

Honoring our Veterans

Month: Nov.

Week #: 11

Day: a. T - W Time: 30 min.

Why is there War?

Life Tree Learning Systems ©

Objectives/Aims

The students will: learn some of the root causes of war; they will also learn how, on a smaller scale, these same root causes provoke everyday conflicts as well

Materials

none

Illustration

War is not like a video game, a TV show or a cartoon. The violence in war is real. It injures, maims, or kills people. It destroys people's homes, factories, beautiful architecture, and works of art. It damages the environment and the plants and animals that live there.

Background

Since the dawn of humankind there has been war. The basic cause of many wars is rooted in a 'self-centeredness' in which one person or group wants the survival and advancement of oneself or one's own kind at the expense of those different than oneself.



The root causes of some wars is based on our inherent tendency towards individual and corporate self-centeredness. The following are some common reasons for starting wars:

- Territorial: wanting more land to expand into
- Economic: wanting another's resources
- Power: controlling others for one's own ends
- Ideological: forcing one's belief system on another
- Revenge: retaliating for perceived or real injustices
- Prejudicial: irrational judging of another as being inferior due to race, ethnicity, gender, etc.

On the other hand, there are what some people refer to as 'just' wars. These wars are often defensive in nature, when one is protecting oneself and one's countrymen from both real and perceived threats. Of course, what is considered 'just' depends on one's ethical perceptions and cultural biases. Ultimately, most Americans would justify the wars we have fought in on the basis of securing, protecting, and advancing freedom or protecting our interests.

This activity is dedicated to nine-year-old Kim Phuc, who had been hiding from the North Vietnamese with her family in the temple. Two of her brothers, aged one and three, were killed instantly by the jellied gasoline. Kim tore off her flaming clothes and ran down the rural road, screaming Nong qua! Nong qua! (Too hot! Too hot!). That photograph in Life Magazine (see in 'Computer Generated') will forever remain etched in my mind. May such horrors of war like these someday be but a distant, painful reminder of why it is so important to work actively for peace.

Group Activity

1. Say, "Conflicts are a fact of life. People have conflicts because we have a tendency to think only of ourselves, have finite knowledge and make mistakes. Conflicts can be good or bad depending on how we solve them. Conflicts can be between friends, family members, groups and even nations. When these conflicts escalate between nations and violence is used war can result. War is not like a video game, a TV show or a cartoon. The violence in war is real. It injures, maims, or kills people (roughly 72 million people were killed in WWII). It destroys people's homes, factories, beautiful architecture, and works of art. It damages the environment and the plants and animals that live there. Today we are going to study what causes war so that we can learn how to prevent war in the future. Often the conflicts we have with our friends or classmates, on a much smaller scale, have the same causes as war. We will use people puppets to act out each of these situations. Pay careful attention to see if you can figure out what causes each conflict.

2. The skits:

Territory:

One boy and one girl are sitting at a table. Due to all of the required materials, the boy needs more space to accomplish his work. He begins to actively push into the space of the other student. The other student loudly exclaims that she no longer has the necessary space to get her work done. An argument ensues with each student selfishly defending his or her right to the space. Ask the group discussion questions.

Economic:

Four students are out on the playground. One pair is playing 'bounce' with a ball. The two other students approach saying they need the ball to play four square. There is only one ball to be had, so an argument ensues with each pair selfishly claiming that they have a right to the ball and they 'need' it. Ask the group discussion questions.

Power/Freedom:

Two students, one older boy and one younger boy are 'supposedly' good friends. The younger student admires and looks up to the older student. The older student, however, takes advantage of the situation and constantly bosses the younger student around to get his own selfish wants met. After a while, the younger student gets tired of being 'used' (make sure the students understand what this means) and begins to refuse the older student's requests. Meanwhile, the older student begins to emotionally and physically threaten the younger student if he doesn't comply.

Note: Continue skits the next day if more time is needed.

Ideological:

Two students have an argument over what is better: a non-contact sport like skating / swimming or a contact sport like football / rugby.

