

Living in a perfect world

Si vis pacem, para pacem (If you want peace, prepare peace)

Themes	Peace and Violence, Health, Environment
Complexity	Level 3
Group size	15 - 30
Time	90 minutes
Overview	This activity starts with a quiz on proverbs and wise sayings that reflect different aspects of being at peace, and goes on to let participants reflect on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The meaning of peace ▪ Inner peace, peace with others and peace with the environment ▪ Developing peaceful behaviour
Related rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The right to peace ▪ The right to life ▪ The right to a healthy environment
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To sense the interdependency between the different dimensions of peace ▪ To discuss the different meanings of peace and how it applies to our daily lives ▪ To promote respect, solidarity and responsibility
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One large sheet of paper (A3) or flipchart paper ▪ Coloured markers ▪ Quiz sheets and pens, one per group ▪ Discussion guides, one per small group ▪ Copies of box 1 and box 2, one per small group
Preparation	Copy the peace wheel in box 1 onto a large sheet of paper. Make it as big as possible.


Instructions

This activity is in two parts: part 1, completing the mandala (25 minutes) and part 2, talking peace (30 minutes).


Part 1, completing the mandala (25 minutes)

1. In plenary, show participants the copy you have drawn of an empty peace circle, or mandala. Point out the sections: peace with yourself, peace with others and peace with nature. Tell them that the completed mandala will represent the attainment of an ideal state of peace. To complete it people have to find the twenty-one “words of universal truth” that relate to each of the twenty-one areas of a life in peace. These missing words can be found all over the world in wise sayings or proverbs.
2. Ask people to get into three groups and hand out a pen, a copy of the empty mandala and a copy of the quiz sheet to each group. Remind them that they have to find the


THEMES



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missing words in each of the proverbs. These are the clues to the values that fit in the different areas of the peace circle.

3. When they have finished, call everyone together. Ask people to volunteer to read out the completed proverbs one at a time. Check they are correct and ask the reader to take a coloured pen and write the word on your large copy of the peace circle.
4. Repeat for all the proverbs until the mandala is complete and a state of peace is attained.

Part 2, talking peace (30 minutes)

1. Ask people to return to their three sub-groups. Give out the discussion guides, one to each group. Ask them to discuss the questions in their discussion guide, while at the same time keeping an eye on the values associated with the relevant area of the peace wheel. They should see if they can come to a consensus about the questions, and they should be prepared to report back on their discussions.
2. At the end, call everyone into plenary, and ask each group to report back.

Debriefing and evaluation

Start by talking about the mandala and the universality of the values represented. Then go on to review part 2 of the activity.

Part 1.

- How hard was it to find the missing words? How many of the proverbs or sayings did people already know? Are they in fact “words of wisdom” that are relevant to our lives today?
- Do the words in the innermost circle represent universal values? Are they equally important in all cultures? Which are the most important in yours?
- Are there other core values which are not represented?

Part 2. Ask someone from each group to make a very short summary of the questions on their discussion guide. Then take the following questions in rounds.

- Was it easy to reach a consensus on all the issues discussed?
- Which question was the most controversial? Why?
- What is their opinion on the controversy?
- Why do people have different views on these issues relating to peace?
- People often link discussions about inner peace with religion. Why is this?
- Do people have to be religious to have values necessary for inner peace?
- What relationships are there between what they have been discussing and human rights?
- Is peace a necessary prior condition for a culture of human rights to exist, or it is necessary to have human rights respected before people can reach a state of peace?

Tips for facilitators

There is further information about the issues raised in this activity in the background information on peace and violence on page 377. This will help you to guide the discussion in plenary. Try to bring out the interrelation between the three dimensions of peace. Do not be afraid of controversy; this is by nature a controversial topic. Rather, reflect on the arguments in favour

Key date

21 June

World Peace and
Prayer Day

and against the issues and emphasise that these are not black and white issues; there are no clear answers.

If there are more than eighteen people in the group, it is best to double up on the numbers of small groups and work with six small groups rather than three large ones. Remember to make extra copies of the materials!

Variations

You could organise part one, completing the mandala, as a whole group activity. Read out the proverbs one at a time and ask for suggestions for the missing words. In this case, you will want to mark the words straight onto the large chart and you will need to make copies of the completed wheel for people to refer to in part 2.

Suggestions for follow-up

With the insights gained in this activity, the group might like to go on to discuss incidents when there has not been peace in their lives and to work out practical strategies for dealing with personal violence. See the activity “Violence in my life”, on page 248.

Further information

The idea of the peace wheel used in this activity comes from Pierre Weil, “El Arte de Vivir en Paz, Hacia una nueva conciencia de Paz”, Errepar, Argentina, 1995. “El arte de vivir en paz, hacia una nueva conciencia de paz” means “the art of living in peace, towards a new consciousness of peace”.

