

The Teaching Peace Initiative Curriculum

Approaching Life from a Non-Violent and Open-Minded Perspective

Grades 6-8

The Curriculum

Our four-session curriculum consists of:

- o Session One: Articulating Peace
- o Session Two: Differences and Prejudice
- o Session Three: Conflict and Empathy
- o Session Four: Becoming Peacemakers

Session One: Peace

Purpose:

Students will be able to:

- Understand a flexible definition of peace rooted in TPI's mission
- Strengthen their personal conception of peace rooted in their values and beliefs

Pre-Session Preparation:

Purpose: To prepare materials for every new class.

1. Collaborate with the teacher to provide paper. (Part 4)

Part 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

Purpose: To introduce TPI and provide transparency on the goals of the curriculum.

1. Briefly introduce yourself.
2. Briefly state why you are here.
 - a. "As a Teaching Peace Initiative peer educator, my goal is to create a dialogue where we can voice our ideas about peace, discover its role in conflict, and become peacemakers ourselves." Now, explain your personal motivation.
3. Ask students to introduce themselves.
 - a. Pose an open question to the students. You may ask any of the following questions or another question of your choice:
 1. What is your favorite hero, real or imaginary?
 2. If you could have any superpower, what would it be?
 3. What is an adjective that best describes you?

Part 2: The Human Knot (5 minutes)

Purpose: To ease students into the curriculum with an engaging ice-breaker that inspires dialogue and collaboration between students.

1. Divide the class into small groups of five students each. (30 sec)
2. Ask students to form a circle within their groups and extend each hand to hold a different person's hand on the other side of the circle.

3. Without letting go of each other's hands, students should be instructed to "detangle" the human knot until they form a circle. Supervise the detangling and provide hints and encouragement when necessary. (4 minutes)
4. Significance of activity: This is a really fun and challenging activity, and the way to win the game and untie the knot is to communicate, listen, and work together! (30 sec)

Part 3: Pre-Test (5 minutes)

Purpose: To gauge the current state of the student's perspective of peace and conflict.

Part 4: Bullying in Middle School Culture (15 minutes)

Purpose: To inspire students to reflect upon examples of bullying and social exclusion in middle school culture, connect their experiences to the greater, more abstract idea of peace, and understand the importance of peace in their lives.

1. Introduce the activity: The goal of today is to begin creating our definitions of peace. However, it might be helpful to first identify examples of bullying in middle school, which hinders peace. (30 sec)
2. Hand out slips of paper to the students. Ask students to write down a time they or a friend experienced bullying/social exclusion in their middle school. Emphasize that students may not name a person in their story; this is a time for reflection, not for accusations and conflict.
The students should answer the following question:
 - a. What was the experience and how did it make them feel? (5 minutes)
3. Collect the slips of paper in a bag. Ask students in the room to pick out slips of paper and read them out loud to the class. If students have experienced or seen a similar conflict, they should stand up. (9 minutes)
4. Significance of the exercise: When peace exists, we can work together to overcome injustice, bullying, and conflict. The existence of injustice and conflict is reason for us all to value the role of peace in our lives and work as peacemakers in our communities. Peace is not just important for the President of the United States or the United Nations; peace plays a role even in our smaller communities. (30 sec)

Part 4: Peace is...Relay Race (15 minutes)

Purpose: To guide students into articulating their own personal conception of peace rooted in their values and beliefs by way of example and collaboration with their peers.

1. Divide the class in half. The groups should form a line, and the first person in one line should face the first person in the other line.
2. Explain the rules of the Relay Race using an example: The people at the front of each line need to answer the question, "What is a cup?" Example:
Person 1: "A cup is a pencil holder."
Person 2: "A cup is for drinking water or tea."

The first person to answer reasonably can move to the back of their line, allowing the next person in their line to get a chance. No answer can be repeated. The line where all of the students have answered the question wins the race. (2 minutes)

3. Now, pose the question, "What are examples of peace?" Follow the rules explained in Part 2. Write down their responses on the board. Possible answers:
 - a) Helping a friend
 - b) Forgiving someone
 - c) Apologizing for a mistake (5 minutes)
4. At the end of the game, ask students to return to their seats. Summarize the students' responses, looking for common threads. (3 minutes)
5. Discuss why peace is important to you personally. To help you brainstorm, here are some sample responses:
 - a. Peace is important because my friends and I are kind to one another.
 - b. I can wear the clothes and listen to the music I like without fearing bullying or judgement.
 - c. I am not judged for the color of my skin or nationality. (1 minute)
6. Guide students toward understanding *how* they obtained their concept of peace. Did they learn and adopt these beliefs from a teacher, family, friends, songs, or shows? Include examples from your own life if necessary to help students brainstorm. Emphasize that everyone can have different definitions of peace based on their own experiences and values. (4 minutes)

Part 6: Conclusion (1 minute)

Purpose: To wrap up session one and provide students with ideas/suggestions to continue peace-learning and peacemaking outside of the classroom.

