

## What is youth topics?

Topical issues to get young people thinking >>> fun – games, discussion starters, quizzes... >>> for people working with young people >>> sent to you twice a year >>> putting faith into action (youth topics is recommended to be used with young people aged 12-17 >>> feel free to adapt the content to suit the particular age and needs of your group.)

### How to use



- 1 Read it through once to get a feel for the programme.
- 2 Choose what is appropriate for your group.
- 3 Gather up what you will need.
- 4 Give yourself at least 30mins preparation time.
- 5 JUSTice – do it!

## Who will pay the price of peace?

youthtopics  
numberfourteen

A boy from Darfur cannot read or write but he knows how to use an AK 47. In 2007 the world spent \$262 for every man, woman and child on weapons and the military. It would cost just \$2.01 a year to ensure every child learnt how to read and write. Let us pay the price for peace.

This issue of youth topics looks at some of the causes of conflict in our lives and the world. It explores the cost of war and some efforts towards conflict resolution and the difficulties of making peace where there is war.

### Activity 1 AGONY AUNTS AND UNCLES

**Aim** To think about conflict and its possible solutions in our own lives.

**Resources** Paper and pen for each person and a container.

**Action** Give each person a piece of paper. Ask them to write on their paper a situation or issue in their life that is causing conflict. It can be as simple as an argument with a parent or sibling. Put these slips of paper into the container. Each person then picks out a piece of paper and gives a constructive way of dealing with that conflict. If two people get a similar conflict they should try and come up with different solutions to the problem.

### Activity 2 BROKERING PEACE

**Aim** To explore peaceful solutions to conflict and to understand the role of peer mediation.

**Action** Split into groups of between 2 and 6 people. Each group thinks of a different scenario that causes conflict. Ideas include arguing over who has control of the remote or someone pushing in front of you in a shopping queue. The groups take it in turns to act out their scenario. Anyone watching can shout out "STOP" when they have an idea of how to resolve the conflict. They then take over from one of the actors to show their solution. This continues until the conflict is resolved.

**Explain** To the group that they have just acted as 'peer mediators' by helping each other to find peaceful solutions to a conflict.

**Discuss** How did it feel to jump into the role and find a solution? What was it like when that solution just increased the conflict? What do you think would have been a better solution? If it worked well how do you see that working in real life? What does it feel like to help others who are in conflict?

### Activity 3 JOIN THE PEACEMAKERS

**Aim** To learn about different New Zealanders who have been peacemakers.

**Resources** Information on each of the following people: Sonja Davies, Apirana Ngata, Tohu, Te Atairangikaahu, Kate Shepherd, Te Kooti, Edmund Hillary, David Lange (you can add others); poster paper and pens for each group.

**Action** Split into small groups and assign each group one of the peacemakers to explore. Ask each group to find out what their person did, how their work affected their community and if their efforts have had a lasting effect. Ask the groups to report back creatively (eg through drama) so that all have an understanding of each peacemaker.

**Discuss** What sort of things did the peacemakers do? What inspired them to do what they did? How did they make a difference? Who was the most important peacemaker and why? What can you learn from them about how to be peacemaker?

## What we believe

CWS believes that all people should be able to live safely and with their basic needs met. War is not a solution for conflict and innocent civilians should not be used as a weapon of war. CWS partners and interested groups work to resolve conflict and address both the underlying causes and the consequences of conflict. CWS also supports efforts like the current international campaign to ban cluster munitions. People and governments must increase the pressure on governments, arms manufacturers, the United Nations and other international bodies to stop funding war and pay the price of peace – adequate food, solid shelter, good healthcare, freedom from fear, protection from danger, a sound education and a fair distribution of the world's resources. "There is no way to peace – peace is the way." A J Muste

## Christian World Service (CWS)

CWS works worldwide in 22 countries providing funds for local community projects to tackle poverty and build self-reliance. CWS responds quickly and consistently to humanitarian crises such as the conflict in Sudan by providing emergency supplies like food, shelter, medicines and clean water through the global network ACT International (Action by Churches Together). CWS also campaigns to tackle the root causes of global poverty and injustice, such as Third World debt, unfair terms of trade and the need for safe and clean water.

### yt direct

If you wish to receive youth topics twice a year tel 03 366 9274 (Youth Team) or email us at youth@cws.org.nz – Just say what you want and give us your details.



POSTER (FRONT) PHOTO: Paul Jeffrey/ACT-Caritas  
SPECIAL THANKS TO CHRISTIAN AID.

PHOTO IN ACTIVITY 4: Dirage camp near Nyala, Darfur is home to some 8,000 people. People want to return home, but will not as it is still too dangerous, due to the general insecurity in the province. Photo: Gesine Wolfinger/ACT-Caritas

NOTE: The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) reports that world military spending is estimated to have been US\$1339 billion in 2007, equivalent to US\$202 per person. The United Nations Development Programme estimated that it would cost an extra US \$10 billion a year to provide basic education to every child. These figures were converted to NZ dollars at the current rate of exchange.

## Activity 4 NOW WE HAVE TO START FROM SCRATCH!

**Aim** To explore what it might be like living in a conflict zone.

### Facts about Darfur

- In February 2003 rebels began attacking government posts in Darfur. By the end of the year the Sudanese government is supporting the Janjaweed, causing thousands of people to flee. In March 2004 the United Nations declares it the worst humanitarian crisis in the world.
- Over 400,000 have died – an estimated 150,000 from violent attacks and 250,000 from diseases and starvation.
- An estimated 250,000 have fled abroad, mainly to neighbouring Chad.
- More than 2.5 million people have lost their homes.
- 90% of the villages of the groups targeted within Darfur have been destroyed.
- An estimated 3.6 million people are dependent on international humanitarian assistance.