There are many ways to interpret the peace circle. The following notes may help guide you in discussions about it:

At the centre of the mandala is infinity, there is no beginning and no end.

All the words in the innermost circle represent the values and behaviour or a state of being that *should be* in each of the corresponding areas of our lives. For example, in relation to our ability to be at peace with others and at peace with society, we need to be at peace in the areas of economy, our social life and culture.

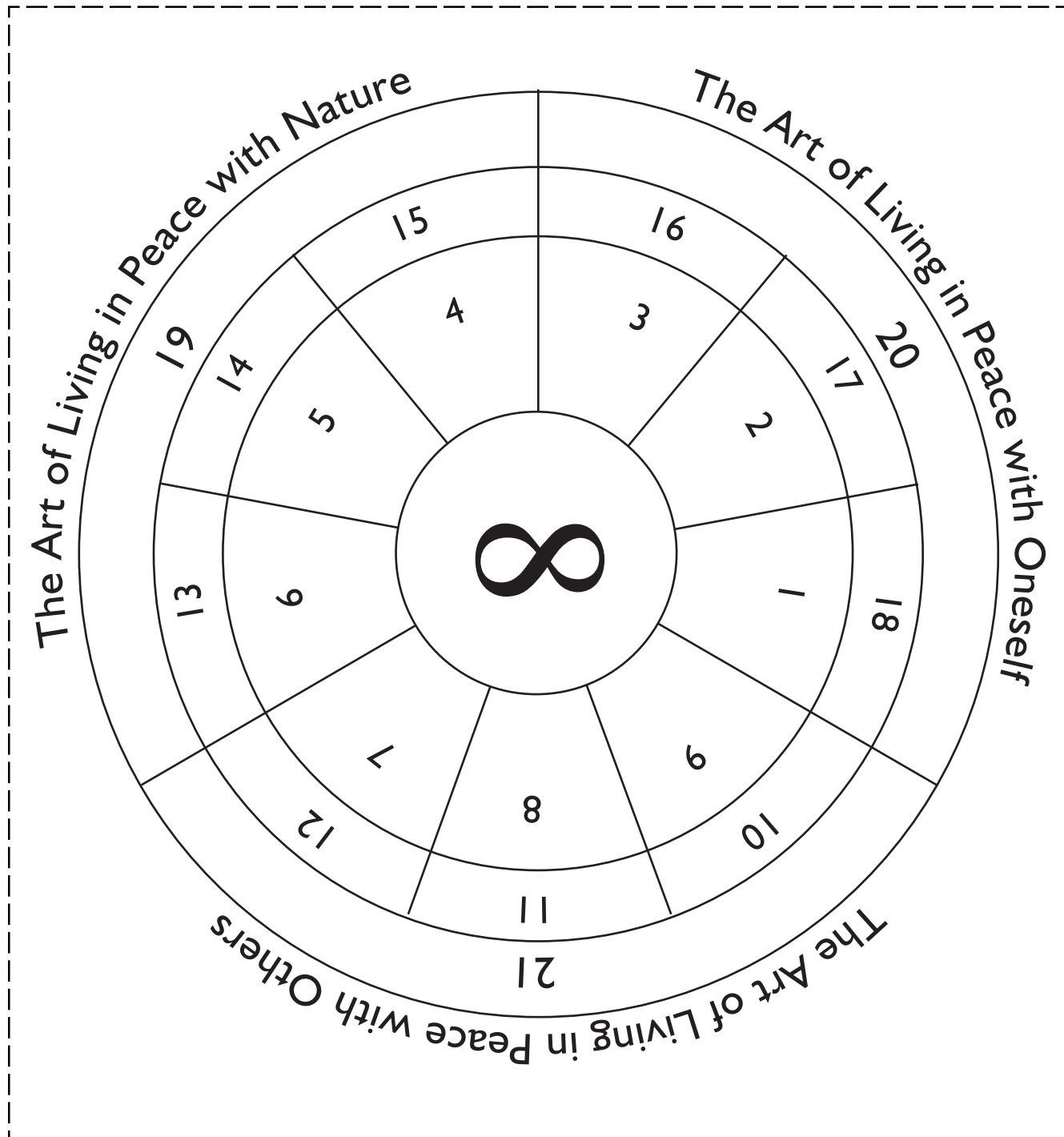
Mind, body and emotions are the areas of focus in our relationship with “oneself” and our inner peace. To have individual inner peace, we need wisdom, to feel love, patience, compassion, and joy and to have a healthy body.

The third dimension of peace is environment, which coincides with peace with nature.

Here we have three areas: we need to have knowledge to be informed, to have respect for life and to be in harmony with substance (things - nature, trees, flowers, animals, etc.)

HANDOUTS

The peace wheel



Quiz sheet

Can you find the words which are missing from the following proverbs and quotations? Identify the words and you have the clues to fit into the peace circle!

