



# Pathways to Peace

Lesson Plans for Middle School



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We have created some examples of how to incorporate Pathway to Peace activities into 45-60 minutes lessons. Each lesson features a balance of discussion, movement, and self-reflection in an order that allows students to connect key concepts. These lessons may be taught consecutively or in any way that works for your classroom.

These lesson plans include objectives, materials, set up, and an annotated agenda with notes for the instructor. The notes offer a way to approach the content from the Peace Institute's experience facilitating these activities in many school and community settings.



# Example Lesson 1: The Principles of Peace

Time: 45-60 minutes

## Objectives

- Define peace
- Identify barriers to peaceful living
- Reflect on the Principles of Peace

## Materials

- Principles of Peace handout
- Poster paper or whiteboard space to capture ideas

## Space Set-Up

- If possible, students should be seated in a circle. This arrangement can help students shift out of traditional lesson plans and into the new learning experiences offered during Peace Month. A circle allows students to make eye contact, ensures that everyone is included, and creates a sense that everyone in the circle is necessary to the learning process. If changing the physical space is not possible, encourage students to turn and recognize their classmates when they're speaking.

## Agenda

### 1. Introduction (5 minutes)

*The instructor will welcome students and introduce the Pathways to Peace Lessons as part of Peace Month.*

**Note:** It can be helpful to name that students will experience some new ways of learning and be asked to step out of the typical classroom routine. Invite students to “try it on” and participate in the entire agenda. Remind students to show kindness and encouragement to each other so everyone feels included.

### 2. Check-In (5 minutes)

*A check-in is an opportunity for students to share something personal and be more present in the space.*

- Share one place you go to feel peaceful and relaxed.

**Note:** Check-in should happen with students seated in a circle and **one** student should talk at a time in order; no cross talking or talking out of turn



### 3. Definitions of Peace (10 minutes)

*In order to work toward peace, we have to first understand what peace looks like and feels like.*

The instructor will ask students for their responses and capture them on the board/on poster paper.

- What does peace mean to you? What does being peaceful feel like? Who are peaceful people in your life? What are symbols of peace? What do we need to live in peace?

**Note:** Encourage students to be honest and specific. “Peace” is a word that is so overused it is often devoid of meaning. Or, peace may be called for by politicians and world leaders in such an idealistic way we can’t believe it’s possible. This is an opportunity to get real about what a peaceful life would actually be like in our communities. Push students beyond the superficial answers and challenge them to think about what we all need to lead happy, healthy, full lives.

### 4. Barriers to Peace (15 minutes)

*Giving students an opportunity to name the barriers to peace they see in themselves and in the world around them can help all of us move past blaming and shaming individuals and toward solutions that address the root causes of violence.*

The instructor will introduce the conversation about barriers to peace and ask students to form two groups.

One group will be asked to come up with FIVE barriers to peace at the personal level: *What goes on inside us that make it hard to be peaceful? What makes it hard for people to be peaceful with others?*

The other group will be asked to come up with FIVE barriers to peace in society: *what barriers to peace do we see in our community? In the country? In the government? In the media, music, and movies?*

Groups will have about 5-10 minutes to discuss barriers to peace. Then, the instructor will ask each group to share their five barriers. After each group shares, the instructor should ask the other group if they have any barriers to add.



**Note:** Violence is widely recognized by experts as a public health issue that affects all of our well-being. At the core of all public health issues is a need to address structural inequity and the way communities are affected by racism and classism. Students are used to being blamed for violence in their communities and have less frequent opportunities to discuss the wounds caused by oppression at the institutional/societal level. We have both an individual and collective responsibility in the peacemaking process.

### 5. Writing/Reflection (10 minutes)

*The Principles of Peace are a tool to help all of us feel and act more peaceful.*

The instructor will pass out the Principles of Peace worksheet to each student, and ask volunteers to read the Principles and definitions.

Then the instructor will give students a few minutes to choose **two** Principles: one Principle that represents a strength (a principle that is easier for them) and one principle that represents a struggle (a principle that is more difficult). Then students can write why they chose each principle.

**Note:** This is a moment to encourage students to be honest because this isn't a test or a graded assignment. They can use the Principles to celebrate what they're already really good at and acknowledge areas that are hard for them where they can grow.

