

Elements of Peace



*activities and
reflections with
young people*

**PAX
CHRISTI**

International Catholic Movement for Peace

Introduction

In proclaiming '*Blessed are the Peacemakers*' Jesus makes work for peace a central concern of the Christian life.

The activities and reflections in this resource will introduce young people to issues of peace and conflict and the vocation of Christian peacemaking.

Each activity should take approximately 15 minutes but this will vary from group to group. At the end of each card there is a pointer towards material for deeper reflection.

Some activities may require preparation by the facilitator and, with videos, we recommend that you watch them ahead of the session in order to check that they are suitable for your particular group. The workshops are designed for use with teenagers but with a little adaptation can be used more widely.

Supporting materials, downloads and videos, together with pdf versions of these cards, can be found on the Pax Christi website:

www.paxchristi.org.uk/elements

Simply select the card title you are working with and you will find the various downloads.

About this Resource

Produced by Pax Christi
For more information visit
www.paxchristi.org.uk



Pax Christi is the International Catholic Movement for Peace. Use this activity to explore the founding of Pax Christi, what it works for and why.

Prepare

Find the Pax Christi resource *Peace in Action*. You will need copies of pages 1, 2, 3, and 4 (top section only) for each person in the small groups.

You will also need copies of Pax Christi the Quiz:

www.paxchristi.org.uk/elements

Explore

Divide the young people into five groups and give each group a large sheet of paper, some pens and copies of one of the pages from *Peace in Action*.

Ask each group to use the information they are given to present their topic to the others. They are to prepare a poster which will enable them to tell the story. The poster can contain no more than ten words but any number of pictures. Give them up to ten minutes for this.

Each group presents their poster in turn before concluding with the quiz.

Quiz

Go through the short quiz to test how well the information about Pax Christi has been conveyed.

You could order some Peace Badges from Pax Christi as prizes.



Pax Christi Daily Prayer

This prayer is said daily by Pax Christi members throughout the UK.

Thank you loving God

For the gift of life
For this wonderful world which
we all share
For the joy of love and friendship
For the challenge of helping to build
your kingdom.

Strengthen

My determination to work for a world
of peace and justice
My conviction that, whatever our
nationality or race,
we are all global citizens, one in Christ
My courage to challenge the
powerful with the values of the Gospel
My commitment to find nonviolent
ways of resolving conflict—personal, local,
national and international
My efforts to forgive injuries and to love
those I find it hard to love.

Teach me

To share the gifts you have given me
To speak out for the victims of injustice
who have no voice
To reject the violence which runs
through much of our world today.

Holy Spirit of God

Renew my hope for a world free from the cruelty and
evil of war, so that we may all come to share in God's
peace and justice.

Prayer

The Young Christian Workers (YCW) have been at the forefront of justice and peace education for many years. Their method, See, Judge, Act, has equipped countless young people to make sense of their faith in the world.

The SEE is a chance for young people to look at their reality; discussing experiences in an environment where they are listened to and they listen to others.

You will need printed copies of the See, Judge, Act statement: www.paxchristi.org.uk/elements

See

In small groups, have the statement read aloud. What is your gut reaction? Is the statement right or wrong?

What concerns do you have as a young person? Think about your local neighbourhood, your work and study, your leisure time, and your family life.

JUDGE encourages deeper thought and explores the teaching of Christ and the Church. It does not give answers but develops understanding.

Judge

'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.' (John 10:10)

What does it mean to live life to the full? Do you think you live life to the full? Do you see your friends, colleagues and other young people living life to the full? What does Jesus mean by life to the full?

The ACT is a decision making time when, reflecting on their discussions, young people commit to making a difference in their lives and the lives of others.

Act

Thinking about what it means to live life to the full, how can you support someone you know to do just that?

The Young Christian Workers are at www.ycwimpact.com

See, Judge, Act

Building Walls: Building Peace?

Walls have often been constructed in order to prevent conflict by keeping people apart. Famously in Berlin, but also in Northern Ireland, as well as along frontiers around the world. But can walls promote peace? We look at one in Israel / Palestine.

Watch Watch *No Way Through*, a short film that highlights mobility restrictions imposed in the West Bank that are limiting its inhabitants' access to health care:
vimeo.com/6946769

Think Why would some people think that a wall which separates two sides of a conflict is a good way to build peace?
Why would others think that a wall can never help to build peace?

