

Where there is no winner

SESSION AT A GLANCE

Story/Discussion

Murder by another name

Letter/Discussion

A soldier's plea

Information

*War : Who gains ?
Who pays ?*

Story/Writing/ Drawing

Worksheet 10
A paradise on earth

Group song

*Last night I had
the strangest
dream*

Distribution

Factsheet 3
Seeds of Peace

Factsheet 4

*We want to be
friends*

Preparing for the session

The session begins with a story to introduce the idea that killing and looting people is wrong, whether it is for personal gain or for the sake of one's country. Do read the story in advance and familiarise yourself with it so as to tell it effectively - particularly since there is no flipchart accompanying it. Following a discussion on the story is the presentation of a letter written by soldiers expressing their opposition to war; prior preparation will help make your reading more dramatic. Some information on wars is provided through an accordion folder, do practice using it. The last activity is a short statement on the conditions in Kashmir followed by a worksheet. There is also a song at the end of the session, which you will have to set to a simple tune - so do practice it in advance.

Main ideas

- Wars all over the world lead to great destruction of lives and property. Although they are justified in different ways, wars are not really different from murder.
- People all over the world are beginning to realise the futility and the horrors of war. In recent times, more and more people have been protesting against wars.
- In spite of such protests, wars continue to happen. One major reason for this is that the weapons industry makes huge profits from the manufacture and sale of arms.
- Engaging in war depletes precious resources that could otherwise be used to improve people's lives.
- Wars have a horrifying impact, not only in terms of destroying countries and taking countless lives, but also on the living, especially women and children.
- There is an urgent need to find ways by which countries can resolve their differences without resorting to violence.

To conduct the session you will need

- Accordion folder : *War : Who gains ? Who pays ?*
- Copies of Worksheet 10 (one copy per child)
- Copies of the song and Factsheets 3 and 4
(one copy of each per child)

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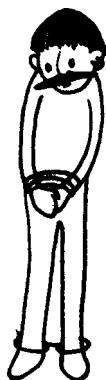


Activity 1**Story/Discussion**

Murder by another name

Conducting the session

Begin the session by telling the class the following story.



It was a fine winter morning. Emperor Akbar's court had assembled, as usual. There was a mood of cheer, for the emperor had just returned a few days earlier, victorious in battle. The normal routine of the court commenced once the emperor had taken his place on the throne. This day, the emperor was to hear petitions and to try people accused of theft, murder and other crimes. A guard led the first prisoner before the emperor.

"He is a murderer, Your Majesty ! Yesterday he waylaid, robbed and killed a family of five people."

Akbar turned to his ministers. "So what is your advice ? What punishment should I give this man ?"

"Hang him, *Jahanpanah* !" said a minister. "Let it be a warning that robbery and murder will not be allowed in the land of Emperor Akbar."



"Bury him alive !" demanded another minister.

"No," shouted a third, "behead him. Have a chariot of four horses drag his body through the city for everyone to see the might and justice of Emperor Akbar."

Akbar then turned to Birbal.

"Why are you silent, my friend ? I would like to know your opinion too before I pronounce my judgement."

"Your Majesty, I am silent because I do not agree with any of my learned friends here," said Birbal.

"So, what is your recommendation ?" asked Akbar.

"Your Majesty, this man should be given a medal of honour of the great court of Emperor Akbar. He should be covered with gold, and given a large piece of land to live in wealth for the rest of his life."



Everyone was shocked. A murmur of protest spread through the court.

"Silence !" ordered the emperor. Then, turning to Birbal, he asked for an explanation.

Birbal replied : "Your Majesty, only yesterday, you showered your Commander-in-chief with such gifts and much more. Why ? Because he had killed several hundred enemy soldiers, captured and tortured many prisoners, conquered enemy territory, looted enemy wealth and won a battle for you ! This poor man has only killed five, so the reward should be smaller. But reward him, you must ! When a man kills hundreds, you honour him but when he kills a few, you want to hang him. Would you call this justice ?"

Use the following questions to initiate a discussion with the class at the end of the story.

- Should the prisoner who had looted and murdered five people be punished ?
- What about Akbar's Commander-in-chief ? He had also looted and killed hundreds of people. Should he be given the same punishment ? Why ?
- Why did Birbal feel that the Commander-in-chief and the criminal should be treated equally ?
- Why do you think we honour our soldiers ?
- If an enemy soldier came to our country and killed and looted our people, what would we call him ? What would the people of his country call him ?

Sum up the discussion by making the following points.

During wars, soldiers take lives and destroy the homes and property of many people. Yet we honour them because we believe that they do it for the sake of their country. But a soldier who is honoured by his country is called a criminal by the enemy country.

