

Smile for Peace



Aim:

that participants explore how to begin transforming conflict.

Age:

6 years and older

Time:

30 minutes

Materials:

Copies of the poem, paper, coloured pens/crayons

What to do:

Everyone stands in a circle. The leader begins by saying 'I smile when...' followed by a statement like 'I'm with my friends'. The next person says 'I smile when...' followed by a new expression. The statement is repeated around the circle until it comes back to the leader. Alternatively, use a ball and throw it to a participant who begins, then throws it to a new person until everyone has taken part. Write down all the things that make the group smile. Ask how our smiles make others feel.

Read the poem to the group. It was written by Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk, poet and peace activist.

"If we are peaceful, if we are happy,
we can smile and blossom like a flower,
and everyone in our family,
in our entire society,
will benefit from our peace".

Thich Nhat Hanh, 1987

In small groups of four, ask the young people to think about what the poem is saying. Give the groups paper and colouring pens or crayons. Ask them to draw or write a poem about how smiling helps us make the world a better place. The groups show their work and display it for others.

