



Pictures of Peace

Workshop Overview

Introduction

Throughout the world, violence is pervasive. American troops are stuck in two quagmires in Iraq and Afghanistan. Both of which have caused millions of deaths and billions of dollars worth of damage. Throughout Africa, civil unrest is disturbing the lives of people in Darfur, The Congo, and Zimbabwe. Food shortages in Latin America and Asia have caused violence in the streets.

Furthermore, women, people of color, indigenous people and members of the Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, Transgender, and Queer communities face persecution, inequity and violence here in the United States and abroad. There is still no affordable health care universally available to American citizens. And economically distressed people have not been able to find a leg up out of crippling poverty in urban and rural areas alike.

Young people face the struggles of malnutrition, failing schools, domestic and street violence. People, particularly women, face the pain, frustration and stigma of intimate abuse and sexual violence. Anger in the streets is high and desperation turns to crime. Low self esteem among young people causes self harm, mutilation, and suicide. Shootings in our schools and churches have become all too common.

The world is obviously a hurting place.

However, some people work to end violence directly. They protest current wars and work to prevent future ones. They stand between armies. They work with gang members and ex-offenders. They give safe haven for people fleeing abusive homes.

Other people are working to end structures of violence and inequity. They are working to build affordable housing for low income families. They are working to make sure every person has access to health care. They are making sure schools are fully funded and safe place for children to learn, grown and develop.

Others are working to end the culture violence that permeates our world. They are struggling for equal rights for women and comprehensive sexuality education. People stand for the rights of BGLTQ people by creating stronger hate crimes laws and giving people equal access to marriage. There are people trying to change the divisiveness of hate rhetoric surrounding Muslim populations and Latino immigrants.

There are people actively working for peace together. Unitarian Universalists, along with other people of faith and conscience are working for a better world where we can imagine peaceful resolutions to conflict and equal access to resources. People are working for a world where every child is loved and every elder is honored. People are working for a world of justice and peace for all.

This work is difficult. By imagining a world of peace, we help ourselves make the first step toward creating that world. That is why, now, in the Holiday Season and with a new Government, we are giving ourselves the opportunity to imagine that world of peace and justice. Please come together as families, friends and members of a religious community to develop pictures of peace for the future.

Goals

- To have participants envision and create images of peace using a variety of media.
- To have UU communities speak about peace, particularly the Statement of Conscience on Peacemaking.
<http://uua.org/socialjustice/issuesprocess/currentissues/peacemaking/121606.shtml>
- To have congregation members organize an intergenerational lobbying visit to elected officials.

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Discuss issues of peace and violence facing our world;
- Share ideas of a peaceful world;
- Use artistic media to create visions of a peaceful world.

Workshop-at-a-Glance (Total Length of Time-1 Hour)

Opening (5 Minutes)

Activity 1- What is Peace? (10 Minutes)

Activity 2- Envisioning Peace (10 Minutes)

Activity 3- Building Peace (15 Minutes)

Faith in Action (10 Minutes)

Taking it home (5 Minutes)

Closing (5 Minutes)

Spiritual Preparation

Today, people will be speaking about peace. There are many views on peace. And there can be passionate disagreements of what peace looks like and how to achieve it. What are your own views on peace? How can you work with people who have differing opinions on peace? How do you deal with conflict on a personal or congregational level?

Workshop Plan

Opening

Materials- Chalice, Matches, Opening Words on Peace.

<http://www.wagingpeace.org/menu/issues/peace-&-war/start/peace-quotes/index.htm> is a very good site with a wide variety of peace quotes

Suggested Words-

“Peace cannot be achieved through violence, it can only be attained through understanding.”

-- Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

Activities

Activity 1- What is Peace? (10 Minutes)

Materials- Butcher Paper/White Board/Chalkboard and appropriate writing materials

Ask participants to brainstorm what peace is. Write the answers on the board in a style that seems fitting. Make a list, group by theme or create a topic tree where themes branch off of each other.

Activity 2- Envisioning Peace (10 Minutes)

Ask participants to sit in a comfortable position with their eyes closed. Thinking about what was just brainstormed; ask them to imagine what a peaceful world could look like. If it helps, ask the following questions:

Who is in your peaceful world?

How are conflicts solved?

How are resources shared?

How do people support each other when bad things happen?

How are people, animals and nature treated?

