

# Cultivating Peace Values Among School Students

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## Abstract

Peace has always been among humanity's highest values--for some, supreme. In today's world, with growing levels of problems, challenges, conflicts, violence--there is an increasing sense of peacelessness among students. Today's school students are experiencing the peace-crisis. Everyone will agree that the need for generating peace consciousness among the growing generation is vital. This is especially so in the contemporary world where violence is increasing vertically and horizontally. Mahatma Gandhi once stated, **"If we are to reach real peace in this world then we shall have to begin with the children"**. If we want our young people to be successful in the world they will inhabit, they will need more than the knowledge we can measure on traditional tests. They will need to be equipped with skills, attitudes and habits required for solving problems unimaginable today. Such individuals will have self-awareness, values of tolerance, compassion and competence to deal with crisis in a creative manner. In order to develop these attitudes, skills and competencies among students, the institutions of family and school have to make conscious efforts to promote peace related skills. This paper aims at an understanding of ways and means to incorporate peace feeling at all levels of schooling. It is also indicated that how peace can be implanted in the mind of sensitive child of twenty first century at the school. It has suggested few strategies for inculcating values of peace as a way of life in the classroom and in various extra-curricular activities of the school. Through the participatory activities they will be able to embody the basic concepts of peace with its values and skills. They can effectively implement these in their daily life situations. They would become the peace-builders of the nation and would help to create the more peaceful and beautiful world.

**Keywords:** Peace Value, Cultivating, Innovative.

## Introduction

*Peace Begins with a smile.* – Mother Teresa

The world has changed in leaps and bounds over the centuries. Life has become complicated, competitive like a running race. With increasing levels of problems, challenges, conflicts- there is an increasing sense of peaceless among school students. Surely, today's students are experiencing the peace-crisis. It is disheartening to see the kind of violent acts being committed by man against man and nature. It is sad to see the violence in the form of terrorism, war, crimes, injustice, oppression and exploitation. There is confusion and disorder in the society, which man has built for him. The saddest part of this state of disorder and confusion is that it is affecting children's innocent mind. Children naturally absorb this violence in atmosphere and may become perpetrators of violence. Hence the need to nurture peace in the minds of children has become the prime issue to be addressed.

*"When there is peace in the individual, there will be peace in the family.  
When there is peace in the family, there will be peace in the community.  
When there is peace in the community, there will be peace in the nation.  
When there is peace in the nation, there will be peace in the world."- Vincent van Gogh*

No country can remain distance in the pressure of globalization. It has affected the field of education too. It has narrowed down the true spirit of learning subjects. It has simply become the matter of passing examination. Due to such examination oriented learning in school, the very purpose and beauty of the whole education system seems to have lost. The real joy of learning is taken away from children. They are simply trained to cope with the rat race of the society. Teachers themselves complain about the disciplinary problems in the school. Even the society at large feels that the youth who comes out of the school are insensitive to the problems of society, selfish, narrow-minded, lack decision making and intellectual depth. They succumb to corrupt social pressures. Everyone will agree that the need for generating peace consciousness among the growing generation is vital. This is especially so in the contemporary world where violence is increasing vertically and horizontally.

*"If we are to reach real peace in this world then we shall have to begin with the children". ---Mahatma Gandhi.*

Quite evidently, student age is the crucially important period which enriches one's personal life, nurtures social adjustments, developing friendship and understanding and affects one's whole life system. Learning to make a living is not the sole reason for getting education; there is another, equally important by-product: **learning to make a life, a life that is beneficial, useful and peaceful.** If we want our young people to be successful in the world they will inhabit, they will need more than the knowledge we can measure on traditional tests. They will need the skills, attitudes and habits required for solving problems unimaginable today. They will need to see varied viewpoints and understand people across the globe. They will need to think flexibly and with imagination. They will need to be innovative and creative. They will need to be more compassionate, caring and tolerant. There is a growing realization in the world of education today that children should be educated in the art of peaceful living. More and more peace concepts, values, attitudes and behaviours should be integrated into the school curriculum.

