Fertile Question: How does world peace begin with me?

Core Content Area 2: Work for Justice

TOPIC 2.1: Justice and peace in the Australia and the Asia Pacific

Extending Knowledge: The sea shepherd and environmental justice

In this lesson students will investigate the link between environmental justice and peace.

Teachers: Before You Start!

1. Familiarise yourself with the resources used in this lesson.
2. Consider using the whole text of Pope Benedict’s 2010 World Day of Peace message.

For students to investigate links between environmental justice and peace, select from the following activities:

1. Explore Christian teaching about environmental stewardship and peace.
   a. Review Catholic social teaching about Environmental Stewardship.
      i. View the image of the earth from space for a few minutes in silence. Read the following statement:
         Ecological conversion is the radical change of mind and heart that leads to a deeper love and respect for all creatures as having their own integrity before God; it involves change to a sustainable lifestyle, to sustainable patterns of production and consumption, and to sustainable economic and political choices.
         Denis Edwards - Australian Catholic Theologian.
      ii. Using these two stimuli, write a 2-3 sentence paragraph describing your position on the earth and its future.
      iii. Share your paragraph with a partner and discuss how images like this highlight the idea that the earth is one global community of life, one human family, deeply interconnected with all other life systems.
   b. Read the quote from Pope Benedict and the following quote from Australian theologian Denis Edwards:
      Can we remain indifferent before the problems associated with such realities as climate change, desertification, the deterioration and loss of productivity in vast agricultural areas, the pollution of rivers and aquifers, the loss of biodiversity, the increase of natural catastrophes and the deforestation of equatorial and tropical regions? Can we disregard the growing phenomenon of “environmental refugees”, people who are forced by the degradation of their natural habitat to forsake it – and often their possessions as well – in order to face the dangers and uncertainties of forced displacement? Can we remain impassive in the face of actual and potential conflicts involving access to natural resources? All these are issues with a profound impact on the exercise of human rights, such as the right to life, food, health and development.
      Pope Benedict (If you want to cultivate peace protect creation. World Day of Peace Message 2010.)
   c. Create a table with two columns with the headings: Environmental Issue and What It Looks Like. Complete the table by listing the environmental issues identified in the Pope’s statement and illustrating your understanding of that issue. Research any issues you are unfamiliar with. Choose one issue and describe how ignoring this issue has the potential to further increase injustice, conflict and possible war.

2. Explore the work of organisations that are fighting for justice for the environment.
   a. Research the work of organisations that are fighting for justice in the environment.
      i. Choose an organisation fighting for environmental justice. Examples include: Sea Shepherd, World Wildlife Fund, A Climate for Change.
      ii. Research your chosen organisation to find out the methods the organisation uses in the pursuit of environmental justice.
      iii. Share research with the class and discuss. What are the most common methods? Does the end always justify the means if property or lives are damaged?
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