

## Rainbow and Flowers

*Peace in our hearts, peace in our homes,  
Peace in our nations, peace in the world.*

A workshop for spiritual development and Christian family life standing committees developed using *World Peace: a family recipe!* (Catholic Organization for Life and Family)

A leader and a reader are required, in addition to the following materials:

- a drawing of a large rainbow on the wall
- marker pens
- 10 cut-out paper doves
- 10 bags of small “skipping” stones, one stone for each participant
- a pool or large container of water
- a drawing of a large pot of gold
- several bars of gold (paper) that can be written on and placed on the pot
- a big happy sun to add to mural wall
- 11 rays for the sun with points written on
- a bouquet of flowers or 10 different silk flowers
- a vase or large piece of oasis
- approximately 70 coloured paper blocks measuring 3"x3"
- prepared prayers sheets
- “Seeds for Peace” handouts



**Opening Song:** “Let There be Peace on Earth” (*Breaking Bread* #476)

**Opening Prayer:** O Divine Peacemaker, as we gather today to explore the ways of peace, come among us and enlighten our hearts with Your wisdom and Spirit so that we may work toward justice and love for all Your people. Dear Jesus, we know that the family is the building block of Your world. May the example of Your holy family guide us to discover simple, creative ways to restore joy and spread Your mission of love. We make this prayer to You through the intercession of Mary, the queen of peace.

**All:** Amen

**Reading:** The Canadian bishops tell us, “Peace is a mission that has been entrusted to all families, where the citizens of the world are born and raised. To these young people who will be tomorrow’s social, political, economic, media and religious leaders; to those boys and girls who represent our future; they will soon become involved in guiding and transforming all of society in the image of the values they have received from their parents.”

### Prayer Response

**Left Side:** Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.

**Right Side:** Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

**LS:** Where there is injury, pardon;

**RS:** Where there is discord, unity;

**LS:** Where there is doubt, faith;

**RS:** Where there is error, truth;  
**LS:** Where there is despair, hope;  
**RS:** Where there is sadness, joy;  
**LS:** And where there is darkness, light.  
**RS:** O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
**LS:** To be consoled as to console;  
**RS:** To be understood as to understand;  
**LS:** To be loved as to love.  
**RS:** For it is in giving that we receive;  
**LS:** It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
**All:** And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life!

**Reading:** (John 15:12–17) Jesus said, “This is My commandment, that you love another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from My Father. You did not choose Me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask Him in My name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.” The word of the Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

### **Meditation**

**Prayer of the Faithful:** Lord, look upon our children. One day they will be mothers and fathers, single persons, priests or members of religious communities, and so we pray, **Response:** *In You, Lord, may we find peace.*

Lord, some people do work that is very humble, while others assume leadership positions. On whatever path we take, Lord, may we realize that the desire to serve with love is most important; and so we pray, **R**

Lord, may our choices, decisions and gestures reflect gospel values so that justice and solidarity will increase; and so we pray, **R**

Lord, we believe that peace in the world begins in our hearts and families. Help us to shoulder this responsibility and to cooperate with Your dream that all may be one; and so we pray, **R**

**Prayer:** O God, by dying on the cross, Your Son defeated everything that destroys people, families and societies. He left us with these words: “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you, I do not give it to you as the world gives.” And so we seek His peace which is rooted in love, forgiveness and reconciliation. This we ask through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

**All:** Amen

**Closing Song:** “Let There be Peace on Earth” (*Breaking Bread* #476)

### **Introduction**

**Leader:** Good day everyone! This workshop has been developed from a 2005 publication entitled *World Peace: a family recipe!* from the Catholic Organization for Life and Family under the auspices of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Each human family is called to live a communion of love. God is the third partner in this covenant between a man and a woman as they strive to build their family’s life. And yet, if we think of the families in our own parish experience, they are not all alike. Let’s look at this rainbow. Many colours make up the whole. Can you tell me the different types of families you know of in our parish’s midst?

