

29 Pieces Education: Artists Making a Kinder World





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29 Pieces is a non-profit organization based in Dallas, Texas.
 29 Pieces uses art to awaken, uplift, and give voice to the creative
 human spirit to make genuine social change.
 29 Pieces is about Monumental Change through Monumental Art.

The 29 Pieces Education: Artists Making a Kinder World program is
 an art-based, hands-on curriculum. Teachers confirm that
 29 Pieces Education teaches essential social values like
 compassion and kindness and important life skills like conflict
 resolution and problem solving.

EDUCATIONAL MANUAL

29 Pieces Education: Artists Making a Kinder World



A Program of



www.29Pieces.org



What is 29 Pieces Education:

Artists Making a Kinder World

29 Pieces Education: Artists Making a Kinder World is an art-based, hands-on curriculum. Since beginning 29 Pieces Education in the 2007-2008 school year, teachers confirm that 29 Pieces Education teaches essential social values like compassion and kindness and important life skills such as conflict resolution, problem solving, teamwork, and analytical thinking.

29 Pieces Education was born from tragedy, after a young man was murdered in front of my home in 2000. As an artist, I processed this event through my art, and was left with a deep understanding of the colossal waste of violence, and the infinite cost of one life lost senselessly. I asked myself, “What can I do?”

The eventual answer was 29 Pieces Education: Artists Making a Kinder World. And now, thanks to the contributions and support of donors, schools, teachers, principals, counselors, fellow artists, photographers, volunteers, and many others, 29 Pieces Education has reached more than 250,000 children and trained more than 1500 teachers, and countless people who have seen 29 Pieces Education exhibits nationwide.

Why use art to teach peace? 1. Art levels the playing field. No matter what your background, everyone is uniquely able to create beautiful, expressive art. 2. After working as a professional illustrator and writer for over 30 years, I have a core belief in the power of art to change lives and communities. And art is what I know. 3. Art goes beyond cognitive learning. It engages the whole person - the mind, heart, hand, body and spirit.

We have worked with thousands of children from every socio-economic background. We’ve worked with teachers in many subject areas, including Engineering, Social Studies, Science, Art, English, Theater. We’ve worked with librarians, counselors, principals, and community liaisons. We have brought professional visual artists, graphic designers, musicians, yoga masters, landscape architects, and actors in to 29 Pieces Education classes to teach our lessons and to tell students about their lives as artists.

With this introduction, we would like to welcome you to the beautiful world of 29 Pieces Education.

— Karen Bleszen

Founder & Executive Artistic Director, 29 Pieces



Artist Willie Baronet and Karen Bleszen in class.

“We have to make a change in our world and lives. By my painting being at a public library, children and adults are going to realize that if a 5th grader can make peace then so can they.”

— 29 Pieces student



WHAT IS PEACE?



Before beginning any of the 29 Pieces lessons, we talk about the word PEACE.

What is PEACE?

1. The absence of war or other hostilities.
2. An agreement to end argument and unkind words and/or actions.
3. Freedom from arguments and disagreement; Example: people living in peace and harmony with each other.
4. Inner contentment; serenity: Example: peace of mind

Discussion Questions

1. Can you think of a time in the last few weeks when you felt really peaceful? Tell us about it.
2. How does peace make you feel?
3. Do you think that peace is important? Why?



The 29 Pieces Education presentation style



OUR EXPERIENCE AS 29 PIECES EDUCATION FACILITATORS HAS TAUGHT US A NUMBER OF THINGS ABOUT HOW BEST TO CONVEY THE IMPORTANT POINTS AND INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT EACH ARTIST'S MAKING A KINDER WORLD LESSON. HERE ARE SOME TIPS WE HAVE FOUND HELPFUL.

PEACE STARTS WITH YOU. Our state of mind as we present is important and can model behavior for the students. We have made it a practice to take a few minutes before beginning a lesson to breathe deeply, empty our minds of concerns/topics other than 29 Pieces Education, and focus on the importance of what we are about to begin. This helps us to maintain patience and kindness even in trying situations.

TONE OF VOICE. We note that our voice tone is of great importance. Using a quiet, measured, and firm voice seems to work best.

IT'S OK TO LAUGH and SMILE. Injecting a bit of appropriate humor at times lightens things up and doesn't detract from the lesson.

STAY SLOWED DOWN. Our approach, regardless of time pressure, is to stay slowed down. There is so much stress and time pressure in the world today, we believe our slowed down approach allows students to begin to experience what peace could feel like in their own lives.

APPRECIATE HOW UNIQUE EVERYONE IS. Each student is new, unique, and interesting. We endeavor to keep that attitude with all.

MAKE EYE CONTACT. We show our interest in students by giving eye contact to each of them when they are speaking and acknowledging them by name whenever possible.