Revenge:

Two students with one being teased all of the time by the other student. The teased student decides to get back at the teaser by pouring rotten milk in his or her lunch box.

Group Discussion Questions: (Ask after each individual skit)

1. What happened in this skit?

A: Will vary with each skit.

2. What caused the conflict?

A: The answer is the title of the skit.

Group Discussion Questions (continued)

3. How could this conflict been solved to the satisfaction of both parties?

A: Territory: They could have better arranged the materials so they could both fit, moved to a larger space or separated until the large work was done and then gotten back together, etc.

A: Economic: They could have shared the ball or invited the other group to join their game, etc.

A: Power/Freedom: The younger student could have found another student to help him stand up to the older student. Have a peace conference. If they the situation continued, the younger student should report it to an adult (help the students to understand the difference between reporting and tattling).

A: Ideological: Have the students agree to disagree in an agreeable manner.

A: Revenge: Use words, have a peace conference, etc.

4. What are five potential causes of conflict/war?

A: Those listed above.

Variations/Extensions

1. Read the letter from the Marine colonel who was serving in the war in Afghanistan. He wrote this letter to his daughter's primary classroom to help explain the situation in that country and what caused the war and how they are trying to bring about peace. It's good to share a soldier's perspective on war.

Conclusion

Say, "Hopefully, by learning the causes of conflict/war, we can help prevent violence with our friends and in the world as a whole."

Honoring our Veterans: Why is there War?



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Honoring our Veterans

Objectives/Aims

By the end of this unit, your child will learn some of the root causes of war and they will also learn how, on a smaller scale, these same root causes provoke everyday conflicts as well.

Background Information for Parents

Since the dawn of humankind there has been war. The basic cause of many wars is rooted in a 'self-centeredness' in which one person or group wants the survival and advancement of oneself or one's own kind at the expense of those different than oneself.

Additionally, there are what some people refer to as 'just' wars. These wars are often defensive in nature, when one is protecting oneself and one's countrymen from both real and perceived threats. Of course, what is considered 'just' depends on one's ethical perceptions and cultural biases. Ultimately, most Americans would justify the wars we have fought in on the basis of securing, protecting, and advancing freedom or protecting our interests.



Day 1

1. Draw a line connecting conflicts between yourself and others (e.g. classmates, siblings, etc.) with the possible cause of those conflicts. Then connect the causes of wars with the wars between countries or large groups of people.

Conflicts Between You & Others

You steal Legos out of a classmate's backpack.

You hide your sister's homework so she'll get in trouble.

At the table, you push your brother's plate away from yours.

You force a classmate to do your homework for you.

You exclude Sarah from your group because she's a girl.

You laugh at and tease your friend for being a vegetarian.

Causes of Conflicts/Wars

- Territorial: wanting more land or space

- Economic: wanting another's things or resources

- Power: controlling others for one's own ends

- Ideological: forcing one's beliefs on another

- Revenge: retaliating for real or perceived injustices

- Prejudicial: deeming another inferior due to race, gender, etc.

Wars Between Countries

Hitler wants to rule the world, starting WWII

Catholics fight against Muslims in the Crusades

UK and Argentina fight over the Falkland Islands

US takes Black Hills from Sioux when gold is found

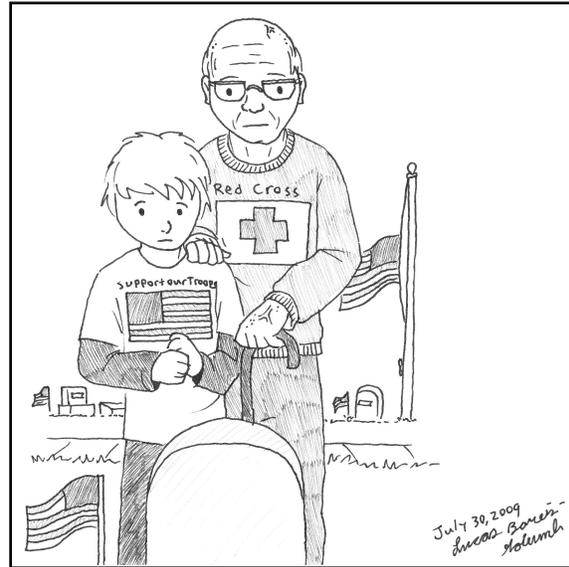
Nazis kill millions of Jews in concentration camps

Al-Qaida vows to avenge the death of Bin Laden

Background Information for Parents

Whether one believes a particular war is just or not, or doesn't even believe in war, it is important to honor our veterans. These men and women were willing to make the ultimate sacrifice: they gave up their lives in order to protect our country and our freedoms.

