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## How To Be Part of Picturing Peace

### *Teacher's Curriculum Plan*

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Materials/equipment requirements: Students will need access to digital cameras and journals in which to write. Teachers will need access to a photo-sharing website, such as offered by Google, and access to a computer for uploading images. Ideally, at least one class period should be conducted outdoors to permit landscape and outdoor still-life photography. If an exhibition is planned at the end, photos will need to be printed and hung, or they could be shown as a slide show on a video screen. The students are active for eight weeks, typically for two one-hour periods per week (total 16 hours in class).

### **PART I. Setting the Stage (Week 1)**

**Teachers create a context for understanding Peace, in tandem with the students. Students begin to keep Peace Journals.**

(A.) Discuss the objectives of Picturing Peace (PP) in whole-class discussion with students.

Teachers explore and explain the importance of peace in their own ways including ideas such as:

(1.) Why is peace important? Where is it important to have peace? Class discussion.

(2.) Can young students contribute to peace? As the project progresses, one answer to this question will emerge. Students will have the opportunity to present their photographs and writings that express their feelings, ideas and desires for peace and to share them with others.



(B.) Introduce assignments for the project. During PP students will create many photographs on the themes of peace. They will choose a few in class for possible exhibition. These will have Titles and Explanations: "Explain how your photograph communicates Peace." Also, all students will keep a PP Journal in which they will write their notes on their PP photographs and their definitions of the Peace words.

(C.) Chart a family of Peace words. Students brainstorm in a "language game" that produces a range of synonyms or "family of words" associated with peace. These are student-generated synonyms and may vary from published thesaurus lists.

(1.) "What words (synonyms) do we associate with peace?"

(2.) Write students' words on the board, or create a chart of words that relate to peace.

(3.) Have the students copy all the synonyms in their notes. Define these peace words and ask students to write the definitions in their Journals.

*Note: In different locations and groups, new words for peace may emerge. For example, "Open" was a synonym for peace in Belfast, where an open border signified peaceful relations between communities. In California, "Diversity" was a synonym.*

(4.) If the students have not mentioned all of the words typically associated with peace, the teacher should make sure that those words are also discussed. Many of the following words appear in thesaurus entries for peace. Emphasize how many of the words related to peace represent FEELINGS or involve the EMOTIONS. Do the words the students mentioned also involve emotions or feelings? Are these positive or negative feelings?

• Calm/Tranquility

• Caring



- Close
- Collaboration
- Empathy
- Friendship
- Giving
- Harmony
- Happiness
- Love /Affection
- Order
- Serenity
- Sharing
- Spirituality
- Unity

(5.) Prepare and place the combined student and thesaurus family of words in a Word Map (or whatever you choose to call it) in the classroom, so that it remains on view for the students

## **PART II. Next step: Learning the vocabulary of Photography (Week 2)**

(A.) Students need to understand about photography because they will be asked to find people, objects and places in their environments that reflect or are associated with different words from the peace “family of words” and capture them in photographs.

(B.) “I am a photographer... what does that mean?” “What do photographers do?” “What are their various jobs and how are they different– news; fashion; fine art?” “What distinguishes an art photographer from other types of photographer?” All photographs convey information, but some images are designed to communicate beauty, or an ideal, or something that the viewer needs to think about. Discuss and try to demonstrate with examples the difference between photographs that simply document what happened at a specific time and place, versus photographs that try to capture beauty or an idea, and photographs that do both these things.

(C.) The focus will be on Creative Photography. Students will make their images of peace through art photography (in contrast with news, advertising or fashion photography). Students should view a number of artistic photographs (teachers can find a selection in the PP gallery) and discuss them. What makes them Creative or Artistic?



(D.) Methods of photography. There are two principal methods of photography:

In candid photography, a photographer finds interesting objects, people, and places to take pictures.

In studio photography, a photographer directs other students as actors and arranges settings or backgrounds. Or, the photographer makes a composition of objects in Still-Life photographs. Examples of candid and studio photography are available in the PP gallery.

(E.) Types of photographs. Examples are available in the PP gallery.

- Portrait/Self Portrait
- Social photography: two person or groups
- Place photography/Landscape
- Still-Life
- Performance
- Abstract image

(F.) There are always two things to keep in mind: Words and Photographs. PP uses the double power of words and images. Students will write about some of their photographs to describe what elements of peace they want other people to notice in them. These texts will increase the impact and depth of meaning that their photos convey. The combination of their photograph with a text will constitute an art object.

