Title of Lesson: The Peace Rainbow

Lesson By: Becky Harrison-Drake

Grade Level/Subject Areas:
Kindergarten- third grade

Class Size:
All class sizes

Time/Duration of Lesson:
All year long

Goals/Objectives of Lesson:
To have students create an understanding of the behaviors that represent the values of the peace rainbow: do-right, non-violence, truth, love, joy and peace.

For each concept and person who represents the concept
1. The student will be able to state the name of the person for each concept and say one idea he/she worked for (peace, equality, non-violence, etc.)
2. The student will be able to draw three pictures of him/herself doing something that reflects the concept.
3. The student will create a color poster with pictures depicting things that remind him/her of the concept.
4. The student will be able to add a sticky note that they wrote or dictated about another child in class doing one of the concepts.

Lesson Abstract:
The children of today are growing up in a crucial time in the history of human societies, in the globalization of cultures and in the global effects humans have on the earth. We have learned a great deal about how important it is to have new generations talk about and understand the concerns of our current problems. However, it is just as important that children begin talking about building a future of peace. Teaching peace and values to young children is a challenge. These are difficult and abstract concepts for a young child to grasp. The following activities offer concrete symbols and works that represent the concepts and to bring them to a realm where all children can begin to incorporate the concepts in their daily lives.

Lesson Content:
Throughout the following lessons the ideas of peace are represented in a concrete way that the young child can begin to understand and apply into his/her life. Peace is presented in a Gandhian manner. To achieve peace we must practice non-violence at the individual levels within our own minds, our own thoughts first then be non-violent in our outward actions. Gandhi describes non-violence as an approach that one takes with his full mind, body and spirit. Non-violence is more than the action of not being violent it is instead an active, dynamic term used to express the mindful living of peace through non-violence for the betterment of self and others. The peace rainbow creates a framework for that foundation. Each value is represented by a color and a prominent person in the peace movements of the past century.

The value of Non-violence is blue and is represented by Mahatma Gandhi. I would like to take a moment and define his thoughts more clearly because the many peaceful struggles of this century are based on his ideas of fighting oppression with nonviolence and his guidelines for peaceful living. All the people represented in the rainbow have attributed their actions and methods to Gandhi.
The first idea is that of **self-awareness and control**. Gandhi felt strongly that a person could not fight non-violently if they did not have control over their mind and body. In his ashrams he experimented with many ways of gaining control over oneself (meditation, diet, fasting, manual work and celibacy). When your mind and body was under your control you would not give in to anger or fear but would courageously and consciously take on the suffering in order to bring awareness and equality to others.

Next is the concept of **ahimsa**: when you embrace all life as precious “…underlying ahimsa is the unity of all life.” (Gandhi, 349) You could be nothing else but nonviolent. This is a full commitment of nonviolence in thought and action. Often it is easy not to hit someone but it is very difficult to keep love in your heart and not even think of hurting another. This does not mean a passive, take-life-the-way-it-is-even-if-it-is-unfair-and-brutal but rather the opposite; it is an active state of nonviolence. You do not accept violence in yourself nor for anyone else. If the rules oppress a people and are violent toward them, through ahimsa you work to free them from their mindset of oppression and from their political chains.

This leads us to **swaraj**: the concept of freedom. Gandhi meant it in two senses; first external political freedoms from oppression and violence; second an internal freedom from your own personal oppressive thoughts. Thoughts that keep you bound to your oppressor, in a state of an inner belief of unworthiness, and helplessness. **Swaraj** is the self-rule in both aspects.

The final concept that is important for the peace rainbow and one’s behavior is the movement of **Satyagraha**. This is “Power (or force) of truth, love and nonviolence… forms of social and political action: individual or mass civil disobedience for social reform.” (Dalton, 249) As you can see Gandhi insisted that the truths and actions for the external were just as valued for the internal. With this all people would be empowered.

Gandhi as a human is just as important to understand because he spent his life trying out theories, living his thoughts out in actions to see what the outcome would be. He was constantly evolving through actions and thought.