How do people celebrate and worship?

Activity 3- Building Peace (15 Minutes)

Materials- Arts and Crafts Supplies of all variety. Paper, paint, crayons, glue, scissors, old magazines, cardboard paper tubes, cereal boxes, crepe paper, rubber stamps, ink, yarn, clay, etc.; a digital camera for taking pictures of participants and their pictures; a digital scanner for making copies to send to the UUA Washington Office.

Have participants devote about 10 minutes to creating artwork showing their peaceful worlds. Have older and younger people help each other. With about five minutes remaining, have participants come together in diverse groups of three or four depending on number of participants and have every one share their pictures. Remember to give people the space to pass or not share. They may need more time to process their experience.

Faith in Action

Organize an In-District Lobby Visit

Ask for adult volunteers to help organize a lobbying visit to a local elected official. Also ask for volunteers to donate their pictures as a gift to the elected official's office. The UUA's Advocacy and Witness team has many great resources on creating a lobbying visit including a list of Legislative Objectives for the next Congress. Gather an intergenerational group to deliver the pictures to the office.

The UUA is also collecting Pictures of Peace to be used in a slideshow at General Assembly 2009 as well as a YouTube video. You can send your pictures of Peace through the following ways:

- Scan your pictures into a digital format.
- Email your photos to [peacemaking @ uua.org](mailto:peacemaking@uua.org).
- Upload your photos to the UUA's "[Pictures of Peace](#)" Flickr group. A Yahoo! ID is required to upload photos.
- Upload your photos to the UUA's [Facebook page](#). You must have a Facebook profile and be a fan of the UUA's Facebook page in order to upload photos. Please write in the caption that your photo is from "Pictures of Peace" and that you give the UUA the right to reprint, distribute, and otherwise use the photo. Please also write the name, city, and state of the congregation where the photo was taken.

Give Feedback on Statement of Conscience on Peacemaking (Alternative Action)

The UUA is currently collecting feedback on the Draft Statement of Conscience on Peacemaking (SOC). Ask participants (including youth and young adults) if anybody would like to help review the SOC rough draft. Feedback is due Feb 1st to <http://dyn.uua.org/congregation/>. The UUA has provided a resource on how congregations can collect feedback. That is available at <http://uua.org/peacemaking>.

Closing

Materials- Chalice, Closing Words about Peace

<http://www.wagingpeace.org/menu/issues/peace-&-war/start/peace-quotes/index.htm>

Suggested Words-

"It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it."

-- Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962)

Taking It Home

During today's workshop...

We envisioned and built peace together. We learned from each other and created peaceful worlds with our hearts, minds and hands. What have we learned today?

How will we take what we learned today and bring it into our homes, our classrooms and our workplaces? How will we practice peace with our families, our friends and the people in our neighborhoods?

How can we remember to practice peace with each other? With whom can you talk about conflict, peace and violence?

Handouts

None of these handouts are required but they could be very helpful in planning the workshop, especially the Faith in Action portion.

Planning a Lobbying Visit (UUA Washington Office)-

<http://uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/advocacytips/26869.shtml>

UUA Advocacy and Witness Legislative Objectives for 2009-2010-

http://uua.org/documents/washingtonoffice/legislative_objectives.pdf

UUA Draft Statement of Conscience on Peacemaking-

http://uua.org/documents/csw/pm_soc_0811_draft.pdf

Congregational Statement of Conscience Feedback Resource-

http://www.uua.org/documents/washingtonoffice/peacemaking_collect_feedback.pdf

Find Out More

The UUA has a wide variety of resources available to congregations on peacemaking. A great place to start is at <http://uua.org/peacemaking>. There, you can find our Religious Educator's Curriculum Guide with over 80 pages of Lifespan RE curriculum on peace spanning the world's religious traditions, including Unitarian Universalism. You can also find a series of adult spiritual development guides on peace, conflict and violence. There are also listservs about UU peacemaking available through the UUA. If you want your congregation to be listed as an official participating peacemaking congregation, please write to peacemaking@uua.org.

The UUA also has a great series of Lifespan RE curriculum called Tapestry of Faith: <http://uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/index.shtml>.

Tapestry of Faith has many more guides similar to this one on developing a strong UU identity and faith. There is also a truly excellent guide on incorporating arts into children's religious education. It is available here:

<http://uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/spiritualityand/index.shtml>