

Give Peace a Chance

An educational resource on conflict and peace building for Post Primary Educators



Introduction



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This is a post-primary education resource for teachers developed to explore the issue of conflict and peace-building. It looks at conflict through the lens of Gaza. It can be incorporated into Citizenship Education, Religious Education, Geography, English or History classes at post primary level. Educators can choose to do some or all of the activities.

Section One: The Cost of Conflict

What you do!



To introduce young people to the cost of war

Divide the class into five groups.

Cut out and give each group a fact card (on Page 2). Invite them to present the facts on their card in a creative way. This could be through role play, a mime, a drawing, a cartoon or song.

Give the groups 15 minutes before asking them to present back to the whole class.



Follow up discussion points

Ask the students to talk about what they have seen presented. What did they learn about the link between poverty and conflict? What are the costs of conflict? Financial, human, social, cultural etc. Why are governments spending so much on arms and warfare when people suffer?

Fact Cards - Did you know?

Every year, right across the world, the amount of spending on defense totals more than \$700 billion. Global spending on education is less than \$100 billion.

The cost of one missile could plant 200 million trees.

In armed conflicts since 1945, 90% of casualties have been civilians compared to 50% in WWII and 10% in WWI.

There are twice as many people in the military as there are doctors, nurses and teachers in the world.

The USA is the world's biggest arms exporter and supplies around 40 % of the developing world's arms.

The cost of one Trident submarine is the same as the cost of a year's schooling for 16 million children in the developing world.

Section Two: Playing by the Rules

Throughout history there have been times when countries feel compelled to go to war in order to protect the human rights of their civilians. This should only ever occur as a last resort when countries have failed to come up with a peaceful solution.

Activity One: To war or not to war...?



To explore with students the justification for war

What to do!

Divide the class into brainstorming groups. Ask them to discuss amongst themselves any circumstances or occasions when they feel that war could be condoned.

Nominate one person from each group to feedback to the entire class.

Note their feedback on a flipchart or on the board.

Compile a list of situations of when war may be justified.



I think war should be allowed when....

I think war should be forbidden when...

Activity Two: Rules of War

The United Nations developed a body of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in order to limit unnecessary death and destruction as a result of war and conflict. IHL explains the Rules of War. Part of this body of law is the Geneva Conventions, which contain provisions prohibiting certain methods of warfare and addressing issues of civil wars.



To introduce students to international law and how wars should be conducted.

What to do!

Use the Rules of War as the basis for a walking debate on the conduct of the conflict in Gaza.

Prepare three cards and place them in three different areas of the classroom. Read out the following statements (below) and get students to move towards the card that reflects their opinion.

AGREE

DISAGREE

NOT SURE



Explore and discuss with the students why they 'agree', 'disagree' or are 'not sure' about the statements. Encourage them to move to another area as the discussion progresses and they change their minds.

Maybe you can think of other statements that might prompt your students to explore the conduct of war.

Introduce the UN's Rules of War (Student Handout on Page 4)

Follow up discussion

Discuss with students the reasons for Rules of War. Why is it important to have such rules? What would happen if such rules didn't exist? Can you guess what happens if a country breaks the rules? Think about the conflict in Gaza (more information on Page 10) - have both sides of the conflict complied with the rules? How does this make you feel?

Statements for Walking Debate

War should be forbidden in every situation

War is the best way to solve a dispute between countries

Fighting over land and other natural resources is allowed

A country can use any weapon or missile if it means the war is finished more quickly

Civilians can be killed if they are on the side of the enemy



Why not get some newspaper articles on the conduct of the war in Gaza as a stimulus for discussion.



A scroll with text on it, representing the United Nations' Rules of War. The scroll is unrolled and shows seven numbered rules. The background is a dark blue textured surface.