1. Express your gratitude for the students and their enthusiasm in session one.
2. Highlight that there are many ways students can continue learning about peace outside the classroom (ex. reading/watching the news). Emphasize that the learning doesn't stop here.
3. Ask them to continue the discussion about peace and its role in our lives, schools, and larger communities with other friends and family members.
4. If students have questions or comments, they can visit the TPI website.

Session Two: Differences and Prejudice

Purpose:

Students will be able to:

- Appreciate the similarities *and* differences between themselves and the people around them
- Understand how ignorance and prejudice are connected
- Comprehend how prejudice can hurt people

Pre-Session Preparation:

Purpose: To prepare materials for every new class.

1. Print out the TPI BINGO sheet. (Part 1)
2. Select two news recent, local articles that highlight prejudice, fear, and/or ignorance.
Print four copies of each article. (Part 2)

Part 1: Differences and Similarities BINGO (24 minutes)

Purpose: To enable students to identify the many ways their classmates are similar and different from one another and understand that these differences are beautiful and unique pieces of our identities. These differences should not impede cooperation, coexistence, and respect.

1. Hand out BINGO sheets to each student. Below is an example of a BINGO sheet:

Celebrates a religious holiday	Loves ice cream	Loves to read books
Speaks a second language	Has Brown Hair	Dislikes spiders

2. Instruct students to find classmates who fit the description in the boxes. Once they find a classmate, the classmate should sign the box. The first person to fill in all of the boxes in a line vertically, horizontally, or diagonally should raise their hand and say, “BINGO!” Encourage students to shoot for “double” or “triple” BINGOS where each box contains two+ signatures. (10 minutes)
3. Significance of activity: Ask students, “What does this exercise teach us?” Write down their ideas, and drive home the following point if it has not been stated: Emphasize that although we are all different, these differences are beautiful and vital to our identities. We have many similarities too-many of us dislike spiders, and in the same way, many of us also love ice cream. (2 minutes)
4. What are the ways that we are all different? Ask the students to brainstorm in groups, writing down their thoughts. Possible answers:
 - a) Race/Ethnicity
 - b) Religion
 - c) Culture
 - d) Sexual orientation
 - e) Gender
 - f) Appearance
 - g) Personal preferences (favorite food, movie, music, etc.) (6 minutes)

5. Ask groups to share out and think about how these differences are important to their own identities. Answer the question yourself, and then hear their responses. (6 minutes)

Part 2: Prejudice, Ignorance, and Fear (20 minutes)

1. Group students in teams of four, and hand out two news articles to each group. The articles should all be different, but they should all highlight examples of prejudice in our communities. Possible examples:
 - a) The case of Kendrick Johnson
<http://www.cnn.com/2016/01/21/us/georgia-kendrick-johnson-attorney-exits/>
 - b) Two Muslim woman wearing hijab attacked on bus
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3362161/Pictured-Two-women-hunted-police-punching-kicking-Muslim-hijab-violent-Islamophobic-attack-London-bus.html>
 - c) Trayvon Martin Case
<http://www.cbsnews.com/feature/george-zimmerman-trial-trayvon-martin-case/>
 - d) Antigay Attack
<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/07/nyregion/man-injured-in-gay-bias-attack-in-greenwich-village.html>
2. Before the students begin, ask them to keep in mind the following questions.
 - a) What is prejudice? How are these articles examples of prejudice?
Prejudice is having a preconception about a person and/or group of people, especially due to one or more of their “differences.” These articles demonstrate examples of religious and racial prejudice or prejudice based on sexual orientation.
 - b) How do ignorance and fear fuel prejudice and social exclusion? How do these themes surface in these articles?
Ignorance is a lack of knowledge about a particular topic, and it can fuel prejudice because as humans we often fear what we do not understand; groups of people who are different from us make us uncomfortable and fearful. This is why in middle school, when we develop a heightened awareness of our differences, we begin to socially exclude individuals or groups of people. Fear drives this social exclusion, and in turn, social exclusion generates more fear.
 - c) What is tolerance?
Tolerance is accepting people’s differences. There is religious and racial tolerance as well as tolerance based on sexual orientation.

3. As they read, walk around the classroom, listen to their discussions, and probe their thinking. (15 minutes)
4. Regroup and highlight that the groups did a great job of thinking critically about the articles. Emphasize the answers in italics (above) to ensure every student in the class understands these concepts. (5 minutes)

Part 3: Conclusion (1 minute)

Purpose: To wrap up session two and provide students with ideas/suggestions to continue their learning outside the classroom.

