

BALTIMORE
MUSEUM OF
ART

Art, Mindfulness, and Peacebuilding

An Arts-Integrated
Curriculum for Grades 6-8

About this Curriculum

The **Art, Mindfulness, and Peacebuilding (AMP)** curriculum is based on a program of the same name that was piloted at The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) starting in 2017. AMP brings together art history, studio art, conflict resolution, brain and behavioral science, and contemplative practices to create a new framework for students' social, emotional, and creative development. Evaluations from the program demonstrate that students who participated **increased empathic concern, demonstrated emotional regulation, experienced greater class cohesion, and actively included classmates who had previously been socially excluded.** The AMP curriculum is designed for students in grades 6–8 but can be adapted for 5th grade depending on maturity and academic level.

This curriculum is designed to be flexible: a lesson plan can be used in its entirety or each component of the lesson plan can be used alone. I encourage you, the teacher, to implement the curriculum in the way that works best for you and your students.

I want to thank the AMP founding team, including Tim Phillips and Dr. William Casebeer of Beyond Conflict, Ali Smith of the Holistic Life Foundation, Akewi Karamba, Donna Basik at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), David Ramos, Hayley Maher, Shamal Ratnakye, interns from the MICA Master of Arts in Teaching program, and especially the students, teachers, and principal at City Springs Elementary/Middle School. I would also like to thank Dr. Tara Sethia of the Ahimsa Center at Cal Poly Pomona for her support in making this resource possible. The project is supported by generous funding from the Sternberger Foundation.

My very best,

Elizabeth Benskin

Director of Teaching and Learning

What This Curriculum Is Not

This curriculum is not an intervention for perceived behavioral problems in students. All too often, social-emotional curricula are understood to be resources for control of student behavior. This is especially troubling given the way that Black and Brown students are disproportionately disciplined in the American school system. This curriculum is designed in the spirit of discovery, community, and partnership between teachers and students as much as possible. Control, which is hierarchical and one-sided, is antithetical to the validation of student voices and the possibility of empathy and peacebuilding.

This curriculum is not a counter-perspective to protests against social injustice. On the contrary, the curriculum should help shed light on the real human cost of systemic exclusion and violence. The intention is not to offer simple solutions or to encourage the bypassing of valid emotional responses to injustice. This resource is intended to support understanding of the way peace and justice are intertwined. The curriculum also explores how the human brain can sometimes be an obstacle to, rather than an ally in, the search for equity and connection. Finally, it offers ways for students to find peace within themselves when possible, although these techniques are never a replacement for a just and fair society and school system.

Curriculum Components

The first three lessons have five sections which can be used together or independently. The last lesson acts as a review. The sections are:

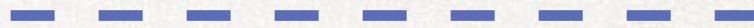
- Contemplative practices such as yoga, meditation, or breathwork
- Historical and/or contemporary exemplars in nonviolence
- Investigation of an artwork
- Brain and behavioral science
- Art-making

How to Use This Curriculum

- **Key questions** should be used to spark responses from students as a class. Exploration of these questions can start with individual, pair, or group work.
- **Contemplative practices** come with instructions and images so that teachers can narrate activities and students have visual references.
- Information and activities on **historical/contemporary exemplars** can be used as a handout to students or as reference material for the teacher.
- The **investigation of visual artworks** is supported with an image of the artwork(s), questions and prompts for students, and information about the object that the teacher can share as students respond.
- **Brain and behavioral science** information and activities can be used as a handout to students or as reference material for the teacher.
- The **art-making activities** include instructions, a materials list, and an image of a sample object.
- At the end of each lesson plan, invite students to reflect in whatever way you think best—whether verbally, in writing, or even silently in a contemplative moment.

