



CHAPTER 8

PEACE

Bringing peace was essential to Jesus' ministry on earth. As Catholics, we are called to continue his peacemaking ministry. We must take a firm stand against violence and hatred in our world.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9).

A Peace Pole is an international symbol of peace. It is a six-sided wooden post. On each side Plexiglas plaques display the phrase, “May Peace Prevail On Earth” in twelve different languages.

Our youth group raised funds to purchase a Peace Pole. We planted it in the center of our church yard and surrounded it with a small flower garden. We dedicated our Peace Pole in memory of a parishioner who served our parish for many years as an advocate for youth.

- 1. Organize activities for children at a family violence shelter. Activities could include tutoring, crafts, games, sports, or reading books. To locate a shelter near you, call your diocesan office or Catholic Charities.**
- 2. Write, sign, and commit to keeping a peace pledge. Brainstorm ways in which you can live peacemaking lives. Put the ideas into the form of a pledge. Invite all members of the group to sign and commit to keeping the pledge. Post the pledge and invite all parish members to join the youth in living as peacemakers.**
- 3. Organize a neighborhood block party. Invite all the neighbors to gather outside for an evening to get to know one another. Lead games for the children. Consider taking pictures of each household and making a neighborhood directory.**

4. Set up a peer mediation program. Train youth as peer mediators. Be sure to utilize the peer mediators for conflict resolution with their peers at parish programs. For information on peer mediation training materials, talk to a school counseling office or contact the Augsburg Fortress Publishers website at www.augsburgfortress.org.
5. Invite young people to research and write articles about violence-related issues for the church newsletter. Topics might include guns, music, movies, video games, pornography, abortion, crime, and drug and alcohol abuse.
6. Participate in war relief efforts. Contact the Catholic Relief Services website at www.catholicrelief.org or the American Red Cross website at www.redcross.org for more information.
7. Raise funds for and plant a Peace Pole as a reminder to your community to live as peacemakers. For more information on the Peace Pole Network, contact The Peace Pole Makers USA, 3534 Lanham Road, Maple City, MI 49664. Or call (616) 334-4567.