FOCUS AND GIVE ATTENTION. Once we have focused our interest on a student's communication, we do our best to stay focused and ignore distractions while we are with them. We listen carefully to what they are sharing and paraphrase back to them what they share with us. Example: "So, you like the idea of using the red paper for the frame." We try to acknowledge the feelings they may be having as they share with us and fellow students. Example: "You seem to be feeling very happy and proud of your accomplishment."

ACKNOWLEDGE POSITIVE PARTICIPATION. We thank each student when they offer an idea or share their feelings in the group letting them know that their thoughts and feelings are important.

ENCOURAGE, BELIEVE AND TRUST. EXPECT TO BE ASTONISHED BY WHAT YOUR STUDENTS CREATE! We hold to the beliefs that all students' contributions are valuable and that all students can be successful with 29 Pieces Education.

ALLOW THE STUDENTS TO SPEAK. In our group/class discussions we keep our own comments at a minimum and seek to allow the students a positive forum to share their ideas and feelings.

ENCOURAGE UNITY. When possible we try to tie students' ideas together. This encourages the sense of community and oneness among students. Example: "You and William both found that quotation important."

REMEMBER. We engrave this message indelibly on our hearts: The lesson is for the kids and the art belongs to the kids. 29 Pieces Education is about the kids; we are the conduit. We create a space and opportunity that helps them express themselves and learn.

“There are no problems, only solutions.” – John Lennon

CLASSROOM OBSTACLES AND HOW TO ADDRESS THEM

Occasionally, we encounter certain obstacles in the classroom at the beginning of 29 Pieces Education lessons. Here are some common obstacles you may encounter and some solutions we have found helpful in solving them. We tend to believe each obstacle can be overcome creatively and we trust the process of art-making to come to our rescue and to be more effective often than any other tactic we try.



Students who have had negative experiences with art in the past and believe they cannot ‘do art’. We listen very carefully to this concern. We believe these students, more than any other, need to be successful with 29 Pieces Education. We ask that they approach the lesson step by step and we give very clear, step by step instructions so that at each step’s completion point, the student is slowly gaining confidence.



“I can’t think of anything to do”.

Blocked creativity is a sign of fear of failure and a sign the student may be shut down. Individual attention is called for here. These students may benefit from reviewing the pictures of artwork in the lessons. As they look you can ask if there are particular things they like or find interesting. These items can be the cornerstone of their own work of art. Often walking through materials with a student can be helpful too. Students can be guided in selecting certain things they like and then proceeding from there. Other strategies might include using a quotation as inspiration, making a quick pencil sketch of ideas, or simply sitting quietly for a moment and visualizing something around a theme.



Ho-hum attitude, tiredness, boredom.

Helping such students to get started often does the trick. Reminding the student that this is their experience and that they can make of it what they like is important. Most of the time these attitudes dissipate as students begin their art project and see others working intently. It is best to not give too much attention to those who are not participating positively but rather continue giving positive attention to everything they do that shows progress.



Negative comments given to a student’s art and subsequent upset/hurt/anger.

As you begin the 29 Pieces Education lesson, firmly state that positive feedback about all artwork is the ONLY type of feedback that is acceptable. Emphasize renowned artists (such as Picasso) whose works may not even look like art to us and whose work was initially made fun of. Make the point that we are all artists in the making and that great art appears in many forms.

— Dr. Vicki Millican, LPC

Sometimes it is necessary to show what peace looks like.



When we begin 29 Pieces Education classes, we have a conversation about the word 'peace.' We talk about the meaning of inner peace, peace in the world and peace between friends and family.

In this past year of 29 Pieces Education, when students in classes were asked to name the last time they felt peaceful, many, and in some cases all students in the room, were not able to remember one example.

This got our attention. It is a noticeable difference from 2007-2008, when the 29 Pieces Education program began. At that time, students could list example after example of times when they felt peace. What is going on?

Whether it is the stress of school and family life, the constant agitation of cell phones, text messaging, the internet and video games, or anxiety that they pick up from

adults in their lives . . . it is troubling and sad. It reinforces our vision and mission in 29 Pieces Education to awaken creative power in students, to help them connect with their quiet confidence in who they are and what they are capable of, and to introduce them to great peacemakers who emulate peaceful and compassionate qualities.

It is no surprise that in a few rare situations, students don't have a visual understanding of what working peacefully looks like. If you face this issue in your classroom, it may be helpful to show your students some of these photographs of what it looks like when a student is working in a focused and calm way, or when a team of students are working cooperatively, with full participation from each team member, or when a student is expressing attention and appreciation for the art created by a fellow student.

Making Something from Nothing

“Sometimes the things you throw away or recycle can make a really cool piece of art.”

— 29 Pieces Education student



Portrait of Cesar Chavez is created from cardboard, colored paper, dry beans, and black marker.

