



Lessons for Upper Elementary School

Lesson 3: What Does Peace Mean?

Adapted from the *Peacebuilding Toolkit for Educators – Middle School Edition*, United States Institute of Peace, <https://www.usip.org/public-education/peacebuilding-toolkit-educators>

Grade: 3rd – 5th grades

Objectives:

1. To develop a common and individual understanding of the meaning of peace
2. To consider the importance of defining peace as an individual and as a class
3. To identify examples of peace in our own lives

Common Core State Standards:

- Informational Text Standards – Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Grades 3-5 Standard 7

Materials:

Blackboard or whiteboard, chalk or markers, blank paper, coloring utensils (optional), pencils, *Exit Pass* worksheet

Time: 45 minutes

Procedures

I. Essential Questions

1. Is there one way to define peace?
2. Why is it important to talk about what peace means to each of us?
3. Where do we see peace in our own lives?

II. Introduction/Teacher Directed (5 minutes)

1. Before the lesson starts, write the word PEACE in the center of the board. Then, distribute a blank piece of paper to each student. Have them write their name in the top left corner.
2. Share with students that this class, they will be discussing the meaning the peace. Tell students that they have 30 seconds to write down on their paper some words that make them think of peace.

3. After students have silently brainstormed their words, ask for volunteers to share, and write their words on the board around the word PEACE.

Teacher note: If you want to challenge your students, you could ask them to write a definition of peace instead of brainstorming words.

III. Guided Practice (20 minutes)

1. Divide students into groups of 6-8. Tell students that on the blank side of their paper, they are going to draw a picture that shows what they think peace is. They should only use pictures and symbols, no words. They will have one minute to draw. Let students know that they will share their drawings with others who will add to them.
2. Stop them after 1 minute and have them pass the paper to the person next to them.
3. Direct the students to add to what they see on the paper, keeping peace as the theme.
4. Stop them after 30 seconds and have them pass the paper to the person next to them.
5. Direct the students to add to what they see on the paper, keeping peace as the theme.
6. Repeat this process until everyone gets their own drawing back.

IV. Independent Practice/Discussion (15 minutes)

1. Ask:
 - What happened to your picture? Does it still show your thoughts about peace?
 - How did it feel to have others add to your picture? Possible answers might include: feeling unhappy that someone changed their ideas, feeling proud that someone built upon their ideas, feeling anxious about their ideas being changed or about other students seeing their drawing.
2. Direct students to turn their papers over and review their list of words based on their final drawing. They can add new words or take away words from their list.
3. Tell students that by revising their list of words, their lists about peace now reflect what others in their class also think about peace. Ask for volunteers to share any words they added to their list. Write these words on the board around the word PEACE. Add your own words, if you think any important ones are missing.
4. Share that the words on the board make up your class definition of peace. Note that peace can mean different things to each of us. Lead a conversation using the follow questions:
 - Why do you think we each might mean different things when we say peace? Elicit answers that involve multiple perspectives and experiences.
 - Why is it important to talk about what we mean when we say peace? Some answers can include that this helps us recognize peace when we see

it, it gives us a sense of what we're working towards when we say we want peace, etc.

- Are conflict and peace connected? If so, how?
 - What are some examples of peace in our classroom and school? In your home or community? In our world? Write these examples on the board/chart paper.
5. Tell students that you are going to create a Peace board in the classroom, where you will hang their words and their drawings.

V. Closure (5 minutes)

Distribute the *Exit Pass* worksheet, in which students should select one of the examples of peace in their classroom, school, home or community, and illustrate it.

Exit Pass

Directions: Draw an example of peace in your classroom, school, home, or community.



Exit Pass

Directions: Draw an example of peace in your classroom, school, home, or community.

