



Conflict Stories

IN THIS ACTIVITY, the participants are introduced to the concepts of negative peace, positive peace, and structural violence.

TIME REQUIRED: 30 MINUTES | INTENDED FOR GRADES 6-8



language arts



social studies

MATERIALS NEEDED

- » Butcher paper and markers
- » Copies of Resource, “Conflict Stories,” found on page 102, one for each group of three participants
- » Visit worldvision.org/lp/acsi-teacher-resources for a video you can show to support this lesson. (optional)

Activity Steps

1

ORGANIZE THE PARTICIPANTS into groups of three. Distribute one conflict story from the resource (Victor, Paul, Ana, or Tanya) to each group. Instruct the groups to read the story and develop two endings, one that is peaceful and one that is not.

2

INVITE EACH GROUP to join with another group to share their conflict stories and the endings they created. Provide each group with a sheet of butcher paper and a marker. Ask them to discuss the elements of peace and conflict that emerged in each story and write them down on the butcher paper.

3

INTRODUCE THE PARTICIPANTS to the following terms describing different states of peace and conflict (formulated in 1964 by Johan Galtung, founder of the discipline of peace and conflict studies):

- » *Negative peace* is peace achieved through the absence of war and the reduction of violent conflict.

- » *Positive peace* is achieved through the absence of war and violent conflict but also includes reducing or removing factors that harm individual quality of life and cause conflict to happen. Positive peace requires economic and social justice, elimination of poverty and discrimination, and a healthy ecology.
- » *Structural violence* is not open physical violence but the less obvious violence caused by poverty, racism, sexism, and human rights abuses. Whenever institutions or social systems give some people power while depriving others of their basic human rights, it can be said that structural violence exists.

4

INVITE THE GROUPS to discuss and determine which of the three states are reflected in their conflict stories.

5

NOW INVITE THE GROUPS to classify their class, school, community, and country as being in a state of negative or positive peace.

6

PROVIDE EACH GROUP with a sheet of butcher paper and a marker. Ask the groups to each create a timeline based on one of the conflict stories, extending beyond the devised endings to include future possible outcomes of situations involving negative or positive peace or structural violence.

7

INVITE the groups to share their timelines.

8

CONCLUDE BY INVITING THE PARTICIPANTS to join you in prayer. Pray for the end of violence and conflict throughout the world. Pray for those parts of the world currently suffering from conflict. Pray that all government leaders will work toward peace and justice. Pray for peace within families and communities. Pray for peace within all hearts.

RESOURCE

Conflict Stories

Victor

Victor studies in a school with students of many different races and nationalities. Some students in this school do not get along well with people of different cultures. The school has no program to help students understand these different cultures and their ways of communicating.

One day, as Victor is walking down the hall, two students call him a racist name. Victor reports the incident to the principal. The principal tells him that he is sorry about the name-calling, but because no one actually got into a fight, he feels it is best to ignore it for now. He tells Victor that if there are any more problems with these two students, he should talk to the principal about it. Victor leaves the office feeling angry that the principal doesn't care enough to do anything about the situation. He tells two friends about it at lunchtime. The boys decide to . . .

Paul

Paul is 14 years old and uses a wheelchair to get around his school. The building is all on one level, and the doorways are wide enough for people with a range of different physical abilities to still be able to attend the school. Paul has many friends in his class; he helps coach the volleyball team after school and is a peer conflict mediator.

One day, Paul's literature class takes a trip to a local theater to see a drama performance. When the class arrives at the theater, the students discover that a steep flight of stairs lead to the entrance, and there is no ramp. The theater manager says that he is sorry and that if Paul's teacher had phoned ahead, he would have told her that the theater is not easily accessible for people with disabilities. Two of Paul's friends decide to . . .

Ana

Ana is 12 years old and a refugee who has just moved to the United States from a war-torn country. Her father and older brother both disappeared during the war, and the family does not know what happened to them. She and her mother now live with her aunt and uncle in your community. Ana is silent most of the time but becomes angry and violent over even the smallest incident.

The other day a girl in your class accidentally bumped into Ana while lining up to get on the school bus. Ana turned on her and began shouting in her own language. She then started pushing the girl away from her. You and your friend decide to . . .

Tanya

Tanya is in the seventh grade. She wants to play ice hockey, but the only teams in her community are for boys. Tanya is a good skater and has been playing road hockey with kids in her neighborhood. Her parents encourage her to try out for the local boys hockey team. She registers, and the coach welcomes her to come out for the first practice.

During the practice, the male players bully Tanya. They say nasty things to her under their breath and, when the coach isn't looking, try to trip her with their sticks. By the end of the practice, Tanya is in tears and ready to give up. She decides to . . .

(Victor's and Paul's stories are from Susan Fountain, *Education for Development: A Teacher's Resource for Global Learning*; London, England: Hodder and Stoughton Publishing, 1995. © 1995 by Hodder and Stoughton Publishing. All rights reserved. Used with permission.)

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