SEE THINGS IN A NEW WAY

It’s important for every young artist to understand and experience the depth of creativity, ingenuity, and cleverness that they possess — no matter what their history or socio-economic background.

If we are talking about the creation of art, it is reassuring to students to discover that they do not need a two ton piece of marble, a \$3,000 computer system, or even an expensive set of colored pencils to make powerful and beautiful art. All of us, no matter what our resources, are capable of beauty, expression and creativity, using the simplest of free or inexpensive materials, such as you see on these and the next two pages.

And as the students learn about Great Peacemakers like Mahatma Ghandi, Cesar Chavez, Mother Teresa, and Jeremy Gilley (founder of the International Day of Peace) they will see that these great people did not begin their work with a lot of money and resources at their disposal. And yet, they achieved great things, and helped hundreds of thousands or millions of people. What *do* these great ones possess? Creativity, a desire to help people, tenacity and commitment in sticking with their goals, a belief in fairness and justice, and above all, a sense of compassion, concern and kindness for all. So if these qualities define “greatness”, we can all agree that these are qualities that don’t cost a penny. And they are qualities that we can all work to develop.

So, suddenly, the things that are free to everyone become the definition of greatness. And in art, that which might be thrown away becomes something we look at and say “Wow! How did you think of that? How beautiful!”

— Karen Blessen,
Founder & Executive Artistic Director, 29 Pieces



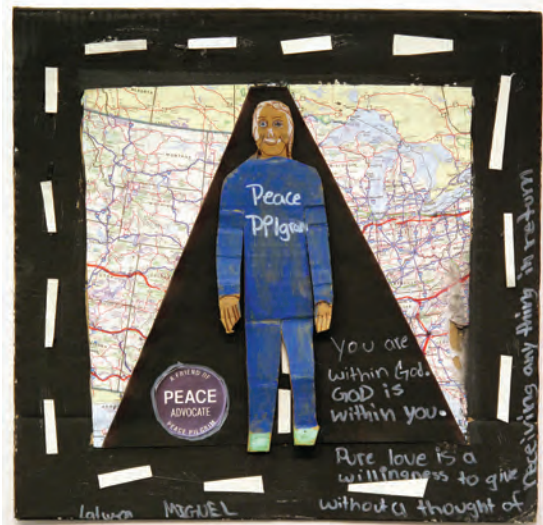
Above: Art supplies for IMAGINE Lesson are white paper, colored markers, transparent tape and colored paper.



Above: Art supplies for EMPATHY Lesson are grocery bag, buttons, plastic bubbles, cardboard and tempera paint.

Left: Art supplies for IF Lesson are cardboard strawberry box, cardboard scraps, paper scraps, black marker and colored markers.





Can you find all these materials in the art you see here?

Cardboard
Colored papers
Sticks
Netting from fruit bags
Straws
Buttons
Yarn
Bottle caps

Styrofoam bubbles
Chopsticks
Fabric scraps
Paper bag
Pipe cleaners
Wire
Bottle caps
Beads

Sand dollars
Bubble wrap
Old jewelry
Ribbon
Crayons
Markers
Wrapping papers
Maps

Feathers
Foam bits
Cotton fluff
Twist ties
Cork
Seashells
White chalk
Balsa wood scraps



29 Pieces Education hits the streets

What motivates students? What motivates adults? What helps to spread the message inherent within the art produced by 29 Pieces Education students? These are some of the questions I asked myself in the early days of the 29 Pieces Education program back in 2008.

For an answer, I looked within. I'm motivated by: 1. Encouragement, 2. The surprise and joy that I've mastered a challenging project, 3. Learning, 4. Positive attention from my friends and family, 5. Public acceptance and praise, 6. The feeling that what I've done makes a difference.

So that's how we settled on the concept of "Taking 29 Pieces Education to the Streets" as one of our guiding principles of the program. Public exhibits of 29 Pieces Education art have been displayed in hundreds of venues nationally. These public exhibits give students and parents the pride of positive accomplishment, and also uplift and touch the hearts and minds of the viewers.

I encourage you to begin planning on venues to display your students' art even before they start their projects. Look through the ideas on these pages and think about possibilities in your community. Be fearless about asking! The exhibit may be as close as the school cafeteria. Everyone will be more motivated.

— Karen Blessen, Founder & Executive Artistic Director, 29 Pieces



29 Pieces Education student with his portrait of Cesar Chavez, on display at the Dallas Public Library.



"I think that with my image, many people and children will understand that if we want to survive, have a nice life, no wars, peace, and happiness we have to come together."

— 29 Pieces Education student



Above: Vivian Castleberry, Founder of Peacemakers, Inc. and Karen Blessen, Co-Founder of 29 Pieces, at the opening of the Castleberry Peace Institute at the University of North Texas. 29 Pieces Education portraits of Great Peacemaker Vivian Castleberry were on display.