*Brainstorm and write the responses on different parts of the rainbow. They could be:*

- *two-parent families*
- *single-parent families*
- *families with no children*
- *adoptive families*
- *widowed families*
- *sorrowing families*
- *single persons living alone*
- *friends living together*
- *homosexual relationships*
- *pregnant families, unwed expectant mothers*
- *teenagers*
- *disabled persons*
- *troubled families*
- *separated or divorced families*
- *seniors*
- *religious communities*

Whatever the circumstances of our personal or family lives, we are all anchored by the truth that, “I am a child of God and God loves me to the point where God gave up His life for me.”

**Leader:** It is time now for you to break up into 10 groups, each with one dove. *Number the groups and assign a number to each type of family that is found on the rainbow.*

**Task 1:** Looking at the family type that your dove represents, (i.e., Dove #4 = adoptive families), identify a situation that could threaten this family’s peace and serenity. Write it on your dove.

Turn the dove over. How could your family, CWL council or parish assist this family in its trouble? Write this on your dove. Your group can help you form an idea. (*allow six minutes*)

**Leader:**

When we welcome and imitate Christ, the Prince of Peace, in the intimacy of our families or CWL councils, we open ourselves up to God's justice. We try to align our will, our perspective, our actions, our desires and our dreams to those of God. What are your dreams for the families in your parish? How have you come up with a plan to lead them to happiness? Bring your dove forward to affix to the rainbow and briefly explain the solidarity plan your group developed.

On the way back to your group, pick up a bag of peace stones for your table. Pass the bag around so your table members can each take a stone to hold as they listen to the other groups' reports.

*After all the groups have returned to their places:*

Imagine: We all know the power of one inspired person, one animated family, one graced parish and one active community. It is like a stone that has been thrown in to a cool, clear lake. The effects ripple outward.

Let us stand to make our commitment prayer.

### **Prayer of Commitment**

**Leader:**

A golden light is in our midst. It burns as peace, as hope, as love, as God. Feel its healing presence pass through you. Send it to another with a kind and loving thought. Know this: As it heals the inside, so can it heal the outside – for the world is but a reflection of what lies within.

(Steve Myrvang)

**Left Side:**

This is It

**Right Side:**

and I am It

**LS:**

and You are It

**RS:**

and so is That

**LS:**

and He is It

**RS:**

and She is It

**LS:**

and It is It

**RS:**

and That is That.

**LS:**

O It is This

**RS:**

and It is Thus

**LS:** and It is Them

**RS:** and It is Us

**LS:** and It is Now

**RS:** and here It is

**LS:** and here We are

**RS:** so This is It.  
(James Broughton)

**All:** Amen!

**Leader:** Each person may come forward with her peace stone and cast it gently into the pool of water as we sing the closing song.

**Closing Song:** “Peace is Flowing like a River” (*Breaking Bread* #479)

### **Coffee Break**

### **Challenge**

**Leader:** *Put the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.*  
Every rainbow needs its pot of gold! Name some ways in which parents can help their children to become sowers of peace and joy. *Write each suggestion on a bar of gold and have a volunteer place them near the pot. Ideas might be:*

- *teach them to exercise their conscience*
- *trust the human and divine potential for good of the child*
- *encourage and congratulate them*
- *discreet correction*
- *pay attention to them*
- *love them*
- *educate them according to their innate talents*
- *develop a family plan to help other people*
- *address poverty issues locally or internationally*
- *treat them with respect*
- *teach them to be responsible for creating a just society*
- *model a life of service*
- *address conflict when it arises*
- *recognize weakness and try to improve*
- *practice forgiveness and reconciliation*

**Leader:** The art of communication could be like this happy sun. (*Add to the rainbow mural.*) What is the art of communication? It is an essential element in all of the situations that couples and families face. It can be like rays for the sun! Notice that there is one on each table. Please have someone at each table stand and read it, then install it around the sun for all to see.

