

This fall we invite you to incorporate  
***White PEACE POPPIES***

...as well as the traditional red poppy in your teaching kit for  
**REMEMBRANCE DAY**

First introduced in Britain in 1933, the white poppy commemorates all victims of war, civilian and military, while encouraging us to challenge the beliefs, values and institutions that make war seem inevitable.



Egg Carton & Handprint Wreath



Civilian and Military Death Statistics - Compare WW1 and Present Conflicts



Display on Elementary School Fence

### **BENEFITS OF EXPANDING OUR SCHOOLS' REMEMBRANCE DAY FOCUS:**

While respecting and honouring the sacrifice of soldiers, mixed poppy wreaths like those above also recognize the huge shift towards higher civilian casualties in recent conflicts. Civilian victims (including many children) now make up more than 90% of the total war dead.

The environmental impacts of war, its psychological toll on soldiers and civilians, and the lost potential of an estimated 50 million children whose education is disrupted by war are consequences our world cannot afford to accept.

By exploring the broader impacts of war, and better reflecting the experience of recent immigrants, teachers at all grade levels can help keep Remembrance Day relevant to students' lives and interests.

Vancouver Peace Poppies offers ideas and resource materials for secondary and primary teachers, plus [subsidized white lapel poppies](http://www.peacepoppies.ca) for use in schools.

We also co-host 'Let Peace be Their Memorial' a Remembrance Day wreath ceremony for overlooked victims of war. We'd welcome more teacher and student participation in that event.



## Expanding the Focus of Remembrance Day

### Some Ideas for Elementary Classroom or School-wide Activities :

from *Vancouver Peace Poppies*

[www. peacepoppies.ca](http://www.peacepoppies.ca)

- 1) Make a ***mixed poppy wreath*** to show the high percentage of civilian war victims. You can use the flower and leaf templates on our website.
- 2) Make ***both a red poppy wreath*** to commemorate soldiers who have been killed, ***and a white poppy wreath*** to commemorate civilians killed in wars.
- 3) Talk about how ***children's lives are disrupted by war***. Then make a white poppy wreath or a single large white poppy using ***cut out faces of kids from ads or magazines to make the centre of the flower***. Add a sign to explain what your wreath represents.
- 4) Ask your kids if they have ***family stories of war and dislocation*** to share with classmates.
- 5) 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.
- 6) Create ***large red and white poppies*** and display them ***outdoors*** on fences around your school. Dollar store foam sheets are waterproof and easy to cut and paint. Include text blocks like 'Remember War' and 'Work For Peace' or 'Remembering Soldiers & Civilians'.
- 7) Make poppy petals using heart shaped templates, a large one for the main petal & smaller ones for the black blotches. Make centres a green circle with a red heart. Explain that gluing or pinning the petals together to make a flower is a symbolic way to show that we build peace and understanding by connecting our hearts to others.
- 8) ***Invite guests*** (veterans and local activists or NGOs) into the class/school to speak about peace and their work to promote it.
- 9) ***Make a mural*** or collage showing a field of green grass with red and white poppies.
- 10) Have your class ***make picture books*** telling the history of the White Poppy.
- 11) Invite students in one class to design a ***Peace Card*** with line drawing. Choose 4 masters, and then photocopy them. Pass the photocopied cards out to participating classes and have students color the fronts of these cards. Have students copy an agreed upon message of peace and remembrance of all victims of war, inside each card. Cards can be passed out to friends and family or distributed in the neighborhood around the school before Remembrance Day.
- 12) 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.).
- 13) Have the children cut out red, white, black, and green shapes from advertisements or magazines. Then ***make a collage picture*** of big red and white poppies with a peace message below.
- 14) Create an art project by encouraging students to bring in and ***repurpose old war toys***, by taking them apart and then using the pieces to make new objects or images promoting peace.

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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.

## **Feedback from Schools participating in previous White Poppy campaigns:**

*The grade 7 & 8 students did a "Courageous Voices" presentation where they each stood up, wearing a white poppy, and quoted a famous person. All quotes were about peace. Students were placed throughout the audience so the voices came from all directions - it was very powerful. Also, our MCs did an explanation of the white peace poppy and its history during the ceremony. Our ceremony started with the theme of remembrance and, after the minute of silence, switched to the theme of peace and all participants switched their poppies from red to white at this time - it was amazing.*

Beth McEwan - John McCrae Public School – Guelph, ON

*The white poppies...were a huge hit. We ran a Remembrance Day Assembly for the school in which each class discussed a way they are working on solving everyday conflicts through non-violent means.*

Ellen Kellner - Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School – Toronto, ON

*Our school used the white poppies to reinforce our 'Look Both Ways' theme which encourages students to consider more than one side of complex social issues.*

Sheila MacLeod - Ruth Thompson Middle School – Mississauga, ON

## **Supportive words from Canadian Veterans:**

*I am a 95 year old veteran, who served in the Canadian Forces for almost 30 years, in 3 theaters of war...and with the UN in Korea. I wore the white poppy this year beside the respected red poppy because I wanted to honour non-military casualties, as well as the military casualties. As we have discovered, modern warfare is TOTAL. It makes no distinction between civilian and military. Weapons of destruction now target civilians every bit as much, if not more so than military formations and installations. It is time for all of us, including The Royal Canadian Legion to recognize this.*

WWII Veteran Lieut. Colonel Woodrow Coward

*I feel that a white poppy for civilians and a red poppy for veterans to commemorate those who died during war is appropriate, and should not be considered "disrespectful" and offensive to Veterans. I think the white poppy is appropriate for Remembrance Day, as the civilian casualties, are as great a loss, as those of the military personnel.*

Korean War Veteran David Laskey

*As a veteran of the First Gulf War and fifteen years in the Canadian Armed Forces, I was happy to discover the White Poppy Movement... the red poppy is also very important to me. It reminds me of the brothers and sisters in arms who gave their lives so that others could have peace. This is why I will proudly wear the white poppy of peace beside the red poppy of remembrance: to honour and remember those whose sacrifice helped to ensure my freedom to write this little note about peace.*

Gulf War Veteran

For more resources see the Vancouver Peace Poppies website <https://www.peacepoppies.ca/>

## **Some additional electronic peace resources for educators:**

1. Teaching For Peace - <http://www.zisman.ca/peace/>
2. Conscience Canada - Never Again: Peace Education and Remembrance Day  
[http://www.consciencecanada.ca/?page\\_id=244](http://www.consciencecanada.ca/?page_id=244)
1. Peace Pledge Union - Education (originators of the White Poppy - England 1933)  
<https://ppu.org.uk/education>