**As expressed in the Preamble to the UNESCO Constitution "Since war begins in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed."** If this is true then, it is through changing our minds, our consciousness and our worldview that transformation needs to occur in order to move towards a culture of peace.

While many factors affect our consciousness and worldview, such as our family life, our religion and our community. The key factor is our formal schooling. Informal education through our parents, extended families, communities and media has a profound impact on our worldview. School is where students spend most of time and if we can bring the knowledge, skills and attitudes for creating a culture of peace into the formal curriculum and school life, imagine the change that we could make.

### Concept of Peace

*The giver of peace is eternally blissful. – Granth Sahib  
You get World Peace through Inner Peace.  
If you've got a world full of people who have Inner Peace,*

*then you have a Peaceful World.- Wayne Dyer*

“Peace is not only the absence of conflict, but also required a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and co-operation”. – Declaration and Programme of Action of a Culture of Peace General assembly Resolution A/53/243, 1999.

“Peace is the behaviour that encourages harmony in the way people talk, listen and interact with each other discourages actions to hurt, harm, or destroy each other.” Theresa Bey and Gwendolyn Turner (1995).

### Three basic sources of Peace:

- **Inner Peace:** It is harmony and peace with oneself, good health and absence of inner conflicts. It is a sense of joy, freedom, insight and feelings of kindness, compassion and content and appreciation of art.
- **Social Peace:** It is harmony arising from human relationships at all levels. It is conflict resolution, love, friendship, brotherhood, tolerance, democracy, community building, human rights, and morality.
- **Peace with Nature:** It is harmony with natural environment and mother earth.

### Cultivating Peace Values

The researcher aims to develop a culture of peace in schools through school curriculum. Initiating a peaceful culture in school should start by developing attitudes and behaviours of appreciation, co-operation, belongingness, trust and spirit of learning. By way of developing a friendly and mutually respectful teacher-pupil relationship, a peace culture can bloom naturally in school. To ensure this, the school has to introduce the living system of peace values, norms and practices into the daily life of the school. It would be necessary to change the teacher-centred classroom approach to child-centred learning. When there is active and participatory learning in the classroom using interesting teaching and learning methods in a friendly and lively atmosphere marked by creative expressions of potentials and self-discipline, peace will emerge naturally. Teachers have to identify effective strategies and practices that could transform the school into a place of harmony.

All education programmes attempt at developing children through the provision and facilitation of certain learning experiences. The plan of the programmes is what you call the curriculum. A programme begins by identification of goals. Then learning experiences have to be selected which enable students to develop to the intended outcome. While developing peace values, our primary objective is to help the child grow into a peaceful person. Hence we have to identify the basic characteristics that we expect out of the person. Then select learning experiences, which will develop the child towards that expected level. It gives us a clear vision and can develop a model for an effective programme.

**Components of Peace Behaviour:** There are many aspects of Peace, such as happiness, calmness, self-control, and tolerance. The activities and techniques described in this book can empower teachers and students to manifest those aspects that are most relevant to the classroom:

- **Acceptance:** acceptance and appreciation of our own and others’ uniqueness, to treat others with respect and courtesy even if their opinions, habits, and customs differ from ours.



feelings. Such activities help emotional development.