Reflect *'Everywhere in the land righteousness and justice will be done. Because everyone will do what is right there will be peace and security forever.'* (Isaiah 32: 16-17)
Does a wall like the one in the film promote peace in the way Isaiah understands peace?

Act Some groups on all sides of the conflict work for another sort of peace in Israel/Palestine. Look at some of their work and how you can support them.
B'Tselem: www.btselem.org
The Arab Education Institute: www.aeicenter.org
Shministim: www.shministim.com
The Lajee Center: www.lajee.org

Use the Pax Christi resource *The Wall* to reflect on the effectiveness of the separation wall in building peace.
www.paxchristi.org.uk/thewall.html

This activity helps make connections between peace and other global issues which might appear, at first glance, unrelated.

Prepare

Put seven chairs ('bases') in a circle. Label each with a sign as to what it represents. **Natural Resources, Climate Change, Poverty, War, Gender, Military Spending, Refugees** and **The Arms Trade** are possibilities. You may think of others.

You will also need:

7 balls of different coloured wool - each colour tied to a different base, strips of paper and pens, 7 copies of the Headlines sheet:

www.paxchristi.org.uk/elements

Activity

Ask the young people to form 7 groups and gather at a base.

Give them a few minutes to think about how their base is connected or linked to the other bases. Looking at the Headlines sheet might help here.

Write this link down briefly and send an 'ambassador' to that other base with the link. He or she will also take the ball of wool and wind it round the chair leg of the other base (at ground level for safety). Allow this to continue for about ten minutes.

What do we see in the centre of the chairs?

Reflect

'Peace is the fruit of anxious daily care to see that everyone lives in justice as God intends.' (Pope Paul VI)

How do our lives connect with the issues in this activity?
What can we change in our lives to help ensure that everyone can share God's peace and justice?

Joined-Up Thinking

Find out more of the connections within Catholic Social Teaching at www.catholicsocialteaching.org.uk

Security

What do we need for security? How do we need to act? How do we best protect ourselves? How can we keep ourselves, our nation and our world safe?

What makes you feel safe and secure? Ask the young people to reflect on this in groups and come up with their top five needs for personal security.

Think Next invite the groups to imagine that they are the government charged with looking after national security. What would they spend the money on? What are their top three priorities?

They might think about education, armed forces, counter terrorism, job creation, police, welfare, employment, agriculture, environment, youth work, foreign relations, international aid, and so on.

Read the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12)

Reflect What do these sayings tell us about how society should be organised? About how we should treat one another? How do they encourage us to live? What kind of security do we see there?

Think about what you prioritised in the activity above. Can you write a Beatitude which reflects your ideas? How easy was it to come up with a Beatitude that was both positive and fair?

Act Pax Christi promotes a human-centred approach to security, promoting equality and justice rather than investing in guns and warfare. You could write to your MP encouraging them to promote this.

Use Pax Christi's Human Security resource to explore further www.paxchristi.org.uk/peace_ed1.php

What does solidarity mean? These activities, developed with Bosco Volunteer Action, explore this question.

Think

Bring to mind a time when you were having difficulties (with your family, friends, school or any other situation) and you needed help to get through them.

Who helped you? How did they help you? How does it feel to have something done for you? How does it feel to have someone stand alongside you? How does it feel to have someone do something with you?

Reflect

Which is better, doing something **for** someone else or doing something **with** someone else?

What does the following quote mean?

'Solidarity is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.' (Pope John Paul II)

Act

If possible send the group outside to collect some twigs or have some ready.

Ask someone to break one twig (easy).

Now bundle a few together. Can they break them now?

What does this demonstrate?

What examples of solidarity can we think of?

Do we all agree that these are examples of solidarity?

What does solidarity mean? Brainstorm your ideas.

How can we be in solidarity with those suffering from injustice?

For practical examples of standing in solidarity please refer to the other cards in this set.

Solidarity

Love Your Enemies

Arguably the greatest challenge in the Christian call to peacemaking is Jesus' command that we must love our enemies. This activity is a quiet and reflective exercise to encourage young people to think about the challenge of living this command.

Print copies of the *Love Your Enemies stories*:

www.paxchristi.org.uk/elements

Prepare

You will also need post-it notes and pens.

Display the stories around the room or, if possible, at various points on one wall with the phrase 'Love your Enemies' displayed centrally on that wall.

