

FOCUS ON PEACE

To me peace means brotherhood. Peace means interrelationship and peace means to live happily. Nowadays it is very difficult to find it. But I experienced it when I was working for this peace project.

We were all of different religions, cultures and different opinions. But we worked together with a lot of understanding and then I realized that if we children can work together even though we are from different religions then why can't the world.

This peace movement is an excellent step towards bringing peace and harmony to the country first and then the world at large.

Now, let me tell you something about what we did to promote peace in our school first. Our library teacher Meena ma'am gave us great support and technical help by arranging for a Peace Board and a Peace Corner for us.

Our first peace assignment was on Mahatma Gandhi. We visited the house of M.K.Gandhi in Bombay, 'Mani Bhavan' to know more about him. We clicked many pictures and studied his ideals. I could feel the presence of the Mahatma in the house. Mani Bhavan is so silent and peaceful it gives you a sense of inner tranquility. After visiting Mani Bhavan we came back to school. We started our work by putting our ideas together on the Peace Board. Then we created a collage on M.K.Gandhi's life and wrote down his sayings. His sayings are so selfless and for the good of humanity that you feel like practicing them. After all the work was completed and the decoration was done the final day came when the Consul General of the United States of America came to visit our school.

We asked him to inaugurate our Peace Corner and explained to him what we had done. He was impressed by our work. Then we proceeded towards the hall where an entertainment programme emphasizing Peace was held for the Consul General.

He was honoured by our school and the 'Lions Clubs International'. Then he spoke to us and enlightened us about Peace and about the importance of Dayton and its Peace Museum. His speech will always be remembered by us. It was an excellent day filled with peace, harmony and hope for the future.

**-Akshay Balwani
STD : 8th (14 yrs)**

THE “PEACE DRIVE” – AN INSPIRATIONAL EXPERIENCE.

The first time we were asked to meet in the library for a ‘Peace and Harmony’ project we were not really excited. Curious as we were, we craved to know the reason behind the whole idea. The idea when explained sounded wonderful but we were still unsure. As we started the project on Mahatma Gandhi we were inspired. He was the most humane person and a symbol of peace or rather the Messiah of Peace.

‘Time and Tide waits for none’ was one saying we truly experienced. In a flurry of activities we made some quotes, a poster, a collage and pictures that gave an insight into his life. This was followed by a report through pictures on our visit to Mani Bhavan, Gandhiji’s old house which has now been converted into a museum. The Peace Tree was also set up in the Peace Corner in the library. As the American Consul General, Mr. Michael Owen stepped on to our 2nd floor, there followed an explanation by two of our students about our visit to Mani Bhavan. He then graciously stepped into the library, cameras clicking everywhere to inaugurate our Peace Corner. Since we were the first school in the whole of India to initiate such a movement, a sense of pride and oneness prevailed. The students talked on all the exhibits displayed there. The highlight of the day was the dance, music and literature through which we portrayed ‘Peace’. We felt that we were one of the representatives of peace throughout the globe to save something common to all of us, The Earth and its people.

**-Visalakshi Shivaraman.
STD 8TH (14 yrs)**

THE “FOCUS ON PEACE” GROUP:

- 1. Akshay Balwani**
 - 2. Akshaay Hendricks**
 - 3. Anmol Gill**
 - 4. Aparajit Subramanian**
 - 5. Bhrajat Kampani**
 - 6. Juhi Shah**
 - 7. Pradeep Sreekumar**
 - 8. Raveena Bangre**
 - 9. Rohan Rao**
 - 10. Sanjna Mukhi**
 - 11. Trisha John**
 - 12. Visalakshi Shivaraman**
- TEACHER INCHARGE : MEENA**

THE PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

On 8th December 2007, Mr. Michael Owen – the American Consul General visited St.Gregorios High School. He inaugurated the Peace Corner in the school. The school has initiated an International Peace Project in collaboration with the Dayton Peace Museum, Ohio. It is the first school in the country to do so. Peace was chosen as the theme and all the year round there will be activities related to the theme. The school has already started the project with a visit to Mani Bhavan the residence of the Mahatma for a short period of time. A peace poster competition was also held, under the banner of the Lions club; who are partnering the school in this venture. Children have written poems on “Peace and Harmony” and the school will be bringing out a volume of these poems next month. A debate on the topic “global peace- a distant dream” was also held. Since peace and environmental quality are intimately linked, the film “An Inconvenient Truth” was also screened for the students to understand how any imbalance in one country can hamper another country no matter how far away .

The Peace Corner, showcases the life and works of different people all over the world, people who have worked towards making peace possible. Some of the people are- Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa and of course the United Nations. An online link project is already underway with a school in New York, wherein students will communicate through the net exchanging materials, information and ideas trying to understand the cultural diversities of the various groups world over. It is hoped that eventually children designated as PEACE ambassadors will travel not just to the U.S.A but the world over carrying the message of Peace and goodwill from nation to nation.

Speaking to the students Mr. .Michael Owen said that, “Understanding the differences in the cultural groups and respecting them is very important towards World Peace and the United States values the differences. I’m very pleased to state that St.Gregorios High School in the country is the first school in the country to embark on such a project and we at the American Consulate will extend whatever possible.”

The function was graced by the members of the school management; a few dignitaries from the Lions Club and of course the students of the school.

**Ranjini Krishnaswamy,
PRINCIPAL
ST. GREGORIOS HIGH SCHOOL**