

WITH EYES TO SEE



PEACE AND JUSTICE CONCEPT: PEACE

ideas for teachers

who want to integrate social justice concepts

into what and how they teach

Fall
Part II
2001

"Dialogue requires patience, humility and a real belief that there is something that one can learn from the other person. It requires an openness to new information, a willingness to be challenged and a deep hope that change is possible."

-Anne Hope and Sally Timmel, from Training for Transformation

"There are three truths: my truth, your truth and the truth"

-Chinese Proverb

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The horrible deaths of more than 6,000 people, a great many of whom were citizens of countries other than the United States, have left us saddened, yearning for justice, and determined to prevent future attacks from occurring. While these feelings and needs are not new to us, the recent events have created greater sorrow and uncertainty than we have felt as a nation in a long time, and our urgency to bring those who are guilty to justice and to protect ourselves from more violence is incomparably strong. How best to address these issues?

Many of us are paying closer attention to the news recently, talking more with our neighbors, co-workers, and families, and learning what we can about the Middle East and Islam. Staying informed, talking with others, and learning about those in our world community who are different from us are important ways for us to respond to the attacks. It is when we close ourselves to learning and dialogue that we act in ways that discount the voices and perspectives of others who could help us approach the truth of our actions. As we continue to reflect on the quotation from Anne Hope and Sally Timmel above, we at Concern America strive to dialogue with others to search for the root causes of a problem and to explore solutions, convinced of the power of love to transform our world into a place of peace and goodness, a place whose gifts are available to all.

This edition of *With Eyes to See* is the second of two parts reflecting on the tragedies of September 11 and the subsequent reactions to those events, through a "peace" perspective. The following pages seek to challenge us to explore with our students the events of the last couple of months from as many angles as possible. By attempting to "walk a mile" in the shoes of others from around the world, analyzing our country's place in this world, and proactively dealing with prejudice, we have hope that our informed actions will mirror the justice we seek and safety we desire.



# IDEAS

"We are faced with the preeminent fact that if civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationship--the ability of people of all kinds to live together and work together in the same world, at peace."

-Franklin D. Roosevelt

"The question isn't who is the enemy, but what is the enemy?"

-American Friends Service Committee

6-12

## Further is Closer

Common sense tells us to move closer to that which we want to better understand, but often that doesn't work. At times we need to step back from something, be it our family, our town, or our country, in order to see it from other perspectives. One of the most common experiences shared by the field personnel of Concern America's projects around the world, for example, is that they learn just as much about this country while living abroad as they do about their host country. What can the rest of the world teach us about the events of September 11, our subsequent actions, and ourselves?

Without having to leave the classroom, students could visit foreign newspapers on-line. Try choosing an event, like the attacks of September 11, or the first days of bombing of Afghanistan on October 7, and compare/contrast the coverage by various news sources from around the world. Each group of students can pick a different newspaper and present their

findings. One group could use the local or national newspaper for comparison. These sources can be used in a variety of ways.

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- www.allafrica.com  
-many African stories, organized by topic
- www.independent.co.za/news/headlines  
-a Capetown paper
- www.ahram.org.eg/weekly/  
-an Egyptian weekly
- www.cubanet.org/cubanews.html  
-a Cuban paper
- www.omid.com/eng\_section.htm  
-an Afghan weekly (Note: This appears to be an anti-Taliban publication, but you can find 3 other sources of Afghan news by clicking on the last link, theworldpress.com)
- www.netiran.com/dailynews.html  
-access to a few Iranian papers
- www.showmynews.com  
-six Asian countries, including Pakistan
- www.theworldpress.com/index.htm  
-access to papers from 192 countries  
(Note: click on a country, scroll to bottom of page to see newspaper links for that country)

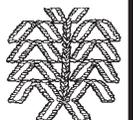
6-12

## "Our Way of Life"

Each year, in preparation for Concern America's Walk Out of Poverty, school groups are given brief presentations on issues affecting the communities where Concern America works, reflecting on those same problems or lack thereof in this country. A couple of years ago, the presentations focused on the fact that the United States makes up only 5% of the world's population, but consumes over 25% of the world's resources. Related topics include our consumption of energy and the resulting pollution, our reliance on low cost labor both in this country and abroad to produce our products for a low price, among others.

On September 20, little more than a week after the attacks, President Bush addressed the Congress and the nation. One of his messages was the need as a country to protect "our way of life." There is no question that any nation or people must protect themselves from aggression, and our physical safety in this country is of the utmost importance, but what is this "way of life" to which President Bush refers?

- Ask the students to break into small groups and make a list of the factors that make up "our way of life." As a class, compile the factors to make one class list. If the combined list does not include statements related to the 5%/25% population/consumption examples cited above, challenge the students to broaden their definitions.
- Now ask the students to look at the list and talk about which of "our ways of life" are worth defending, and which should be changed. For example, most people around the world support the protection of "freedom" and "democracy". However, do we want to protect companies that do not pay a living wage or "protect" our disproportionate use of natural resources?



8-12

## What Do They Think of Us?

A photo was taken of a rally in Pakistan shortly after September 11 in which a banner could be seen that read: "America think: Why does much of the world hate you?". Why would someone say this? What could be some of the possible answers to this question? What can/should we do about this? To answer these questions, of course, we must learn more about others from around the world. There have been quite a few documentaries and programs recently about Afghanistan, for example, and many articles in newspapers and magazines. (See the previous page for listings of worldwide press publications.)