You might start by having Matthew 5: 43-48 read aloud.

When Jesus urges us to love our enemies, what exactly does that mean? On the wall there are a number of stories about people trying, failing, struggling and succeeding in loving their enemies.

Reflect

For the next 15 minutes invite the group to spend time reading the stories, reflecting on the demands of loving one's enemies and adding their own thoughts using the post-it notes provided.

This activity can take place in a 10 - 15 minute slot or can be ongoing for some time, allowing young people to dip in and out of it as they wish.

At the conclusion of the exercise you might invite the young people to share their thoughts and feelings with the whole group.



Animal Instincts: Responding to Conflict

This activity looks at how we respond to conflict. Using animals to introduce various styles of response, it explores the limitations of avoidance, accommodation and counter-violence as ways of dealing with or resolving conflict. Jesus' way is different.

Prepare Print off the *Animal Conflict Cards* and display them around the room:
www.paxchristi.org.uk/elements

Invite the young people to wander around the room, read what the animal represents and choose which one reflects their most common response to conflict.

Explore Ask them to explain to those nearby why they have chosen the one they have before sharing this with the whole group.

What are the advantages of your style of response?
What are the disadvantages?

Is your method likely to solve the problem? Why?

Another Way Ask the young people in small groups to come up with a strategy about how they would resolve conflict and then design a poster promoting their ideas. Their strategy should:

- 1/ Be practical.
- 2/ Use no more than three words.
- 3/ Help to avoid violence but not avoid the problem.

The groups are likely to use words such as listen, compromise, love, patience. These words are crucial tools in nonviolence, the strategy of Christ.

See *Love Your Enemies* and *Turn the Other Cheek* cards for more on the nonviolence of Christ.

Turn the Other Cheek

Set the Scene

Challenge Injustice

Our Call

Jesus tells us to 'turn the other cheek'. What does he mean?

'If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.' (Mt 5:39)

With the young people standing face to face in pairs, lead them in this reflection on the words of Christ.

If you were to hit your partner on the right cheek how would you do it?

They might try with their left hand but this is not permitted. In Jesus' time the left hand was only used for unclean tasks.

The most effective way to strike the right cheek is a backhanded slap with the right hand.

The backhanded slap is how masters controlled their slaves, mothers their children and husbands their wives. It shows them they are inferior and powerless.

Jesus tells the powerless to turn the other cheek. How would you hit your partner on the left cheek?

It's impossible with the back of your right hand!
The only way is with a fist or slap – and that is how equals fight. You lose your position of power.

The one who started with all the power is forced to back down. The victim, by offering the other cheek, has taken control, asserted his or her own dignity, refused to be humiliated, challenged oppression, and demanded to be treated as an equal.

This is nonviolence: to challenge injustice and to deal with conflict creatively without resorting to violence. Jesus' call to us is revolutionary.

For more on Christian nonviolence see St Ethelburga's stethelburgas.org/themes/youth-refusing-violence

We live in a world of rules, laws and guidance from people chosen to be in charge. Is it ever ok to disobey, to say no and break the rules? What does faith ask of us?

Watch Watch the powerpoint about the life of Franz Jägerstätter *Holy Disobedience* (3 minutes):

www.paxchristi.org.uk/elements

Read Read the story of Jesus healing a woman on the Sabbath, Luke 13: 10-17.

People were indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath.

In the story above what is Jesus saying about who or what we should obey?

Reflect *'I am convinced that it is still best that I speak the truth, even if it costs me my life.'* (Franz Jägerstätter) Does speaking the truth and disobeying authority still carry costs? Are they worth it?

'The highest authority is the individual conscience.' Do you agree?

Disobey!

Act Not recklessly, not in every situation nor every opportunity. But when faced with a situation whereby doing what you are told or what is expected of you is unjust then courageously say 'no'; stand up for truth and for good, bearing steadfastly any consequences you will face.

For more about the life and witness of Blessed Franz Jägerstätter contact Pax Christi.

Holy Disobedience

The Arms Trade

In 2005 a group of students in East London were challenged by an Arms Exhibition happening near to their school. Here we use their experiences to explore some of the issues of the trade in weapons.

Watch *Where is the love?* is a film made by the young people in East London about the arms fair that happens next to their school. You can view it at:

www.elaaf.org

Think What is your reaction to the film?
How did the film shock or surprise you?
How did the film make you feel about the arms trade?