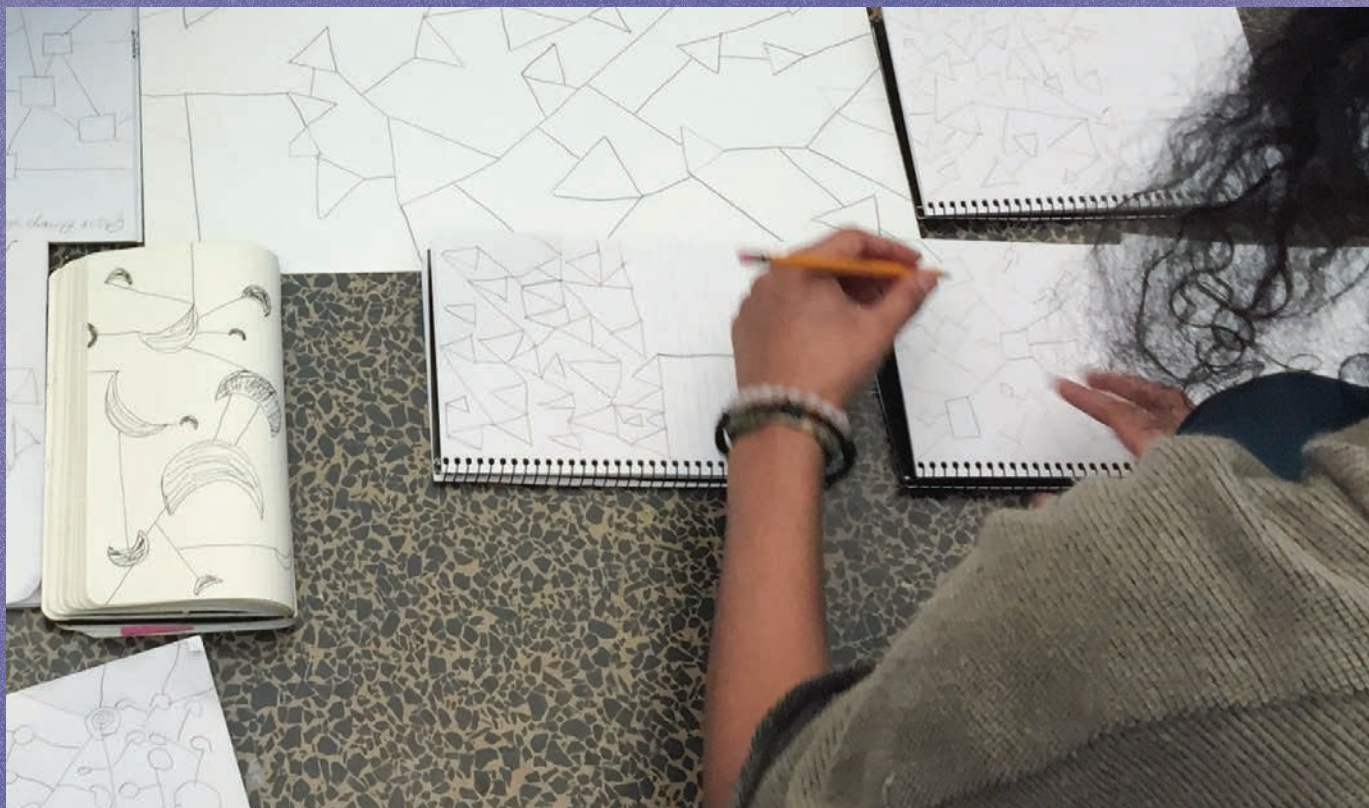
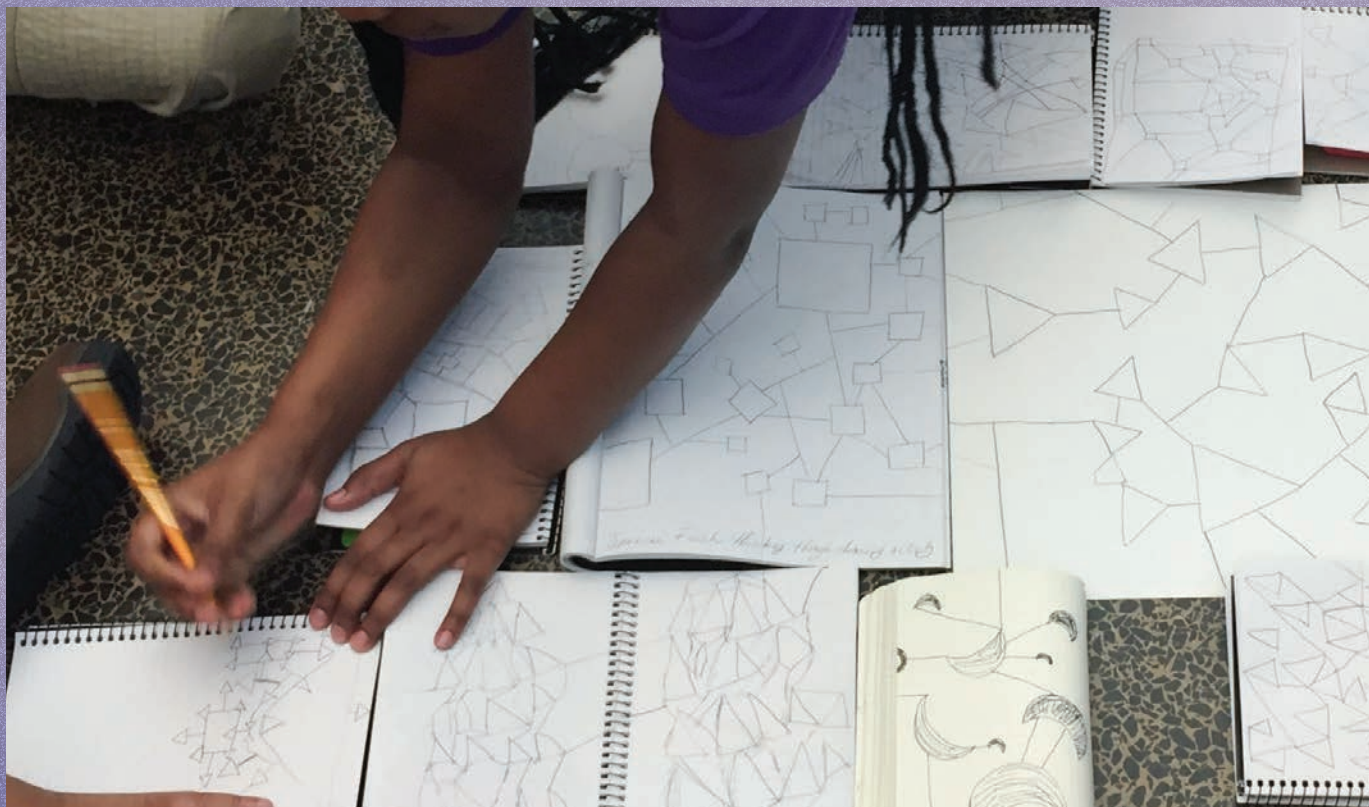
Lesson 1

Connection and Conflict



Key Questions

- What is conflict? What does it mean to be in conflict with other people?
- What does it mean to be connected to other people?
- In what ways does connection relate to peace?
- What are some ways for people to overcome conflict and build connection?



Contemplative Practice

Loving Kindness Meditation

This meditation helps the individual envision positive connections with others and themselves, by going through a process of visualizing someone they love and holding that feeling for others: someone who occupies a neutral place in their life, someone who is more challenging, the entire world, and finally, themselves.

Please sit in a cross-legged position on the floor, or in your chairs with your legs uncrossed, feet on the floor, hands resting in your lap or on your knees with palms upright, and back upright but relaxed. If you feel comfortable, I invite you to close your eyes. If closing your eyes does not feel comfortable, simply find something in the room to look at with a soft gaze.

Begin by noticing your breath—how fast or slow are you breathing? Where do you notice the sensation of breathing the most? Next, begin to note any sounds around you. Simply take in those sounds—let them come and go. Notice how your body feels—begin at the top of the head and slowly let your focus move down your body, all the way down to your feet. What sensations are you noticing? Just observe the sensations.

I now invite you to bring to your mind someone that you love very much. As you continue to breathe, notice your body's sensations as you think of this person. What are you noticing? Now silently send that person happiness, health, safety, and peace.

Now bring to your mind someone that you know and see regularly, but that you do not have strong feelings about. This may be the person who works the register at a local store or classmates that you may not know well. As you continue to breathe, send that person happiness, health, safety, and peace.

Bring to your mind someone that you find challenging to deal with. As you continue to breathe, send that person happiness, health, safety, and peace.

Bring to your mind all the people of the world. As you continue to breathe, send all people happiness, health, safety, and peace.

Bring to your mind yourself. As you continue to breathe, send yourself happiness, health, safety, and peace.

I now invite you to bring your attention back to your breath. Notice the motion of your chest as you breathe. Notice the temperature of the air as it enters and exits your nostrils. Now focus on what your body feels like—notice where the body touches a surface such as the chair or the floor. Begin to notice the sounds around you, letting them come and go. If your eyes are closed, I invite you to open them slowly, taking in the space around you.



Historical Exemplar

Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869–1948)

Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869–1948) is one of the most consequential individuals in the history of India and recent world history. He came to be called Mahatma Gandhi, Mahatma meaning “great soul” in the ancient Indian language of Sanskrit. He began his career as a British-educated lawyer in practice in South Africa but shifted to working against injustices in Indian society. He is credited with developing a system of nonviolent thought and action that inspired the people of India to peacefully expel the British government which had occupied and ruled the country. The British government left India in 1947. Gandhi was an important inspiration for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929–1968) and others for the nonviolent actions used to make significant progress in civil rights for Black Americans.

Gandhi believed that nonviolence was an individual state that included nonviolence in thought, speech, and action toward other human beings. He believed that the means used to achieve a goal were as important as the goal itself, so a violent approach, even if it led to a successful result, was unacceptable. Gandhi saw nonviolence as active, not passive. He also spent much time in self-reflection and prayer as he constantly revised and refined his approach. He was raised Hindu and engaged in Hindu prayers, but also insisted on prayer meetings in his community that included prayers from many religions.

One example of a nonviolent action led by Gandhi was the 1930 Salt March. Gandhi organized this march to protest unfair taxes, imposed by the British government, on naturally occurring salt—a financial burden on Indians for one of their own natural resources. First, he sent a letter to the British

Viceroy asking him to end the salt tax. This was always his first step—to ask directly for what was needed. When he received no response from the Viceroy, he organized a march to the sea to freely collect salt in protest of the tax law. The march began with about 70 people and by the time Gandhi reached the coast—240 miles away from the start of the march—he had been joined by about 12,000 people. There, the Indian citizens defied the salt tax in different ways, including by boiling the water off of sea water to make salt.