Conversely, it's also important to acknowledge the conscientious objectors that choose not to go to war either because of their religious beliefs or intellectual convictions. Years ago, a CO might have been court-martialed, imprisoned, tortured or even shot. Even given these consequences, these COs courageously stood by their convictions. Today, a person can legally apply to be a CO on either religious or moral grounds.



Day 2

In the above picture, the boy is honoring the memory of his grandfather who was a Marine in WWII. He died trying to capture the island Tinian and its airstrip. Later that same airstrip launched the B-29 bomber Enola Gay which dropped an atomic bomb killing some 350,000 people. Behind the boy stands his other grandfather, whom he also highly respects. This grandfather was a conscientious objector during the war and did alternative service with the Red Cross.

1. What is a veteran? _____

2. What is a conscientious objector? _____

3. Why do we celebrate Veteran's Day? _____

Day 3

1. Even if war is fought for a good cause or reason, why is it destructive and harmful? _____

2. What can you do to prevent conflicts and prevent them from becoming violent?

January 26, 2007

Dear Students,

I am Mathias' daddy. Our family lives in Denver, but sometimes I work as a Marine. That means that once in a while, I have to fly to far-away places where there are conflicts. My job is to help make peace and to help people cooperate.

I am so happy to know that you are learning about Cooperation and Peace Making in Ms. Mary's class. I read about this in your January newsletter.

It makes me sad that there is so much conflict in our world. But if we learn how to cooperate and how to make peace when we see conflicts, we can avoid problems that make us sad and that put people in danger.

Right now, I have to work far away from Denver. I am in a country called Afghanistan. I have been here since before Christmas.

Afghanistan is a beautiful country that feels a lot like Colorado, with very high mountains, rivers, cold weather, and wide open spaces.

The people here have a very interesting culture. All of the men wear beards, which is a symbol of maturity or being "grown up"; and all of the women wear clothing that covers even their heads and faces. The Afghan people have dressed this way for almost two thousand years, since it is part of the religious tradition.

I am sad to tell you that there are people here who are fighting. The reason that I am here is to help the people stop fighting, and to help the people build schools, doctors' offices, roads, religious buildings called, "mosques", and to help train policemen and soldiers.

When people fight, we all worry about safety. When people cooperate, then people are safe.

Even though there are a lot of people fighting, we are using a resolution procedure that can really help to make peace and to resolve conflicts.

First, we bring together the people who are fighting, and we help them talk and listen to each other in a respectful way. Everyone sits in circle just like you do each morning. The circle is called a "shura" and the place where they gather is called a "jirga". Each person gets a chance to talk, while the other people listen. Then, the people change places, and take turns talking and listening.

Next, we let the people suggest plans to cooperate. Each person gets a chance to suggest a plan. Almost every time, the people can find a way to cooperate by finding a plan that is good for each side.

Last, we bring the people together to shake hands. In this culture, some people shake hands like we do in America; but many more people show respect to each other by placing their right hand over their hearts and bowing to the other. One person will say, "Salam alaikum", which means, "Peace be with you." The other person will respond with, "Al m'alaikum salam," which means, "Peace be with you, also."

I have sent a few pictures to share with you. I hope you enjoy seeing the people from Afghanistan, and I hope you enjoy learning about cooperation and peace making. These are some of the most important skills in the world.

Semper fidelis,

William G. Mitchell
Major, U.S. Marines

Combined Joint Task Force 76
Bagram Airbase, Afghanistan