

Famous Peacemakers

Month: Mar.

Week #: 25

Day: a. Mon. Time: 30 - 40 min.

Maria Montessori

Life Tree Learning Systems ©

Objectives/Aims

The students will: recognize that ordinary people can do extraordinary things; develop positive role models to help guide their lives

Materials

picture of Dr. Maria Montessori (See 'Computer Generated')

Photograph

Can you guess who she is? She was an extraordinarily gifted and compassionate person. Utilizing the scientific method, she founded a form of education based on meeting the needs of children.



Background

The famous peace makers that were selected for this week were chosen because they worked to meet the needs of children or because children can relate to what they accomplished. In addition, these are all people that had a proactive approach to life in which they served the needs of others and were motivated by something other than their own selfish interest. Ultimately, they represent role models

of extremely high moral character in a culture in which students often gravitate to and admire rock, movie and sports stars whose moral fabric is, at times, questionable.

The following information is from: Kennedy, Robert. "Dr. Maria Montessori (1870 - 1952)" <http://privateschool.about.com/od/montessoriindex/p/Montessori.htm> (2006).

Maria Montessori

Dates: Born: August 31, 1870 in Chiaravalle, Italy.

Died: May 6, 1952 in Noordwijk, The Netherlands.

Early Adulthood: An extraordinarily gifted person with the scholarly bent of a Madame Curie and the compassionate soul of a Mother Teresa, Maria Montessori was always ahead of her time.

She became Italy's first female doctor when she graduated in 1896. Initially she took care of children's bodies and their physical ailments and diseases. Then her natural intellectual curiosity led to an exploration of children's minds and how they learn. She believed that environment was a major factor in child development.

Professional Life: Appointed Professor of Anthropology at the University of Rome in 1904, Montessori represented Italy at two international women's conferences: Berlin in 1896 and London in 1900. She amazed the world of education with her glass house classroom at the

Background (continued)

Panama-Pacific International Exhibition in San Francisco in 1915. In 1922 she was appointed Inspector of Schools in Italy. She lost that position when she refused to have her young charges take the fascist oath as the dictator Mussolini required.

Travels To America: Dr. Montessori visited the U.S. in 1913 and impressed Alexander Graham Bell who founded the Montessori Education Association in his Washington, D.C. home. Her American friends included Helen Keller and Thomas Edison. In 1915 she mounted an exhibit at the Panama-Pacific International Exhibition in San Francisco. It featured a glass class room which allowed people to observe her teaching methods. She also conducted training sessions and addressed the NEA and the International Kindergarten Union.

Training Her Followers: Dr. Montessori was a teacher of teachers. She wrote and lectured unceasingly. She opened a research institute in Spain in 1917 and conducted training courses in London in 1919. She founded training centers in the Netherlands in 1938 and taught her methodology in India in 1939. She established centers in The Netherlands (1938) and England (1947). An ardent pacifist, Dr. Montessori escaped harm during the turbulent '20's and '30's by advancing her educational mission in the face of hostilities.

Honors: Dr. Montessori was nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize - in 1949, 1950 and 1951.

Educational Philosophy: Maria Montessori was profoundly influenced by Friedrich Froebel, the 'inventor' of kindergarten, and by Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, who believed that children learned through activity. She also drew inspiration from Itard, Seguin and Rousseau. She enhanced their approaches by adding her own deeply felt belief that we must 'follow the child'. One does not teach children, but rather creates a nurturing climate in which children can teach themselves through creative activity and exploration.

Methodology: Maria Montessori wrote over a dozen books. The most well known are the *Montessori Method* (1916) and *The Absorbent Mind* (1949). Dr. Montessori taught that placing children in a stimulating environment, e.g., the Children's House, will encourage learning. She saw the traditional teacher as a 'keeper of the environment' who was there mainly to facilitate the children's self-conducted learning process. She did not permit any form of corporal punishment or demeaning behavior in her class rooms.

Legacy: The so-called Montessori Method got its start with the opening of the original Casa Dei Bambini in the slum district of Rome known as San Lorenzo. Montessori took fifty hopelessly deprived ghetto children and awakened them to life's excitement and possibilities. Within months people came from near and far to see her in action and to learn her strategies. She founded the Association Montessori Internationale in 1929 so that her teachings and educational philosophy would flourish in perpetuity.

Maria Montessori in the 21st Century: 'Help me to do it by myself!'

Dr. Montessori's pioneering work with children's education began at the beginning of the twentieth century. One hundred years later her philosophy and approach remains remarkably fresh and in tune with modern minds. In particular it resonates with parents who seek to stimulate their children through creative activity and exploration in all its forms. Children educated in the Montessori manner know who they are as people. They are confident, at ease with themselves, and interact on a high social plane with their peers and adults. Montessori students are naturally curious about their surroundings and are eager to explore anything and everything. They go on to adulthood ready to make a contribution to society rather than becoming a drain on it.

Background (continued)

The Montessori movement has spread throughout the world. It is a shining beacon of light in a dreary educational world. What Maria Montessori started as a scientific investigation has flourished as a monumental humanitarian and paedagogical endeavor. What she felt in her heart has become an international cause. Children are unique and a most precious resource.