The United Nations' Rules of War

1. Non-combatants and civilians shall be protected and treated humanely.
2. It is forbidden to kill or injure an enemy who surrenders or who is outside the combat.
3. The wounded and sick shall be cared for and protected by the party to the conflict which has them in its power.
4. Captured combatants and civilians must be protected against acts of violence, revenge and reprisals. They shall have the right to correspond with their families and to receive relief.
5. No one shall be subjected to torture, corporal punishment or cruel or degrading treatment.
6. Parties to a conflict and members of their armed forces do not have an unlimited choice of methods and means of warfare.
7. Parties to a conflict shall at all times distinguish between the civilians and combatants. Attacks shall be directed solely against military objectives.

Source: 4th Geneva Convention for Protection of Civilians in time of War, August 12, 1949

Section Three: Who's got the Right?

Activity One: Examining Rights



To examine the human rights that are threatened or abused in times of war.

What to do!

As a class read Samir's story (Student Handout on Page 6). Invite students to form small groups and re-examine the article, taking note of all the human rights that are threatened, respected or abused.

Use the Universal Declaration on the Human Rights of a Child as a reference point for your students (Page 7). What does the United Nations say about the Rights of the Child?

Draw a list on flipchart or board of Samir's rights (sample grid below)

RIGHTS ENJOYED		RIGHTS DENIED		RIGHTS THREATENED	
Analysis		Analysis		Analysis	
Right	UDHR Article	Right	UDHR Article	Right	UDHR Article

Follow up

Think of your own life. Fill out a similar grid. Look at the different rights that you enjoy. How does this make you feel? Who decides on the rights of children? How would you feel if your rights were denied?



Samir's Story

My name is Samir* and I'm 13 years old. I lived in the Jabalya refugee camp, 80 metres from UNRWA's school (United Nations Relief Works Agency). I lived on the ground floor with my mother, Amal, my father, Muhammad, and my four brothers and sisters.

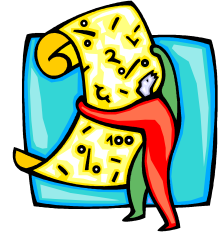
On Tuesday morning [6th January 2009], we woke up and tried to figure out how we could get bread. My brother Hussein and I went looking but the bakeries had none, and we returned empty-handed. My mother decided to bake bread in a small electric pan we have. We all sat with her in the yard in front of the house while she made the bread.

While waiting for the bread to be ready, we heard the sound of bombings and gunfire. Suddenly there was a huge explosion next to us, and smoke covered the yard. I couldn't see my family. My body hurt all over. After a few minutes, the smoke began to clear. I saw my sister covered in blood. She groaned in pain. My uncle lifted her up and walked with her to the main road. My sister Asil is only five years old.

There were lots of dead and wounded people. People were running around helping the injured. Asil was brought to an ambulance. My parents were killed by shrapnel from the shell that had fallen next to us as we sat waiting for the bread. Now I just don't know what to do....

* Source: Edited from B'tselem: Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories.
{Trócaire's partners in the region}

Universal Declaration on the Rights of the Child



Article 1: All children under the age of 18 are entitled to all of these rights

Article 2: You have the right not to be discriminated against in any way.

Article 3: You have the right to have good decisions to be made for you.

Article 4: You have the right to have your rights respected and made real by the government.

Article 5: You have the right to be looked after by your parents if you have them.

Article 6: You have the right to a life.

Article 7: You have the right to be given a name and a nationality.

Article 9: You have the right to live with your parents, unless this would not be appropriate.

Article 12: You have the right to say what you think and you must be listened to.

Article 14: You have the right to believe what you want, and you can follow any religion that you wish.

Article 17: You have the right to have information from TV, radio, books, etc.

Article 19: You have the right to be protected from being hurt, abuse and neglect.

Article 20: You have the right to have protection and care if it is not possible for you to live with your parents.

Article 22: You have the right to have protection and help if you are a refugee.

Article 24: You have the right to good health care.

Article 26: You have the right to help from the government if you are poor or need help in some way.

Article 27: You have the right to have a good place to grow up in.

Article 28: You have the right to have a good education.

Article 30: You have the right to speak your own language and practice your own religion or culture.

