

Lesson from a Book: *Somewhere Today: A Book of Peace*

by Shelley Moore Thomas, photographs by Eric Futran, Whitman and Company, 1998

Synopsis of story:

This is a picture book that shows the many ways we can build peace in our own communities. The actions shown in the book are performed by both children and adults and are simple and easy to do (e.g., being a friend, teaching a little sister to ride a bike, visiting a friend who is old, planting a tree).

SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

Opening:

The opening should include introduction of new children and a check-in. Sitting in a circle, everyone shares his or her name and something that happened this week or something he/she is looking forward to.

Quotation:

“You must be the change you want to see in the world.”
— Mahatma Gandhi

The story:

For young children, read the story yourself, taking ample time to show everyone the pictures. Each child able to read may read a portion. The teacher and/or older children may need to assist some readers.

Wondering and discussion questions:

1. What are some of the things people did in this book to create peace in their communities?
2. I wonder how these things created peace. (Invite children to wonder out loud in response.)
3. I wonder what peace means to you.
4. I wonder what you could do to build peace around you.

Activity suggestions :

1. *Peace Collages*: Have the children create collages of people building peace. Materials needed: paper, magazines, scissors and glue sticks
2. *Drama*: Brainstorm and role play a variety of ways to build peace in our own lives. Put on skits for the other children or for the meeting.

Lesson plan age level:

3–8 years old.

Lesson focus:

Peace testimony, community testimony.

3. *Paper Peace Quilt*: Give each child a piece of paper or fabric to decorate with their own way of building peace using words, symbols, abstract images or pictures. Put the pictures together like a quilt and display in meeting.

Song:

“Let There Be Peace on Earth,” in *Rise Up Singing: The Group Singing Songbook*, edited by Peter Blood and Annie Patterson, Sing Out Publications, 1988, page 161.

Closing:

Sitting in a circle, each person says in one word what he or she will do within the coming weeks to help create peace. Pass the peace from person to person by shaking hands.

Possible follow-up service projects:

1. *Elder visits*: Identify members of meeting who are home bound and arrange a visit. Making a gift ahead of time can give the children a comfortable focus for the visit when they don't know the elder being visited. Be sure to check on any dietary limitations before preparing food.
2. *Toy collection*: Collect new or nearly-new toys and spruce them up to give to a local shelter. Consider a women's shelter where victims of domestic abuse bring their families. They often leave home quickly without toys and other luxuries.

Lesson plan by Robin Wells (modified) of Asheville (NC) Friends Meeting for the FGC Religious Education Committee.