

The Wall of Hope

An Introduction

Summary: The "Wall of Hope" is a graphic exhibit of more than 100 peace and justice events and movements throughout history in which everyday people have been successful in bringing about peace and social change by nonviolent means. The display includes well-known figures like Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks as well as lesser-known stories such as the White Rose student movement in Nazi Germany. For many people, a good way to explore the possibilities of peace-making today is through the lives and activities and choices of inspiring peace and justice heroes like Gandhi, Dorothy Day, Nelson Mandela, and Aung San Suu Kyi, to name a few.

Layout: Each event on the Wall of Hope is summarized in a few lines on bright squares mounted along the top of a 120 foot long green cloth. Underneath, from one to five pictures and drawings help illustrate and bring to life each event. Shorter versions of the wall with fewer events are readily organized for use in smaller display areas, classes, or work-shops. Many classes and youth groups have used our Wall "How- To" kit to make their own Wall of Hope.

Experience: The Wall and related activities have been used with over 500 classes, conferences and groups in the past five years. For example, the Wall of Hope proved inspiring at the Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship annual conference in Canada in early 2000, several Global Mission Events, and was a major exhibit at the 1997, 2003, and 2006 ELCA Youth Gatherings attended by 40,000 youth and advisors. The display has been featured in workshops for teachers, and for annual meetings of the largest peace education associations in the U.S., the Peace and Justice Studies Association (PJSA) and the Consortium on Peace Research, Education and Development (COPRED).

The Wall of Hope is especially relevant in light of the Decade for Peace which was proposed by 20 Nobel Peace Prize winners, the largest number ever to support any initiative. In November 1998, the United Nations General Assembly voted to designate the years 2001 to 2010 as "The International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence." The organizations that developed the Wall of Hope have been at the forefront in building support for the Decade in the Pacific Northwest and around the country. The coordinator of the Wall of Hope was one of two dozen leaders from around the world chosen as the US delegate to the first international meetings, held near Madras, India in October 1999, to make plans for the UN Decade for Peace.

Resources: A packet is available explaining the steps for a youth group or class to successfully put together and display their own Wall of Hope, using materials available from us and the world wide web. It includes the text of the Wall, photos, examples of activities, 4-page bibliography of sources covering most of the Wall's events, tips on a Wall project for classrooms and youth groups, and other material. We have also developed a number of other resources including activities and background articles on peacemaking, and bibliographies of varying lengths for students, teachers, activists, and leaders. The groups who have worked with the PJRC to refine the Wall have experience leading workshops on building a culture of peace, ranging from one and three hour sessions to weekend workshops including highly regarded programs for youth and adult groups like "Peacemaking in the Real World" and "Leadership Training in Peacemaking." For more information please contact:

Activities Using the Wall of Hope

In our experience, the Wall of Hope is more engaging and its impact is more lasting when participants are active in their exploring and learning. We've tried a wide range of activities, a dozen of which are outlined below. We invite you to be creative and encourage you to share with us any new ideas you find useful.