Gandhi was a man who lived in South Africa and India. He was the victim of brutal prejudice both personally and in the laws because he was an Indian. He felt that the only way the British government (India was a colony at the time) was going to change was to convince the Indian people to change how they acted. The Indian people had been under brutal rule for so long, they did not have the self-confidence to make change. The large majority of the country was Indian people; they were the ones who would make the change. If in their hearts they could become confident with self-respect they could have courage to make changes. He created Ashrams. This is where people dedicated to the communal life and the ideals of Gandhi would gather to live. This was his experimenting ground for social construction and internal construction.

He began to move his people through his amazing concepts of truth, love and nonviolence to freedom. The satyagraha movement was a massive protest of injustice in the form of walkouts, the Salt March, fasts, and civil disobedience. This was not done without pain and even death but it was done without fear because of the whole mind/body commitment to social change and nonviolence. His people were liberated from mass oppression and even began to break down the societal barriers of castes and untouchables.

The following leaders are great men and women in their own thoughts and deeds, however each has stated that their actions were based on the teachings and influence of Gandhi.

Martin Luther King was a reverend in the 1950’s who followed the teaching of Gandhi in nonviolent protest against institutional inequalities. He lived in a time when black people could
not go to a school designated for whites, could not drink out of the same fountain as a white person, eat at a white person’s restaurant, or even keep a seat on the bus if a white person boarded. The laws were saying black people do not deserve to be with whites because whites were better.

Dr. King knew these laws were absolutely wrong and he had a vision of changing them. He had studied Gandhi and nonviolent movements. Dr. King trained many people how to protest without violence. He organized thousands of people to boycott buses and to sit at the ‘whites only’ lunch counters. Many white and black people supported the cause of equality and joined Dr. King. Many people did not support him and they turned abusive and violent. Black people were threatened, beaten and humiliated but still they kept their protest with quiet dignity and nonviolence. They knew they were right in their struggle.

The focus for this value is on doing the right thing even though it may be hard. Dr. King said as he stood in front of his bombed out house, “we must meet hate with love.” Eventually the laws did change as did the attitude of many white people who first did not agree with him.

The value of Truth is represented by red and Wangari Maathai. Maathai was born in Africa. She attended school instead of doing traditional female jobs. She continued her education until she earned her Ph.D. Even though she had accomplished a great deal she still had to work hard to overcome prejudice against her as a woman and a black person.

She began seeing that the deforestation of Kenya was killing its people. She began working with the poor women teaching them about the harm deforestation was doing to the community in the form of drought, lack of food and lack of self-rule. She led nonviolent protests against mass clearing of forests. Women began replanting trees. Maathai was put in jail for her protest and for empowering villages to create a community of health and safety for themselves-but she kept going.

Dr. Maathai was awarded the Nobel peace prize for founding the Green Belt Movement in East Africa. Through this program Dr. Maathai has empowered many villages. In East Africa the women of her organization have planted over three million trees.

The value of Love is green and is represented by Mother Teresa. She was born in Yugoslavia however, at a young age became a catholic nun and moved to India to work with the poor and sick people of the slums. She lived with the people. She dedicated her entire life to bettering the health, heart and mind of the poor. She received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979. She believed that through pure and unselfish love one could change the world and create a peaceful place for all humanity. “If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.”

The concept of Joy is represented by the color purple. This color is unique because this is where each child is the person representing the concept. They tell their story of acts to better family, friends and community. These may be small stories (I tied my friend’s shoe) but just as crucial to be seen as joyful and peaceful.

The concept of peace is represented by the color yellow and the person Maria Montessori. Montessori was a woman in Italy. She was the first woman to receive a medical degree in Italy yet she had to endure and conquer prejudice because she was a woman. She was very brilliant and graduated at the top of her class. At the graduation she was chosen to give the final speech and it ended in a standing ovation. She began her medical career as a physician at the insane asylum. It is here that she noticed the inmates playing with the meager crumbs on the floor. She was convinced that given proper health, education and freedom to explore the world the children could learn. She was granted to try this theory. In this school she began her systematic
observation of children. She began to develop her thoughts on education and teaching. She created a program of which the foundation is respect for the child, observation of the child for teaching, creating self-control and independence, self-awareness, awareness and interaction/exploration of environment, and awareness of others. During World War II she was exiled out of her home in Italy because of her outspoken views on peace. She was put in house arrest in India. She was released from house arrest but was not allowed to return to Italy until after the war was over. It was in India that she developed her work in Peace education. She was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize three times.

