

Peace Mural reflective activity

Introduction

This activity has been created to enable children and young people to respond to war and associated humanitarian crises. It is also an opportunity to reflect on the impact of conflict around the world.

It is our hope that this reflective activity will give space to the children and young people you work with to process their thoughts and feelings on unfolding crises and upsetting stories and images they may have encountered. We acknowledge that there may well be children in school who are personally affected by conflicts, especially if they have family and friends in affected regions and that this might present particular challenges for teachers; this activity is designed for all children to participate in and is focused on peace and hope rather than on the details of conflict itself. Special sensitivity may be required by teachers who know the context of their classrooms, so please do use your judgement and adapt as required.

The activity will offer space for children and young people at various points to reflect personally, with a view that they will write or draw their responses down on paper. Each child will need something to write/draw with and four pieces of A5 paper. At each stage of the reflection, there is an opportunity to collect in their thoughts by passing round a bag or basket. If possible, keep each round of paper separate from the others as this will help you to create the Peace Mural.

We recommend that, after the activity, a member of staff uses the pieces of paper to create a Peace Mural using the themes:

- Things that have caused anxiety/how it might feel to be affected by conflict
- Things we can do to find inner peace and joy
- Visions for what a peaceful world would look and feel like
- Ways and ideas of how you as a school community could be peace-makers.

If you have space on a display board, it may be useful to keep your Peace Mural on display as a reminder during times of conflict and tension.

We feel it could be a useful tool to revisit as anxieties will continue to affect many children and young people.

This exercise will also help you as adults to get an insight into the thoughts and feelings of the children in your care.



Talk with pupils about the situation which you are going to think about during this time of reflection. Allow pupils a few moments to get comfortable and ready to listen quietly. Then use the following words to help them process their concerns and feelings:

Over the past days and weeks, we may have seen images and heard stories on the news that can cause us to feel sad and anxious..

It is normal to feel upset about bad situations – it helps to let us know something is wrong in the world around us.

When we keep our anxiety and fears locked up inside of us, they can cause us harm by making us feel more and more worried. When we share with others how we feel, it can help us lighten the feelings of anxiety.

Within our school community and families, if we find the space to share our concerns. We can offer strength and support to each other.

Instruct the children to spend some time quietly writing or drawing things that have made them feel anxious or sad. Make sure to share that they shouldn't put their names on the paper for the whole of this activity.

When everyone has had a chance to reflect and put to paper their ideas and reflections, pass round a bag or basket for everyone to put their paper into.

Every single person is unique, valuable, and worthy of love, care, and respect. Every person has gifts, talents, and passions that fill us with the joy of life. When we share our gifts with the world, they can help bring a sense of peace and calmness to our hearts and enrich the lives of others around us. We can improve our own lives and the lives of others around the world in many different ways using our individual talents.

Invite the children to spend time drawing or writing down the things they do that help to bring a sense of peace and joy.

When everyone has had a chance to reflect and put to paper their ideas and reflections, pass round a bag or basket for everyone to put their paper into.

(Note: keep each round separate as this will help with creating the Peace Mural).

When people lose their homes, way of life - and sometimes their lives - to conflict. it is a tragedy. Each loss is a loss to global community, a loss of wonderful gifts and talents, and can be a threat to the cultures that enrich our wonderful world. All those who feel sad in the face of violence and conflict, do not feel sad alone.

We are all unique and wonderful, and we can join together with communities everywhere to build a better world.



Invite the children to draw or write down their hopes for what the world can be – how would the world look or feel like if we were all at peace together?
When everyone has had a chance to reflect and put to paper their ideas and reflections, pass round a bag or basket for everyone to put their paper into.

One of the impacts of war and conflict is that many people are forced to leave their homes and countries behind. Many people don't want to leave their homes, communities and their favourite things behind, yet they have no choice but to find safety somewhere else.

It takes courage and bravery for people to leave behind everything they have ever known and to journey into other places (or countries) that can feel very different, where they may not speak the language or know anyone.

It also takes courage to welcome people into our communities who are strangers, to share what we have, even when we are worried that we may not have all that we need. To open our homes and our communities to welcome, love and to provide safety to people who have lost everything is a brave thing to do.

We are global citizens, and we are part of a global community. We stand together with people who have to leave their homes to find safety elsewhere.

Invite the children to draw or write ideas for how we can welcome people into our communities, and how we can share what we have with people who have lost almost everything they ever had.

When everyone has had a chance to reflect and put to paper their ideas and reflections, pass round a bag or basket for everyone to put their paper into.

NOTE Pass round bags after each section – no names on paper. Opportunity for staff to moderate what gets displayed.

Poem from Ukraine

Visit <https://www.voicesofyouth.org/poems-for-peace>. The first poem is written by 14-year-old Daria from Ukraine. You could either ask one of the children to read it or play the YouTube video of Daria reading it herself.

The poem gives us an insight into the sense of despair about the conflict and the isolation that the communities affected by war and conflict may be feeling – they are 'waiting for someone to care'. Despite this, Daria has written a poem which ends with hope, she still has a belief in a happy future living in harmony and peace.

The line 'we forget that every door has its own unique lock' brings to mind the symbol of safety and security which the people in areas of conflict are seeking and also makes us



think of our own unique lock, our own individual talents and feelings that we need to unlock to become global citizens and stand in solidarity with communities across the world who are living in conflict.

Lesson idea: Ask the children to write their own poems of hope in response to Daria. You could start by gathering words of hope as a class to give the children a starting point. Your poems could be added to the Peace Wall.



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