After her death in 1952 two members of the Montessori family continued her great work. Her son Mario directed the AMI until his death in 1982. Recently her granddaughter Renilde has been active as Secretary-General of the AMI. Truly Montessori education is a family affair.

Group Activity

Note: This activity assumes that these students attend a Montessori school. Teachers in other schools might want to research and present the founder of their school's philosophy and method.

1. Read excerpts of the 'Background Information' on Dr. Maria Montessori and show her picture.
2. Act out a 'traditional' classroom. Historically, a traditional classroom is often characterized by:
 - All of the students sitting in rows, often times alphabetically
 - The teacher is the center of attention and all instruction emanates from her/him
 - Instruction is given to the group as a whole; teaching is to the 'middle' or average student; individual differences are not taken into account
 - There are few, if any, hands-on materials
 - Students go to the restroom as a group
 - Students have designated times in which to do their work, math period, language period, etc.; students are interrupted from completing the work cycle
 - Students do not have a choice as to what they will work on; they are autocratically given assignments
 - Extrinsic rewards such as grades, points, gold stars or candy are given as motivation for learning

Group Discussion Questions

1. What is different between our Montessori classroom and a traditional classroom?
A: Hands on materials; choice of work, control of error; no grades, just mastery; can finish work cycle; uninterrupted work time; individualized work plans; intentional teaching of peace making skills, etc.
2. What do you admire the most about Dr. Maria Montessori?
A: Answers will vary.

Variations/Extensions

Conclusion

Say, "Dr. Maria Montessori really cared about children. She believed the best way to show love to children was to meet their developmental needs; to 'follow the child.' Without her research and hard work, this classroom, and many others like it, would not exist."

Mar. 25 a. Mon.

Famous Peacemakers: Maria Montessori



Can you guess who this is? She was an extraordinarily gifted and compassionate person. Utilizing the scientific method, she founded a form of education based on meeting the needs of children.

Famous Peacemakers

Objectives/Aims

By the end of this unit, your child will recognize that ordinary people can do extraordinary things; they will also learn about positive role models to help guide their lives.

Background Information for Parents

The famous peacemakers that were selected for this week were chosen because they worked to meet the needs of children or because children can relate to what they accomplished. In addition, these are all people that had a positive, proactive approach to life in which they served the needs of others and were motivated by something other than their own selfish interest. Ultimately, they represent role models of extremely high moral character in a culture in which students often gravitate to and admire rock, movie and sports stars whose moral fabric is, at times, questionable.



Photograph

Dr. Maria Montessori is one of the famous peacemakers we studied. She was an extraordinarily gifted and compassionate person. Utilizing the scientific method, she founded a form of education based on meeting the needs of children.

Day 1

1. Write down the name of a peacemaker that you admire and want to use as a role model for your life. This person does not need to be famous, but he or she needs to be loving and constructive in his or her life's work and not be hateful or destructive.

Name of peacemaker: _____

2. List six reasons why you chose this person:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

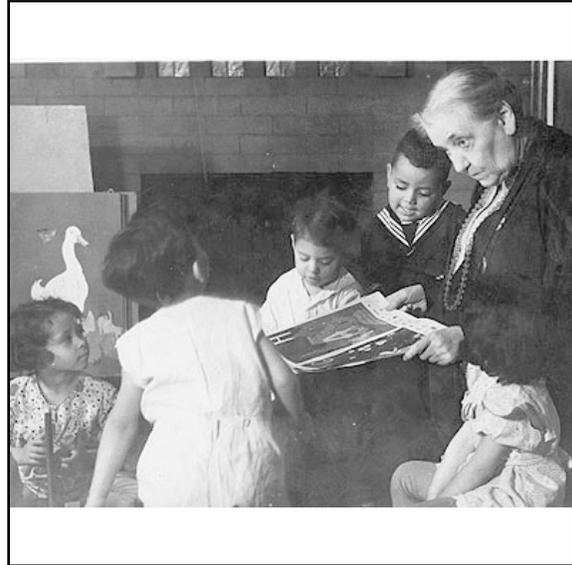
4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Background Information for Parents

Jane Addams' good work both directly and indirectly benefited children. She directly helped children through Hull House, a settlement house that helped poor immigrants. Here she provided and advocated for day care, playgrounds, kindergartens and child labor laws. Indirectly, she supported the immigrant children's families by providing English classes, factory worker safety and other helpful services.



Day 2 - 3

1. Written below are some quotes from famous people regarding peace. Unfortunately, the sentences got dropped and all of the sentences are all mixed up! Unscramble the sentences and then discuss with your parents what you think the famous quotation means. The answers can be found at www.allgreatquotes.com/peace_quotes.shtml.

- a. "The way a to destroy him enemy best is make to an friend."

- Abraham Lincoln

- b. "If forgotten have that it is each because we peace, have we belong to we no other."

- Mother Teresa

- c. "If begin the to create we a peace we must lasting wish with children."

- Mahatma Gandhi

- d. "All we a give is are peace saying chance..."

- John Lennon

- e. "You must be the change you wish to see in the world."

Who do you think said this? -----