1. Express your gratitude for the students and their enthusiasm in session two.
2. Highlight that there are many ways students can continue learning about peace outside the classroom (ex. reading/watching the news). Emphasize that the learning doesn't stop here.
3. Ask them to continue the discussion about prejudice and its role in our lives, schools, and larger communities with other friends and family members.
4. If students have questions or comments, they can visit the TPI website.

Session Three: Conflict and Empathy

Purpose:

Students will be able to:

- Articulate causes of conflict and using peaceful tools to overcome conflict
- Differentiate between “you vs. me” and “compromise”
- Understand the importance of empathy

Pre-Session Preparation:

Purpose: To prepare materials for every new class.

1.

Part 1: Empathy and Music (20 minutes)

Purpose: To enable students to importance of understanding one another’s feelings, thoughts, and ideas and put themselves in their shoes (empathy).

1. Show the following music video from Beyoncé’s “Formation” and hand out sheets of paper with the song’s lyrics. Before you play the video, group students in teams of four and ask them to discuss the following questions as the video plays.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrCHz1gwzTo>
 - a) Putting ourselves in Beyoncé’s shoes, what can we learn about the Black Lives Matter movement, police brutality, and the celebration of African American life from the video? (6 minutes)
2. Ask teams to share their ideas. (5 minutes)
3. Repeat the same steps for Ed Sheeran’s “Small Bump”:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_af256mnTE
 - a) Putting ourselves in Ed Sheeran’s shoes, what can we learn about the experience of losing a child? What lyrics in the song help us empathize with him? (3 minutes)
4. Ask teams to share their ideas. (5 minutes)
5. Pose the question, “What is empathy? Why is empathy important?”
Empathy is the ability to put ourselves in someone’s shoes and understand their feelings. Empathy can solve conflict and help us see a situation from the perspective of another person. These songs are effective because the lyrics enable us to understand a person’s emotions. (4 minutes)

Part 3: Conflict Mediation Tool-kit (15 minutes)

Purpose: To expand the students' approaches to solving conflict.

1. In order to develop ways to address conflict, we need to first understand the root causes of conflict. Pose the question, "Why does conflict occur?" Ask students for their opinions and guide them toward the following answers:
 - a) Difference in opinion/perspective
 - b) Lack of empathy
 - c) Existence of stereotypes/prejudices
 - d) Miscommunication (4 minutes)
2. Now, emphasize that before we can solve conflict, all parties involved must first take the "Bird's Eye View" and view the conflict in its entirety. What happened first, second, last? It is important for us to take a step back instead of focusing just on our own perspectives and roles in the conflict. (1 minute)
3. Present the question, "What are methods we can use to solve conflict?" As students give their answers, write common threads on the board. Some suggested methods are listed below. After each method, provide an example of the method at play.
 - a) Perspective-Taking: We need to value the ideas and opinions of the other person. Situations of conflict have a lot of ambiguity; the reason why the disagreement exists is because nothing is black and white.
 - b) Seek a New Perspective: Sometimes it is difficult to see a situation clearly and objectively when we are personally invested in it. If the parties cannot solve the conflict, we can ask a trusted friend of all the parties to intervene and provide their perspective.
 - c) Compromise: All the parties agree on a solution that requires a condition to be met by each of them. None of the parties will be 100% happy with the solution, but this method ensures every party can agree on the solution.
 - d) Discussion, not Debate: Each party needs a chance to articulate their perspective. During this time, the other parties may not interrupt. Sometimes conflict occurs when we are not listening to other people. Often, we agree on more than we disagree, but we remain too focused on arguing.
 - e) Seek Guidance: Always call a trusted adult if you feel unsafe during a conflict, especially if the conflict becomes emotionally or physically abusive. (10 minutes)

Part 4: Conflict Skit (14 minutes)

Purpose: To help students simulate situations of conflict as well as apply peacemaker tools of solving them.

1. During session one, we asked students to brainstorm their personal experiences dealing with conflict/injustice. Before the class, select one example from that batch and create a skit with it.
2. Divide the class into four groups. Assign the following roles to each group: participant #1, participant #2, teacher, and friend of the participants in the conflict. (30 sec)
3. You and your peer educator will act out the conflict skit. (1 minute)
4. Ask groups to discuss how they would solve the conflict in their respective roles. Remind them of the methods we brainstormed earlier. (3 minutes)
5. Ask one student from each group to share one way they would solve the conflict. Ask each group shares, pose the following question to the other groups, “Do you agree or disagree with this method? Why?” Emphasize that situations are not black and white, and often we can use different methods to solve conflict. (10 minutes)

Part 5: Conclusion (1 minute)

Purpose: To wrap up session three and provide students with ideas/suggestions to continue their learning outside the classroom.

1. Express your gratitude for the students and their enthusiasm in session three.
2. Ask students to think back to the example of conflict they wrote about during session one. How can they apply the new conflict resolution strategies they learned to that example of conflict?
3. If students have questions or comments, they can visit the TPI website.