- knowing how to express feelings and ideas without attacking the other person
- showing tenderness, affection and gratitude
- recognizing problems without attributing blame
- asking for further explanation
- accepting responsibility even if we have injured someone unwittingly
- deciding to avoid any behaviour that can hurt someone else
- becoming instruments of reconciliation
- parents (or adults) reviewing the day together and vowing never to go to bed angry
- parent and child or any two adults, no matter their dissatisfaction, taking the time to reassure each other of their love
- families praying for the grace of peace

## God's Gifts of Peace

**Leader:**

*Bring forward the flowers.*

Wanting to remain with us after His resurrection, Jesus took care before He died to leave concrete signs that would remind us of His love and make Him truly present to us through the journey of life. These expressions of God's love are the sacraments, including the Eucharist – the greatest sacrament – and reconciliation. These are the sacraments of everyday life, the source of supernatural strength that gives us the ability to love the way Christ did. We are offered the grace to live in greater communion with God and others in order to build peace and achieve lasting happiness.



“I appoint you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last,” Jesus said. What are some of the fruits, seeds, signs or flowers of peace?

*Hold up a flower and read its attached sign, e.g., respect for life. Hand the flower to one of the groups. Continue to distribute the flowers, one to each group, by reading the title out loud. Each flower has a bag with about seven building blocks in each. These are for the same table as that flower. These building blocks will each have a title, e.g., “respect the dignity of each person;” another for the same group would say “respect for the property of others,” etc.*

In your groups, work together with your building blocks. For each one, write the name of an action plan, your family, CWL council or parish can do to address this facet of your flower, seed, fruit or sign of peace. *(allow 15 minutes)*

## Group Presentations

*Each group in turn will come forward to place their flower in the vase or oasis naming the sign of peace. They will then start to build the foundation for peace (pin or tape to backboard or, if using real blocks, on a table or backboard).*

## Summation

**Leader:**

Family life blossoms into a fullness when each one of us incorporates in our daily life these strengths that are beyond human capabilities.

We can then forgive each other, trust each other and share words that are freeing and life-giving. Some relationships may seem irretrievably broken, and some situations may seem impossible to fix. In such cases, it is best to commend them to God, trusting that His healing grace may work through someone other than us, even in a different time and place.

*Distribute the handout “Seeds for Peace.”* You may want to select one of the Seeds for Peace, pray and meditate on it. Then, cut it out and stick it on the fridge. Discuss with your CWL council and/or family how, together, you can make a difference on this particular “Seed for Peace,” e.g., respect. Cut out the next one when you and your council and/or your family is ready to work on the next seed, and so on.

### **Closing Prayer**

- Leader:** Let us join our voices together with the late Pope John Paul II as we say:
- All:** “In all that you do, let yourselves be guided by this constant thought: peace within you and peace around you, peace always, peace with everyone, peace for everyone.”
- Left Side:** Go in the peace of Christ!
- Right Side:** Go work in the service of others.
- LS:** Go love, console and forgive.
- RS:** Go help one another!
- LS:** Go proclaim God’s great plan of love and communion for all humanity!
- RS:** Go and do God’s will!
- LS:** Go build peace!
- RS:** Go be God’s hands, smile and heart for the world!
- All:** Let us go be another Christ!
- Song:** “Let There be Peace on Earth” (*Breaking Bread*, #476)

If there is light in the soul, there will be beauty in the person.  
If there is beauty in the person, there will be harmony in the house.  
If there is harmony in the house, there will be order in the nation.  
If there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.  
Chinese Proverb, *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, Book 1.

