

Munsey Park School
Community Read - December 2014

Dear Munsey Park Families,

This month, our selection for the *Community Read*, "What does PEACE feel like?" by V. Radunsky and children from around the world, explores the philosophy that responsibility for peace does not rest with governments only. The book uses descriptive similes and metaphors to describe the essence of how peace smells, looks, sounds, tastes, and feels. It also features an extensive list of words for peace in over 150 languages. Children may examine what peace means to them and cite examples of peace or peacemaking in their own lives.

"What does PEACE feel like?" also provides an opportunity for students to discuss ways they can promote peace through small actions at school, or in their family, the community, and world. Students may write a plan for a surprise act of kindness and peace. Students may reflect on questions to gain insights about peace: How do you define peace? When do you feel peaceful? In what times and what situations, circumstances and people have you felt peaceful? What circumstances interfere with your sense of peace? What does it mean to have a peaceful world?

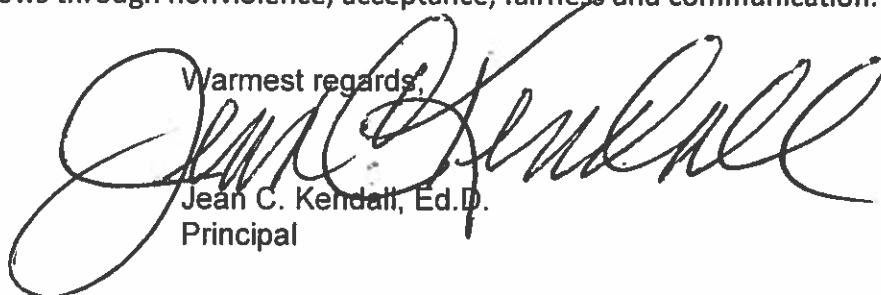
During units on peace, students may learn to experience peace for themselves. They may think about and appreciate peace and identify what allows them to feel peaceful and why we need to be quiet and peaceful sometimes. They also identify differences between a peaceful world and a world of conflict. Finally, they build positive, peaceful methods of dealing with conflict, including conflict resolution skills. Older students consider items which represent a peaceful world and identify thoughts and actions that allow peace to grow.

With your younger child, your family might want to make a peace collage to share with his/her class. Older children might investigate why people start wars and what would he/she like to tell them. They might want to write peace slogans for display in school.

When discussing peace with your child you can consider these *reflection points*:

- Peace consists of positive thoughts, pure feelings, and good wishes.
- To stay peaceful requires strength and compassion.
- Peace begins within each of us.
- Peace is more than the absence of war.
- Peace is being quiet inside.
- Peace is the main characteristic of a civilized society.
- Peace must begin with each of us.
- World peace grows through nonviolence, acceptance, fairness and communication.

Warmest regards,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Jean C. Kendall".

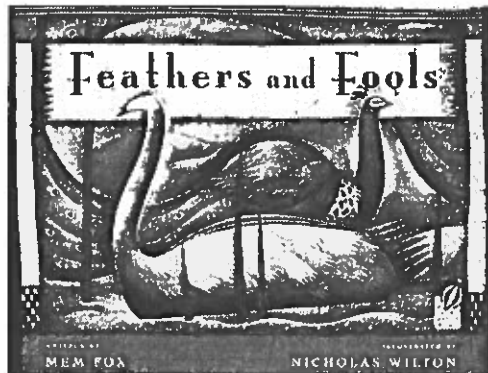
Jean C. Kendall, Ed.D.
Principal

(Following, please find suggested books for read-alouds)



A Little Peace by Barbara Kerley

This simple, beautiful photo-essay demonstrates the philosophy that responsibility for peace does not rest with governments and organizations alone; it is also the work of individuals. The colorful pictures are supported by limited, yet powerful text, illustrating how each person can work to achieve peace. Children from around the globe highlight simple actions, such as lending a hand, sharing a smile, and making friends. A concluding spread identifies the city and country where each photo was taken, and a postscript on the organization is included. Sharing this book with youngsters should spark discussion.—Margaret R. Tassia, Millersville University, PA



Feathers and Fools by Mem Fox

A pride of peacocks notices that a flock of nearby swans can both swim and fly, feats they themselves cannot do. They wonder if the swans will use their strength aggressively. Soon they convince themselves that they are in danger, and begin stockpiling arms only to be used defensively, of course. The swans then gather their own weapons. Fear and tension increase until the war both groups have been preparing for breaks out, triggered by a nervous mistake. "Soon cries filled the air and blood darkened the earth." Two eggs survive, two chicks hatch, a swan and a peacock. They recognize one another as fellow birds, more alike than different, and stumble away to share the world.



The Peace Book

For children, the concept of peace can be a difficult one to understand, and Parr makes an admirable attempt to explain it. He relates the notion to making new friends, listening to different kinds of music, and helping your neighbor. Where he stretches it a bit is with sentiments such as, "Peace is wishing on a star" or "...watching it snow," even if the images are tranquil. Bright primary colors and bold black outlines define cartoon like characters (animal and human) with smiling features.



Paths to Peace by Jane Zalben

This volume highlights 16 individuals who have worked to improve conditions for others through their words and actions. Included are writers, philosophers, Civil Rights advocates, and politicians, many of whom are Nobel Peace Prize recipients. The book focuses on celebrated individuals such as John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., Eleanor Roosevelt, Cesar Chavez, and Elie Wiesel. The vignettes provide an interesting glimpse into the lives of these people and will pique reader's curiosity and encourage them to learn more. Each biography is surrounded by an eye-catching border and faces a full-page illustration.