

At a Glance

Do I Create Peace or Conflict?

Focus

To understand how our words and actions can contribute to peace or conflict.

Unity Principle

I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe.

Affirmation

I bring peace into my world. I am a peacemaker.

Unity Writings

Until world peace is based on the divine law of love and this law incorporated into the pact of peace as well as into the minds of those who sign the pact, there will be no permanent peace.... A peacemaker is one who reduces to peace and harmony all the thoughts of strife, anger, and retaliation in his own mind.

— Charles Fillmore, *The Revealing Word*, p. 146

For the Leader

“Making a difference” is all about recognizing our personal power. We see that we can use our power in helpful ways or in harmful ways, and that we must make these choices ourselves. In troubling situations, we can choose to be either a peacemaker or a conflict-bringer.

Today we consider what it feels like to be a maker of peace by our thoughts and actions—to be a peacemaker. Many times we fling put-downs or judgments or accusations at others without even being certain what we are upset about, or how the other person might feel. Dr. Seuss’s story in *The Butter Battle Book* points up this absurdity in a unique way, and provides the opportunity to change the outcome—to be a peacemaker. Jesus’ teaching about “casting the first stone” offers the chance to consider compassion in our response to others who may have created a conflict situation, as well as to recognize that we may have plenty to work on in our own lives rather than attacking others. In each story and its exploration, we can reflect on how we can contribute either to peace or to conflict.

Scripture

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”

—John 14:27 (New Revised Standard Version)

Songs

“Peace Like a River,” *Unite With Me in Song CD*, #4

Getting Ready



Lesson 4

Supplies

Pre-session

Blank puzzle of several pieces, 1 piece per person; or cardstock copy of puzzle (See end of lesson.)
Markers

Opening

Marshmallows, at least 5 per person

Creative Experience

Smooth river stones, 3+" each, 1 per person
Basket
Paint pens or permanent markers

Prepare Ahead

Pre-session

Copy puzzle at end of lesson onto cardstock, if desired, and cut apart.
Separate blank puzzle pieces and place on table.

Creative Experience

Place stones in basket.

Additional Lesson

Story

The Butter Battle Book by Dr. Seuss





Lesson 4

Do I Create Peace or Conflict?

Supplies

Blank puzzle of several pieces, 1 piece per person; or cardstock copy of puzzle (See end of lesson.)

Markers

Prepare Ahead

Copy puzzle at end of lesson onto cardstock, if desired, and cut apart. Separate blank puzzle pieces and place on table.

Pre-session

Pre-session is not essential to the lesson. If Uniteens arrive before the starting time, use pre-session to begin to focus on the lesson and to encourage relationship building.

Piecing Peace Together puzzle

Say: Choose a blank puzzle piece. Think of a time when you have been a peacemaker and draw something to remind you of that event. Bring your puzzle piece to Opening Circle.



Opening

Focus

To understand how our words and actions can contribute to peace or conflict.

Opening Prayer and Check-in

Include an offering blessing and song wherever it works best with your group.

Say: Welcome! Today we will be exploring how we can be an active part of conflict or peacemaking. We had time earlier to remember a time when we were an active peacemaker in some situation. As we go around the circle and say our names, we can share what we have drawn to remind ourselves of that incident, and give a summary of it in 1 or 2 sentences. Then each lay your puzzle piece down, and join it with the other ones already down to form a complete puzzle, to show how we each can contribute to peace. (*Proceed as indicated.*)

Note: If pre-session was not done, give Uniteens a moment to think of a time when they were a peacemaker, and then invite them to share that in one or two sentences.

Marshmallow Throw game

Say: We are now going to divide into 2 groups. Count off “X, Y.” All the Xs stand on one side of the room and all the Ys stand on the other side of the room facing the Xs. The first group will be called the XXers, and the second group will be called the YYers.

In a moment, I am going to give the XXers some marshmallows for “missiles” to throw at your enemies, the YYers. While you are throwing them, shout “YYer!” at them. *(Give each person in X group 5 or more marshmallows.)* Ready? Begin! *(Proceed as indicated, then collect the marshmallows.)*

Say: Now, we are going to repeat the process, except that now the YYers will have the marshmallow missiles, and will be yelling “XXer!” as they throw them. *(Give each person in Y group 5 or more marshmallows.)* Ready? Begin! *(Proceed as indicated, then collect the marshmallows and ask the following questions.)*

Ask:

- How did it feel to have “missiles” or “stones” thrown at you from the opposing team?
- How did it feel to “throw stones” at the opposing team?
- Describe a time you were put down. How did it feel?
- Describe a time you put someone down. How did it feel?

Say: Today we will be considering how some conflicts can get started. Many times we fling put-downs or judgments or accusations at others without even being certain what we are upset about, or how the other person might feel. Let’s see what Jesus taught about that.

Supplies

Marshmallows, at least 5 per person

Adapted from “Casting the First Stone,” *Do It!: Active Learning in Youth Ministry*, Thom and Joani Schultz, Group Books, Loveland, CO, 1989, p. 60.

Exploration

Bible Story: Casting the First Stone John 8:2-9 (New Century Version)

Say: In the book of John in the Bible, there is a story about Jesus teaching some people about “put-downs,” or making negative judgments about others. Let’s listen to the story.

Focus

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Read or invite group members to read the following Bible passage to the group, either from below or from a Bible.