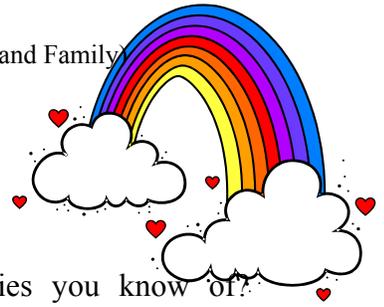
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2005

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1. Materials needed
2. Opening Prayer Service
3. Introduction: Rainbow: Can you name the different types of families you know of?  
Brainstorm
  - a. Break into 10 small groups. On one side of the dove: identify a situation that would threaten this family's (one of the identified types) serenity.
  - b. Turn dove over. How can we assist this family to overcome this trouble?
4. Bag of Peace Stones: the power of one
  - a. Prayer of Commitment and casting forth peace stones.
5. Coffee Break
6. Challenge: (Pot of gold) Brainstorm – write on bars of gold (paper) how parents can help their children be sowers of peace and joy.
7. Art of Communication: (Sun) Each table has a ray to add to the sun: ways to keep the lines of communication open in families.
8. God's Gifts of Peace: (Bouquet of flowers) each individual flower (can be silk flowers) represents a different sign or fruit of peace, e.g., respect for life, humility, self-control, patience and tolerance, inner strength, generosity, goodness and kindness, joy, justice and prayer.
  - a. A single flower is given to each small group.
  - b. Each flower has a bag with about seven building blocks, each with a different quality on it, e.g., respect for life flower has "respect for the property of others" written on one block.
  - c. In the group, write an action plan to promote this quality, i.e., develop about seven different little plans = seven building blocks to peace.
  - d. Each small group presents its action plan as they build the "foundation for peace."
9. Summation and handout "Seeds for Peace"
10. Closing Prayer

# Seeds for Peace



Peace is not a matter of chance, but the fruit of belief and effort. Many qualities serve the cause of peace. Here are some of the most important peace-building seeds that we must pass on from generation-to-generation if we want the world to know lasting peace.

**Respect** for life at all of its stages and respect for the dignity of each person; respect for the property, differences and fundamental rights of others; the search for common values and goals; the rejection of prejudice; and honesty.

**Humility** can be shown in many ways: recognizing our strengths and weaknesses, admitting our mistakes and asking for forgiveness; developing the desire to improve ourselves and having the courage to correct our mistakes; avoiding sarcasm or showing off; and not judging or condemning.

**Self-control** allows us to master our spontaneous reactions, to curtail our whims and to wait before speaking; to correct without getting angry; to avoid criticizing; and to make choices that respect life and the dignity of all people – including ourselves – by avoiding, for example, pornographic or violent films and reading material.

**Patience and tolerance** lead us to bear without complaint the suffering, difficulties and vexations that are part of life and to accept others as they are, to understand them, to bear with them, to be lenient and to forgive.

**Inner strength** gives us the ability to face life's difficulties with perseverance; to think beyond ourselves and give freely to others; to overcome impatience; to nurture a spirit of service and sacrifice; and to seek to do good.

**Generosity** leads us to use our strengths and talents in the service to others and for the common good; to share our time and material possessions, especially with the most vulnerable (the poor, the sick and the elderly); to avoid excluding others, even within our families; to find the positive qualities in another person; to think and say good things about others; and to forgive.

**Goodness and kindness** consist of gentleness; of a warm unconditional welcoming attitude; of attention to others and attentive listening; of an openness to dialogue, to understanding and to compassion; of many little selfless acts; of timely words to encourage reconciliation; and of a concern for the welfare of others, seeing them as God sees them.

**Joy** is a result of shared love, and is present even in the midst of suffering. It manifests itself through optimism, humour and a smiling face. God knows the power of a smile!

**Justice** leads us to fight against inequality and poverty, and for the common good; to seek the good of others as if it were our own; to call for the equal distribution of the earth's resources; and to support organizations, such as the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace and Amnesty International, that work for equitable development and human rights.

**Prayer** within a family initiates children in the adoration of God who loves them so much; they learn to praise God, to thank God, to ask God's forgiveness, to count on God, and to call upon God throughout their day. Prayer awakens in children a desire to be like Jesus, the Prince of Peace.