Gandhi was imprisoned for his role in this act of non-cooperation with the British government but while he was there, followers participated in a march toward a salt processing plant. Police beat the marchers but those participating in the protest did not fight back due to their commitment to nonviolence. Ultimately, the salt tax did not go away, but Indians living near the coast were permitted to make their own salt. Gandhi did not get everything he asked for at that time. But the Salt March and related actions brought international attention to the cause of Indian independence.

Student Question

What is an injustice in your community that you would like to see changed? What kind of violent actions could address the situation? What would the consequences be? Brainstorm some nonviolent actions you could take to address this injustice. What do you think the results of that would be? How willing would you be to persist even if some actions failed at first?



Investigating Art

Lion and Humped Ox

A lion and an ox face each other across a fruit tree. On the tree is the Greek word *philia* meaning “friendship.” The pairing of the “natural enemies,” predator and prey, framed by the blossoming tree illustrate how peace and diversity were valued in the city of Antioch, a cosmopolitan Hellenic city with a range of ethnic and religious groups, including Jews and Christians. This mosaic scene would have been part of the floor of a hall in the suburban summer home of an Antioch citizen of the 5th century.

Invite students to look closely at *Lion and Humped Ox*. Divide students into groups of four and ask them to create written responses to the following questions. When they have finished answering questions, ask each group to share their responses. Record student comments on a white/black board or large piece of paper.

- Describe the art elements—color, line, shape, texture, space, and form—you see in this work.
- What do you think this work might be made from?
- Have you seen anything similar to this before? What was it? What does this not look like?
- What are the subjects depicted in this work?

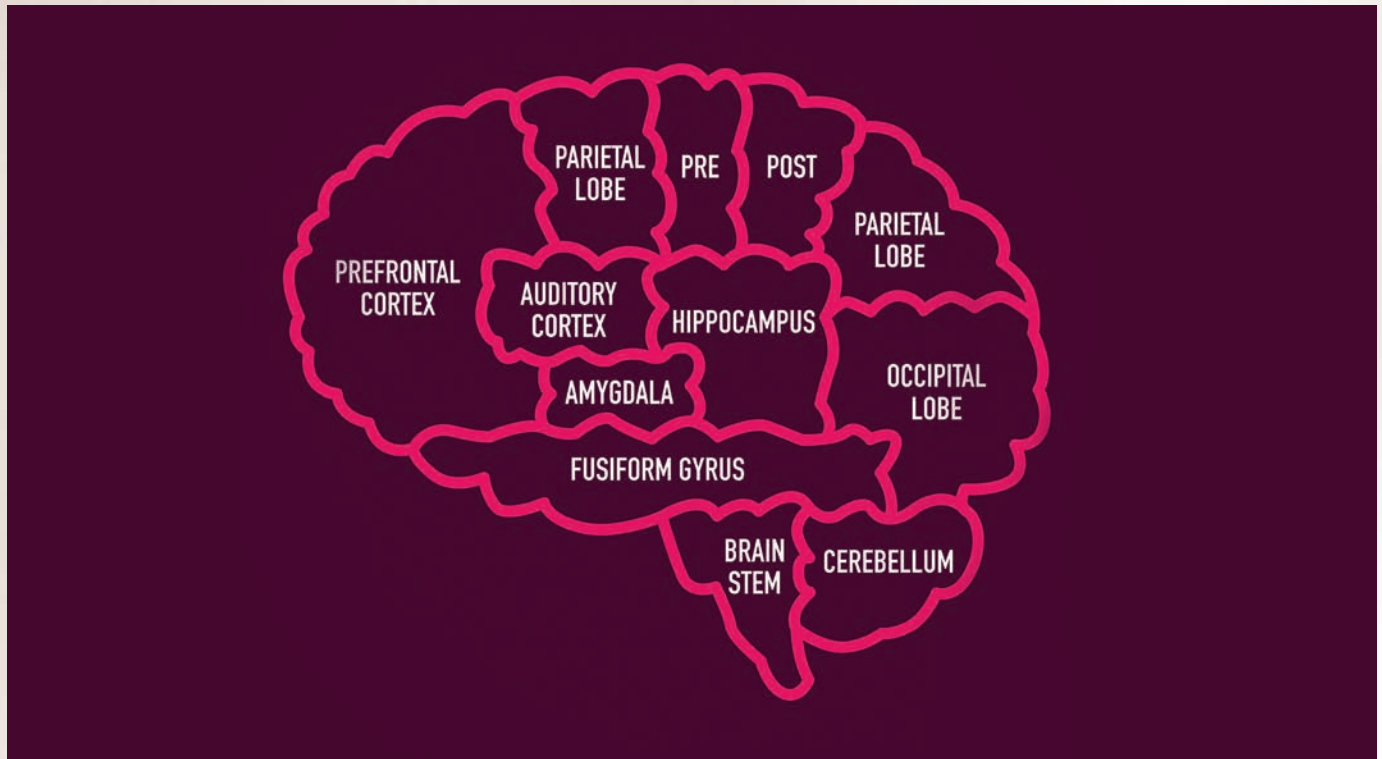
Once students have responded to the above questions, ask them as a group to respond to the following questions. As students respond, share relevant information about the object. Continue to record student responses.

- What typically happens when a lion and an ox are in the same area?
- Why do you think the artist may have depicted these two animals together?
- Why put the word *philia* (“friendship”) on the tree between them?
- Can you think of other instances when “natural enemies” were able to come together? What did it take for that to happen?



Exploring Brain and Behavioral Science

Connection and Conflict



Take a look at this diagram of the human brain.

We'll discuss the **amygdala** and **prefrontal cortex** areas of the brain, but first let's talk about the **brain in conflict**.

When you are having a disagreement with someone, feeling anger towards them, your brain perceives the situation as a threat.

That is not to say that feeling anger is wrong. Feeling emotions of any kind is a human experience and all emotions are okay. Anger, for instance, is an emotion that comes up when we feel like something is wrong or unjust. The question is, what happens when you feel certain emotions?

Student Question

When you have been angry with someone, what was going on in your mind? What did it feel like in your body?

The **amygdala** is activated when you feel a threat (for example, when you feel angry towards someone). It causes what we call the “fight, flight, or freeze” response. This response is designed to help you escape from dangerous situations, like being chased by an animal that may do you harm.

What does the **amygdala** see as a threat?

Lots of stuff.



Student Question

Take a look at the three pictures on the left. What is happening in each one? How might each of these situations be seen as a threat?

The amygdala may not see all of these situations as **equal** threats, but it does see them all as threats. That is when it activates.

How does the activation of the **amygdala** work?

The amygdala looks out for threats and when activated turns on the fight, flight, or freeze response. That means if you are in a threatening situation, you might engage in a fight, run away (flight), or stop in your tracks too scared to do anything (freeze).