With all the concepts above we can reach peace in our own lives and in the world.

State Content Standards for Alaska

Reading:
K 1.2.1 Answering who, where and what questions after listening to a sentence paragraph, or story.
K 1.2.2 Predicting and confirming outcomes when listening to a story.
K 1.3.1 Participating in choral speaking and retelling short poems, rhymes, songs, or stories with repeated patterns.
K 1.5.1 Identifying the most important idea of a text.
K 1.9.1 Expressing own opinion about material read/heard.
K 1.10.1 Making relevant connections between text and personal experiences.
K 1.11.1 Listening to and discussing stories representing various cultures and Traditions.

Guiding Questions:
- What are the values that make us peaceful in our thoughts and actions?
- What can and what do we do to show our values?
- Who are the people that show us how to be peaceful?

Materials Needed:
- Six jars, food coloring (orange, blue, green, red, purple, yellow), eye dropper, water
- Small Peace people book (see in lesson unity) for each child
- Paper and drawing materials
- Sticky notes and writing materials
- Half of a poster board for each child.
- Magazines, scissors, glue sticks, writing and drawing materials.

Lesson Context:
These following activities offer concrete symbols and works that represent peace concepts and to bring them to a realm where all children can begin to incorporate the concepts in their daily lives.

This can be used in units of famous people, black history month, peace education and an ongoing classroom management program.

The digital story in this lesson is based on all the values and is to be shown at the culmination of the rainbow study.

The children can make their own or a class video with pictures throughout the year of children following the values.
Teaching Activities:
Before presenting this activity have discussions of what it means to do-right. Guide the class to making positive action statements (stay away from “don’t”). Ask for examples from the class, home or school.

1. **Pledge of Do-Right** represented in orange (repeat this for each of the colored values).

On a small tray place a cloth of orange, a small sign with “Do-Right” written on it, a medium or small size jar filled ½ way with clear water, an eye-dropper and bottle filled with orange colored water (this should be a bit more concentrated for adding to the jar).

Presentation:
Each child sits in a circle with their knees touching.

Wait until it is quiet.

With drama, but silent, take a drop of food coloring and drop it into the water jar. Pause to watch the color.

Say with this drop of orange I promise to try my best to Do-right.
Silently pass the tray by slowly pushing it in front of the person next to you.
Each child places drop of food coloring to the jar and says a promise of some kind.
When it comes back to you, take a small stir stick and as you slowly stir say this is our classrooms promise to Do-Right.

Place jar and sign on peace shelf or accessible. Leave the lid off but next to the jar.
As the water evaporates ask a child to add more drops of colored water and repromise.
If children are having a conflict they can put the lid on and hold the jar together in quiet then begin problem solving. If they are too hot to both hold the jar have them sit with the jar on an orange cloth between them.

The quiet moment with the jar is important cool off and think time before problem solving. The jar gives them a focus point and a reminder of the value.

Repeat this activity for each value.

Stretch the values out through the year. Often the children come to the realization they are ready for the next value, or look for the ‘teachable moment’ as conflict arises in your class. The rainbow is not in a fixed order.

2. **Peace People Books**
Make enough copies of the books for each child. Read the book aloud together. Discuss the pictures and the words. Guide the child to the value the person represents. Brainstorm actions the people took to show they represent the value.

Discuss what they do to show that value. Have them draw and write or dictate their ideas of
what they do for the value. Make it into an individual book on each value or a class values book.

For Joy there is no person. This is the value in which the child is the star peace person. They tell their own story of joy and make a book and are added to the legacy of Peace People.

3. Peace Poster
Make a poster of pictures from magazines or child-drawn images that depict the values learned. Hang each poster up on the walls with the child’s name on it.

4. Peace Post-Its
Have a tray with large post-its and a pencil. The children may at any time write a note about a person they see doing one of the values. The child tells what the other child had done and what value it represents. Stick the notes to the poster board of the child.

If you find a poster empty of notes, you write a note perhaps bringing attention to the child for the action (even if it is small, the actions will grow). Ask other teacher’s (music, art, P.E., principal, etc) to add to the children’s posters.

Assessment/ Evaluation:
The children will be assessed by stating facts aloud, creating a poster and connecting the ideas of peace to their lives through discussion and action.

Bibliography:

