

Peace Light

In December each year a candle will be lit in the Grotto of Christ's Birth in the Church of the Nativity, in Bethlehem. This flame will be taken by young Israeli and Palestinian Scouts to Tel Aviv Airport where with the support of Austrian Airlines a Scout will carry it to Austria.

In the week before Christmas, there will be Light distribution services across Ireland. From these Scouts will take the Light to their communities: to places of worship, community centres, hospitals and homes.

For information on the Light Sharing events:

facebook.com/IrishPeaceLight

Also check out:

scout.org/peacelight



Do

Step 1: Explore understandings of peace in one of your meetings.

Step 2: Take part in your nearest Share the Peace Light Ceremony or arrange to get the Peace Light to your Group. Plan a secure and safe way to transport the flame.

Step 3: Distribute the Light in your community. Think about places of worship, hospitals, and community centres.

Step 4: Plan a simple ceremony for when you pass the Light on. Also, maybe give them a small information note on the Light.

Step 5: Make out a plan for who is going to go where to spread the Light. Also, remember that the days coming up to Christmas can be very busy for people, especially parents, so plan in advance!

Peace Light: Activities

A traditional African folk-tale for democracy and peace education

Issues such as democracy, the non-violent management of conflicts and mediation are broached using a symbolic background. The traditional African folk-tale and the symbolic atmosphere provide a backdrop, but the problem raised is a universal one.

All Rover Scouts receive a copy of the folk-tale to read through it:

THE KINGDOM OF VIOLENCE

Mwami is a king who reigns absolutely. His only concern is to retain his power, so much so that he does not allow anyone to raise their little voice or oppose his decisions, which makes him like a dictator in his kingdom, where the population is often subjected to different sorts of physical and moral violence.

The ruthless behaviour of Mwami, and especially the poverty into which his population is sinking, cause his subjects to revolt in the end, and they decide to react with counter-violence, notably by planning to assassinate the king's beloved son.

This counter-violence, proposed by someone close to the king, the wise man Pocho, is averted by another, reasonable wise man, Lino, who, for his part, suggests the mediation of King Muhuza of the neighbouring kingdom. This mediator manages with great difficulty to reconcile Mwami and his subjects. The reconciliation agreements are signed by both sides involved in the conflict, and lasting peace is installed in the kingdom.

A traditional African folk-tale for democracy and peace education

Role play: Based on the story, Rover Scouts should take on a role. At least seven characters are needed. The traits described are only indicative, be spontaneous within the framework of the basic story:

- King Mwami. He is in a very difficult situation. Used to governing absolutely, it is not in his nature to negotiate or compromise. He tends to favour forcing solutions.
- The queen (wife of Mwami). She is very family-orientated, and tries to help her husband out of a serious situation. Above all, she does not want her son to be harmed or killed.
- Son of Mwami. He is a calm and rather unassuming young man. Despite his authoritarian and tyrannical nature, King Mwami loves him very much.
- Wise man Pocho. He is a close adviser to King Mwami, but is double-dealing. It was he who suggested to the rebellious population that they should seize the king's son and threaten to assassinate him as a way of making the king give way.
- King Muhuza. He is the king of the neighbouring kingdom. In contrast to what is happening under Mwami's reign, Muhuza's kingdom is calm and prosperous because everyone has a say in important decisions. His calm and thoughtful nature, combined with his moral authority, make him an ideal potential mediator.
- The queen (wife of Muhuza). She advises her husband, guides him in his thinking and encourages him in his mediation efforts.
- Wise man Lino. He suggested mediation to King Muhuza to prevent violence causing even more damage in the kingdom of Mwami. He gives King Muhuza judicious and lucid advice for his mediation efforts. It is thanks in large part to his intervention that, by overcoming a lot of problems, King Muhuza manages to reconcile King Mwami and his subjects.

NB: The "cast" can also include one or two "supporters" of the king, or even one or two "opponents", but the stage should not be overcrowded.

A traditional African folk-tale for democracy and peace education

The reconciliation celebration must be really happy and colourful. The “Aye Mama” that the participants learnt at the beginning could be danced again, balloons/confetti thrown, etc.

The participants analyse the concepts implied in the basic story (see Background and Key Messages, above), referring also to their personal experience in the matter:

- The situation at the root of the conflict.
- The different way of resolving a conflict: violently, peacefully, etc.
- The effects of each way of proceeding on individuals and on the social structure.

To conclude this part of the workshop, the participants exchange views on the role that peace education can play in preventing, defusing and resolving conflicts.

Remaining in small groups, the participants make drawings, puppets and peace doves.

Take from WOSM’s *Building Peace Together*

Peace Light: Activities

Addressing Discrimination

1. Remind everyone that discrimination takes many forms. Ask each Crew to brainstorm examples of discrimination. List their answers on newsprint or a chalkboard. Include any of the following that participants neglect to mention:

- Teasing, name calling, or using derogatory terms for race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender
 - Excluding someone from activities, or ignoring or denying requests based on the requester's race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity
 - Physically or verbally attacking someone (especially with the 'authorities' ignoring, condoning, or even encouraging this behaviour)
 - Treating someone unfairly in the workplace, public spaces, or educational institutions (for example, denying someone a job or a raise on the basis of ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity)
2. In Crews, Rover scouts should think of a time when they or someone they care about was treated unfairly or unequally because they were members of some specific group. Ask for volunteers to share these experiences.
3. Ask the Rover scouts to identify what would have helped in the situation. Then encourage others to share their stories.
4. Ask what strategies and techniques the Rover scouts might use to help end discrimination in different settings, like school, clubs, and in public spaces.

Peace Light: Activities

How to Be a Super Activist and/or Ally (1)

1. Ask the UN how they think homophobia and transphobia affect LGBTQ+ youth—write the Rover Scouts' on a board. (Help them to think of answers such as: they can cause depression; they make LGBTQ+ youth think that they aren't as good as other people; they can lead to drug and alcohol use, etc.)
2. In Crews, discuss whether or not homophobia/transphobia affect straight youth. If they think that the answer is yes, ask them to come up with five or six examples. Bring the groups back together and ask them to share some of the things they came up with.
3. Distribute and discuss the handout 14 Ways Homophobia and Transphobia Affect Everyone (next page)
4. In Crews, now discuss ways that LGBTQ+ youth and their straight allies can fight homophobia and transphobia. Distribute the handout Ways to Be a GLBTQ Ally or Activist. Then, have a general discussion and write down your ideas.
5. Finish up with the some of these questions:
 - Did you learn anything today that surprised you?
 - Were you surprised about ways in which homophobia affects your life? The lives of your friends and family?
 - In view of what you know now, will you take action to oppose homophobia and transphobia when you witness them?

Modified from Creating Safe Space for GLBTQ Youth: A Toolkit

www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/safespace/

Peace Light: Activities

How to Be a Super Activist and/or Ally (2)

Ways to Fight Homophobia and Transphobia

Here are just a few of the many ways that young people can fight homophobia and transphobia. If participants have a hard time coming up with actions they can take, suggest some of these.

1. Be a friend to LGBTQ+ youth.
2. When you hear homophobic or transphobic comments, calmly assert your belief in everyone's right to be treated with dignity and respect.
3. Ask to speak with adults in charge (of the school, agency, community of faith, etc.) about the importance of a 'zero tolerance' policy for homophobic and transphobic comments and actions.
4. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper highlighting the topic
5. Have for a relaxed dress code that honors each person's individuality and unique gender expression.
6. Help create a safe space for all in your Unit
8. Create and distribute a list of community resources for LGBTQ youth.

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How to Be a Super Activist and/or Ally (3)

Homophobia and Transphobia Affect Everyone

Ways that Homophobia and Transphobia Affect LGBTQ Youth

1. Homophobia and transphobia make many LGBTQ youth feel isolated, lonely, and ashamed.
2. Homophobia/transphobia create an environment in which LGBTQ youth may have to face harassment and even violence in their schools, communities and/or homes.
3. They force many gay, lesbian, bisexual, and questioning youth to become sexually active before they really want to, choosing partners of the opposite sex just to hide their sexual orientation or their questions. Transphobia forces many transgender youth to become sexually active before they really want to just so they can hide their gender identity.
5. Homophobia and transphobia contribute to the self-doubt that makes many GLBTQ youth turn to drugs and/or alcohol to numb their feelings.

How Homophobia and Transphobia Affect Straight Youth

6. Homophobia and transphobia pressure straight people to act unkindly or even cruelly towards LGBTQ people and encourage bullying and cruelty toward anyone whose appearance or behaviour isn't sufficiently 'macho' or 'feminine'.
7. Homophobia and transphobia force straight people to act 'straight,' limiting their individuality and self-expression.
8. Homophobia/transphobia can destroy family relationships
9. Homophobia and transphobia lead many straight youth to become sexually active before they really want to just to 'prove' they are straight.
10. Homophobia, along with racism, sexism, and poverty, makes it hard to end the HIV epidemic.
11. Homophobia/transphobia make it impossible for people to value diversity and the wonderful variety that exists among all people.

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Messengers of Peace

The Messengers of Peace Award aims to promote world peace through the positive activities of young people. Any Rover Scout who has voluntarily invested more than 10 hours in a community service project is eligible for the award. This can be anything from running a fun day for the disadvantaged in your local community, to coordinating a book donation for a school in need. Any community project that brings a positive change to an area - its health, environment, social circumstances, safety or addresses conflict – is a Messengers of Peace project.



Requirements

Complete a service project which involves at least 10 hours of effort.

Your project should include the following:

- Service to a community: The project should address a need in the community.
- Sustainable: It should have a lasting impact
- Personal Progression: All of the Rover Scouts should be involved in organising and doing the project.

Steps to getting the Award:

1. The Crew firstly registers by emailing betterworld@scouts.ie (include your Group details, numbers of Rover Scouts participating, and your planned project)
2. Plan: Learn about a local social issue (meeting) and decide on ways in which you can help (meeting)
3. Do: Crews organise a community project (weekend or weekly activities)
4. Review: Evaluate your project and its impact, and commit to maintaining if required (meeting, on-going). Submit an application.
5. Celebrate your achievement!