The **prefrontal cortex** is responsible for many important functions, but it can only work when the amygdala is calm. The prefrontal cortex is the area of the brain responsible for reasoning, problem-solving, planning, decision-making, emotional control, focus, and positive social behavior. It also does not fully develop until you are about 26 years old!

Student Question

Think of a time when you were really scared. Would you have been able to solve a math problem?

So, what is happening in your brain when your **amygdala** is activated?

It is easy for the amygdala to be activated. When the amygdala is activated, the **prefrontal cortex** is frozen and cut off from the nervous system. It cannot do any of the work it does when the brain feels safe and calm.

As you can see, there are so many situations in our daily lives that can activate the amygdala. Having emotions is normal, but if our amygdala is activated all the time, it is exhausting and feels terrible.

It can be hard to do, but it is possible to deactivate the amygdala. And when you find ways to deactivate it, you train it to activate less often when you face the same situation in the future.

Student Question

What are some things you have done to calm down when you have been angry or scared?

How do you deactivate the **amygdala**?

There are many ways to find calm when you are angry or scared. Here are just a few:

- Take five long, slow deep breaths—make sure your exhale is longer than your inhale.
- Squeeze your face together, squeeze your shoulders to your ears, and tighten your hands into fists. Hold for ten seconds and then release.
- Make art! When you do, **cortisol**—the hormone that the brain produces in response to stress—is reduced.

Student Challenge

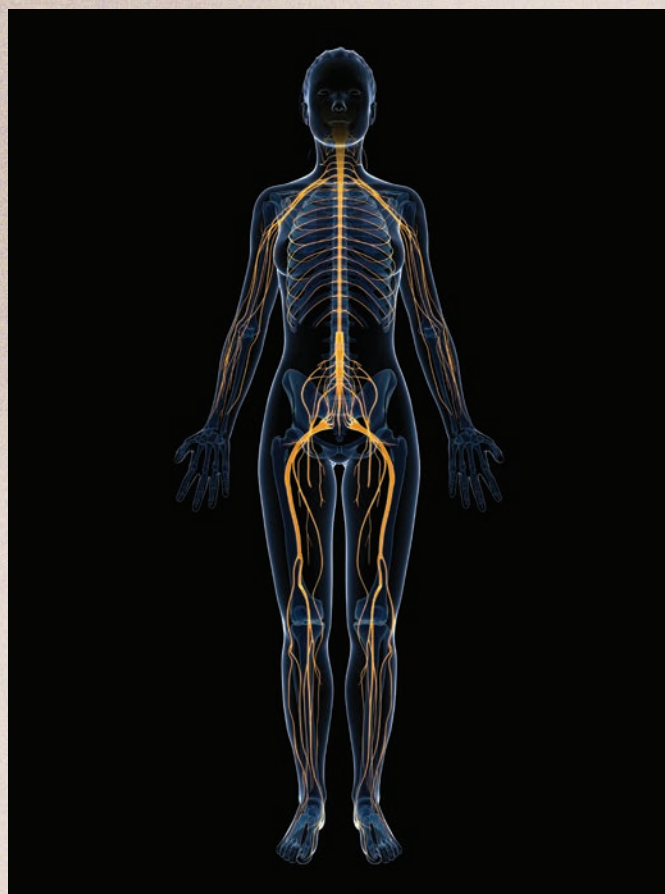
Try one of these activities—notice how it makes you feel.

Now let's talk about the brain when it is **feeling safe and calm**.

The brain is like the “control room” of the human nervous system which extends throughout the body. So, in fact, the brain itself extends throughout the body. This is why we can notice changes in our body (sweating, increased heart rate) when we *feel* nervous. Emotions and physical sensations always go together.

Student Question

Think of a time when you felt a strong emotion like sadness or joy. What body sensations did you notice?



The brain is like the ‘control room’ of the human nervous system which extends throughout the body.

When the brain is calm, the **prefrontal cortex** can do its job. That means you can solve problems, make reasonable decisions, and relate to other people. If you feel positively bonded to other people, your brain is producing a hormone called **oxytocin** which makes you feel safe and included.



Art-Making

Kindness Cards

In this art-making activity, students will make decorative cards for people they would like to connect with more closely. (Let students know that they do not have to give the cards if they do not yet feel comfortable doing so.) Ask them to reflect on who they might give a card to and for what purpose. Some possibilities are:

- An apology card for someone to whom they have been unkind
- A “hello” card for someone they notice has been socially excluded at their school or in their community
- A “what can I do to help?” card for someone they know has experienced a personal loss or challenge
- A gratitude card to acknowledge someone who has helped and supported them

You may want to lead the Loving Kindness Meditation and include the person students wish to make cards for prior to the actual making.

Kindness Cards

- 1 Have students clarify the message they will include in the card. It can be very simple, such as “Just wanted to say hi.”
- 2 Ask students to reflect on what they know about this person—what kind of decoration do you think they might like on their card?
- 3 Invite students to make their cards by folding a piece of cardstock or heavy-weight paper in half, writing a message inside (and including words on the front if appropriate) and decorating the card with drawings, collage materials, and washi tape.

Materials

- Cardstock or heavy-weight paper
- Pencils—regular and colored
- Markers
- Collage materials, including magazines, newspapers, and other ephemera
- Washi tape
- Scotch tape
- Rulers
- Scissors
- Glue
- Scratch paper

Lesson 2

Challenging Exclusion

A horizontal dashed line consisting of ten short, dark blue dashes.

Key Questions

- What does it mean to be excluded?
What does it feel like to be excluded?
- What does it mean to be included?
What does it feel like to be included?
- How have some people fought against
exclusion and for inclusion?
- How can you fight against exclusion
and for inclusion?



Yoga Pose: Warrior II

Warrior Pose II in yoga supports feelings of strength and power. The pose opens the chest and hips and helps with stability. Students will need to spread out in the classroom so that they have ample space for the pose. Invite students to hold this pose for about 30 seconds on each side.

Start by standing straight up, with your feet hip width apart and your arms by your sides. Place your left foot a few feet behind you, toes pointing slightly outward. Keep your right foot pointed straight ahead. Line up your right heel with your left arch.

Bend your right knee, making sure that it is over the ankle—not moving forward over the ankle.

Keep your chest and shoulders facing forward. Lift your arms up to shoulder height—your right arm pointing forward and your left arm pointing behind you so that the arms are in a straight line. Keep your eyes focused on the fingers of your right arm.

Hold the pose and see how it feels in your body. Press your feet into the floor for stability.

Now gently straighten the right knee and, with control, pull the left leg forward until you are in a standing position.

Take a deep breath in your standing position with your arms by your sides. Notice how your body and mind feel.

Now for the other side.

Place your right foot a few feet behind you, toes pointing slightly outward. Keep your left foot pointed straight ahead. Line up your left heel with your right arch.

Bend your left knee, making sure that it is over the ankle—not moving forward over the ankle.

Keep your chest and shoulders facing forward. Lift your arms up to shoulder height—your left arm pointing forward and your right arm pointing behind you so that the arms are in a straight line. Keep your eyes focused on the fingers of your left arm.

Hold the pose and see how it feels in your body. Press your feet into the floor for stability.