### 6. Conclusion (5 minutes)

*It is important that the group comes back together before the end of the session. This will give students an opportunity to share what they've taken away from the Principles of Peace exercises.*

- In a circle, each student will be asked to share the principle they chose as their strength



# Example Lesson 2: Safer Learning Space

Time: 45-60 minutes

## Objectives

- Discuss what it means to have a peaceful classroom
- Acknowledge the presence of pain/loss and the need for healing
- Identify ways to support fellow students

## Materials

- Poster paper or board space

## Space Set-Up

- Students will need space to form two lines and space to break off into groups of 4-5.

## Agenda

### 1. Introduction (5 minutes)

*The instructor will welcome students and read the Principles of Peace to set the tone for the space.*

**Note:** Allow students to take a deep breath and quiet moment before starting the agenda. Remind students that this class is a time to practice the Principles of Peace.

### 2. Check-In (5 minutes)

*We all come into the classroom carrying burdens and baggage that affect our ability to learn. We can practice courage by sharing a part of ourselves and practice compassion by acknowledging what other students are going through.*

- What is one thing you are struggling with and one thing you're celebrating?

### 3. Pair & Share (15 minutes)

*Peace Month is an opportunity to have open dialogue about what students need to feel accepted, supported, and understood.*

The instructor will ask students to form two lines facing each other so every student has a partner across from them. The instructor will read a question and give students 1-2 minutes to discuss their answers with their partner. Then the instructor will ask one line to move to the right so each student has a new partner and ask the next question. The instructor can also ask for volunteers to share something interesting or important they heard from their partner with the whole group.



- What is one time you felt encouraged or empowered by another student? What did they do to make you feel supported?
- What is one time you felt disrespected or shut down by another student and how did you handle it?
- What do you need to feel safe and respected in school?
- How can you show respect to your fellow classmates?

**Note:** Having conversations in pairs will allow students to deepen their connection with other students they might not otherwise engage with one-on-one. It is also important to pull out the lessons from the partner conversations and share them with the whole class. The goal of this exercise is to have students think beyond the structure of rules and discipline already in place at the school so that they can talk more about how they want to be treated and how they can treat others students with respect and compassion.

#### 4. Discussion (15 minutes)

*We can use the Principles of Peace to come up with concrete strategies to make the classroom a safer space for healing, teaching, and learning.*

The instructor will ask students to count off to form five groups. The instructor will assign each group a prompt to respond to. Students should discuss realistic ways they could see themselves practicing the Principles of Peace and supporting their peers. After the groups have had time to brainstorm, the instructor will ask them to report back to the whole class.

- When a fellow student is hurt and grieving, we can offer them hope and courage by...
- When a fellow students is struggling with their work, we can show faith in them by...
- When a fellow student has disrupted the classroom, we can seek justice and forgiveness by...
- When a fellow student is shining and succeeding, we can show love for them by....
- When my fellow students are in conflict with each other, we can show unity by...

**Note:** Encourage students to be realistic and resourceful. Remind students that they are probably already using the Principles of Peace to be a good friend; ask them to think about ways they can extend those skills and gifts to the larger school community. If students are identifying barriers and challenges to treating other students well, try to validate and address those concerns: while peacemaking may be a struggle, it is possible. If students are stuck, be prepared to offer ideas and resources.



### **5. Conclusion (5 minutes)**

*It is important that the group comes back together before the end of the session. This will give students an opportunity to commit to at least one peacekeeping strategy discussed in class.*

- What is one way you can commit to practicing the Principles of Peace in school?





# Example Lesson 3: Identifying and Expressing Feelings

**Time:** 45-60 minutes

## Objectives

- Increase capacity to share feelings
- Celebrate what we love about ourselves
- Be creative

## Materials

- Writing utensils
- “I am Poem” handout

## Space Set-Up

- Ideally chairs should be set up in a circle to allow for sharing. Students will also need surfaces to write on.

## Agenda

### 1. Introduction (5 minutes)

*The instructor will welcome students and read the Principles of Peace to set the tone for the space. The teacher will share the topic of the lesson and the objectives.*

**Note:** Allow students to take a deep breath and quiet moment before starting the agenda. Remind students that this class is a time to practice the Principles of Peace.

### 2. Check-In (5 minutes)

*A check-in is an opportunity for students to share something personal and be more present in the space.*

- Share 3 things you are feeling in the moment

### 3. “I Am” Poem (15 minutes)

*Self-reflection and self-expression is a process that gives us the opportunity to face ourselves, heal from within, and feel acceptance from others.*

The instructor will pass out the “I Am” poem template and give students time to fill it in. Students should do their best to fill in the whole poem, but may leave lines blank if the prompt doesn’t speak to them.



