

PEACE

24/7

Empowering Youth to Be Ministers of Peace and Justice



**Communication
Key to
Peace**

Become Aware

Peace is an almost undefinable word. It takes on a multitude of forms that are different for every person in every situation. Yet, in all this confusion, we constantly seek that state of existence we continue to call peace. There is one thing that is constant about peace, we know when we are not experiencing it. We sense when our soul is not right with the world. This condition may result from our personal or even global struggles, but it often involves a simple thing like miscommunication between two or more people.

In today's world our lives cross the paths of others not only face to face, but through almost instant technology like cell phones, fax machines, and the Internet. A teen sitting at her computer in her home in Montana, USA, can carry on a conversation with a friend sitting at her computer in her home in Sydney, Australia. It is possible to become deeply involved in the lives of people you have never even met face to face. And there lies the dangers of communication. Communication is anything but simple. Whether you are the receiver or giver, communication requires the use of all our senses. When our messages are conveyed with clear understanding, relationships usually continue in a peaceful manner. But when communication ceases to exist, or, possibly even worse, is misinterpreted, the resulting responses may be anything but peaceful.

Poor communication can be party to relationships breaking up, employment, feelings hurt, anger, and unnecessary grief. At times, rash decisions, even criminal acts, have been made because communication has broken down. On the other hand, good communication among parties can result in opportunities for wonderful friendships, individual and team accomplishments, and families who actually enjoy spending time together.

There is no fail-safe way to make sure others understand the messages you are trying to understand. However, recognizing the importance of communication in relationships is a major step in the right direction. Such awareness causes you to be more sensitive to others and the signals of communication they are sending. Successful, two-way communication is a powerful key to reaching the infinite goal of peace.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Acknowledge Responsibility

- We are not all gifted in the skills of communication. Even Moses, chosen by the LORD to lead a people from bondage, felt inadequate to communicate. If you read on in Exodus 4:13–16, you will discover that God helped Moses by letting his brother, Aaron, serve as his spokesperson. Have you ever felt inadequate at communicating a message? Did you ask God for help? Did you seek help from a friend or family member? When you feel that the words just won't come, and you know you have a message that must clearly be communicated, remember the words of God to Moses.
- Jesus communicated to the people in many ways. Read through the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) to find examples of the following communication methods as demonstrated by Jesus.

visuals	stories	personal example
friendships	experiential	metaphors
challenge	preaching	through others

Exodus 4:10–12 NRSV

Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor even now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." Then the LORD said to him, "Who gives speech to mortals? . . . Is it not I, the LORD? Now go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to speak."

20th Century Meets the 21st Century

Research the ways people communicated their thoughts and feelings with each other at the beginning of the twentieth century. Compare the twentieth century with the many different ways people communicate at the beginning of the twenty-first century. How much have they changed? What has stayed the same? Discuss. What has been lost through these changes, and what has been gained?

Acquire More Understanding



Play a game of charades. Only body language can be used to portray your message to the other team.

Play a game of gossip. Pass a message from person to person by whispering in their ear. Does the message change as it is passed from one person to another? Does the game reflect the communication of gossip accurately?

Other games designed around communication skills

Password
Catch Phrase
Scattergories
Scrabble®
Pictionary

Clear and Concise

Clear and concise communication can make an enormous difference on the outcome in a given situation. Role play how you would communicate in the following situations. For each situation, discuss the possible results if communication is not understood clearly.

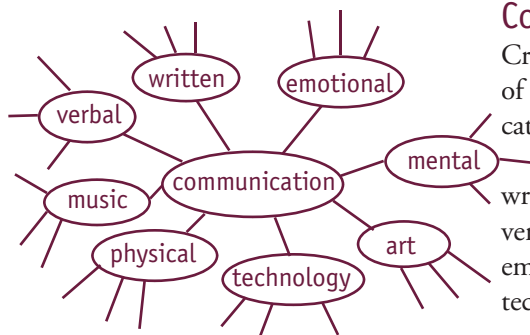
- Coming home from a Friday night game in the next town, there is an accident on the road that backs up traffic for miles. No one in the car has a cell phone, and by the time you get home it is way past your established curfew.
- You worked hard on a school project, and you feel that the grade was unfair.
- You are interviewing for a job at the local grocery store.
- You are on the student council, and you have been asked to speak to the principal about specific dress code changes.