Throughout the PP project, students should ask: What pictures or images could capture a chosen word? Later, looking at each other's photos, students should ask: what words come to mind to describe this image? Go back and forth from words to images, and from images to words. Remember that many photographs might try to picture the same word, but go about it in very different ways. Compare how many variations there are in pictures of the same word. In Picturing Peace, meaning will be communicated through different words and different pictures that all add up to Peace.



### **PART III. Picturing Peace in Action, Week by Week**

Week 1: Setting the Stage. Teacher introduces the project and leads discussion/brainstorming about the vocabulary of Peace. (See Part I.) Class creates their Word Map. Students start their journals.

Week 2: Learning the Vocabulary of Photography (See Part II). Students continue their journals.

Week 3: Preliminary photographs by the students. Probably, these will involve social or group photographs. Focus on social groupings associated with peace and its family of words such as collaboration, caring, unity, harmony, diversity, and friendship. In these scenes people form groups that show they are acting peacefully, or relating to each other in a way that demonstrates these social words. They may be greeting each other, helping each other, or arranged in a pattern that is peaceful or positive or symmetrical. They may group themselves to show balance, or how people can rely on each other. They may be linked physically, or they may be posed separately but have a shared visual focus, etc. The aim here is portray an ideal peace arrangement in which group unity, harmony and diversity are emphasized to maintain the peace; or to represent caring scenarios in which the scene features a peacemaker. As they learn the basics of photography, students will practice selecting their favorite photos and deleting others in order to keep only their best photos. At the end of this period, students choose a photograph for possible exhibition. In response to the question, "Explain how your photograph communicates peace," students write their explanations. Teachers follow up with suggestions to improve and elaborate their writing. Either the students will learn to upload their photograph files (JPEGs) and text files to the class's photo-sharing website, or the teacher can upload the favorite photographs and their texts.



Week 4: Students continue to photograph. Probably, these will involve portrait photographs, including Performance of peaceful characters and peaceful gestures by individuals and groups. The students may create living sculptures in which peace is materialized in the form of people that can bring peace. Students who create a peace character for himself/herself to perform can ask another student to take his/her picture. At the end of this period, students choose a photograph for possible exhibition. In response to the question, "Explain how your photograph communicates peace," students write their explanations. Teachers follow up with suggestions to improve and elaborate their writing.

Week 5: Schedule outdoor time. Students continue to photograph. Their outdoor photographs will involve Landscape photography, taking advantage of the setting, what can be seen from different vantage points, and how people can be placed in these places. Outdoor Still-Life photos are also possible. Collect and artistically arrange materials in a natural setting as a wish for peace, or as a vision of peace. For example, collect rocks, flowers, twigs and leaves and arrange them with attention to space and pattern. Students can write about these pictures back in their classrooms.

Week 6: Students continue to photograph. Probably, these will involve indoor still-life and abstract photographs. Supplies, materials, and objects brought from home will be needed to organize still-life arrangements. These are the kinds of symbolic objects and arrangements that students feel have the power to assist in the cause of peace, or that could create a small place of peace. Photograph the small peace-place or wish-arrangements. In this assignment peace is a personal and ideal goal. These pictures involve constructions of peace as wishes, showing that art can be used to create symbolic peace out of objects that are peaceful, placed in meaningful arrangements. At the end of this period, students choose a photograph for possible exhibition. In response to the question, "Explain how your photograph communicates peace," students write their explanations. Teachers follow up with suggestions to improve and elaborate their writing.



Week 7: Students continue to photograph. Probably, these will involve a variety of types of photos as students work to achieve their best pictures or capture their most inventive ideas. At the end, students choose a photograph for possible exhibition. In response to the question, "Explain how your photograph communicates peace," students write their explanations. Teachers follow up with suggestions to improve and elaborate their writing.

Week 8: Teacher helps each student choose one (1) final photograph for exhibition from among each student's favorites. Each student completes the text for his/her photograph.

Week 9: The class's photographs are printed. Recommended size on mat board: 9" X 12", full bleed out to the edges with no border, or 11" X 14" with a one-inch border. The texts are printed in an appropriate size to be paired with the photos.

Week 10: Exhibition of the photographs, ideally with family and public attendance.