EMPATHY Lesson workshop with children and parents at the Dallas Zoo.



LOVE Lesson exhibit at the Charles A. Sammons Baylor Cancer Center.



Top and above: Students and parent at LOVE Lesson exhibit at Neiman Marcus NorthPark Center, Dallas.



Above: Display of LOVE Lesson art at the Clampitt Paper Creative Center, Dallas, TX.



Above: Display of IF Lesson art at the Dallas City Hall.



Above: 29 Pieces Education students read poetry about peace for the celebration of the International Day of Peace in Bishop Arts District, Dallas.



Above: Student art at upper left from the HEROES and HEROINES Lesson, for sale at the Art Conspiracy auction in Dallas.



Above: art from the Great Peacemakers Lesson on exhibit at the Dallas Public Library.

Left: Love Lesson art on display at the ALoft Hotel, Dallas.

Right: Student art from the INFLUENCE Lesson on display at a local business.



PEACE ONE MINUTE ...

AND THEN SOME!

By Dr. Vicki Millican, LPC

Before beginning 29 Pieces Education lessons we suggest that facilitators mention the importance of cultivating inner peace and then follow up with one or two short relaxation activities to remind students that they have the power within them to experience inner peace any time they wish to do so. However, we have learned that there is more to helping young people experience the inner peace that we all long for