Early in the morning [Jesus] went back to the Temple, and all the people came to him, and he sat and taught them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery. They forced her to stand before the people. They said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught having sexual relations with a man who is not her husband. The law of Moses commands that we stone to death every woman who does this. What do you say we should do?" They were asking this to trick Jesus so that they could have some charge against him.

But Jesus bent over and started writing on the ground with his finger. When they continued to ask Jesus their question, he raised up and said, "Anyone here who has never sinned can throw the first stone at her." Then Jesus bent over again and wrote on the ground.

Those who heard Jesus began to leave one by one, first the older men and then the others. Jesus was left there alone with the woman standing before him.

Discussion

All questions need not be asked. Continue as long as interest is maintained. Several people may answer each question.

- Why did the Pharisees and scribes bring the woman to Jesus?
- Why did Jesus' words cause them to drop the stones and walk away rather than throw them?
- What was the sin in this story? What does the word "sin" mean to you? How does Unity see sin differently?
- What are other ways that people throw stones at each other besides using real stones?
- Unity teaches that we create our world through our thoughts. How does this story illustrate this?
- What is a situation that occurred at school or with your friends where people were "throwing stones" at others? What caused the situation to occur?
- What are other ways the upset people could have handled the situation? How might Jesus have handled it?

Sin means "missing the mark," as in archery. Wrong thinking (sin) leads us to fall short of divine perfection by failing to express our God-qualities, such as love, wisdom, intelligence, forgiveness, etc.

- How do countries “throw stones” at each other? What does it lead to?
- What are ways for countries to resolve their problems?
- How do your thoughts affect how you handle a situation? Which Unity principle applies here?
- Describe a time when you found a way to work through a conflict without “throwing stones.” What did you do?
- What are ways you can handle a situation where others are “throwing stones” at you?

Creative Experience: Meditation with Peace Rocks

Say: Choose one of these stones to hold in your hands. Then find a spot on the floor where you have some space around you. (*Begin meditation when all have settled into their spot.*) Close your eyes for our meditation. Take three slow deep breaths in and out and find your calm center for our visualization....

Say: You are standing on the side of the road. Off in the distance, you see a crowd of people walking toward you, angrily holding a woman. They are holding stones in their hands.... Be aware of your feelings as you watch this scene.... As the crowd reaches you, you pick up a stone and turn to join them, walking toward a young man and his friends.... How does it feel to be holding a stone in the crowd?...

Now, in your mind’s eye, lay down your stone and feel yourself turn to face the crowd as Jesus. How does it feel to see the crowd and the woman who is now lying on the ground looking up at you?... You kneel down and with your finger, you write something in the sand. What do you write? (*Pause for 30 seconds.*)

Now visualize turning to the crowd and saying, “If you have never made a mistake in your life, throw the first stone.” You watch as each one drops their stone and turns to walk away. What feelings rise up in you now? What do you do next?.... (*Allow time to reflect.*)

In these last few moments, let feelings and images of peace or love come into your mind.... (*Allow time to reflect.*)

Say: In a moment, we will open our eyes and move to tables in silence to decorate our stones with symbols of love and/or peace.

Now, as we say together our affirmation, we will open our eyes and move to the tables. I will say the affirmation once, then we can repeat it together.

I bring peace into my world. I am a peacemaker. (*Repeat.*) Amen.

Proceed in decorating stones as indicated.

Principle 3

I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe.

Supplies

Smooth river stones, 3+” each, 1 per person
Basket
Paint pens or permanent markers

Prepare Ahead

Place stones in basket.



Closing

Say: We have had the opportunity today to consider what it feels like to be a maker of peace by our thoughts and actions—a peacemaker. As we go around the circle we will each have the chance to share with others what symbols of peace we have chosen for our rocks. (*Proceed as indicated.*)

Say: Let's close by claiming for ourselves the truth of our affirmation:
I bring peace into my world. I am a peacemaker. (*Repeat.*) Amen.

These suggestions are to encourage Uniteens to connect what is happening in their lives to their spirituality. Use to enhance lessons and/or to continue lesson theme at home. Check any website before recommending it, as web content frequently changes.



Media Connection

- Google and research a peace organization and email what you have found to a friend in your Uniteens class.
- Arrange for your Uniteen group to view the movie “The Dark Crystal” and have discussion afterward about the origins of conflicts and their resolutions.
- Check out www.dosomething.org for ideas and inspiration.



**Theme
Extender**



Additional Lesson

This section offers additional story ideas for another date. It can also serve as an alternate to the main story/experience.

Story: *The Butter Battle Book* by Dr. Seuss

Discussion

All questions need not be asked. Continue as long as interest is maintained. Several people may answer each question.

- Why are the characters in the story fighting with each other?
- What are some of the weapons they create?
- Why aren't the weapons effective?
- What happens at the end of the story?
- How could it end differently?
- Where do you see this happening in the world right now?
- What can be done differently so that the conflict can end?
- Describe a time when you have seen others having a conflict that kept getting worse. What happened? How did it end?
- What happens when each side keeps trying to get back at the other?
- How does it feel to win an argument?
- How does it feel to lose?
- What is a way to deal with a conflict so that everyone wins?
- How can you use Unity Principle 3 to help you with conflicts in the future?

Creative Expression: Peacemaking Machine

Say: Our actions can help bring peace into our personal world and into the larger world of our planet home. Let's use our imaginations now to create a "peacemaking machine" out of the people in our group, then use the "machine" to act out an alternative ending to the story in which both sides win. (*Proceed as indicated.*)

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Principle 3

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Piecing Peace Together puzzle