**Note:** You will find the “I Am” Poem template in the appendix. The “I Am” poem is a tool for students to express themselves and explore how they are impacted by their emotions. It’s also an opportunity for students to practice the principle of courage by sharing their work and showing appreciation for other students’ poems.

#### **4. Close out (20 minutes)**

When students have had time to complete the poem, the instructor will call students back together to share. To close the agenda, in a circle each student should share their “I am Poem.” If students don’t want to read their entire poem, they can choose at least one line to share.



# Example Lesson 4: Unity

Time: 45-60 minutes

## Objectives

- Deepen relationships between students
- Discover common ground and shared concerns
- Recognize how our moods and feelings impact others

## Materials

- None

## Space Set-Up

- Ideally chairs should be set up in a circle to allow for sharing. Students will need space to stand up and move their bodies.

## Agenda

### 1. Introduction (5 minutes)

*The instructor will welcome students and read the Principles of Peace to set the tone for the space. The teacher will share the topic of the lesson and the objectives.*

**Note:** Allow students to take a deep breath and quiet moment before starting the agenda. Remind students that this class is a time to practice the Principles of Peace.

### 2. Warm Up: My People Stand Up (15 minutes)

*This warm up activity will allow students to get their bodies and minds moving. This game requires cooperation and friendly competition.*

All chairs must be arranged in a circle, with one less chair than students. When the instructor gives the signal, all students must get up and get into a new chair—they cannot sit in the chair directly next to the one they are sitting in.

The one student who is left without a chair will be in the middle and has to share one way to practice one of the seven Principles of Peace and then complete the prompt “My people stand up for...” with something they support or believe in. *Examples: My people stand up for equity; my people stand up for better jobs. My people stand up for peace.* If students agree with the statement, they should stand up and move to another chair as quickly as possible. If they disagree with the statement they can remain seated. The person left without a chair will start the process over again.

The instructor should allow the game to continue until all students have been in the middle or for about 15 minutes.



### 3. Power of Energy (15 minutes)

*Unity means recognizing that our wellness and success is interconnected. The attitude and energy we bring into the classroom has a great impact on not only what we are able to accomplish, but also our classmates' capacity to do their best. In order to make the classroom a safer place for healing and learning, we need recognize how the energy we give off affects others and how their energy affects us.*

This activity works best when the instructor does not share the name of the activity or give much context until the discussion afterward. The instructor should follow these steps:

- A. Ask one student to show courage and volunteer to step outside the class.
- B. Once the volunteer steps out, the instructor will ask the rest of the class to think negative and critical thoughts—**not about the student**, but rather in general about the school, the city, or the world. Ask them to think the thoughts and not express them with their facial expressions.
- C. The instructor will invite the student back into the class and ask them observe what it feels like in the room.
- D. The instructor will ask the student to raise their arm and hold it steady while the teacher tries to push their arm down. The instructor is usually able to push the student's arm down rather easily due to the negative energy in the room.
- E. Without explaining the activity, the instructor will ask the student to step out of the room one more time.
- F. Then the instructor will ask students to shake off the negative thoughts and shift to thinking happy, supportive, encouraging positive thoughts.
- G. The instructor will invite the student back into the room and ask them again to observe how the room feels.
- H. The instructor and student will repeat the arm exercise and note the differences. Typically the student feels stronger and is able to hold their arm up for longer.
- I. The instructor will ask a student to explain the activity in his or her own words to the volunteer.



After the exercise, the instructor will give students some context about the power of energy and engage students in discussion. First the group should hear from the volunteer—what was the experience like? How did the class’ energy impact them? Then the instructor can ask for volunteers to respond to some thinking questions:

- What did it feel like to be surrounded by negative energy? What did it feel like to be surrounded by positive energy?
- How does our energy impact others? How have you been impacted by others’ energy and attitude?
- What strategies can we use in class to be aware of our energy? What are some ways to take responsibility for our own energy and attitude?
- When you are going through a lot or struggling and not able to have positive energy, what support do you need?

**Note:** To introduce the activity, the instructor can explain, “We are going to try an activity together so keep an open mind and let’s see what happens.” It is essential to stress to students that their negative thoughts should **not** be about the student—that would be hurtful and counterproductive to peacemaking. The point is to see how thinking negative thoughts affects our body language and the vibe in the room. Give students a few moments to sit with their positive or negative thoughts before bringing the volunteer back in the classroom—students don’t need to “perform” but they should remain silent and concentrated on their thoughts. Be prepared to share what it felt like to push down on the student’s arm and what changed for you. The purpose of this activity is to understand how our energy impacts on other people—so focus students on thinking about how their attitude affects their classmates.