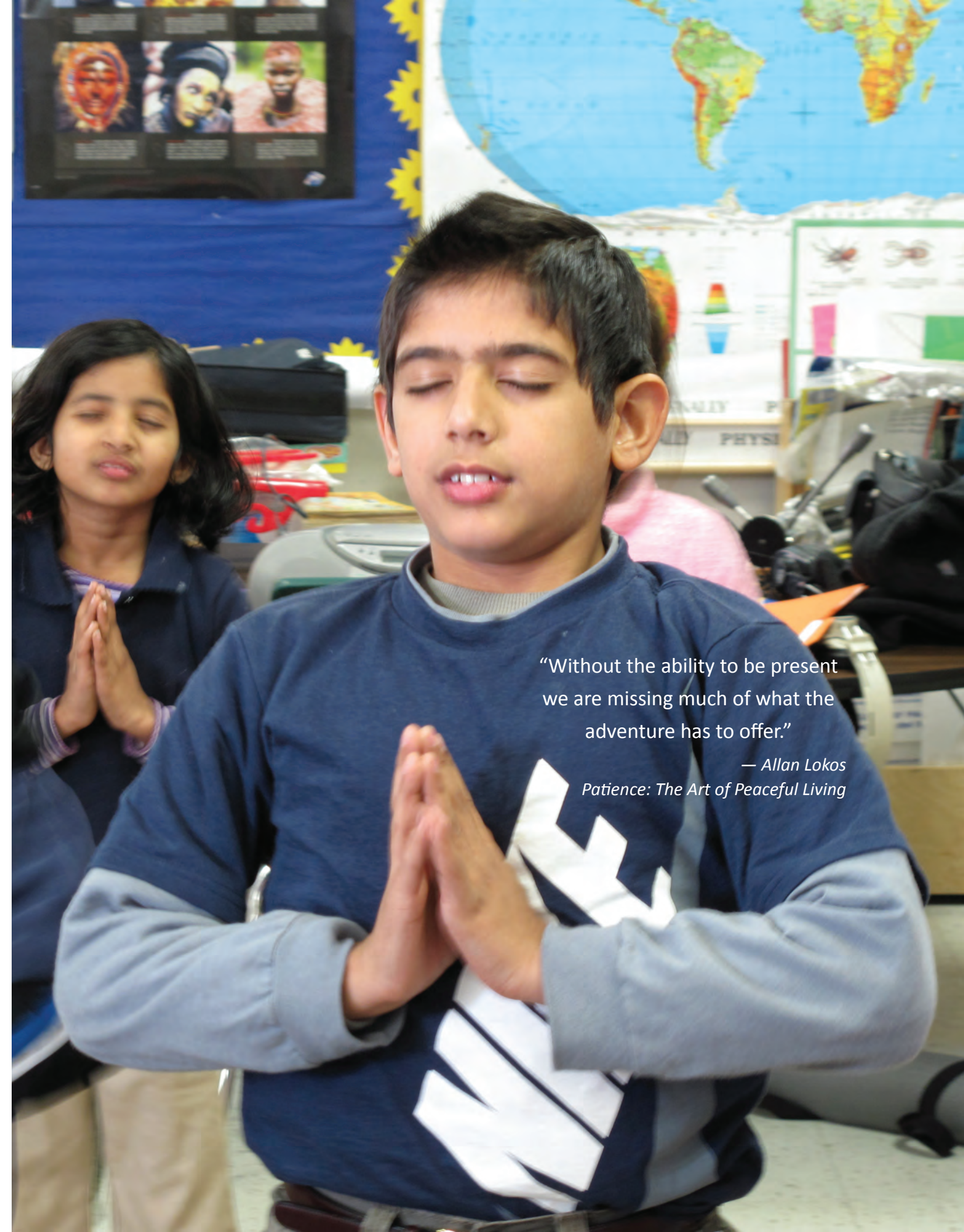
Trauma Informed Sensitivity

According to Souers & Hall, (2016), 35 million children in the United States, have experienced at least one type of trauma. We also know that at least one in four students in all schools has been traumatized to the degree that it negatively affects their school success (National Child Traumatic Stress Network Schools Committee, 2018). As lovers of all children, 29 Pieces realizes the necessity of being trauma-informed and sensitive in our work with young people.

Dr. Bruce Perry (2002) a leading expert on childhood trauma, defines trauma as a psychologically distressing event that is outside the range of usual human experience. Jen Alexander (2019) defines trauma as “a set of experiences that threatens a person’s actual safety or perceived sense of felt safety”. Examples of trauma are acts of terrorism, life-threatening disasters, severe accidents, domestic violence, or child abuse. Traumatic

experiences generally involve feeling great fear, a sense of helplessness, and frequently—terror. During or after a traumatic experience, individuals generally work to cope with the experience & may shut down both physically & psychologically. They may appear to be functioning in a normal way. A traumatized individual may even state they are “fine” when asked, but internally the trauma may be causing long term negative effects. Whether the effects are immediate, ongoing, or delayed, trauma has a negative impact on one’s life functioning. (SAMSHA, 2014, van der Kolk, 2017).

Being trauma-sensitive in 2024 means we have an awareness that the young people we work with may have experienced neighborhood gun violence or domestic violence in the home, may have come from other cultures/countries where terrorism was a daily threat to their lives, and/or may feel unsafe due to caregivers’ instability such as coming from a highly conflicted divorce or the losing a parent to a violent event. They may have lost their original caregivers and were placed insecurely in multiple foster homes. They may have also experienced trauma due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (Attachment & Trauma Network, Inc., 2015). Knowing these facts, we are dedicated to assisting young people in bringing about their own long-term recovery.



“Without the ability to be present we are missing much of what the adventure has to offer.”

— Allan Lokos
Patience: The Art of Peaceful Living

TECHNIQUES/ACTIVITIES

How Do We Assist Young People Who Are Coping With Trauma?

Having awareness of how the brain functions is important. To keep it simple: we need to be aware that the young people we work with have both an “upstairs brain” and a “downstairs brain”, according to Dan Siegel (2012). The downstairs brain is the doing & feeling part of the brain, whereas, the upstairs brain is our thinking brain. During a stressful event, these two parts of the brain are not working properly & individuals will likely experience

what we know as a “fight, flight, or freeze” response. Once a traumatic event occurs, an individual’s memory records the experience & an individual would likely be “triggered” in the future by any event, experience, perception, etc. that reminds them in some way of the past event/experience.

Trauma-sensitivity means we notice when a young person in our group is experiencing stressful responses /reactions/behaviors

A PROGRESSIVE RELAXATION EXERCISE: (FOR MIND, BODY, AND EMOTIONS)

1. Give a short explanation about Inner Peace using the information on the preceding page.
2. Begin by asking students to sit quietly in a comfortable position.
3. Ask students to close their eyes and to keep their eyes gently closed until you tell them to open them.
4. Ask them to take a deep breath, letting it out slowly.
5. Ask students to do a “body and mind scan” checking how they are doing physically and emotionally. Say, “Now I want you to focus on your body, pay attention to any discomfort, pain, fatigue, or pleasant feelings you may be having. Scan your head, neck, upper body, stomach, lower body. Next, focus on your mind. Pay attention to the thoughts you are having. Are they pleasant or stressful? Are you focused on one particular thought or are your thoughts coming and going quickly? Finally, focus on your emotions. What are you feeling? Are you sad, angry, excited, concerned, anxious? Make a note of where in your body you feel that emotion.”
6. Tell them to make a note of any areas of physical discomfort or any areas of emotional stress. Give one or two examples of stress and discomfort if you are uncertain whether they understand. Explain that stress can cause problems for our body, mind and emotions so they could be experiencing discomfort in any of these areas.
7. Once you have gone through the above introduction, you can focus on one of the techniques or activities to relieve stress or discomfort students may be feeling.
8. At the end of the 29 Pieces Education time period, you can check in with students to see how they are feeling. You may want to repeat the body scan with them to help them increase their self-awareness. Remind them that they can use the technique/activity you showed them whenever they feel a need to gain more inner peace.
9. **Remind them that if they have “big” feelings or physical pain that seems too much for them, it is important to ask for help.**

before, during or after their 29 Pieces lesson. We prepare in advance with self & co-regulation strategies that help all students get regulated at the beginning and throughout their 29 Pieces art experience, so they are able to fully enjoy participating. Our goal, as trauma-sensitive educators, is to learn how best to “help students feel safe, be connect-



ed, get regulated, and learn” (Jen Alexander, 2019).

