

Some Ideas for Secondary School Students:

Classroom Discussion Topics:

- Discuss the *history of red and white poppy symbols*.
- Ask them to think of how the *lives of students their age are disrupted by war..*
- Talk about the white poppy controversy in Canada. Why do some people feel that it is offensive to veterans? Can they suggest ways to make it more accepted?
- Ask your students if they have *family stories of war and/or dislocation* they would be willing to share with classmates.
- Ask students to *share stories of peace making* from their own lives, in class or at an assembly. These can be in any form (written/drawn/spoken/acted/etc.).
- What are the effects of disrupted education and lost potential on the world economy?
- What do they think are the most common causes of war. Fear? Desire for Justice? Anger? Greed? Political Gain? Hunger or Overcrowding?...
- What do they feel are some justifiable grounds for war? Unjustifiable?
- Is the 'Responsibility to Protect' a good doctrine? How might it be used or abused?
- Can war be an effective use of resources to achieve a desirable goal; if so when?
- What lessons – good or bad do soldiers learn in training for war?

Student Research Topics:

- Have students *pick an issue they care about and research how it interconnects with issues of war & conflict*. For example a student interested in food sustainability could research war's effect on agriculture. Environmentalists could study DU contamination or the military's carbon 'Footprint'. Other possible topics are child soldiers, the effect of war on endangered species, life in a refugee camp, PTSD and other negative effects of war on soldiers, even if they are on the 'winning' side.

Art Projects:

- Make a *mixed poppy wreath* to show the high percentage of civilian war victims or *a white poppy wreath* to commemorate civilians (or high school students) killed in wars.
- *Make a mural* or collage showing war scenes plus red and white poppies.
- Make a display of poppies whose centres are news photographs of the faces of victims of war.

Club or Class Presentations:

- Research how issues of War and Conflict relate to your clubs' purpose and make a short presentation to the Remembrance Day Assembly. For ideas see Student Research Topics above.

Ideas for Secondary School Students cont. :

Schoolwide Activities:

- Hold a **Peace Concert** in your school, just before Remembrance Day, involving students singing and speaking. Invite parents and school neighbors. If you encourage donations at this concert, the money raised can be donated to a peace-making charity of the students choosing.
- **Invite guests** (veterans and local activists, NGOs) into the class/school to speak about peace and their work to promote it.
- **Reach out to older or younger students** at a nearby high school / elementary school and develop a project together that links these two schools in action for peace.

A Student Run White Poppy Poppy Campaign:

- Run a (small or large) white poppy campaign in your school using cloth poppies from Britain or by making or printing your own poppies on photo paper.
 - for **paper poppies** you can use the downloads on our website.
<http://peacepoppies.ca/paper-poppies-8.5x11-20.pdf>
 - For **ordering cloth poppies** contact the Peace Pledge Union in Britain by emailing Annie Bebington admin@ppu.org.uk.
- Vancouver Peace Poppies can give advice on ordering and shipping
We will also provide free pins and information cards to accompany your poppies.
- Do your research so you are prepared to answer any questions.
- Try to **greet objections calmly** and ask people to explain their reasons rather than being confrontational or dismissive. That's what Conflict Resolution is all about.
- You can **distribute your poppies by donation or sell them** for a set price. Any profits made should go to promote peace activities
- Here's what one Ontario student had to say:

I think we made a real splash here, though only 42 people had poppies, our message of peace definitely made its way down the high school grapevine. Which is really big accomplishment considering I live in a military community, with strong pro-war opinions.

In fact, there were a lot of cases when there were people who militantly disagreed with us, confronted us, and then after hearing our message of "If we really want to honour the memories of those who have fallen, wouldn't we want others not to suffer the same end?" actually changed their assessment of us, some actually taking a poppy themselves!

There were some teachers and staff who caused us a little hell, asking students to take the poppies off. However there were no major incidents, and no one was punished for wearing a poppy.

This was a huge success in my opinion; I definitely want to be involved next year.

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Don't forget to **tell us** about the **your projects and ideas**, so we can share them with others and inspire more work in future years !!!!