

Choices

Jesus said, "Love one another as I have loved you."
(John 15:v.12)

Jesus wants his friends to learn to do things differently from the way people normally react. When people try to solve their problems by fighting, Jesus says, "Fighting only makes things worse. Be kind to each other." If someone steals your shoes, Jesus says, "Ask her if she wants your jacket too." God's way is to show love, not hate; to find a peaceful solution to problems – talk about it, work out what is fair to both sides, be especially kind to those who can't stick up for themselves.

Peace-making begins with each one of us. We all have choices to make:

- Do I argue with Mum and Dad or do I stop and think and listen to what they have to say? (and then ask ...)
- Do I hit that boy who annoys me or do I walk away?
- Do I tease that girl who looks different or do I get to know her and see what she is really like?
- Do I stand by and watch while someone is being bullied or do I help the person being bullied to walk away?
- Do I join in when my friends are doing something wrong or do I say no?
- Do I nick my sister's i-pod or do I ask her if I can borrow it and say 'OK' if she says no?

When there's a choice, usually one choice will help keep things peaceful and fair, the other choice will cause anger, upset, hurt or even violence. Jesus doesn't say it will be easy, but he does tell us if we want to be recognised as God's child we have to choose the way of peace. The way of peace is usually what is fair.

So what do you do if you are feeling angry or upset? How can you let out your angry feelings without hurting anybody (including yourself)? A boy I know used to go and play the piano very loudly – he had three favourite songs he always played until he calmed down. A little girl I know used to go punch her pillow and then fall asleep; when she woke up she felt much better.

Mandalas

One way of finding something calm to do is to colour in a mandala.

A mandala is a patterned picture that you colour in. Mandala means 'circle' so a mandala usually starts with a circle, then shapes and patterns are added, with a clearly calming centre point. You can work from the outside into the centre, or from the centre out to the boundary.

Mandalas have been used for many centuries as an aid to thinking about things.

As you colour the patterns your mind becomes calmer and can sort things out.

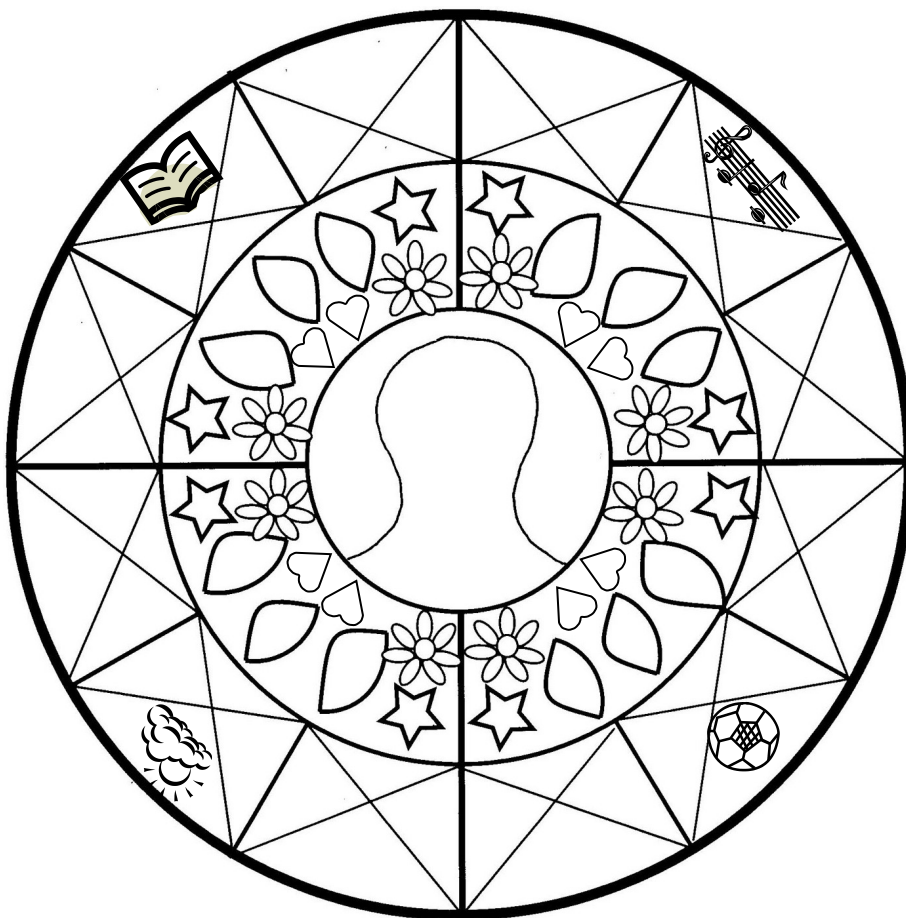
You can download mandalas from the web:

<http://www.free-mandala.com/en/start.html>

or you can design your own.

Here's one to get you thinking about peace in your community.

Start with yourself in the centre. Choose a colour to represent the way you like to feel. Think about the images as you colour them in. What do they say about peace in your home, your school, your neighbourhood?



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