Article 31: You have the right to play and have time to play in.

Article 38: If you are in a war zone, you have the right to be protected from any harm

Section Five: Give Peace a Chance



To encourage young people to imagine alternative futures for the world and to ensure human rights for all

What to do!

Divide the class into groups and give each group one statement to discuss. Take a large sheet of paper and let each member of the group draw or paint his/her thoughts or write poems or reflections in response to the statements.

‘I wondered why somebody didn’t do something for peace, then I realised I am somebody.’

Anonymous.

‘If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.’

Nelson Mandela, South Africa.

‘There is no way to peace, peace is the way.’

Mahatma Gandhi, India.

‘Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies a theft from those who are cold and are not clothed.’

Dwight Eisenhower, USA

‘Peace and security cannot be won at the barrel of a gun.’

Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

‘If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.’

Mother Teresa, Calcutta.

Use the statement to prompt the students to think about peace in the world and what they would like to see in the world that we live in. What is needed to make this world peaceful and safe for us all?

Section Six: Taking Action for Justice

Trócaire was established in 1973 in order to help protect the most vulnerable people on the planet. In fact, Trócaire's motto is, "Working for a Just World". It is this motto that motivates us to strive for a fairer world for all of us.

Part of helping the most vulnerable people in the world is taking action for justice and showing solidarity. So why not take action in your classroom!

Activities: Portraits of Peace

Invite individual students to read out their own peace poems and reflections from Section Five. Create a gallery in your classroom of your drawings and murals and reflections for peace.

Hold an awareness day on September 21st, the International Day of Peace.

Create a poster board of icons of peace. Use the heroic examples of Nelson Mandela, Mother Theresa of Calcutta, Mahatma Gandhi to name a few.

Log onto Trócaire's website, www.trocaire.org and find out our most recent developments in the area of peace building and human rights. Take action for justice by logging onto our campaigns page www.trocaire.org/takeaction.

*"I wondered why somebody didn't do something for peace.
Then I realised I am somebody"*

Anonymous



Background information on the history of Gaza

The Gaza Strip is a narrow piece of land along the Mediterranean coast between Israel and Egypt. Its area is 365 sq. km. More than 1.5 million people live there. 56% of the Gaza population are under 18 years of age.

A long history...

After the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, Egypt occupied Gaza. Palestinian refugees fled to Gaza from areas that became the country of Israel. Israel occupied Gaza in 1967. Since then Gaza has been disconnected from the other Palestinian areas of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

In 2005 Israel removed its illegal settlements from Gaza but no Palestinian was allowed to enter or leave Gaza. Israel controlled Gaza's borders. In 2006 the militant group Hamas won elections in Gaza. The international community and Israel imposed sanctions on the people of Gaza.

This led to a siege on Gaza. Israel allowed only basic items like food, groceries and medicines into Gaza. In 2008, aid agencies described Gaza as in a humanitarian crisis. After a six month ceasefire in 2008, during which people in Gaza remained under siege, violence began to escalate. Both sides, the Hamas and the State of Israel, blamed each other for the increased violence.

At the end of 2008, Israel attacked Gaza with shelling and missile attacks, killing hundreds of Gazans, including civilians, and injuring thousands. Palestinian militants fired rockets into Southern Israel. Thousands of people were left with ruined houses without any running water and basic needs like food and medicine. Two years on, in 2010, more than 1.4 million people remain in need of urgent humanitarian assistance.

Because of a blockage on Gaza's borders, people are forced to live in appalling conditions. Power cuts are a daily fact of life and homes destroyed because of conflict cannot be repaired. Their efforts to recover from the sustained bombardment and conflict have been made almost impossible because of an illegal blockade on the people of Gaza that has been in place since June 2007.

Due to the blockade Gazans cannot access basic items such as spare parts for cars and buses, plastic sheeting for shelter, wheelchairs for their disabled, books and stationery for their students, or even footballs and music instruments. It's also very difficult for even international government officials to visit the area as well as for aid agencies.



Source: Map courtesy of Google Images