Communication Shortcuts

Cultures and communities create their own communication shortcuts that won't often be found in a language book or dictionary. These include slang terms, hand gestures, even body postures. These shortcuts are often unique, not only to a specific area of the world, but to smaller populations such as teenagers, families, or friends.

Watch and listen. What slang terms or body gestures do you observe (adults, kids, families, friends) that people from outside your area would not understand? See if you can find out how these shortcuts got started.

Do a little investigating. Are there any communication shortcuts that are indigenous of the teen culture across your country? Do any of them span the world of teen culture? How is it possible for trends like these to be shared across geographic borders?

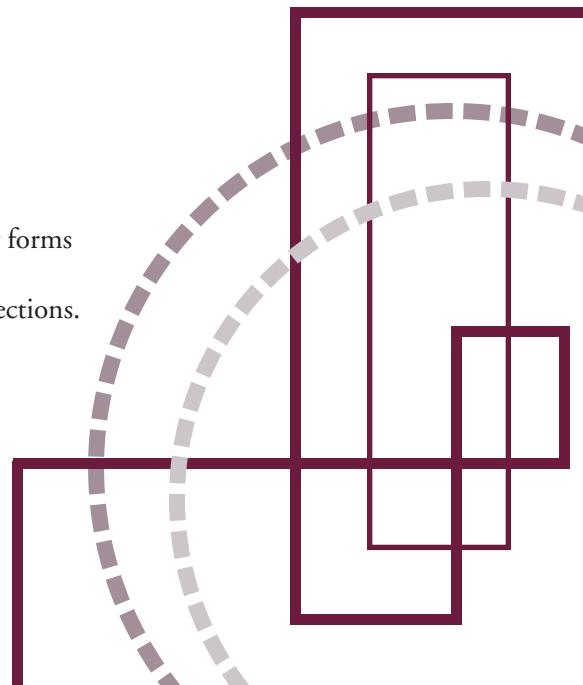


Communication Chart

Create a chart that organizes the many forms of communication. Use the following categories for dividing the chart into sections.

written
verbal
emotional
technology

music
art
physical
mental





Take Action

- Assume you are going to be traveling to a place where your language is not spoken. What words would you want to know how to communicate before you go? Learn how to communicate your list of basic survival words and/or phrases as spoken in a language different from your own.
- Learn the alphabet for Morse code and sign language.
Internet keyword searches: Morse code and sign language

• Send a message to a friend by **fax** inviting them to a gathering at your house or other location. Send the same message to another friend by **e-mail**, another by **telephone**, another by **letter**, and another **face to face**. Finally, ask a friend to make a **secondhand** invitation by inviting still another friend for you. At the gathering, take time to discuss the responses to the different forms of invitation. Was it clear? Did friends know what they were being asked to do and why? How did it make them feel? Did the form of invitation have anything to do with their reactions? Discuss the types of information that are best used with each method.

Become an Advocate

• Communication Is Key to Peace.

Sponsor an event to help educate your community on the importance of good communication in the process of living peacefully. If possible, try to get schools and churches involved. If you have a ministerial alliance in your community, this might be a great sponsoring organization. Set the date, then challenge people to express the concept, “communication is key to peace” through one of the following methods:

Want to start small? Do the activity as a youth group and set up the event for your congregation or other sponsoring organization.

music
artwork
drama
video
still photography
design posters/flyers
design a billboard
written articles, poetry
storytelling

At the celebrating event, display artwork, photography, posters, and written articles. Provide opportunity for music and drama to be performed and videos to be shown. A time could also be set

aside for the reading of articles and stories. A display showing communication tools as they have developed through the years would also be great.

• International Peace Communication

The governing bodies of countries have a great deal of influence on whether or not you live in an environment of peace. Communication among governing bodies is also extremely important. If you feel strongly about actions your government is taking, and you live in a country that allows freedom of speech, then take the time to communicate with the people who represent you! Write letters, create petitions, and make phone calls. Just do your research first! Be concise, have the facts straight, and your grammar and spelling correct. Let several people read through what you are trying to say. These are all important tools in successful communication.