Reflect *'He will judge between the nations
and will settle disputes for many peoples.
They will beat their swords into ploughshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war anymore.'* (Isaiah 2:4)

How does Isaiah's vision for God's reign challenge us in respect to the Arms Trade?

Act Tell more people about the truth of the arms trade:
Get the *Where is the love?* film shown in school or at your youth group.

Write to your local MP expressing your concerns.

See www.caat.org.uk/getinvolved/act_now.php for more ideas.

More information from www.caat.org.uk

What advice do we find from Christ and the Church on being a peacemaker? How are we called to act?

Think

Think about your own lives. Where do you see conflict and violence in your homes, schools, communities or world?

Draw a conflict tree: Put the causes of the conflict on the roots, the results on the branches and, on the leaves, suggest possible ways of resolving the conflict.

How do you resolve conflict in your own life?

You will need printed copies of the Being a Peacemaker quotations: www.paxchristi.org.uk/elements

Reflect

Ask the young people in twos or threes to look at some of the quotations

What can we learn from each quotation about being a peacemaker? How do they encourage us to act? What reasons do they give to explain why working for peace is important for Christians? What methods of peacemaking do they suggest?

How can the methods of peacemaking identified in the previous section be put into action?

Act

Pray: for peace and justice in our lives and the world.

Stand up: for those suffering through war and violence.

Tell someone: about how they can help.

Campaign: put pressure on those who make the rules.

Protest: find creative ways to make your feelings known.

Civil Disobedience: refuse to obey unjust rules.

Unite with other peacemakers and join Pax Christi
www.paxchristi.org.uk/join1.php

The Stories We are Told

Where do we get our information? How do we know we are getting the full story? What else is there to know? These activities explore the danger of only hearing one side of the story.

Prepare

You will need a pile of newspapers. Any will do, but you might want to make sure that there are plenty of stories about young people in them.

With enough time, some groups could watch *The Dangers of a Single Story* by Chimamanda Adichie to explore this theme more fully:

<http://youtu.be/D9lhs241zeg>

Activity

Ask the young people in small groups to go through the newspapers looking for stories about young people.

From these stories can they create a caricature of what a young person is like according to the press? Invite them to produce a freeze frame, a short drama or a piece of art that presents that picture of young people.

Is this the truth? Is it part of the truth? Is there more to young people than what the papers say? Is it a problem that young people are being portrayed in this way?

How can we make sure we are hearing more than one side of a story?

Act

Tell a different story. If your local paper regularly prints bad news about young people then write to them and redress the balance. Celebrate young people with good news stories.

The Jimmy Mizen Foundation supports young people to become that good news story www.jimmymizen.org

Celebrating ordinary people who have done extraordinary things for peace.

Divide the young people into groups and give each group a story from the *Peace People* collection:

www.paxchristi.org.uk/peace_people1.php

Think Invite them to think about the following key questions and feed back to the rest of the group:

What motivated their action?

Who supported them?

What do we learn from their story about the task of peacemaking?

For this you can use the stories from the Pax Christi collection or invite the young people to identify their own peace heroes and heroines.

Tell a Story In groups ask the young people to use drama, art, song, poetry or any other way they choose to creatively tell the story they have selected.

Share your work with the rest of the group.

This project can be extended and with more time a DVD or website of these stories could be produced.

Share the stories of Peace People further afield...

Share Make a display in your school or church.
Write an assembly for school based on the stories.
Allow these stories to continue to inspire and sustain your own work for peace.

www.wagingpeace.org/menu/programs/youth-outreach/peace-heroes

Sowing Seeds of Peace

There is a profound link between environmental issues and conflict. Climate change affects the poorest most deeply, increases inequality and the chances of conflict and war over resources. Here we see how working for peace demands working for environmental justice.

Prepare The activity card *Joined-Up Thinking* is a useful introduction to this reflection on environmental justice. With time, both may be combined for a richer session.

Watch the story of Wangari Maathai and The Green Belt Movement:

<http://youtu.be/BQU7JOxkGvo>

Think What problems does neglect of the environment lead to that might make conflict more likely?

Do you see this happening in your own school or neighbourhood?

Read the following quotes. How do they encourage us to live in relation to the environment?

