



Ten ways to Work for Peace at Home

The peace Christ offers is more than an absence of conflict, more than mere 'tolerance' of others. It involves the healing of hearts, inner freedom and loving relationships that draw us into the divine life.

Here are ten steps for our homes which can contribute to a world of peace.

1. 'Pray' the news

Newspapers and current affair programs can at times seem like a depressing litany of reports on crime, war and terrorism. Rather than passively read or watch the news, use the moment to *pray* for victims and perpetrators of violence in the world.

2. Discuss the makings of peace

If your child is expressing concern about a situation of global conflict, or is studying a particular social issue at school, seize the opportunity to talk about peace, not just in socio-political terms, but from a Christian perspective. E.g., Look up the bible together to see what the early Christians had to say about peace (e.g., Jn 20:19-23; Eph 3:14-18) or search the internet for the Pope's World Day of Peace Message.

3. Treasure a peace-prayer

Choose a 'peace prayer' from among the writings of the saints, keep it with you and say it often. The Peace Prayer of St Francis is well known, but there are many others in our great tradition of prayer.

4. Praise, affirm encourage

There is nothing like truthful praise, affirmation and encouragement to fill a home with joy and peace. The opposite is also true: there is nothing like nagging, criticism, put-down jokes and sarcasm to fill a home with mistrust and negativity. For a peace-filled home focus on praise, not criticism.

5. Think about it!

Think before you say or do something that is going to create hurt and tension in the home. Take responsible control of your mouth, your actions, your thoughts.

6. Forgive and be forgiven

Peace starts at home. Essential to peace is forgiveness. Model for your children what it means to ask and receive forgiveness. Teach them that relationships flourish not because people are perfect but because they are prepared to admit their failings, say sorry and start over.

7. Speak well of your neighbours

Witness to your children what it means to be a peace-maker, especially when

dealing with difficult people. Bad-mouthing is not helpful. Stand for your values while showing compassion and keeping communication channels open for constructive dialogue.

8. Relax in God's love

When we are not at peace our breathing becomes shallow, our muscles tight. Take five minutes each day to relax your posture and breathe deeply. Inhale the life-giving breath of God's Spirit. Entrust all your cares to our loving God.

9. Learn from a peacemaker

Take lessons from a peace-filled person. Watch, listen, learn from what he/she does or says. Study his/her demeanour and attitudes. Ask about the 'secret' to a peace-filled life.

10. Turn to Mary

Many people testify to a deep, personal peace found by turning to Mary, Mother of God. Whether it be through the rosary or other marian prayers, the same Spirit who overwhelms Mary and fills her with grace can transform us in ways we never thought possible.

Helpful Hint

Personal maturity involves taking responsibility for one's life. This includes owning up to our faults, asking for forgiveness and making amends for a wrong. As members of the Church we have wonderful opportunities to do this by opening ourselves to Christ's healing love in the sacrament of reconciliation. A commitment to forgive and be reconciled in everyday life, celebrated and strengthened by the sacrament, is a powerful recipe for peace indeed.