- **Sharing Game:** Working harmoniously in a group is satisfying, empowering and leads to growth, not only to the individual but also to the others in the group. Inability to work in a group can make one's life a failure at every level. Conflict is a part of our life. It occurs when people lack understanding of others perspectives. To avoid the escalation of conflict and to promote peace and nonviolence, cooperation is essential. Sharing and creating stories of peace together is one way students can begin to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for a culture of peace.
- **Mass-Singing:** Lively songs based on peace values in different languages could be taught to children to sing. For this they could gather in a big hall and all should participate in it. Children singing in unison will create a strong feeling as being a part of unified group and instils a feeling of belonging and feeling of group purpose. It would increase their awareness of rest of the world and would get the feeling of connectedness. The concepts of beauty, creativity, rhythm and harmony can thus be skilfully woven into the school curriculum.
- **Affirmation Activities:** These activities are effective in developing the self-esteem of children. Children express affection, positive remarks, appreciation and friendship for each other either verbally or non-verbally, in these activities, e.g.: Children move around the classroom making pleasant comments to each one they meet. **or** A child is invited to come to the middle of the class. The participants one by one come to him/ her and expresses their positive feelings in a manner that makes the child feel happy.
- **Dance:** Dance is a very powerful medium of peace, which can be explored endlessly. Dance can be used effectively to build peace vision and attitudes in children. Its strength lies in the affective component it inherits. Students can be encouraged to perform on different poems in their text books which have peace related values. Through such artistic representations we share a common humanity. We need all these ways of viewing the world because no one way can say it all. It surely contributes to increased self-confidence, persistence, social tolerance and appreciation of individual and group social development.
- **Workshop on Self-development:** One of the significant functions of the human intelligence is to look within and understand one's own process of mind. Self-understanding is to look within and observe, probe, examine, inquire the conditions and processes that dictate our behaviour. Education should help children to build themselves as persons through such self-empowering processes such as guidance, inspiration for higher life, self- understanding, and skill training. Workshop can be conducted to help students build their self-knowledge.

### Peace Core Values

Everything we do comes out of the core belief that active peacemaking requires direct, respectful, and creative communication. We're here to get in the middle when people or communities have disputes, and our work is driven by these six values:

- **Optimism** - We see every conflict as an opportunity for better understanding. Mediation is a valuable tool, so we strive to make it more accessible to everyone.
- **Transparency** - We encourage openness—from ourselves and from people in disputes because direct communication is the best way to find solutions.
- **Empathy** - We don't simply remain neutral—we strive to understand and honor the different points of view of the individuals, parties, or communities in conflict.

- **Empowerment** - We create a private, collaborative environment to help individuals and communities find practical solutions to their disputes. We also help them gain the tools to handle future conflicts.
- **Excellence** - We demand nothing but the best from ourselves on behalf of the people we work with—whether in mediation, in trainings, or during any other discussions.
- **Creativity** - We think differently—and we encourage the people we work with to think differently—to find innovative, and perhaps unexpected, solutions to make New York City a more peaceful place.

### Significance of the study

Through applying peace education and thus attempting to create the culture of peace, it has been observed that schools stand to make several discernible and even quantifiable gains. For example the following benefits are reported by teachers and principals who have used the peace education approach in their schools:

- Help develop good attitudes in students and teachers as well, e.g. cooperation, mutual respect.
- Help healthy emotional development in students.
- Facilitate socialization through participation in interactive and cooperative learning activities.
- Improve students' discipline and moral behaviour.
- Develop creativity both in students and teachers.
- Improve standard of quality of teaching and learning.
- Develop a more humanistic management approach.

### Conclusion

Values conducive to achieving peace, including but not limited to open mindedness, celebration of cultural diversity, and respect for human dignity. The educational system today must be sensitive to many issues comprising the effectiveness of education for our children. Educationist must maintain a mind-set of continuous improvement and continue to provide the best possible education for our students. The present paper has suggested few innovative techniques which can be used in the classroom and in various extra-curricular activities of the school. It will bring the desired change in students by developing the peace related attitudes, values and skill. They will be sensitized towards the important concepts of peace. Co- curricular activities will bring action in the class and promote preferred values for peace i.e. Compassion, justice, equity, sharing, fairness, caring for life, empathy, reconciliation, integrity, hope and active non-violence. Thus the students will be able to reflect critically on their assumptions and beliefs and they can consciously implement the new ways of solving the problems, through critical thinking. Through the participatory activities they will be able to embody the basic concepts of peace with its values and skills. They can effectively implement these practically in their day to day life. They will become the peace-builders of the nation and will help to create the more peaceful and beautiful world.

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