What is Inner Peace?

Inner Peace is an intellectual, emotional, and physical state that is brought about when our higher mind is in charge and we are able to calm our minds and emotions and slow down our bodies. When our higher mind is in charge we are able to manage and often override stress, worry and other troubling mind states such as anger, insecurity, and jealousy. We are able to stay strong during trying circumstances such as in situations where there is bullying, arguing, fighting, or when we are facing hard choices.

Why is Inner Peace important?

The Dalai Lama answers eloquently. *“The question of real, lasting world peace concerns human beings, so basic human feelings are also at its roots. Through inner peace, genuine world peace can be achieved. In this the importance of individual responsibility is quite clear, an atmosphere of peace must first be created within ourselves, then gradually expanded to include our families, our communities, and ultimately the whole planet.”*

From Dan Siegel author of Mindsight: The New Science of Personal Transformation & The Mindful Brain: Reflection and Attunement in the Cultivation of Well-Being. Dr. Siegel believes that we all need to take the time to think about the “neural reasons” it is important to slow down, “balance our brain, and improve our connections with one another, and with our self.” In the foreword to Buddha’s Brain by Dr. Rick Hanson, he states:

“Our relationships with one another are not a casual part of our lives, they are fundamental to how our minds function and are an essential aspect of brain health. Our social connections with one another shape our neural connections that form the structure of the brain. This means that the way we communicate alters the very circuitry of our brain, especially in ways that help keep our lives in balance. Science further verifies that when we cultivate compassion and mindful awareness in our lives—when we let go of judgments and attend fully to the present—we are harnessing the social circuits of the brain to enable us

to transform our relationships with our own self.”

(Daniel J. Siegel, 2009)

The relaxation/mindfulness exercises we have included in this manual were carefully chosen from widely used tools that have been successfully employed for many years to help individuals increase their sense of



internal peace, calm and well-being. When we train our brains through the use of these exercises “we build circuits of kindness and well-being moment by moment, one person, one relationship at a time.” (Siegel, 2009)

1. It is important for students to become familiar with the concept of inner peace so that they realize the choices they make in responding to difficult, stressful situations day to day have an impact on bringing about world peace.
2. Achieving consistent inner peace takes regular practice and attention to how our bodies and minds are experiencing

the events of life. Through these short relaxation activities students become familiar with what is going on in their minds, bodies and emotions and start to see that they can change themselves into more serene, calm individuals.

3. Students will have access to tools they can use on a daily basis to face stress in life with courage and serenity. Once these tools are introduced during the 29 Pieces Education lesson teachers can incorporate them into regular classroom time and students can develop peaceful habits that will help them thrive.
4. When these tools are used regularly, research shows that individuals have more access to creative ideas, increased ability to pay attention to what they are learning, and will learn to take the time to respond, rather than react to provocative situations at school, home, and in their community. (Hanson, Rick: Buddha’s Brain, New Harbinger Publications, Inc., 2009)

Visualization: Visualization is a relaxation tool that allows you to consciously imagine something and to experience it with all your senses—sight, sound, taste, smell, and touch. It is a powerful way to rest comfortably for a few minutes in a peaceful place that you create in your mind.

Imagine Yourself Relaxed. With your eyes closed, picture a place that you would find very peaceful and relaxing. It could be an outdoor scene like the beach, the mountains, a rainforest or a favorite vacation spot. Maybe it is your bedroom, a chapel, or just a beautiful room with a fireplace—maybe a scene you remember from a movie or a magazine.

Let your vision of this special place expand in your mind. Look around and see everything that is there—all the colors, smells, sensations, sounds, how it feels to the touch—everything that makes this place relaxing and calming for you. In your mind, explore this place and once you have thoroughly imagined this space, stay there in your mind experiencing it for a minute or two. Take a few deep breaths and just enjoy the sense of inner peace and relaxation you have. I will tell you when to open your eyes. Let students stay with the visualization for 1-2 minutes, timing it carefully.

Imagine yourself giving or receiving affection. Either recall a time when you gave affection to a person or pet or when you were given affection—like cuddling or petting an animal, giving someone a hug, snuggling with someone, or having someone listen intently to what you are saying. Imagine how you would feel if someone was giving you kindness and affection. Notice what you experience in your emotions and body. Notice if you are feeling more relaxed and peaceful. Stay with your positive feelings for a minute or two.

