

Activity E:

Peace symbols

Teacher's Briefing

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Peace symbol

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Peace symbols: Activity overview

Concepts to examine

Peace and conflict in daily life, how logos represent ideas and products, how peace is portrayed through images and artwork.

Materials and space needed

Projector/interactive whiteboard for showing images, space for role play, paper and art materials for logo design.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the lesson:

All students should have been able to produce their own peace symbol (including using the CND symbol template).

Most students will be able to explain the reasoning behind their designs.

Some students will be able to discuss the impact of symbols and logos in our society.

Overview

- After identifying symbols and logos from everyday life, students go on to examine how body language can be construed as violent. They then examine existing peace symbols and resistance art and go on to design their own symbol. The following activities can also be used as stand alone parts of a lesson.

Instructions

Activity One

Aim: Exploration symbols/logos and their meanings

- Show students symbols/logos that may be familiar to them (brands/charities/political). Ask them to identify them in teams, awarding points for correct answers.
- Discuss the power of logos in small groups and feedback. How do they represent their meanings? What does the school logo represent? What would they wear? Why do they prefer some logos to others?

Activity Two

Aim: Identify contrasts between body language

- Show students pictures of people greeting each other in non-violent ways, such as handshakes and embraces. Why do these show goodwill? Are there different types of handshakes?
- Ask students to pose in different freeze frames to show varying greetings. What difference do they feel in their bodies between a hostile greeting, and one of friendship?
- Ask students to make facial expressions portraying viciousness, anger, fear, boredom, shyness and friendliness. How do they differ, for instance in terms of eye contact? Can you think of any cultural differences in relation to expressions?

Activity Three

Aim: To explore different peace symbols and resistance art and what they are portraying

- Show students a range of different peace signs: CND, white poppy, dove, broken rifle. Discuss the origins and ask 'Do they convey what they are meant to?'
- Discuss: the CND symbol in popular culture/advertising.

Activity Four

Aim: encourage students to depict a vision of peace

- After brainstorming what they consider peace to be personally, locally, nationally or internationally, students design their own peace symbols. Higher ability/older students can do this from scratch. Other students may find it helpful to fill in the four sections of the CND symbol with something they feel is needed for peace.

Plenary

- Discuss the impact that symbols and logos have on their everyday life. Can they imagine a world without symbols and logos?
- Why is it important to have symbols to portray peace? How did they feel when they made their symbol?

Activity E:

Peace symbols: Further information

The symbol

One of the most widely known symbols in the world, in Britain it is recognised as standing for nuclear disarmament – and in particular as the logo of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). In the United States and much of the rest of the world it is known more broadly as the peace symbol. It is widely used on fashion items, badges and “bumper” stickers in many countries.

Who designed the symbol?

It was designed in 1958 by Gerald Holtom, a professional designer and artist and a graduate of the Royal College of Art. He showed his preliminary sketches to a small group of people in the Peace News office in North London and to the Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear War, who organised the first march from London to AWE Aldermaston, where British nuclear weapons were and still are manufactured.

When was it first used?

It was on that march, over the 1958 Easter weekend that the symbol first appeared in public. Five hundred placards were produced. Half were black on white and half white on green. Just as the church’s liturgical colours change over Easter, so the colours were to change, ‘from Winter to Spring, from Death to Life.’ Black and white would be displayed on Good Friday and Saturday, green and white on Easter Sunday and Monday.

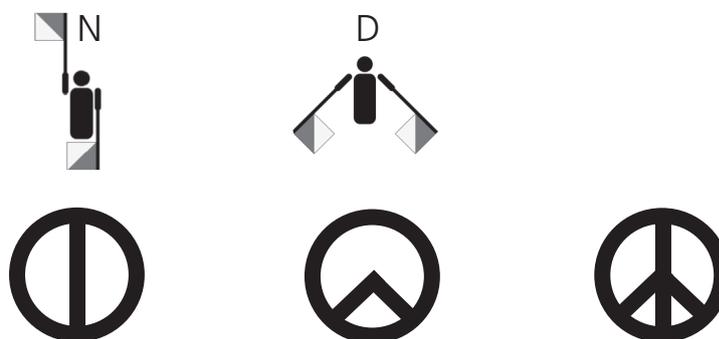
What does it represent?

Gerald Holtom, a conscientious objector who had worked on a farm in Norfolk during the Second World War, explained that the symbol incorporated the semaphore letters N(uclear) and D(isarmament). He later wrote to Hugh Brock, editor of *Peace News*, explaining the genesis of his idea in greater, more personal depth:

“I was in despair. Deep despair. I drew myself: the representative of an individual in despair, with hands palm outstretched outwards and downwards in the manner of Goya’s peasant before the firing squad. I formalised the drawing into a line and put a circle round it.”

Whilst making the placards for the demonstration, Holtom also realised that upside down the symbol was the semaphore letter for U – standing for unilateral. Furthermore, when inverted the symbol could represent the tree of life, a symbol of hope and resurrection for Christians.

There have now been many adaptations made to the logo for different groups. Christian CND have adjusted the central stroke, extending it upwards to form the upright of a cross. Women’s groups have added a cross below to make a women’s symbol, and Scottish and Welsh CND have added thistles and daffodils respectively.





Your own peace symbol

Fill each of the four sections with something you think is needed for peace. This might be peace in the world, such as clean water for everybody, or peace in your school and an end to bullying.