The words you have to match are: Beauty, Body, Compassion, Co-operation, Culture, Economy, Emotions, Environment, Patience, Harmony, Health, Individual, Information, Joy, Justice, Knowledge, Life, Love, Mind, Respect, Social life, Society, Solidarity, Substance, Truth, Welfare and Wisdom.

Area 1. Experience is the mother of _____.

Area 2.

- a) Where there is _____ there is no darkness. (Burundi Proverb)
- b) _____ and perseverance have a magical effect before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish. (John Quincy Adams)
- c) Man may dismiss _____ from his heart, but God never will. (William Cowper)
- d) Don't promise something when you are full of _____; don't answer letters when you are full of anger. (Chinese Proverb)

Area 3. _____ is better than wealth.

Area 4. Doubt is the key to _____. (Iranian Proverb)

Area 5. If you want to be respected, you must _____ yourself. (Spanish Proverb)

Area 6. To touch the earth is to have _____ with nature. (Oglala Sioux. Native American)

Area 7. For the sake of others' _____, however great, let not one neglect one's own _____; clearly perceiving one's own _____, let one be intent on one's own goal. (Buddhist proverb)

Area 8. Government and _____ are in all things the law of life; anarchy and competition the laws of death. (John Ruskin)

Area 9.

- a) _____ without wisdom is like a flower in the mud. (Romanian Proverb)
- b) Sooner or later the _____ comes to light. (Dutch Proverb)
- c) _____ forever, _____ forever, _____ forever. For the union makes us strong. (Ralph Chaplin)
- d) When violence comes into the house, law and _____ leave through the chimney. (Turkish Proverb)

Area 10. _____ of the mind must be subservient to the heart. (Mahatma Gandhi)

Area 11. See _____ and glee sit down, / All joyous and unthinking, / Till, quite transmogrified, they're grown / Debauchery and drinking. (Robert Burns, 1759–1796).

Area 12. There can be _____ where there is no efficiency. (Beaconsfield)

Area 13. Be not deceived with the first appearance of things, for show is not _____. (English Proverb)

Area 14. A moment of patience can prevent a great disaster and a moment of impatience can ruin a whole _____. (Chinese Proverb)

Area 15. Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in _____. (T.S. Eliot)

Area 16. Easier to bend the _____ than the will. (Chinese Proverb)

Area 17. By starving _____ we become humourless, rigid and stereotyped; by repressing them we become literal, reformatory and holier-than-thou; encouraged, they perfume life; discouraged, they poison it. (Joseph Collins)

Area 18. See with your _____, hear with your heart. (Kurdish Proverb)

Area 19. Man shapes himself through decision that shapes his _____. (Rene Dubos)

Area 20. Every heart is the other heart. Every soul is the other soul. Every face is the other face. The _____ is the one illusion. (Margaurite Young)

Area 21. You can tell how high a _____ is by how much of its garbage is recycled. (Tahanie)

Discussion guides

Discussion guide: Peace with oneself (group 1)

1. What does it mean to be at peace with oneself?
2. What sorts of things that we say and do everyday, show that we are at war with ourselves and do not have a quality of inner peace?
3. Is there a relationship between the body, mind and emotions? What kind of relationship?
4. How can we develop the qualities that help us to be at peace with ourselves?
5. Is it possible to have a positive relationship with others if we do not have inner peace ourselves?

Discussion guide: Peace with nature (group 3)

1. Does society value the environment?
2. What does it mean to live in harmony with nature?
3. Whose duty is it to care for the environment?
4. In the future, how many wars will be fought over basic natural resources (for example, water), compared to wars fought for other reasons (for example, ethnic, cultural or religious clashes)?
5. Do you think that the art of living in peace with nature is relevant to the achievement of a total state of peace?

Discussion guide: Peace with others (group 2)

1. Do we - as human beings - have the capacity to live at peace with others?
2. Does absence of war mean that we are at peace with others?
3. Can we learn to be more peaceful with others in our daily lives? How?
4. What grounds are there to be hopeful for a peaceful world in the future?
5. Can the scars left by wars be overcome so that people can live in peace again?

Answers to the peace wheel quiz.

Area 1. Wisdom.

Area 2. a) Love,

b) Patience,

c) Compassion,

d) Joy

Area 3. Health

Area 4. Knowledge

Area 5. Respect

Area 6. Harmony

Area 7. Welfare

Area 8. Co-operation

Area 9. a) Beauty,

b) Truth,

c) Solidarity,

d) Justice

Area 10. Culture

Area 11. Social life

Area 12. Economy

Area 13. Substance

Area 14. Life

Area 15. Information

Area 16. Body

Area 17. Emotions

Area 18. Mind

Area 19. Environment

Area 20. Individual

Area 21. Society

The completed peace wheel

