

A workshop based on
World Peace: a family recipe!
(Canadian Catholic Organization for Life and Family, September 2005)

Materials required:

- plastic bags (some empty and some filled with different soil e.g., planting soil, sand, heavy soil, rocky soil)
- flip chart and markers
- enough doves (10 for each participant) with a “seed for peace” on each
- copies of *World Peace: a family recipe* (one for each participant)
- “Seeds for Peace” handouts
- copies of the parable of the sower for each table (Matthew 13:3-9)

Introduction

Leader: In 2001, the United Nations proclaimed an international decade for a culture of peace and non-violence for the children of the world. This workshop is designed to help League members and parents to sow joy and peace wherever they work and live, and become agents of reconciliation. As Pope John Paul II said in his *Message for World Peace 2000*, no. 22, “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.”

Have four Ziploc bags on each table. One will be empty. One will have rocky soil. One will have weeds in it, and one will have good soil.

Stimulus

Leader: *Read the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-9)*

Evocation

Leader: *Reflect on the parable as you discuss the contents of each bag.*

- the empty one (the path) – Why did this environment not produce grain? What could have been done to make it fruitful?
- the bag with soil and rocks – How could this soil be improved so the harvest would be greater?
- the bag with weeds – What can be done when thorns and other weeds threaten good plants?
- the bag with good soil – What makes the soil “good”? Why does it produce 30-fold? 60-fold? 100-fold?

Objective Enquiry

Leader: Let us take a few moments to reflect on our own lives.

- What ground were you planted in?
- Were you like the seeds on the path?
- What was life like for you growing up?
- What were the rocks?
- Were there weeds along the way?
- Who plucked them out? (parents, other family members, you, a friend, and who else?)
- Name a few tools that were used or you used to get rid of “weeds” in your path.

Leader: *After this reflection continue:*

Those who are called to the vocation of marriage and starting a family uproot and replant themselves in a unique way. As individuals they bring with them what their parents have instilled in them, and what they have learned along the way from extended family members and from members of their community, including societal influences. Along that way to adulthood they experienced the “grooming and pruning” that formed their beliefs and values, and painted the picture of how they want to raise their own family. Those growing up with violence around them revert to violence, not only when they feel threatened, but also as a way of expressing themselves. There is a comfort in what has been planted and reaffirmed in us even if it hurts or leads to destruction. Somebody growing up witnessing or experiencing abuse has a high chance of entering into an abusive relationship, either being abused or being the abuser. Those growing up in a peaceful and loving environment will always seek peace and love. Love is a fruit of peace. Let us therefore sow the seeds of peace. Peace is a gift of God and we all have the right to peace. *(allow 3-4 minutes)*

Skill Practice

Leader: *Divide the participants in small groups and ask the question: “What are the Seeds for Peace?” (Brainstorming session). Invite small groups to share their ideas and write them on a flip chart or have participants write on flip chart paper and have a representative from each group share from their flip chart sheet.*

Application

Leader: *Read each reflection on the “Seeds for Peace” and the petition which follows. Have all respond with “Lord, nurture the seeds of peace within us.” (R)*

Respect for life at all of its stages, and respect for the dignity of each person; respect for the property, the differences and the fundamental rights of others; the search for common values and goals; the rejection of prejudice; honesty. That the seed of respect grow and flourish in our lives, we pray. **R**

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; not judging or condemning, to mention a few. That the seed of humility swell and take root in us, we pray. **R**

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; 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. That the seed of self-control produce strength for our daily lives, we pray. **R**

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. That the seed of patience and tolerance flower in us and our relationships with others, we pray. **R**

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. That the seed of inner strength be nurtured in us so we can be of greater service to others, we pray.

R

Generosity leads us to use our strengths and talents in the service of others 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 family; to find the positive qualities in another person; to think and say good things about others; and to forgive. That the seed of generosity blossom within us and colour our dealings with others, we pray. **R**

Goodness and kindness consist of gentleness, of a warm and 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; of a concern for the welfare of others, seeing them as God sees them. That the seed of goodness and kindness burst forth in an abundant harvest, we pray. **R**

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! That the seed of joy spring up and envelop us and those around us, we pray. **R**

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; to support organizations such as the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace and Amnesty International, which work for equitable development and human rights. That the seed of justice and service spread throughout our lives and touch the lives of all especially those who are marginalized, we pray. **R**

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. That the seed of prayer be nurtured in our homes and families, we pray. **R**

Evaluation

Leader: Most likely you are familiar with the saying "Peace begins at home," and whether or not we experienced this peace in our families and societal environment growing up, as adults we can choose to experience this peace and pass it on to our children and to those who cross our path.

Plan of Action: How can we encourage families in our parishes to sow the seeds of peace in their lives?

How can we help them have success with this "family recipe" for peace?

(Pass out copies of World Peace: a family recipe!. Give each participant the 10 doves each with a seed of peace on it. Invite them to come up with a plan in their own homes for “sowing seeds of peace.”)

Closing

Hymn: “Peace Is Flowing Like a River”

Prepared by
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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...



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