#### 4. Appreciations (10 minutes)

*Taking time to share what we appreciate about each other makes us feel more valued and connected to our classmates.*

The instructor will write every student’s name down on a piece of paper, and ask each student to choose a name. In a circle, students will read the classmate’s name they chose and share one thing they appreciate about them.



# Example Lesson 5: Community Service Learning

Time: 45-60 minutes

## Objectives

- Name the assets of the community
- Learn about the Mother's Day Walk for Peace
- Make a commitment to peacemaking

## Materials

- Poster image of tree
- Post-it notes, index cards, or small paper squares and tape

## Space Set-Up

- Ideally chairs should be set up in a circle to allow for sharing.

## Agenda

### 1. Introduction (5 minutes)

*The instructor will welcome students and read the Principles of Peace to set the tone for the space.*

- In a circle each student will share the Principle of Peace they are focusing on that day.

**Note:** Allow students to take a deep breath and quiet moment before starting the agenda.

### 2. Community Assets (15 minutes)

*Communities are often blamed and shamed for being violent, dangerous, and bad places to raise families. Often we overlook the root causes of violence or feed into myths and stereotypes about who perpetrates violence. This does a great disservice to young people who are and have the potential to be peacemakers. To stop violence and start peace, we must recognize the strengths, assets, and resilience inherent in every community.*

The instructor will ask students to go around and share what neighborhood or community they live in/come from, and one thing that makes them proud of that neighborhood/community or one thing that makes that community strong. As another option, students may write or draw and then hang up what they've created.



### 3. Mother's Day Walk for Peace (15 minutes)

*Service is a critical part of the peacemaking process.*

The instructor should give students an overview of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute and the Mother's Day Walk for Peace, pass out walk information, and explain how to get involved. The class can choose to set a fundraising goal, and students may brainstorm ways they can raise money for the Mother's Day Walk for Peace. Students should leave with a timeline and a concrete process to collect money.

If the classroom is not going to engage in fundraising for the Mother's Day Walk for Peace, students may use this time to discuss the importance of the event as a way to bring the Principles of Peace alive in Boston. Students may also discuss other community events or marches they've been to that were powerful and had a positive impact.

**Note:** There are printed materials available to send home with students about the Mother's Day Walk for Peace. Be prepared to offer guidance to students if you plan to make a formal commitment to the Walk. If you don't plan to attend, be ready to facilitate a conversation about the Walk as a concrete example of community members making an effort to make our own neighborhoods more peaceful places. Ask students what other community service or organizing they have been involved with and how that connects with making communities more peaceful.

### 4. Peaceful Resolutions (10 minutes)

*Ask students to make an ongoing commitment to peacemaking beyond Peace Month.*

- The instructor will ask students to commit to one way they will work toward peace in their classroom or community, and a person in their life they want to honor with their commitment.

**Note:** Celebrate students for their risk-taking, hard work, and peaceful attitudes. Name any ways you plan to continue peace education or social-emotional learning in the classroom in the future.



# The Principles of Peace

<b>FAITH</b>	Complete trust in someone or something
<b>HOPE</b>	Believing in yourself, someone, or something
<b>JUSTICE</b>	Treating everyone fairly and equitably
<b>LOVE</b>	Showing care for yourself and others
<b>FORGIVENESS</b>	Moving past something that was done wrong to you
<b>COURAGE</b>	Having strength to do something you are afraid of
<b>UNITY</b>	Staying connected with each other





# I AM POEM

I am \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

(Two principles of peace OR two things about yourself)

I wonder \_\_\_\_\_ (something you are curious about)

I hear \_\_\_\_\_ (real or imaginary sound)

I see \_\_\_\_\_ (real or imaginary sight)

I want \_\_\_\_\_ (A desire you have)

I am \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

(Repeat the first line)

I pretend \_\_\_\_\_ (Something you pretend to do)

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ (An imaginary or real Imaginary)

I touch \_\_\_\_\_ (An imaginary touch)

I worry \_\_\_\_\_ (Something that bothers you)

I cry \_\_\_\_\_ (Something that makes you sad)

I am \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

(Repeat the first line)