Session Four: Becoming Peacemakers

Purpose:

Students will be able to:

- Identify peacemakers in history and in their communities
- Articulate the difference between action and inaction
- Perceive themselves as peacemakers with the ability to create change in their lives, families, schools, and larger communities

Part 1: Identifying with Peacemakers (10 minutes)

Purpose: To ease students into the curriculum with an engaging ice-breaker that inspires dialogue and collaboration between students. Additionally, the exercise helps students begin to identify with peacemakers with similar interests.

1. At the front of the room, display five examples of local, young peacemakers with their picture and goals/accomplishments.
2. Call up tables/rows one at a time to observe the peacemakers and ask students to answer the following question, “Which peacemaker do you most identify with and why? Which peacemaker could you see yourself as?” (5 minutes)
3. Ask for students to share their responses. (5 minutes)

Part 2: What Would a Peacemaker Do? (11 minutes)

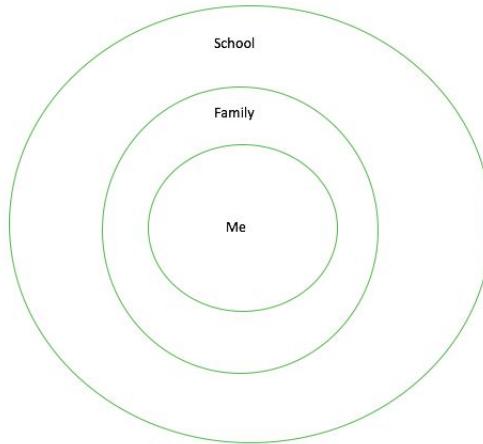
Purpose: To help students articulate the actions of peacemakers.

1. Blast from the past: Do a quick recap of session one and two:
 - a) What is peace? Is there one definition of peace?
 - b) What is prejudice? How are is it related to fear? (3 minutes)
2. Now that we have an understanding of peace, we need to understand how to apply it to our daily lives. Team students in groups of four. Hand each group a piece of paper with a scenario. (30 sec)
3. Ask groups to answer the following questions addressing the scenarios: “What should peacemakers do in this situation? What should peacemakers avoid doing?” (30 sec)
4. The students should discuss the scenario and write their responses to the questions on the sheets of paper. (2 minutes)
5. Instruct groups to trade scenarios, read previous responses, and add their own if necessary. Repeat one more time. (4 minutes’ total)
6. Summarize: We saw that there are many ways peacemakers can act in different situations. We came up with these lists ourselves, together! We are all capable of thinking and acting like peacemakers. (1 minute)

Part 3: Peacemakers at Multiple Levels: Community Circles (12 minutes)

Purpose: To help students identify peacemakers in their families, schools, smaller and larger communities. The activity emphasizes that peacemaking is concrete and tangible—we can identify examples of peacemaking and peacemakers in our own lives.

1. Using your own community circle as an example, ask students to create their own community circles. Share your circle first, highlighting important peacemakers in your life. (2 minutes)



2. Ask students to create their own. Students should create multiple circles (potentially 5+), each circle representing a community they are a part of. At the very center, ask students to write their name. Examples of possible communities include:
 - a) Family
 - b) School
 - c) Sports team
 - d) State
 - e) World
 - f) Universe
 - g) Religious community
 - h) Town (5 minutes)
3. Now, pose the question, “Who are peacemakers in each community circle?” Ask students to write their names/roles (mom, coach, teacher) in each community circle, adding at least two peacemakers to each circle. (5 minutes)

Part 4: Identifying as Peacemakers (12 minutes)

Purpose: To guide students toward seeing themselves as active peacemakers in their communities.

1. The center-most circle, labeled with each student's name, was not filled in in Part 3. We have spent time thinking about how other people in our lives are peacemakers, but we all have the power to become peacemakers ourselves.
2. Everyone can be a peacemaker, no matter how old! You don't need to make a big difference to make an important difference. Pose the question, "What are ways in which we are peacemakers, even as kids? What are ways your classmates are peacemakers?" Suggested answers are given below. As students share out, their classmates should raise their hands if they have carried out this specific action. Additionally, the students can fill in their "me" circle with these actions. (10 minutes)
 - a. We are capable of loving and respecting one another.
 - b. I share my Cheetos with my friend.
 - c. I volunteer at a soup kitchen with my church.

Part 5: Post-Test

Purpose: To gauge student learning and growth from the four sessions.

Part 5: Conclusion (1 minute)

Purpose: To wrap up session four and provide students with ideas/suggestions to continue their learning outside the classroom.

1. Express your gratitude for the students and their enthusiasm in all of the sessions.
2. Emphasize that although this is the last day of the curriculum, learning does not have to stop here-all of the students are capable of being peacemakers and citizens of the world.
3. If students have questions or comments, they can visit the TPI website.