Butterfly Hug: Fold your arms across your chest, link your thumbs together. Move your other fingers back & forth, gently tapping your chest as if our fingers are the wings of a butterfly. You can move them slowly or fast. Stay focused on the back & forth movement of your hands. Breathe in & out gently as you do this. (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010).

Meditation: Meditation is simply the act of focusing the mind on a particular subject and bringing it back to that subject whenever it wanders away. People may meditate on the breath, a candle flame, a prayer word, or a

short inspirational passage. It can also mean focusing on a simple activity and bringing the mind back when it wanders away—like paying attention to what you are eating or doing a short walk and staying in the experience of it. In a walking meditation, you would simply bring your mind back to the walk each time it wanders off and wants to think of something else. Focusing on your breath is a common meditation practice.

Breathing Meditation. With your eyes closed begin to pay attention to your breath. If you notice that your mind is wandering away—which it will do—bring your mind back to your breath. No matter where your mind wants to go, continue returning your attention to the breath. Continue this practice until I tell you to open your eyes. Allow students to experience for 1-2 minutes; then check in on how this experience was for them. If you have time, try another alternative subject for them to focus on such as repeating the word Om or Amen or Peace and then bringing the mind back each time it wanders away.

Deep Breathing: There are many variations of deep breathing that facilitate inner peace and relaxation. Experts tell us that when we are stressed our breathing becomes shallow and fast. Our goal with deep breathing is to deepen and slow down our breathing so we can experience relaxation.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR BREATHING EXERCISES:

Variation 1: Belly Breathing

1. Gently close your eyes.
2. Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly/stomach (except for alternate nostril exercise).
3. Notice where your breath seems to be

coming from. Is it the chest area—indicating shallow breathing (stress) or is it coming from your belly, an indication of deep breathing (relaxation)?

4. Your goal is to use your breathing to relax yourself. You can always measure your stress level by checking where your breathing is coming from. That way when you are stressed you can use a simple breathing exercise to relax yourself and gain inner peace.

Variation 2: Instructions for 5 second inhale/hold/exhale exercise:

- Tell students that in a minute you will ask them to take a deep breath and then slowly release it. Demonstrate.
- Tell them they will repeat this process for a minute or two—(facilitator keep time). While breathing, students should do their best to relax and think peaceful thoughts.
- Say: “Now--quietly—being mindful that we all want to feel peaceful—inhale a very deep breath counting to five. Hold the breath to the count of five, then slowly exhale to the count of five. Repeat this deep breathing process until I tell you to stop”.
- When 1-2 minutes are up, ask students for feedback about it. Did they notice their breathing deepen and slow down? Do they feel more relaxed and focused?

Variation 3: Instructions for alternate nostril breathing exercise:

- In a minute I will ask you to take a deep breath and slowly release it. I will ask you to alternate closing one nostril and

breathe through just one nostril at a time.

- Close your mouth. Lift one arm and place two fingers outside one nostril and close it off. Demonstrate.
- Let your other arm rest gently at your side.
- Breathe from the open nostril 3-4 times.
- Switch to the other nostril. Repeat breathing.
- Continue alternating nostrils until facilitator signals to stop.
- Notice your breath while we are doing this activity.
- Facilitator should time this activity for about 1-2 minutes

Variation 4: Instructions for Shhhh x 3+Oh/Om exercise

- In a minute I will ask you to take a deep breath and then push it out with a shhhh sound.
- Demonstrate.
- We will focus on relaxing your mind, emotions, and body with these breaths.
- First we will repeat three deep breaths ending each time with the Shhhhh sound.
- Then we will take one deep breath and end by drawing out the word Ohhhhhhh or Ommmmm. Demonstrate.
- We will repeat this breathing technique three times to first relax our bodies, then our minds, and finally our emotions.

Mindfulness:

What is Mindfulness? Mindfulness means staying focused in the present moment, not multi-tasking or distracting ourselves with too many details at once. It means that whatever we are doing, we are THERE—not off in our minds somewhere else — or texting or checking our phones for messages.

Mindfulness can be practiced anywhere, anytime. When we are in the present and appreciating everything around us, we are peaceful. Our mind is not focused on something that could happen in the future or something that happened in the past. When we are mindful we reduce our stress and become more relaxed. Worry and resentment cannot take hold and hi-jack our peace.

Mindfulness exercise:

Right now, you can make the choice to stay focused in this classroom, listening to me. See if you can pay attention to everything in this room for the next 2 minutes. Notice everything you see, hear, etc. If other thoughts come into your mind do your best to bring your mind back to this classroom and what is going on here.

You can try this anywhere, anytime. You could practice being mindful at lunch, recess, on your way home this afternoon, at dinner with your family tonight. Remember—do one thing at a time. Don’t multi-task. If you are eating, eat. If you are listening to someone, do only that.