I understand \_\_\_\_\_ (Something you know is true)

I say \_\_\_\_\_ (Something you believe in)

I dream \_\_\_\_\_ (Something you dream about)

I try \_\_\_\_\_ (Something you make an effort on)

I hope \_\_\_\_\_ (Something you hope for)

I am \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

(Repeat the first line)



**I am** \_\_\_\_\_

**I wonder** \_\_\_\_\_

**I hear** \_\_\_\_\_

**I see** \_\_\_\_\_

**I want** \_\_\_\_\_

**I am** \_\_\_\_\_

**I pretend** \_\_\_\_\_

**I feel** \_\_\_\_\_

**I touch** \_\_\_\_\_

**I worry** \_\_\_\_\_

**I cry** \_\_\_\_\_

**I am** \_\_\_\_\_

**I understand** \_\_\_\_\_

**I say** \_\_\_\_\_

**I dream** \_\_\_\_\_

**I try** \_\_\_\_\_

**I hope** \_\_\_\_\_

**I am** \_\_\_\_\_

**BY** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



# How to get involved with the Mother's Day Walk For Peace



## 1. Start a virtual or walking fundraising team!

Set a fundraising goal with your classroom and track your donations online. With social fundraising, it has never been easier to reach your fundraising goals. The best part is that you can personalize your fundraising team page with your class' story and message to show others why the Peace Institute is important to you.

Register yourself or your team online. Visit [mothersdaywalk4peace.org](http://mothersdaywalk4peace.org) or email Agnes ([agnes@curoergosum.com](mailto:agnes@curoergosum.com)) to register.

## 2. Donate today and help us meet our \$600,000 goal!

Give online or by sending a check to Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, 15 Christopher St. Dorchester Ave. Dorchester MA, 02122. Make sure to write the name of your team or school in the memo.

## 3. Volunteer!

Volunteers are a critical component contributing to the success of the Mother's Day Walk for Peace. If you or your students would like to volunteer, please email [events@ldbpeaceinstitute.org](mailto:events@ldbpeaceinstitute.org)

## 4. Raise awareness About the Walk! We need your help to get the word out!

- Announce to your school that your classroom is walking or fundraising.
- Inform local papers that you are participating.
- Invite friends and family to the Walk on Mother's Day
- Encourage your colleagues to match your donation.
- Be social, share [mothersdaywalk4peace.org](http://mothersdaywalk4peace.org) on twitter and facebook! #mothersdaywalk4peace #iampeace #peaceispossible #walkthwalk



# Fundraising Tips



## Set a goal

Aim high! Set a personal or classroom fundraising goal that challenges you to get creative, reach out to more people, and raise the most money possible for the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute.

## Donate Yourself

People are much more likely to give when they see you yourself have made a financial commitment. Do not put it off, please give today.

## Share Your Story

Share why you walk and what the Mother's Day Walk for Peace means to you! Share that you teaching peace education in your school and how it's impacting your students.

## Start Asking Early

Our number one fundraising tip: Just ask! Many students have successfully raised money by asking their classmates and other teachers for donations at school. Students should also go home and ask their family, friends, and neighbors. If students use the internet, they can reach out to their friends online.

**Send an email** to your friends and family telling them you are participating in the Mother's Day Walk for Peace and want to reach your goal. Be sure to send the link to your classroom team fundraising page. Include a link to your fundraising page in your email signature. Or **ask in person** and record any donations you receive on our donation tracking form. Use **social media to spread** the word about your participation to your contacts. Encourage people to support your participation in the Walk. Use your status update to inspire and fundraise.

## SEE It Through

Ask and ask again. It's common for people to put things off. So make sure to follow up on any letters you've sent that haven't received an answer and any outstanding donations that haven't been fulfilled as Walk day approaches. Do not worry about bugging people. It is common to ask 4-5 times before someone gives. People also like to hear about how you are progressing in reaching your goal.

After a few weeks, check back in with everyone you've reached out to that has not yet contributed. We all tend to procrastinate, and unless you follow up, some donors might assume you have reached your goal and don't need their support. Your family, friends, and acquaintances will appreciate the reminder!

## SAY THANK YOU!

Saying "thank you" to your donors is the most important step in this journey! Every dollar that Louis D. Brown Peace Institute spends on crisis management, survivor support, and peace education and training comes from the generosity of our donors. Please be sure to let your supporters know how their donation is helping.

**THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE PEACE INSTITUTE**

