

PEACE HOUR ACTIVITY GUIDE (Grades 6-12)

Background: On Thursday, June 9, students in every CPS school will take an hour out of their day to talk about how to make this a safe and peaceful summer. They will talk about what peace means to them, and discuss ways they can help bring peace to their communities. During the peace hour teachers will engage students in a talking circle where every student will be given an opportunity to share and reflect upon what peace means for them.

Description of Talking Circles: Talking circles are a form of restorative practice that focus on allowing participants to share ideas on an issue or topic. In a talking circle a question(s) is posed by the circle keeper and each participant is given an opportunity to share their answer or perspective on the question. The circle format is designed to ensure that all voices are heard and allows for different perspectives to be shared.

To learn more about how to facilitate a talking circle, read [Talking Circle Best Practices](#), created by Alternatives, Inc., from the forthcoming CPS Restorative Practices Toolkit.

Talking Circles Step-by-Step (Grades 6-12)

1. Pre-Circle Preparation

- a. Arrange chairs in a circle
- b. Select a talking piece (ie. bean ball, rainstick, bell, or any object that has significance in the room.)
- c. Know your Opening, Discussion and Closing questions (see below or adapt your own)
- d. Have PSA loaded and ready for viewing
- e. Have copies of peace pledge

2. Circle Introduction

- a. Welcome everyone to the circle and explain the purpose of the Peace hour. Remember this opening sets the tone so it should feel different from a regular class period.
(ie., "Every student across CPS is sitting in a circle in their classroom right now, talking about how important peace is to our community and what we can all do to make our community more peaceful. We know that one person cannot end the violence that is happening. This is an opportunity for us all to have a conversation about peace and what it means to us.")
- b. Introduce the process "circles bring people together to talk about their own experiences and to listen and learn from others".
- c. Create a safe space - share the following norms with students.
 - i. *Only the person with the talking piece speaks.*
 - ii. *Everyone has an equal voice in the circle.*

- iii. *Everyone gets a chance to speak, but you don't have to share.*
- iv. *Are there any other norms that would help you feel safe in this circle?*

3. Video Preview - Student PSA

Peace hour should begin with teachers playing a brief introductory video for their students. This video features students from Farragut High School, and includes examples of a talking circle and student-to-student advice on how to have a safe and productive summer.

You will receive the link to this video in a separate email. When you are ready to view the video, click on the link, sign into Safari montage using your CPS I.D. and password, and the video should play automatically.

4. Opening Question

Set the tone by instructing students: *"Close your eyes [OR take a quiet moment] and imagine a peaceful place, time or event. What does it look like, sound like, feel like?"* Allow think time for students (no more than 1-2 minutes) to get an image in their head.

Have students answer the prompt *"What does peace mean to you?"* on a note card. Explain to students that when they share their answer they can place their card in the center. This can serve as a reminder of the focus of the talking circle and a visual center.

The teacher should begin by sharing their answer to the prompt. Then use this opening go around to help students understand the tone of a circle, how the circle will flow, the role of the talking piece, and the circle norms.

After students share their words, choose a few of the positive associations (ie., love, caring, understanding) and remind the students that it is important for everyone in the circle to respect these values so that everyone in the circle can feel safe to share their thoughts.

5. Discussion Questions

The circle keeper poses the questions and answers it themselves, if they would like. Then the circle keeper should pass the talking piece to the student seated at either side of them.

- Round 1: *"What are the barriers or challenges to peace that you see?"*
- Round 2: *"How could we create a more peaceful community together?"*

After each round, you may choose to summarize the common themes you hear in students' responses.

6. Closing Question

- a. *"Share what you are going to take away from the circle" OR "Share one way you would like to contribute to peace in your community"*

- b. Thank everyone for being open and for sharing. Remind them that the circle is a sacred place and to respect each other and the space you shared by not repeating what was said to others.

7. Closing Quote

Choose a quote from this list or share your own favorite quote about peace to close the circle.

- "An eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind." Mahatma Gandhi
- "Peace is a journey of a thousand miles and it must be taken one step at a time." Lyndon B. Johnson
- "If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other." Mother Teresa
- "While you are proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it even more fully in your heart." Francis of Assis
- "We will not build a peaceful world by following a negative path. It is not enough to say 'We must not wage war.' It is necessary to love peace and sacrifice for it." Martin Luther King, Jr.