## Dealing with Prejudice

We were overtly reminded again of prejudice's ugly head immediately after the recent tragedies. Many people who look "Muslim" or "brown-skinned" have been targets, suffering property destruction, verbal abuse, fear, and even physical violence (one man was killed in Arizona because he was wearing a turban--he was a Sikh from India). Most teachers have seen prejudice many times between students, but are often at a loss regarding how to deal with it. The following suggestions of **Do's** and **Don'ts** in dealing with "prejudice" might be of help.

Teachers  
K-12

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- Do** deal with the situation immediately.
  - Do** confirm that the particular type of abuse is hurtful and harmful and will not be tolerated.
  - Do** value the feelings of others by active, sensitive listening.
  - Do** take steps to support the victim and enable him or her to develop a stronger sense of self.
  - Do** take those involved aside to discuss the incident.
  - Do** explain to students why such incidents occur and undertake ongoing, long-term (pro-active) strategies with the class for combating stereotyping, prejudice, and negative attitudes to differences.
  - Do** apply consequences to the attacker in accordance with the school rules, code of behavior, and race/ethno-cultural relations policy.
  - Don't** ignore it, let it pass unchallenged, or let intangible fears block your ability to act.
  - Don't** overreact with another put-down of the offender.
  - Don't** impose consequences before finding out exactly what happened from those involved.
  - Don't** focus entirely on applying consequences to the offender while ignoring the feelings of the victim.
  - Don't** embarrass either party publicly.
  - Don't** assume that the incident is an isolated occurrence divorced from the overall context in which it occurred.
  - Don't** humiliate the attacker when imposing consequences. Remember that the attacker may feel like a victim too.

(*Unity in Diversity: A Curriculum Resource Guide for Ethnocultural Equity and Anti-racist Education*. Ontario Ministry of Education. April, 1991; quoted in *Rethinking Our Classrooms: Teaching for Equity and Justice*. Rethinking Schools: Milwaukee. 1994. p. 26.)



"He who knows only his side of the case knows little of that."

-J. Stuart Mill

"Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of creative alternatives for responding to conflict.-- Alternatives to passive or aggressive responses, alternatives to violence."

-Jeanne Larson

# IDEAS AND RECOMMENDED

9-12

## Down to the Roots

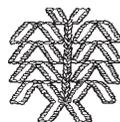
Finding the root causes of an issue is essential if we hope to truly address the problem. President Bush has announced that the central focus of his administration is now to eliminate terrorism. What are the root causes of terrorism, and how can we help eliminate it from the world? Try setting up this exercise as a role play:

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You are the President, making a speech to your cabinet (the class) citing this new focus of your administration. You are calling upon your cabinet to do the following:

- Explore the root causes of terrorism. This will require students to learn more about terrorists in general (not just centered on the Middle East of course--Timothy McVeigh and the "Unabomber" were terrorists). Why do they do what they do? In what type of surroundings did they grow up? Who have they attacked in the past?
- Make a list of the root causes of terrorism; this will inevitably be a diverse list. Now the task of the "cabinet" is to come up with actions (solutions) to address each of the root causes with the goal of preventing further acts of terrorism.
- Compare the "cabinet's" proposed actions with those of:

- (a) the government, and
- (b) the students' own ideas about how our country should act at this time.



"The best defense of place is not power but the removal of the causes of war."

-Lester B. Pearson
Former Prime Minister
Canada

"Peace cannot suddenly descend from the heavens.

It can only come when the root causes of trouble are removed."

-Jawaharlal Nehru

CONCERN AMERICA

is an international development and refugee aid organization that sends doctors, nurses, engineers, educators, and nutritionists as volunteers to train and empower the materially poor in Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Bolivia, Guinea and Mozambique.

In support of these projects, Concern America offers educational services in Orange County which include:

- * the St. Nicholas Project
- * Walk Out of Poverty
- * Infusion Method Workshops for teachers
- * "Training for Transformation" Workshops for adults
- * school and parish consulting for the implementation of the Bishops' Pastoral: "Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions" (June, 1998)
- * Lending library for resources of peace and social justice

Information on any of these projects can be obtained by contacting:

Concern America
P.O. Box 1790
Santa Ana, CA 92702
(714) 953-8575

Peace-Related Books Available for Lending at Concern America--*Once Upon a Conflict: A fairytale manual of conflict resolution for all ages, Tom Leimdorfer. So Everybody Fights? A teaching programme on Development Education for 9-13 year olds, Irish Commission for Justice and Peace. Learning Peace. Grace C. Abrams, Fran Schmidt. Yes, You Do Count, A Teaching Program on Human Rights, Maura Ward PBVM. Working Together, A Handbook for Cooperation, Peace Pledge Union. Educating for Peace and Justice (Religious Dimensions, K-6), James McGinnis. Global Teacher, Global Learner, Graham Pike & David Selby. Catholic Social Teaching and Human Rights, Jane Deren, Marissa Maurer, and Julie Vieira.*

Stay In Touch--One way to be an active citizen in a democracy is to share one's views with government leaders. To write, use the following addresses: Representatives: The Honorable (name), United States House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515; Senators: The Honorable (name), United States Senate, Washington, DC, 20510; President George W. Bush, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20500. Or call: The Capitol Switchboard is (202) 224-3121.