**Resources** FEATURE STORY: Gesine Wolfinger/ACT-Caritas.

**NYALA, SOUTH DARFUR, SUDAN** "They burnt down my house and stole my cattle," says Ahmed Abdelsalam. "The whole village was ruined by the Janjaweed militia. They threw bombs and looted everything."

Two months ago, the father of 11 children, together with his neighbors, left their village of Umbawada for the safety of Belli camp for internally displaced persons. The camp lies an hour's drive from Nyala, the capital of South Darfur. Some 8,000 people are living here. Every day, new people arrive. The joint ACT-Caritas programme, supported by Christian World Service is providing some assistance by drilling wells and providing food and shelter, but more is needed.

The Janjaweed attacks have hit Bakhat Ruot hard. In 1988, the 30-year old teacher fled from South Sudan to Darfur, which at that time was still a safe place. Together with his family and several neighbours, they had built a new life. Now they have to start from scratch again. "We have lost everything," says Bakhat Ruot. "In Abeidura we had a school. Here, there is no place where our children can learn anything." Asked whether they think of returning, they react vehemently. They are too scared.

Meanwhile the villagers from Umbawada have assembled in front of a small hut. It measures no more than six square meters and has place for only two raffia mats. More than a month ago, four people moved to this hut. Back home, they were small farmers. They cultivated beans, sorghum and okra and were able to sustain themselves and their families. By selling their products on the market, they ensured that other people had enough to eat. It is no longer safe to grow food. Away from home they would need to lease land to grow food, but they have no money to do so. Instead they are trying to eke out a living through the sale of firewood and weeds or by helping the local farmers.



"Of course we want to return to Umbawada one day," says their spokesperson Bakhi Adam Isak. "But for that to happen the Janjaweed have to disappear first. If we can feel safe where we live, we won't need any outside help."

**Action** Ask each person to talk about what they know about Darfur. Read the facts and then the story. Ask them how they responded to the story? What do you think it must be like to live in constant fear of an attack? What would it mean to lose their homes, family members and food? What choices do you think a family had to make when the Janjaweed was nearby? What stood out for you in the story? How much do you know about other conflicts in the world? Where have you got your information from? What would it be like to be forced to flee your home? How would you feel if some of your family was left behind? Discuss how you could work for peace in Darfur or other conflicts with which you are more familiar.

## Activity 5 MAKE ART NOT WAR

**Aim** To turn weapons of war into art.

**Resources** Plastic knives, tape, paperclips and any other resources you think necessary.

**Action** In Mozambique and Cambodia, guns and weapons from the civil wars are being used to make items like chairs and sculptures. Guns are exchanged for items like sewing machines which people can use to earn much needed income.

Tell the group about this scheme (more info below), then give them lots of plastic knives, tape, paper clips and whatever else you think might be useful. Give them 15 minutes to create their own monument to peace.

**Discuss** What did each group make and why?



Photo courtesy Christian Aid.

### Fact Box: Conflict Statistics

- World military spending in 2007 was equal to US\$202 (NZD \$262) for every person in the world.
- There are currently 659 New Zealand Defence Force personnel deployed on 16 peacekeeping operations, UN missions and defence exercises around the world.
- There are approximately 24.5 million internally displaced people in the world.
- There are approximately 300,000 children under 18 involved in fighting for government and opposition forces
- There are at least 44 countries in a state of conflict at the moment

## How do you build a peaceful future in a country scarred by years of civil war?

That is the question the people of Mozambique have had to tackle over the last decade, as 16 years of conflict came to an end in the mid 1990s. The Christian Council of Mozambique has been using art to provide practical ways of overcoming a legacy of conflict, and work towards a future of peace. Their project creatively turns the weapons of war into artistic symbols of a hopeful future. People give up weapons – such as guns, grenades and knives – and exchange them for tools to earn a living such as ploughs, bicycles and sewing machines. In a country where many struggle to earn enough to feed themselves and their families, this can mean the difference between life and death. The weapons are then cut up by the project and given to a group of Mozambican artists who turn them into sculptures.

## Activity 6 WORSHIP WORKOUT

**Aim** To explore what the Bible says about our responsibilities.

**Resources** Bible and post-it notes.

**Action** Read Micah 4: 1-5. Reflect on the reading as a group, exploring what God might be saying to them about war. What does this mean when so many places in our world are in conflict? Why should we care about people affected by conflict in our communities? Aotearoa New Zealand? the world? Discuss how you might be peacemakers.

**Prayer Activity** Form a circle. Give them a post it note and ask them to think of a conflict in the world. Write the name of that conflict on the post-it note and stick it on yourself. Then give one person a ball of wool and ask them to start by praying for people affected by that conflict. Then throw the wool to someone else in the circle who will pray for their conflict until everyone has had the wool and a web has formed.

Conclude with a prayer acknowledging that this is God's creation and God wants every single person to live in peace with enough food to eat and their dignity respected. Finish by talking about how if we all pull our bit of wool at the same time the power balance is equal but when people cannot eat they have no strength to pull. Other people hold all the power.

## What to do now

If you feel strongly then tell others about what you have learnt. Use the resources to do a presentation at your church or school service or in a public space challenging people to pay for peace.

Organise a sponsored event with the money going to

help CWS partners helping provide emergency relief in places like Darfur.

Hold a public debate and invite local personalities to take part or a quiz night as a fundraiser for displaced people in Darfur.