Now gently straighten the left knee and, with control, pull the right leg forward until you are in a standing position.

Take a deep breath in your standing position with your arms by your sides. Notice how your body and mind feel.



Den Norske Nobelkomité
har overensstemmende med
reglene i det av
ALFRED NOBEL

den 27. november 1895
opprettede testamente tildelt

Malala Yousafzai

Nobels Fredspris
for 2014

Oslo, 10. desember 2014

[Signature]

Kari K. Fløe
[Signature]

Ingrid Bergt Mikkelsen
[Signature]

Alfred Nobel 2014

Contemporary Exemplar

Malala Yousafzai (b. 1997)

Malala Yousafzai (b. 1997) was born in the Swat Valley of Pakistan, about 100 miles from the Pakistani capital of Islamabad. She grew up attending the school that her father established. By 2009, the Taliban—a militant Islamic extremist group—controlled the Swat valley, including her town Mingora. When they first arrived, most citizens did not feel threatened by them, but the Taliban gradually became a more and more violent force. They stopped people from accessing media. They blew up police stations and schools. They killed people who spoke out against them.

The Taliban also banned all education for girls. Malala began to speak out through any channel available to her. She spoke on the radio, on TV, and to the international press. Not only did she insist on the rights of girls to receive an education, but she also criticized the Taliban's use of the religion of Islam as a tool of violence rather than of faith and peace. The Taliban threatened her with serious harm if she continued.

Student Question

How did Malala fight against the injustices she saw? How did the way she fought support peace and nonviolence?

When she was 15 years old, Malala was shot in the head by a Taliban gunman. She was badly injured but survived with permanent damage to the left side of her face and loss of hearing in her left ear. She moved to England with her family and went through a long process of recovery. She enrolled in school but also used her voice to continue to fight for girls' access to education around the world. She now has a foundation, The Malala Fund, which sponsors projects that support girls' education in several countries.

In 2014, Malala was the youngest person in history to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

Student Question

Speaking out about injustices can be very risky. Is there a cause that you would be willing to take risks to support? What are the risks of speaking out about injustice?

APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

(PRE-EMPLOYMENT QUESTIONNAIRE) (AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER)

Date _____

Name (Last Name First) _____ Soc. Sec. No. _____

Address _____ Telephone _____

What kind of work are you applying for? _____

What special qualifications do you have? _____

What office machines can you operate? _____

Are you 18 years or older? Yes _____ No _____

SPECIAL PURPOSE QUESTIONS

DO NOT ANSWER **ANY** OF THE QUESTIONS IN THIS FRAMED AREA UNLESS THE EMPLOYER HAS **CHECKED A BOX PRECEDING** A QUESTION, THEREBY INDICATING THAT THE INFORMATION IS REQUIRED FOR A BONA FIDE OCCUPATIONAL QUALIFICATION, OR DICTATED BY NATIONAL SECURITY LAWS, OR IS NEEDED FOR OTHER LEGALLY PERMISSIBLE REASONS.

☐ HEIGHT _____ FEET _____ INCHES ☐ WEIGHT _____ LBS. ☐ CITIZEN OF U.S. YES _____ NO _____

☐

MILITARY SERVICE RECORD

Armed Forces Service Yes _____ No _____ From _____ To _____

Branch of Service _____ Duties _____

Rank or rating at time of enlistment _____ Rating at time of discharge _____

Do you have any physical limitations that prohibit you from performing any work for which you are being considered? Yes _____ No _____ Please describe _____

EDUCATION

SCHOOL	*NO. OF YEARS ATTENDED	NAME OF SCHOOL	CITY	COURSE	*DID YOU GRADUATE?
GRAMMAR					
HIGH					
COLLEGE					
OTHER					

*The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 prohibits discrimination on the basis of age with respect to individuals who are at least 40 but less than 70 years of age.

EXPERIENCE

NAME AND ADDRESS OF COMPANY	DATE		LIST YOUR DUTIES	STARTING SALARY	FINAL SALARY	REASON FOR LEAVING
	FROM	TO				

BUSINESS REFERENCES

NAME	ADDRESS	OCCUPATION

This form has been designed to strictly comply with State and Federal fair employment practice laws prohibiting employment discrimination. This Application for Employment Form is sold for general use throughout the United States. TOPS assumes no responsibility for the inclusion in said form of any questions which, when asked by the Employer of the Job Applicant, may violate State and/or Federal Law.

TOPS Form 3286 (Revised)

Litho in U.S.A.

Investigating Art

Adrian Piper, *Untitled*

This graphite drawing of a face on a printed employment application form is designed to challenge the idea that forms such as these are fair and unbiased. You may notice that under “Application for Employment” are the words “an equal opportunity employer” and yet, by seeing a person’s face on the form, we are reminded of the complexity of human beings and how forms cannot possibly give us a full picture of a person’s talents, aspirations, values, or challenges. In addition, the form focuses on opportunities (professional, educational, etc.) from which BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) have historically been excluded.

The lines on the form act like a kind of barrier between the viewer and the person depicted. There is added poignancy in the fact that the person has opened their mouth, as if to speak, but as viewers, we cannot hear them.

Invite students to look closely at *Untitled*. Divide students into groups of four and ask them to create written responses to the following questions. When they have finished answering questions, ask each group to share their responses. Record student comments on a white/black board or large piece of paper.

- Describe the art elements—color, line, shape, texture, space, and form—you see in this work.
- What do you think this work might be made from?
- Have you seen anything similar to this before? What was it? What does this not look like?
- What are the subjects depicted in this work?

Once students have responded to the above questions, ask them as a group to respond to the following questions. As students respond, share relevant information about the object. Continue to record student responses.

- What are the questions in this form? What is missing?
- What can forms tell us about people? What can they not tell us about them?
- How can forms participate in bias and exclusion?
- What might that person tell us about themselves if we could hear them speak?



Exploring Brain and Behavioral Science

Challenging Exclusion



Student Question

Have you ever been in a situation where other people excluded you or bullied you? What were your emotions? What did that feel like in your body?

Let's talk about what happens in the nervous system when you are being excluded or bullied. The **amygdala** (the threat center) will see these situations as a threat and become activated, causing the fight, flight, or freeze response.

Exclusion matters to us because humans are social animals. Our family, friends, and community are important to us and being excluded from them does not feel good.

But what about the people doing the excluding or bullying? One factor might be the hormone oxytocin. **Oxytocin** is released in your body when you feel included, safe, and connected with other people. This is a good thing, right? Not always. When people feel very bonded in a group, and oxytocin plays a role in that bonding, they are more likely to have negative feelings about people they see as outside of their group. That is why it might seem easy to pick on others when you are with a group of close friends, for instance. It also means you have to remember to actively reach out to those people not in the group because it may not come naturally in that situation.

Student Questions

Think about a time when you were in a group and you gossiped about, bullied, or actively excluded someone. Most people have done it at some time in their lives. What did it feel like to be doing those things? Think about what you and your friends could have done differently. How would it have felt if you had done things differently?