- 1. Making your own Wall of Hope** – This has proved to be one of the best methods of building interest, ownership, and learning. Participants discuss and select events to include in their Wall, make up the cards, find graphics, and present the Wall to others in their school, church, community center, etc. (For ideas, see the sheet entitled "How to use the Wall of Hope with classes and youth groups.")
- 2. Questions and conversations along the way** – We've made up cards with open-ended questions that are placed at various stages along the Wall. They worked especially well when we trained and stationed volunteers at each one to engage groups of participants with their question and recorded answers in a growing collage of thoughts and ideas (on 8½ x 11 pink laminated cards in our Wall version).
- 3. Hopes for Peace** – Participants write their thoughts and hopes for peace on pieces of adding machine tape which is pinned to the Wall or to a frame or posts adjacent to the Wall. This was especially effective in outside installations of the Wall or placements with occasional breezes so the tapes flutter in the wind.
- 4. Decorating Bricks** – This is a way to extend the Wall of Hope out into the world and was used successfully at the 2003 Youth Gathering in Atlanta. Seven groups collaborated to purchase 4000 cardboard lunch boxes a little larger than bricks. Work tables held a variety of art materials, peace quotes, etc. for participants to decorate their "bricks." They were then stacked into an extension of the Wall of Hope that snaked out into the rest of the conference area 40 and 50 feet by the end of the event.
- 5. Wall of Hope activity** – After everyone has had a chance to explore the entire Wall, divide the group into pairs. Give each group a range of dates encompassing 1/6 or 1/8 of the length of the Wall (so a group of 24 would have 2 pairs for each segment of the Wall). Ask each pair to survey their events, noting ones they've heard of, are new, are especially intriguing, selecting one to share with the rest of the group. If there's time, have each pair write their event on poster-board, stand in chronological order, and share.
- 6. Workshop and videos** – Having a workshop or video on peacemaking or nonviolence for folks who have explored the Wall can help reinforce the insights and applicability of the wall to our lives and world. For example, the six half-hour segments of "A Force More Powerful" are ideal discussion starters. The PJRC can help with agendas, resources, and activities for a dozen hour-long and two weekend workshops.
- 7. Scavenger Hunt or Self-Quiz** – When participants reach the end of the Wall invite them to work in small groups, pairs, or alone to answer questions or find events (e.g. see attached Self Quiz). We've found it isn't as useful to give out the quiz at the beginning because many people look only to fill in the answers and it can actually reduce engagement with and learning about events on the Wall.
- 8. Exploring the Wall in groups** – In one of the most successful high school installations a group of a dozen especially interested youth were trained to accompany all of the students in the school in groups to walk along the Wall, asking questions and adding details about their favorite events on the Wall.
- 9. Reports** – Several schools have displayed the Wall for the entire school for 2-4 weeks while one or more classes did activities about the Wall. For example, materials from our "Sources" list can be made available in the classroom or school library for participants to prepare class presentations or reports.
- 11. Handouts along the Wall** – We have eight 4" x 5" cards of quotations that can be hung in pockets along the Wall. Additional quotations can be gathered by participants on events they find intriguing.
- 12. Unusual placement of the Wall** – For example, one church in North Carolina made their Wall of Hope on a 4 foot by 80 foot piece of material that encircled the chapel building. Parishioners leaving a Peace Sunday worship service were invited to explore the wall.

A “Wall of Hope” activity (15 to 45 minutes)

Goal of the activity: Most Americans know far more about sports and entertainment figures than about the heroes and movements for peace and justice. School textbooks and the media spend far more time on the activities of presidents and generals than on the leaders and movements for the abolition of slavery, women’s suffrage, the 8-hour day, civil rights, environmental protection and challenging racism, war, family violence.... In the process, everyday people are denied the stories of social change, the stories of democracy. And they are denied stories that lift up and teach the skills of democracy: organizing, advocacy, nonviolent protest.

Peace and justice workshops strive to tell those stories and share those skills through videos like **A Force More Powerful** and activities like **Building Nonviolent Community** and **The Eight Stages of a Social Movement**. The Wall of Hope is a valuable complement to these audiovisuals and activities. It is crucial to experience in some detail the stories of Gandhi in India, the Danish resistance to the Nazis, or the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. It is also useful to be reminded of or learn about the breadth of non-violent activity for peace and justice throughout history and in every part of the world.

Materials needed: Wall of Hope brochure or timeline, paper (different colors) and markers, Nonviolence cards (or other sources of quotations on peace and justice themes).

To begin: Pass out the Wall of Hope brochure or timeline. Divide participants into groups of two, three, or four. Give each group a range of dates encompassing 1/6 or 1/8 of the events on the Wall (e.g. one of the six panels of events in the brochure – 24 participants would have 6 groups of three examining the Wall).

Instructions to groups: Ask each group to read through their events, and then talk about people and movements they’ve heard of, those that are new, those they found especially intriguing.... Invite each group member to select one event to share with the larger group. **Option:** If there’s time, have each participant write larger to be read across the room, the date of their event and a 2 or 3-word title on colored paper.

When everyone is finished, have the entire group stand in chronological order, and share a few sentences about what they found inspiring about their event. (Estimate time needed to ensure time for discussion.)

Discussion questions:

1. What makes these events inspiring?
2. Were there events or leaders about whom you were unfamiliar? What difference would it make if these movements and heroes were prominent in our media and schools?
3. What is the role of stories like these in our efforts for peace and justice? How might we make use of stories like these in our activities? What could you bring into your life from these stories?

Closing: Have several participants share brief quotations from the Nonviolence Cards by various Wall of Hope leaders and movements. (If time allows, pass out the cards and have everyone read a quotation.)

Leader tips: Pitch your comments to the experience level of the group. If the group is mostly unfamiliar with these stories, you may want to open the discussion by first asking, “Were there events you were familiar with?” It makes for a more visual sharing if the colors of the event papers are mixed up around the circle. See “Activities using the Wall of Hope” for additional options.