8. Peace Pledge

Share with the class that students at Farragut Career Academy (shown in the video) wrote a peace pledge as part of a project that they did with the Community Peace Makers initiative. Invite students to say the peace pledge together. Students then can sign individual peace pledge forms or you can have the whole class sign one and post it as a community commitment. See attached for templates.

PEACE HOUR ACTIVITY GUIDE - Grades P-5

Background: On Thursday, June 9, students in every CPS school will take an hour out of their day to talk about how to make this a safe and peaceful summer. They will talk about what peace means to them, and discuss ways they can help bring peace to their communities. During the peace hour period teachers will engage students in a talking circle where every student will be given an opportunity to share and reflect upon what peace means for them. ***For earlier grades this may mean a shorter 10-15 minute period of time rather than a full hour.*** This could be incorporated into your class Morning Meeting structure if appropriate.

Description of Talking Circles: Talking circles are a form of restorative practice that focus on allowing participants to share ideas on an issue or topic. In a talking circle a question(s) is posed by the circle keeper and each participant is given an opportunity to share their answer or perspective on the question. The circle format is designed to ensure that all voices are heard and allows for different perspectives to be shared.

To learn more about how to facilitate a talking circle, read [Talking Circle Best Practices](#), created by Alternatives, Inc., from the forthcoming CPS Restorative Practices Toolkit.

Talking Circles Step-by-Step (Early Grades)

1. Pre-Circle Preparation

- a. Arrange chairs in a circle
- b. Select a talking piece (ie. bean ball, rainstick, bell, or any object that has significance in the room.)
- c. Know your Opening, Discussion and Closing questions (see below or adapt your own)
- d. Have PSA or Alternate video loaded and ready for viewing
- e. Have an enlarged copy of the pledge for the teacher for shared reading

2. Circle Introduction

- a. Welcome everyone to the circle and explain the purpose of the Peace hour. Remember this opening sets the tone so it should feel different from a regular class period.
(ie., *“Every student across CPS is sitting in a circle in their classroom right now, talking about how important peace is to our community and what we can all do to make our community more peaceful.”*)
- b. Introduce the process *“circles bring people together to talk about their own experiences and to listen and learn from others”*.
- c. Create a safe space - share the following norms with students.

- i. *Only the person with the talking piece speaks.*
- ii. *Everyone has an equal voice in the circle.*
- iii. *Everyone gets a chance to speak, but you don't have to share.*
- iv. *Are there any other norms that would help you feel safe in this circle?*

3. Video Preview - Student PSA

While you are more than welcome to use the CPS Student PSA, a more age appropriate alternative you can consider using is Todd Parr's *The Peace Book*. A read aloud version is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEbS6L-_xAU

4. Opening Question

"Think of a time when you felt peaceful, safe or joyful/happy. What does it look like, sound like, feel like?"

For grades 3-5: Have students answer the prompt on a note card. Have students go around the circle to share their answer. Students can place their card in the center.

For grades P-2: Have students share the word that comes to mind; the teacher can record their words on chart paper. This can serve as a reminder of the focus of the talking circle and a visual center. Use this opening go around to help students understand how the circle will flow, the role of the talking piece, and the circle norms.

After students share their words, choose a few of the positive associations (ie., love, caring, understanding) and remind the students that it is important for everyone in the circle to respect these values so that everyone in the circle can feel safe to share their thoughts.

5. Discussion Questions

The circle keeper poses the questions and answers it themselves, if they would like. Then the circle keeper should pass the talking piece to the left.

Grades 3-5

-Round 1: *"What might make feeling peaceful, safe or joyful hard?"*

-Round 2: *"How can you help yourself and others to feel peaceful, safe and joyful?"*

Grade P-2

-Round 1: *"At school, how could we create a more happy community together?"*

After each round, you may choose to summarize the common themes you hear in students' responses.

6. Closing Question - Grades 3-5 only

- a. *"When we leave the circle, share one thing you are going to do to make our school or your home a more peaceful, safe or joyful place."*

- b. Thank everyone for being open and for sharing. Remind them that the circle is a safe place and to respect each other and the space you shared by not repeating what was said to others.

7. Peace Pledge

Share with the class that students at Farragut Career Academy (shown in the video) wrote a peace pledge as part of a project that they did with the Community Peace Makers initiative. Invite students to say the peace pledge together. Students then can sign individual peace pledge forms or you can have the whole class sign one and post it as a community commitment. See attached for templates.