It is important to understand how exclusion and bullying happen and that our nervous system plays a role. Besides the way oxytocin affects us, exclusion can be supported by the way our brains see the world. One of the most important roles of the brain is to act as a **pattern detector and prediction machine**. The brain REALLY likes to put things in categories (pattern detector) so that it can figure out how to react properly to something in its environment (prediction machine). Your brain prepares your body to act if there is a threat (fight, flight, or freeze response). This is

why we sometimes work backwards from how our body feels (for instance, if our heart is racing) to what we think (“that person over there must be a threat to me”).

This means that the brain makes judgments based on whatever information it has from prior experiences, assumptions based on those prior experiences (filling in any gaps), and what it is perceiving in its immediate environment. This was very helpful for early humans because it ensured survival. But in today’s world, it means you make quick judgments that are not always accurate. For example, if you meet someone who reminds you of a person you did not like because you had a bad experience with them, you might automatically decide you do not like this new person. Remember this the next time you encounter someone or something new.

Related to bullying and exclusion—although not the same—is dehumanization. Dehumanization is when you see other people as less than human. People may express this when they speak about people in other groups as dirty, diseased, or compare them to animals and insects.

Why is dehumanization dangerous? Because when people use dehumanizing language against another group of people, it is an indication that they are more likely to act violently toward the other group.

Student Questions

Have you heard people talk about other groups using dehumanizing terms? Who were they talking about and what terms did they use? Have you heard dehumanizing language used against groups of people in the media? What are some ways you can think of to fight against the dehumanization of other people?





Art-Making

Posters for a Cause

Posters can be an effective way to quickly convey a message through brief text and visual imagery. This activity invites students to reflect on a cause they feel strongly about and make a poster reflecting their viewpoint.

Posters for a Cause

- 1 Invite students to brainstorm by writing a list of causes they feel strongly about.
- 2 Show them examples of posters that promote causes and have them discuss what makes them effective (or not).
- 3 Students will then write a slogan or message for their cause poster. Once students have settled on their message, they can decorate their posters with visual images. They can hand-letter the message or you can provide letter stencils.
- 4 Ask for volunteers to share their posters and describe to the group how they made their text and image choices.

Materials

- Poster board or foam board, 11" x 17"
- Pencils
- Rulers
- Tempera paint, various colors
- Foam-tipped paint applicators
- Markers
- Letter stencils
- Collage materials including magazines, newspaper, etc.
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

Lesson 3

Finding a Way to Peace

Key Questions

- What is peace?
- How easy or hard might it be to find peace for yourself? To build it in your community? In the world?
- What might be some of the challenges of practicing peace?
- What might be some of the benefits?



Contemplative Practice

Noticing Thoughts

People are often very hard on themselves, and many people are familiar with what they might call “the voice in their head.” This is the voice that tells them that they are not worthy of love, they have failed, they are not smart—these are just examples of the many things that often come up for people, especially when they have experienced stress or have been exposed to emotional or physical neglect and/or abuse. This meditation practice helps to create some space between a person and their thoughts, so they are not overly identifying with those thoughts, a building block to finding internal peace. You may want to start by asking students to anonymously write down self-critical thoughts they have had about themselves and reflect on the fact that what they have written is just a thought, not reality. Then share that you will guide them through a practice that will help them to find some space between themselves and their thoughts.

Please note: if students are clearly not ready to participate in this activity or express serious resistance, starting with the Loving Kindness Practice in Lesson 1 may be a good way to begin so that they are first extending good wishes to others and then afterwards to themselves.

I invite you to sit upright in your seat or cross-legged on the floor and begin to notice your breath. You may close your eyes if you feel comfortable or, you may keep your eyes open and focus on a spot on the floor or another part of the room with a soft gaze. As you breathe, notice the qualities of your breath—warm or cool, long or short, deep or shallow.

You may notice thoughts—imagine them like clouds passing in the sky or like bubbles you can pop. As you notice them, you can gently say (silently) to

yourself, “thought.” Once you have done that, return your focus to the breath. You can do that as many times as you need.

Sometimes your thoughts will distract you completely and you will forget that you are meditating. That is okay. Once you notice, just bring your attention back to your breath.

Continue to breathe. Be aware of where your breath is most noticeable—maybe at your nostrils, in your chest, or even in the belly area. Wherever it may be for you is fine.

If thoughts and feelings come up, remember that they are just thoughts, not reality. Note them, and then let them go. The breath is your place of focus.

Continue to breathe and just notice the breath.

Now take one slow, deep breath. When you feel comfortable, if you closed your eyes, you may open them again.



Historical Exemplar

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929–1968)

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was one of the most influential American leaders of the 20th century. A Baptist minister by training, he was initially invited in 1955 by individuals fighting for civil rights in Montgomery, Alabama, to act as leader and spokesman in what would be a year-long effort to desegregate public buses in that city. He would go on to be the most recognizable leader of the Civil Rights movement and one of the most respected orators and writers in American history.

King was also a champion of nonviolent protest. He was highly influenced by the work of Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869–1948), the leader of the nonviolent movement that led to the expulsion of the occupying British government from India in 1947. He felt that Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence was aligned with his deep belief in a Christian concept of love.

The Montgomery bus boycott was an example of the nonviolent action he supported. At the time, in the city of Montgomery, public buses were segregated, and Black individuals were forced to sit in seats in the back of the buses. Although many individuals and organizations, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) had been working for racial justice for years, this particular campaign was launched when Rosa Parks (1913–2005), herself the secretary of the local NAACP, refused to give up her seat to a white man and was arrested. In response, Black citizens chose to walk or carpool rather than ride the bus. This placed economic pressure on the city as well as brought national attention to the injustice of segregation in Montgomery.

King thought deeply about the question of nonviolence and regularly defended its use in the

Civil Rights movement. Many people disagreed with his dedication to nonviolence, both within and outside of the movement. It is important to know that King's passion for nonviolence developed over time as he thought about and observed nonviolent action and, in doing so, recognized that nonviolence was consistent with his own values related to love in the Christian tradition. Like Gandhi, he saw nonviolence as an internal state as well as a form of action.

Although he is known for his work in the Civil Rights movement, King fought for intertwined causes—racial justice, economic justice, and international peace. In fact, what is known as “The March on Washington” where he delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech on August 28, 1963, was actually “The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom” as King, other Civil Rights leaders, and citizens in the movement recognized the relationship between economic injustice and racial inequity.

King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 and, at the time, was the youngest recipient in the history of the prize.

Student Question

In what ways do you already value peace and nonviolence in your own life? What are some examples, big or small? Do you see potential for more peace? What would that look like? What would you need to do? How might you persuade others to join you in building peace and justice?



Investigating Art

David Hammons, *Traveling*

This drawing may look to a viewer like a depiction of layered, swirling gray clouds. In fact, artist David Hammons made this drawing by coating a basketball in dirt from the Harlem neighborhood in New York City and bouncing it on the paper.

The title of the artwork, *Traveling*, refers to the rule in basketball that penalizes players who move while in possession of the ball, but not dribbling it. Behind the drawing is a brown suitcase, another allusion to the theme of traveling. In this work, Hammons sheds light on the issue of the ways society has restricted the movement of Black Americans—historically and in contemporary life—whether physically, economically, or socially.