Reflect *'What does the Lord require of you but to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God?'* (Micah 6: 8)

'To sow peace; protect creation.' (Pope Benedict XVI)

How can I make a difference? Be like the hummingbird:

<http://youtu.be/IGMW6YWjMxw>

Act Wangari Maathai *thought globally and acted locally*. What can you do in your day-to-day life to help protect the environment?

For more information see www.greenbeltmovement.org

Sumud is the Arabic word for steadfastness. Sumud reflects the need for faith, hope and perseverance in working for peace. We reflect prayerfully on Sumud.

Introduction

Light a candle to start the time of prayer and to help focus our hearts and minds.

Sumud means steadfastness. It means remaining strong in the face of occupation, violence, and suffering. It means persevering in faith and hope for a better tomorrow for all.

Slideshow: *Images of Sumud*
www.paxchristi.org.uk/elements

In candlelit silence invite quiet contemplation upon the following readings.

Reading: Matthew 6: 5-13

Think: What is Jesus asking of us?

Reflect

Reading: *'Hope is a state of mind, not of the world. Hope, in this deep and powerful sense, is not the same as joy that things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously heading for success, but rather an ability to work for something because it is good.'* (Vaclav Havel)

Think: How does this challenge us to live?

Pray

Conclude with the prayer *Overcoming Violence*, read by several voices:

www.paxchristi.org.uk/elements

Other prayer and liturgy ideas for peace can be found on the Pax Christi website www.paxchristi.org.uk/litgy1.php

What We Offer

Pax Christi's work with young people encourages critical reflection on issues of peace and justice and the role of the peacemaker as part of the Christian vocation.

Universities

Pax Christi's work in universities primarily involves facilitating retreats for students. The retreats are designed to explore peacemaking as part of the Christian vocation and usually run Friday—Sunday (although we can be flexible to fit with the traditions and needs of the university).

You arrange the location and participants, and we will provide the input.

Schools and Parishes

Our workshops invite young people to examine the issues, exploring the causes and consequences of conflict in their lives and the lives of others throughout the world. Some of our most popular workshops include:

- Vocation of Christian Peacemaking
- Palestine / Israel
- Conflict and Violence
- The Armed Forces
- Human Security
- Christian Nonviolence

The specific theme and content of a workshop can be tailored to meet the needs of the group of young people.

Book

Contact our Youth Worker at the Pax Christi office
education@paxchristi.org.uk

www.paxchristi.org.uk/peace_ed1.php

This resource has been produced by Pax Christi with the help, support and encouragement of James Trewby at Bosco Volunteer Action, Anna Morris, Albert Debono and all at the Young Christian Workers, John Williams, Angela Clapham, John McQuaid, and Jennifer Rowlands.

Credits and Links

See, Judge, Act was produced by the Young Christian Workers
www.ycwimpact.com

Solidarity was produced by Bosco Volunteer Action
www.boscovolunteeraction.co.uk


Animal Instincts: Responding to Conflict is adapted from
Peacebuilding: a Caritas Training Manual (Caritas Internationalis, 2002) and
Training for Transformation: a Handbook for Community Workers (Hope and Timmel, 1995)

Videos linked to in these resources are by Christian Aid (www.christianaid.org.uk), TED (www.ted.com), the Royal Docks Community School (www.royaldocks.newham.sch.uk), and the Greenbelt Movement (www.greenbeltmovement.org).

Other material is produced by Pax Christi. Please contact us if you would like to reproduce anything contained within this resource.

Organisations supporting young people in being peacemakers:


St Ethelburga's (www.stethelburgas.org)
 Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (www.cnduk.org)
 Fellowship of Reconciliation (www.for.org.uk)
 SPEAK (www.speak.org.uk)
 Student Christian Movement (www.movement.org.uk)
 Campaign Against the Arms Trade (www.caat.org.uk)
 East London Against the Arms Fair (www.elaaf.org)



In his message for the World Day of Peace 2012 Pope Benedict stresses the importance of '*Educating Young People in Justice and Peace*', encouraging their zeal for the building of a more just and peaceful society.

This youth work resource from Pax Christi is a set of activities and reflections each designed to introduce young people to some aspect of the work of Christian peacemaking. The activities, each lasting approximately fifteen minutes, serve as an introduction to many of the key themes which inspire and inform the Christian vocation to work for peace.

These activities are perfect as part of a confirmation programme, RE lesson, parish youth project or group where young people are looking to explore and deepen their faith.



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