversity

Respect the earth

Possible Discussion Questions

- Do you agree that these preconditions are necessary before peace can be achieved?
- Do you think there is anything missing?

- Which precondition do you think is the most important for the creation of a culture of peace? Why?
 - The last line of the full Hague quote reads, “Such learning can only be achieved with systematic education for peace.” Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
3. As a class, students discuss how “understanding global problems” relates to, or assists in, the creation of a culture of peace.
 4. Students form groups of four. The teacher assigns one of the remaining preconditions to each group and distributes newsprint, glue, scissors, markers and a variety of recent newspapers, news magazines or news websites. Students scan this material for stories related to their assigned precondition, finding examples from local, national and global levels, if possible. Students write their precondition on the newsprint and glue relevant stories onto the page.

Note to Teacher: Some alternative news websites have been included in the Additional Websites list on pages 64 and 65.

5. Remaining in their groups, students prepare a response to the following question.
 - How do you think your precondition is related to, or assists in, the creation of a culture of peace?
6. The teacher uses the following questions to lead the class into the group presentations of their posters and responses.

Possible Discussion Questions

- How easy or difficult was it to find stories relating to your precondition?
- Are there relationships between the preconditions? If so, what are they?
- What do the stories suggest about the need for change?
- Did you find stories about positive change relating to your precondition?

Note to Teacher: Students can continue to collect stories relating to the preconditions for peace over the course of the module, adding to these posters.

Activity 3: Personal Perspectives

1. The teacher hands out the *Taking Stock* survey and asks students to complete it individually. Once completed, students pair up with a partner to share answers and discuss their selections. Students are encouraged to clearly articulate their rating and rationale for each statement, but they do not need to reach consensus or defend their responses — there are no right or wrong answers.
2. After students discuss their responses in pairs, the teacher initiates class discussion using the questions below. This is an opportunity for students to identify, explore and share their current beliefs and opinions and be introduced to concepts that will be revisited throughout the resource.

Note to Teacher: Placing students in same-sex pairs to discuss their responses is an interesting way to explore possible gender differences in beliefs about social change.

Possible Discussion Questions

- Can you think of any widely held social beliefs, systems or ideas that have changed over time (e.g., *drinking alcohol while pregnant/driving, segregation of blacks, women voting and working, acceptance of common-law or gay relationships*)?
- Are there relationships between local and global actions? What do they look like?
- Who do you think has the most power to change things in our world: individuals, organizations or governments?

(Help students understand that organizations and governments are made up of and/or elected by individuals.)

Activity 4: Perspectives of Others

1. The teacher divides the class into six groups. The ***Words Into Action*** handout can be displayed on a projector or a copy can be handed out to each student. Groups will then determine:
 - the most challenging statement • the most thought-provoking statement
 - the most motivational statement • the least inspiring statement
2. After the results are tabulated, students discuss the reasons for their choices.
3. The teacher assigns each group one of the following topics. Students select quotes that address their topic and summarize the messages presented through the quotes.
 - what causes people to take action • why people choose not to act
 - the power of the individual • the power of a group
 - what kind of action people can take • who is responsible for making change happen
4. As a class, groups present and discuss their selections and summaries. Class discussion follows using the questions below.

Possible Discussion Questions

- Do you think that the motivation to work for peace and justice has to come from a place of anger or personally experienced injustice? Why or why not?
- Does living in one of the richest countries in the world make us more responsible to act?
- Reflecting on quote #16 (Jon Robbins), do you agree that taking action is both a joy and a privilege?

(Make the point that not everyone has the political right to protest.)

- Do any of the quotes contradict each other? If so, which one do you most identify with?

Assessment/Extension Opportunities

Diagnostic

■ Use the ***Taking Stock*** survey to gain insight about the viewpoints, biases and misconceptions that students bring to the classroom or as a baseline to assess attitudinal change if incorporating several lessons from the resource.

▮ Revisit the *Taking Stock* survey at the end of the *Taking Action* module and have students compare their perspectives.

Portfolio

▮ Teachers who will be using a variety of activities from the *Taking Action* resource may want to use the portfolio as a means to gather student work for assessment. If so, be sure to review the *Portfolio Rubric* handout (page 48) with students prior to starting the unit. During the module, consideration should be given to the range of assessment options used for each activity to allow students to reflect on their learning experiences in a variety of ways.

Journal Reflection

▮ Choose your favourite quote from the *Words Into Action* handout and answer the following question.

• If you were to adopt this quote as a motto, how would it change your life?

▮ If world leaders asked for your opinion on how to create a culture of peace, what would you tell them?

▮ Choose one of the quotes and write about a situation or example (*personal, school, community, national or global*) that demonstrates or relates to the quotation.

Research

▮ Research the connection between violent toys, television, music or video games and violent behaviour, and write a position paper or create points to defend a perspective for a class debate.

▮ Research the Seville Statement on Violence (see page 13) and its implications for the creation of a culture of peace.

▮ Research the authors of the peace quotes (Activity 4) and summarize their contributions to creating a culture of peace.

▮ Research a widely held social belief, system or idea that has changed over time (*e.g., drinking alcohol while pregnant/driving, segregation of blacks, women voting and working, acceptance of common-law or gay relationships*). How did the change come about?

Outside the Classroom

▮ Ask students to take the survey home to their parents/caregivers, then tally those results and compare them with class results to explore generational differences or similarities.

Creative Response

▮ Write a poem/short story or create a piece of art/collage that reflects your vision of a culture of peace. Inspiration can be found by visiting the online galleries at the following websites.

TakingITGlobal: Global Gallery — A platform for artistic expressions from around the world. See “Contests” or “Collections” for list of themes of exhibitions. Topics include Peace and Conflict, Towards a Culture of Peace, Global Youth and much more.

www.takingitglobal.org/express/gallery/exhibits.html

NO War Zone Studio — Art, photography, creative writing and music posted by youth from around the world. www.nowarzone.org/thestudio.asp

Free the Children — This youth action site posts poetry and art by youth.
www.freethechildren.com/youthinaction/voices_poems.htm

www.freethechildren.com/youthinaction/voices_artwork_letters.htm