This work can remind us that things are more complex than we first imagine and that we can shift our perspective as we see and learn more. Invite students to look closely at *Traveling*. Divide students into groups of four and ask them to create written responses to the following questions. When they have finished answering questions, ask each group to share their responses. As students offer their responses, share relevant information about the artwork. Record student comments on a white/black board or large piece of paper.

- Describe the art elements—color, line, shape, texture, space, and form—you see in this work.
- What do you think this work might be made from?
- Have you seen anything similar to this before? What was it? What does this not look like?
- What are the subjects depicted in this work?

Once students have responded to the above questions, ask them as a group to respond to the following questions.

- What surprised you most about what you learned about the artwork?
- What are some other times when you have had your ideas/perspective changed on something?
- Can you think of ways that the ideas in this artwork relate to peacebuilding?



Exploring Brain and Behavioral Science

Finding a Way to Peace

Student Question

When you make decisions, do you think those decisions come from a rational place or an emotional place? And why does that matter?

Lots of people might say that the decisions they make are completely rational—after all, don't we look at the facts, think about risks, and decide from that? Yes, we do often think about these things when we make a decision, but our emotional brain is much more important than we think.

A psychologist at New York University, Jonathan Haidt, describes the mind as the **elephant and the rider**. The elephant is the emotional part of our brains (the **limbic system**, which is where you find the **amygdala**, the threat center) and the rider is the rational part of our brains (the **prefrontal cortex**). So, if you think about a person riding an elephant, the rider may think they are in full control, but the elephant is actually much stronger. If the elephant gets upset and starts running in the opposite direction, the rider cannot stop it. This is what happens when the amygdala gets activated and the prefrontal cortex cannot do its work.

If we have made a decision, we have to make sure the emotional parts of our brains want the same thing as the rational parts of our brains, or we will not be able to follow through on whatever decision we have made. The emotional brain is what motivates us.

Student Question

Have you ever wanted to learn something new or do something differently but found it hard?

What did you do in that situation? Did you continue trying or did you give up? What were the emotional factors in that situation?

Changing your mind about something is hard work. This includes learning something new. Your brain has to let go of past ideas in order to build new ideas and understanding. As we can see with the elephant and rider idea, though, our emotional brains can help us in these situations. When we know what we need emotionally, we can feel more confident and excited about doing whatever new thing we would like to do that may have seemed too hard at first.

It is not always easy to know what we need emotionally. But, if we start to pay attention to our emotions, we learn more about what feels good, what feels bad, and what might feel good at first but later makes us feel bad. Spending time just noticing our emotions can help with this.

There is more good news. You can change your brain. This is called **neuroplasticity**. People used to think that humans were born with a certain capacity (intelligence level, for instance) and that this did not change. Now we know that the brain can keep learning, changing, and adapting over our lifetimes. We can encourage our brains to change by engaging in certain activities (like making art) or by meeting new people in situations that feel safe to us.

Student Question

What is something you would like to try to learn or some way you would like to grow? How can you find positive motivation that meets your emotional needs?



Art-Making

Peacebuilding Shadow Boxes

People often use shadow boxes (similar to a picture frame but with more depth to hold three-dimensional objects) as places to display important items from their past, or things that they collected on a trip away from home.

In this activity, students will create shadow boxes that reflect how they can see themselves, their communities, or the world moving towards more peace. Students may elect to use objects that already belong to them and/or found objects and images that express important truths about any journey toward peace and arrange them artfully in a cardboard shadow box.

Peacebuilding Shadow Boxes

Day 1: Ask students to do some reflective writing on a journey to peace, whether personal, community-focused, or global. Invite students who feel comfortable to share their thoughts. Ask them to discuss ways that the artwork they will be making could reflect a journey.

Day 2: Provide students with the cardboard shadow boxes. Invite them to use their own objects or select ones from found objects made available to them. Have them arrange the items they have chosen in the shadow box and then attach the items to the inside of the box with glue. For some items it may not be necessary, or possible, to attach them with glue—they can rest on the bottom of the shadow box.

Ask for volunteers to share their shadow boxes, explaining the choices they made and their thoughts on the process.

Materials

- Cardboard
- Shadow boxes*
- Objects such as tickets, photos, notes, cards, natural materials (shells, rocks, leaves, etc.) fabric, old toys, images from magazines, and other small objects from which students can select to represent this journey to peace
- Heavy-weight paper (for notes or drawings the students might want to make themselves)
- Pens/markers
- Glue
- Popsicle sticks
- Scissors

*Shadow boxes can be ordered from websites such as: clearbags.com

Lesson 4

Everyday Peace



Key Questions

- What are some examples of peacebuilding you see in your class, your family, your neighborhood, your city, your state, or in the country?
- What are some ways you can contribute to peace in your world?
- What are some ways you can find peace in yourself?
- What kind of world do you want to see in the future and how does peace play a role, in your opinion?