Follow-up activities: Show one of the 6 stories of **A Force More Powerful** or an activity like **Building Nonviolent Community** or **The 8 Stages of Social Movements**. Plan a day/weekend nonviolence workshop.

Resources: *A Force More Powerful* (book and videos), *Justice Seekers Peacemakers*, *The Power of the People*, *This River of Courage*, *You Can’t Kill the Spirit* (“Sources of the Wall of Hope” lists over 200 titles)

St. Francis...Quakers...Harriet Tubman...FOR...Gandhi...White Rose youth...Daisy Bates...Rosa Parks...Martin Luther King, Jr.
...Freedom Summer youth...Kent State students...Oscar Romero...Tiananmen Square students...Erik Larson...Nelson Mandela...

HOW TO use the *Wall of Hope* with Classes and Groups

Introduction: The "Wall of Hope" has proved to be an effective means for involving young people in peace and justice issues in a positive way and for sharing the stories of social change movements and heroes that can help inform and inspire future justice and peace discussions and projects. It's a great project for groups.

Preparation: It helps to lay the groundwork in thoughtful way, especially if you are interested in a project of several weeks or months. For example, think of ways to build on successful experiences members of your group have had with discussions, book reports, etc. on peace and justice heroes. You may want to plan several brief discussions or videos on outstanding events on the wall (e.g. those at the top of this page) to build awareness, gauge interest, and identify those in your group who could help in the project's early stages.

Some youth group leaders and teachers have begun the project by asking a few interested students to read and share brief stories about key wall heroes in order to build interest. Similarly, it helps (especially if there isn't a strong response at first) to proceed in stages, beginning with activities centering on figures chosen by group members. Groups have chosen to construct walls of every imaginable length, from a medium size bulletin board to 20 or 30 feet on classroom walls, to 80 or 120 foot long installations in libraries, hallways, gyms and auditoriums. The San Antonio Peace Center put the Wall's text on their web site with graphics under the title: "The Great Peace March" at www.salsa.net/peace

1. Selecting the events to be included on the wall. In our experience, the more participants themselves are involved in this step, the better: Much of the learning takes place at this stage. Yet few people, young or old, are familiar with more than a fraction of Wall events. Thus it is key to create a safe climate for members of your group to explore at their own pace and build their knowledge and ownership of the project. It helps for participants to share what is being learned with each other and with others, e.g. giving short presentations for or leading small groups from other classes as they explore the Wall. It also helps to use newsprint (or Wall event list) so the group can decide what they want to include.

Most groups report that selecting events worked best over a period of weeks, e.g. looking at a quarter of the total Wall events at a time, starting with the most recent period which may be more familiar. It helps to begin by brainstorming what folks already know and then passing out a page of Wall events, discussing its contents, and selecting ones to include. The next step can be done in pairs or small groups: gathering pictures and drawings. As interest and involvement grows, you can fill in any gaps, e.g., "We have more ecology than civil rights stories," and adding additional events.

2. Looking for pictures can be one of the most enjoyable activities. Here are tips from our experience: It is usually best to start with pictures on the web. Scope out other sources ahead of time using our bibliography, perhaps with help from more interested young people so that less experienced people don't run into dead ends and get frustrated. Many libraries can put materials on reserve, or you can check out materials and order key books so your groups can focus on reading about, selecting, and making copies of pictures. Show those making copies how to pick the best setting (darker photos require a lighter setting, and perhaps the "photo" setting). Generally photos reproduce better if they're enlarged.

3. Construction: The four colors we use for the wall event descriptions (blue, green, orange, red) are widely available in copy centers and paper stores, help brighten the wall, and distinguish different types of events. A muted color works best for the background of paper or cloth. You may have access to a laminator that can make your events and photos more durable (ours cost only \$79); laminating helps, but isn't essential.

4. Sharing: Which heroes are especially meaningful for your participants? Have small groups present 2-5 minute talks and lead discussions on favorite wall events for your group and then perhaps for other children, parents, etc. Develop larger insights about how social change takes place. Select Wall events to explore at greater length (e.g. with videos of Gandhi, Freedom Summer...). Don't forget to take pictures of the planning, construction, presentations, etc. Have fun!

We are eager to help you have a successful project, to learn from your experience, and to share what you learn with others: 206.720.0313; pjrcbooks@hotmail.com. There are relevant materials at: <http://pjrcbooks.tripod.com>