When we are mindful, we can become more relaxed, and we are more able to be kind to ourselves & others. We all know how good

it feels when someone is listening to us and giving us eye contact when we are speaking. Try being mindful with a friend or family member. They will appreciate it and you will be helping to bring about world peace. Mindfulness is contagious!

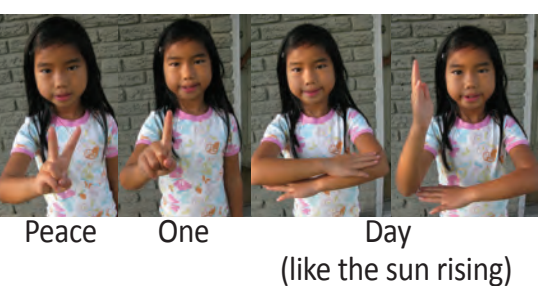
As an experiment today—practice mindfulness while we are engaged in our 29 Pieces lesson. Keep your mind focused on each part of the lesson and when you notice that your mind has wandered off, bring it back and renew your effort with your art activity. Notice how it feels to be completely centered on your project. (If you have trouble staying focused, raise your hand & one of us will help you).

Sometimes when we are stressed or have “big” feelings going on inside, it can be helpful to do a slow, mindful walk for a few minutes. If you need to take a few minutes to walk, let us know, & we will find a place where you can do a short mindful walk to get centered. This can help you get back on track.



The 29 Pieces Education class

How 29 Pieces Education Works



29 Pieces Education: Young Artists Making a Kinder World, is one of the core programs of 29 Pieces, a Dallas non-profit organization that uses art to awaken and uplift the creative human spirit to make genuine social change.

Here is a general guide to help you see how your 29 Pieces Education class might flow:

1. Greetings, Intro to Lesson.

You might teach your students how to express "Peace One Day" in sign language. We sometimes use this greeting when we arrive for 29 Pieces Education and when we end the 29 Pieces Education class. See photos at left.

2. Peace One Minute.

We suggest that you take a minute or two to use one of the mindfulness exercises from the "Peace One Minute Bag of Tricks" (page 24) to encourage your class, and yourself, to focus and relax. Or use the poem within the lesson PowerPoint.

3. Review of previous lessons.

The 29 Pieces Education lessons build sequentially. While it is not mandatory to do the lessons in the order in which we show them in the manual, it does help to review previous lessons, words of the day, and comments from students.

4. Introduce the Word of the Day.

Each lesson is built around a core word - such as COMMITMENT, SANCTUARY, LOVE, CONSEQUENCES. As part of the beginning of the lesson, we introduce the word, and give examples of the word in everyday use. The word is in a powerpoint presentation that is used in all lessons.

5. Presentation of the lesson.

Using the 29 Pieces Education lesson plans to guide you, and samples of previous 29 Pieces Education student work in the manual, present the lesson. All lessons include a powerpoint posted online at artistsmakingakinderworld.org for your downloading. These powerpoints can be altered to suit the need of the teacher. For younger classes, we minimize the length of this presentation. More mature children will engage in the full presentation. We engage the students as much as possible in the presentation - asking kids to read and respond to questions.

6. Do art activity.

Explain the art activity, and do a demonstration of the techniques, if time allows. Tell the students how much time they will have to make their art. If necessary, show students what peaceful behavior looks like (from p. 18-19) Tell students that they will need to help in the clean up. And encourage, encourage, encourage!

7. Student presentations.

Children present their art or performance to the group. IMPORTANT! We give tips for speaking in front of others: 1) Speak loudly and clearly enough so that an adult in the back of the room can hear, 2) If you feel brave, make eye contact with someone in the class, or look above the class to a point in the back of the room, 3) Show your art to the class while you talk, 4) Be proud of your beautiful creation.

We review and model appropriate and positive, respectful behaviors for audience members who are watching and listening to a fellow student's presentation.

8. Display of student art.

When possible, arrange to display the student art - whether it is in your classroom, the hallway, the cafeteria, the gym, or in a public venue - like a museum, performance hall, stadium, church, library, coffee shop, or local business. This give the students the pride of positive accomplishment, it takes the message of peace out into the community, and it empowers the student, teacher and school with the feeling of making a difference in their world.





29 Pieces Education

ARTISTS MAKING A KINDER WORLD

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT 29 PIECES, THE ORGANIZATION:

[29 Pieces.org](http://29pieces.org)

DOWNLOAD ARTISTS MAKING A KINDER WORLD

LESSON KITS:

artistsmakingakinderworld.org

EMAIL US WITH QUESTIONS:

info@29pieces.org



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About 29 Pieces: An Educator Speaks

Keller Texas ISD will be hiring 7 or 8 more art teachers - and we attribute the increased student interest in art to the excitement that students felt last year about 29 Pieces' programming.

— KIM BLANN , DIRECTOR OF FINE ARTS,
KELLER ISD, TEXAS

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