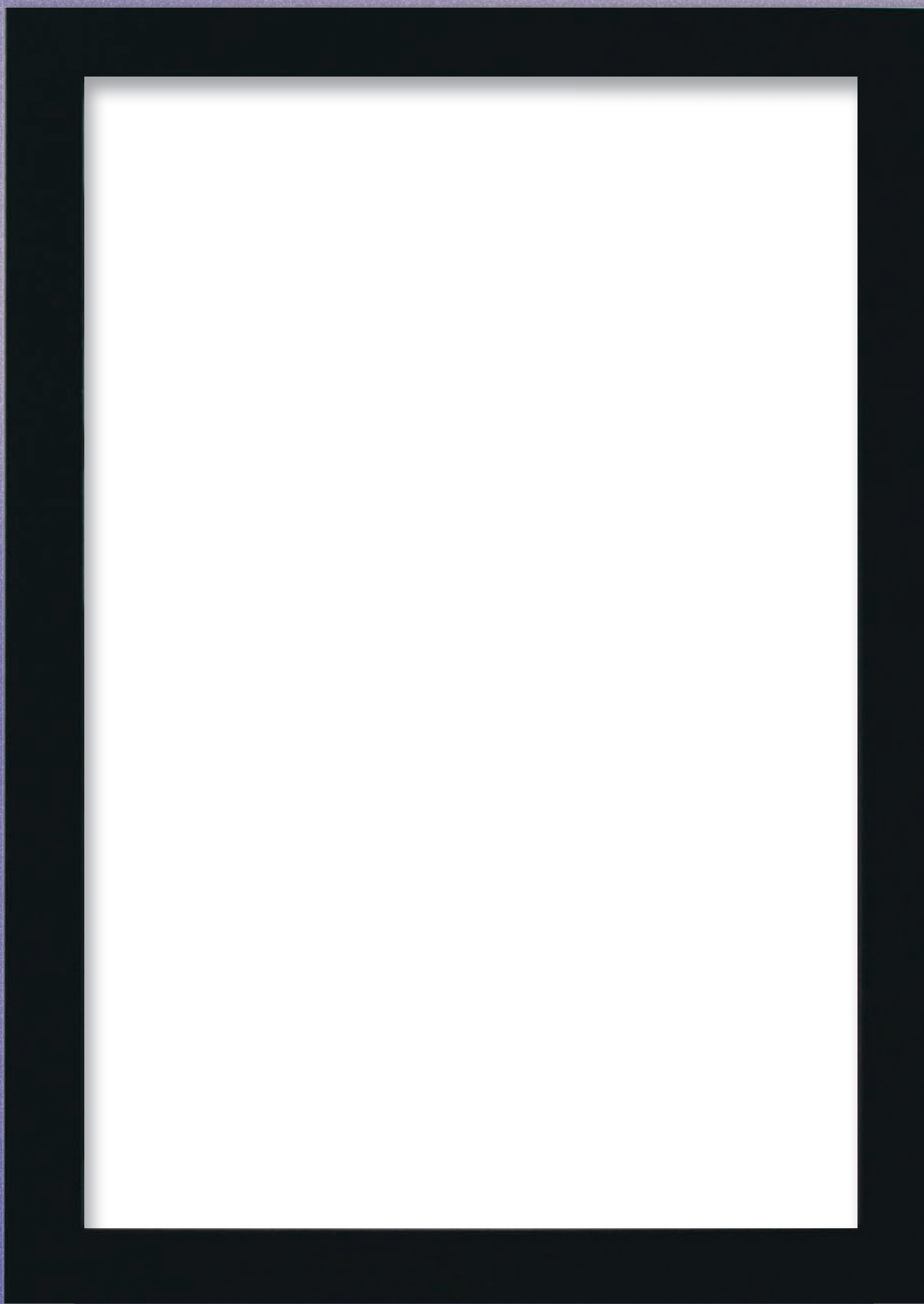


Contemplative Practice

Soft Belly Breathing

This simple breathing practice is one of the easiest ways to center and ground yourself. This can become a regular practice to support student wellbeing.

Sit comfortably in your seat (or on the floor cross-legged) with your back upright but relaxed. If it feels right to you, you may close your eyes. If you prefer not to close your eyes, find something in the room to focus on with a soft gaze. Now slowly draw in your breath and, as you do so, allow your belly area to soften so that it expands with the breath. No need to force the belly outwards—just keep your attention on drawing your breath all the way down to the belly area. Slowly exhale and allow as much of the air as possible to leave the lungs. We will breathe this way for five minutes.



Historic/Contemporary Exemplars

You are a Peacebuilder

There are many ways to be a peacebuilder and all of them are valid. Some people choose to focus on themselves and how they can feel more peaceful. Some people choose to expose injustice and push for justice. Some people find ways to reach out to people who have been hurt or excluded.

Student Question

Who is someone that you feel builds peace? How do they do this? Think of someone in your family, community, or a public figure.

As individuals, we can be peacebuilders in our own way.

Student Question

How can you be a peacebuilder?

Think of the ways that you can build peace. Now, make a drawing of yourself that shows how you will be a peacebuilder. You can draw yourself taking action to build peace. You could make a drawing of yourself with things around you that show how you are building or have built peace. Or you can find another way of making a self-portrait of yourself as a peacebuilder. Be creative!



Investigating Art

Finding Peace

Invite students to look around online, in their homes, or in their communities and find an artwork that they feel represents or communicates peace. Ask them to document the artwork and answer the following questions:

- Describe the art elements—color, line, shape, texture, space, and form—you see in this work.
- What do you think this work might be made from?
- Have you seen anything similar to this before? What was it? What does this not look like?
- What are the subjects depicted in this work?

Students will then present their artworks to the class and describe why they feel the artwork gives them a sense of peace. As students present, encourage them to notice the similarities and differences in the kinds of images that each student has selected to validate individual perspectives.



Exploring Brain and Behavioral Science

Review

Every day is a new challenge and there are many ways that events and people can disrupt any sense of peace we may have. It can be tough. But, if we know some of the ways that we might be challenged, we can better prepare to handle the ups and downs of the day. Here are some key points to review from the previous lessons:

- The brain is complicated and our understanding of it changes over time.
- The amygdala is a part of the brain that senses threat. It is easily triggered, even if we only *think* there is a threat. When triggered, people fight, run away (“flight”), or freeze.
- It is not easy, but you can deactivate the amygdala by using calming techniques, like taking five slow, deep breaths.
- The prefrontal cortex is the part of the brain that is responsible for reasoning, problem-solving, solving, planning, decision-making, focus, and positive social connection. When the amygdala is activated, the prefrontal cortex cannot do its job.
- Oxytocin is a hormone that is released in your body and makes you feel safe and included.
- Oxytocin can also play a role in situations where you feel safe and included as part of a group, but you are less open to people from outside of that group.
- The brain is always looking for patterns so that it can predict what will happen in the future. This was helpful for human survival in early history but can also cause people to make quick judgments and assume things about people and situations.
- Dehumanizing language is language that compares people to things that are not human, such as animals and insects. Dehumanizing language is dangerous because when people use it, there is a greater chance they will be violent toward the people they are describing with this language.
- The mind is like an elephant and rider. The rider is the rational part of the brain (controlled by the prefrontal cortex), and the elephant is the emotional part of the brain (controlled by the limbic system). The limbic system is able to override the prefrontal cortex when it is activated.

Protected Classes and

(APPLICABLE TO MARYLAND)

National

Color: Pertaining to a person's skin color

Familial Status: Families in which one or more lives with: a parent, a person who is the child or children, or the designated custodian, with the parent or custodian. Familial status protection also applies to anyone securing legal custody of a child.

National Origin: Refers to someone close to you who (including hearing, mental, alcoholism, chronic, and mental retardation) major life activities regarded as handicapped.

Physical or Mental Disability: Someone close to you who (including hearing, mental, alcoholism, chronic, and mental retardation) major life activities regarded as handicapped.

Race: Categories of racial or ethnic groupings.

Religion: Religious or spiritual beliefs or practices.



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Art-Making

Peace Reminder Booklet

- 1 Have students fold the colored paper strips in half and then fold each half backwards to form an accordion. Instruct students to open the colored paper strip so that the two edges are facing them. This will be the inside of the accordion book.
- 2 Students will each take one piece of scrap paper and one 4" x 4" matboard square and trace the square onto the paper. They will then cut out the square leaving a 4" x 4" square space in the scrap paper. This will be the students' viewfinders.
- 3 Using the viewfinders, students will look for details in the magazine or printed images that they find appealing. Once they find something they like, they should keep the viewfinder on it, place the 4" x 4" matboard square in the square space of the viewfinder, pull up the viewfinder, and trace around the matboard square with a pencil. They can then cut out the square. Students will find four images they would like to place in their accordion books.
- 4 Once students have cut out the four images they want to put into the accordion book, ask them to arrange them in the order they would like. (Encourage students to do this once they have all four images—if they paste them into the book one at a time, they may miss the opportunity to make different choices about the sequence of the images.) Students can then use glue sticks and double-sided tape to secure the images in the four square pages of the book.
- 5 If they wish to, students can also write a word, phrase, or sentence on each image such as "breathe" or "peace."

Materials

- Colored paper or construction paper cut into 4" x 16" strips
- Double-sided tape
- Glue sticks
- Scissors
- Pencils
- Thin markers
- Magazines
- Printed images from online sources
- Scrap paper
- 4" x 4" matboard squares



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