

## ***The Peace Resource Center of San Diego***



### **Elementary Peace Education Workshop Rationale**

The Peace Resource Center of San Diego is located in a neighborhood that includes a small elementary school. With its unique straw-bale building situated near the San Diego Peace Garden and orchards, we felt we could offer an educational opportunity to the nearby school that would help introduce the ideas of peace and sustainability to the local children. Initially, we developed three lessons to be delivered to third grade, but when the principal demonstrated enthusiasm for all of the children to visit the PRC, we added lessons for all of the grades.

Recognizing that our environment won't be replicated, we nevertheless would like to share our workshops as others may be inspired to do similar peace and environmental education.

Our plans are written as scripts, with the idea that volunteers who are not trained teachers might easily deliver them. Workshops can be led by one person or two; logical trade-off points are noted for leader (A) and leader (B). Beyond co-facilitators, extra hands are often useful, to assist the child who has trouble cutting, to answer questions, to prepare and clean up snack, as an extra guide on a nature walk.

With little effort, a two-hour workshop can be adapted for two one-hour sessions. In addition to class field trips, one might adapt the plans for peace camp or Sunday school.

As you pick and choose from our workshop agendas, remember Maya Angelou's words of wisdom: "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." The latter sentiment is the reason for the nametags, games, snacks and breaks. It's also the reason for letting even young students know what they can expect by doing an agenda preview. We wanted our time together to be very welcoming, warm and respectful of the students' stage of development. A "Guidelines" poster was always visible when the students visited. Our first guideline: "Have Fun!", followed by Be kind and work together; Solve problems peacefully and Ask for help if you need it.

This is important work, and in the age of testing, testing, testing, many of our students won't have the opportunity to think about what peace is or how people work for peace. Likewise, many children are growing up without much connection to nature. Our hope for a sustainable world begins with the connections that young people make to plants, animals and insects, soil and water.

As you look over our workshops, you'll also notice that there are plenty of hands-on, craft, dramatic and interactive segments. Many of our children are missing the sort of experiences that are respectful of a wider variety of learning styles. All of the youngsters, including the older ones, seemed to relax and enjoy the chance to learn in a different way.

We are the Peace Resource Center of San Diego and we work for peace, social justice and sustainability. We believe in starting with the children, and we hope you will join us.