

Peace Begins in Me

**Peace education curriculum for
Project PeacePal**

**Creating a more peaceful world
one student at a time...
...one letter at a time.**

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Introduction

Welcome to the Peace Begins in Me curriculum! In the midst of life's whirlpool of change, there are a few things which appear to remain constant. One is a universal desire to love and live in peace, and another is a universal pull toward conflict. Even those of us who intend to live peacefully find ourselves dismayed and heartbroken at times following an experience of conflict, wondering "How did that happen?" Life's most important skills are not usually taught: how to really love and be loved, how to be a parent, how to be a compassionate listener, how to be patient, how to create peace.

When I first created Project PeacePal in spring of 2007, it was because I wanted to build a way for young people around the world to have a different experience, one which better prepared them for some of these experiences. I wanted to connect them directly with each other and provide a way for them to intentionally learn how to create peace. My vision is that this curriculum is ideally used in conjunction with the PeacePal letter writing process, and is intended to be repeated each school term. Students will find that their insights deepen each time they experience a lesson or activity. The friendships formed through these letters and this curriculum will provide the foundation for a sustainable and peaceful future.

Project PeacePal's mission states: "PeacePals are international friends who write letters to create a connected web of compassionate young leaders practicing the art of peace in daily life. As conflict arises out of misunderstanding and ignorance, PeacePal's international connections bring insight that, in the midst of cultural diversity, there is an underlying common yearning for peaceful relationships based in respect."

The pages which follow have been lovingly created by a dedicated group of educators who are passionate about peace. This is our first go at it, however, so however much we have tried to weave these lessons together into an integral fabric, we have probably dropped a stitch or two here or there. We ask that you please keep notes of your experiences with using this curriculum, and send us your comments, suggestions, constructive criticism and yes, even praise!

Most lessons have at least one activity, and some have several. There are no doubt many wonderful resources we have not included here which will be included in future editions. We have assumed from the start that this would be a work-in-progress. Perhaps it is best if it always remains a work-in-progress, and grows with the people using it.

My eternal thanks go out to all the lovely souls who have responded to Project PeacePal, and especially to Angie Scherbarth, Nancy Harmon, Gerri Barnhart and Keliko Adams who poured themselves heart and soul into helping me write this curriculum. This curriculum is dedicated to my son, Lorand Wilkinson, and all the young people who will lead the world in a new and peaceful direction.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Blessings of peace to all,
Sarah Wilkinson
Founder and Director, Project PeacePal

Notes to facilitators and teachers:

You will notice that the journal activity is ongoing throughout the lessons and activities of this curriculum. Our intent (and hope) is to strengthen the internal process of inner reflection within each student, reinforcing the understandings gleaned from this process. The journaling also gives students concrete evidence of their experiences and growth in peace building. Students will have these journals to reflect upon during and after the lessons and hopefully will find them useful throughout their lives.

The lessons in *Peace Begins in Me* are intended to be repeated from term to term. Each encounter with a lesson or activity will bring new and hopefully deeper insight. Repetition will reinforce the skills so that they become natural responses in times of conflict.

Lessons and activities were written with consideration to a standard class period. We understand that facilitators and teachers may need to make adjustments from time to time to fit their schedules. Some will find that a lesson scheduled to take one session could span two or three sessions. Please use the curriculum at a pace that fits your situation. Feel free to contact us if you have questions or need support.

An integral part of the *Peace Begins in Me* process is service to others. Sustainable long term peace is most possible when we make being of service to each other a priority. With older students in particular we encourage U.S. PeacePals to develop ongoing service projects in collaboration with their overseas PeacePals.

One of the simplest projects can be collecting coins in classrooms to donate to Project PeacePal as a way to help pay for program costs for international partners. Project PeacePal currently subsidizes program costs for most of the international locations. Project PeacePal staff are available to provide support in developing and implementing service projects locally and internationally.

New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks were applied to each lesson. This does not mean that these are the only standards or benchmarks applicable to the lessons and we encourage you to add and use other standards and benchmarks where you feel they are appropriate.

A link to our online feedback survey is available to you from our website, listed below. The survey is quick and easy and will help us determine what works and what needs improvement. By working together we can support the young leaders of tomorrow.

For any questions please feel free to contact us online, by mail or by phone:

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Thank you for your participation!