We need to think about this and ask ourselves some critical questions : Can killing someone and destroying what they have bring honour to anyone ? Does violence really solve problems ? Are there other ways in which countries can resolve disputes ?

In the following activities, we will try to understand the point of view of those who have lived through wars - the soldiers who have lost their limbs, women and children who have lost their entire families and people who live in constant fear that death may claim them any minute. We will also see who pays the price of wars and who benefits from them.

Activity 2

Letter/ Discussion

A soldier's plea

Tell the class that you are now going to read them part of a letter written by American soldiers who had fought many wars, the last one being the USA-Iraq war in 1991. They wrote this letter to American soldiers when their country was planning to attack Iraq again in 2003, asking them not to participate in another war, not to repeat the same mistakes.

Read out the following letter, pausing occasionally to make sure that the class is with you.

We are retired soldiers of the United States armed forces. We stand with the majority of humanity, including millions in our own country, in opposition to the United States' war on Iraq.



We have fought many wars but we all agree that war is wrong. Many of us believed serving in the military was our duty, and our job was to defend this country. Our experiences in the military caused us to question much of what we were taught. Now we see our REAL duty is to encourage you as soldiers to find out what you are being sent to fight and die for, and what the consequences of your actions will be for humanity. We call upon you to follow your conscience and do the right thing.



In the Gulf war, we were ordered from a safe distance. We bombed much of Iraq by dropping killing hundreds of thousands of people. We remember the road to Basra - the Highway of Death - where we were ordered to kill fleeing Iraqis. We bulldozed trenches, burying people

alive. Burning chemicals and oilfields made the air full of poison, affecting both the people of Iraq and our own soldiers. One out of four Gulf war soldiers is disabled.

During the Vietnam War we were ordered to destroy Vietnam from the air and on the ground. In one area,

My Lai, we massacred women, children and old men. This was not a mistake; it's how we fought the war. We know what we have suffered after the Vietnam War because the ghosts of over two million men, women and children still haunt our dreams. More committed suicide after returning home, than those who died in battle.

Do you know what it is like to look into the eyes of a people that hate you ? You should think about what you are being sent for. You are being sent to invade and occupy a people who, like you and me, are only trying to live their lives and raise their kids.

There is no honour in murder. War is murder by another name. When, in a war, a bomb kills a mother and her child, it is murder. When, in a war, a child dies of dysentery because a bomb damaged a sewage treatment plant, it is murder. When, in a war, a father dies of a heart attack because a bomb disrupted the phone lines so he could not call an ambulance, it is murder. When, in a war, a thousand poor farmers die defending a town they have lived in their whole lives, it is not victory, it is murder.

If the people of the world are ever to be free, **you have to decide whether you want to be a citizen of the world or the soldier of a nation.** You must think and make choices based on your conscience. If you resist joining the war we will support you and stand with you because we have come to understand that our REAL duty is to the people of the world and to our common future.

Pause for a few minutes to let the message of the letter sink in; then get the class to respond to it with the help of questions like the following.

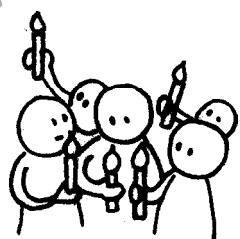
- Are you surprised that soldiers would write a letter like this ?
- What effect do you think it would have on other soldiers who read it ?
- Are soldiers the only ones who die in wars ?
- In what ways does war affect other people ?
- If war is so terrible, why do you think governments go to war ?
- If people really didn't want war, would it be possible to stop fighting ?
- Can you think of any other ways in which conflicts between countries can be settled ?

Sum up the discussion by making the following points.

Like these soldiers, thousands of **ordinary people have begun to protest wars**. During the Iraq war in 2003, thousands and thousands of people from all over the world, particularly from countries that were fighting the war, such as the USA and Britain, protested in different ways.



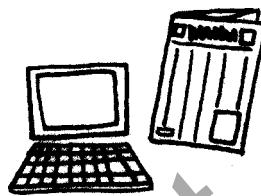
All these protests were peaceful. They took out processions, lit candles, boycotted American and British goods, wrote letters and petitions to their governments against the war, and used the Internet and newspapers to make their voices heard. They protested because they knew that **weapons used in war cause unimaginable destruction and also cost a lot of money**. There are chemical, biological and nuclear weapons that can destroy not only a large part of humanity but future generations as well. They also protested because they believed that **we have to look for other ways of solving problems for the future of humanity**.



Activity 3 Information

War :
Who gains ?
Who pays ?

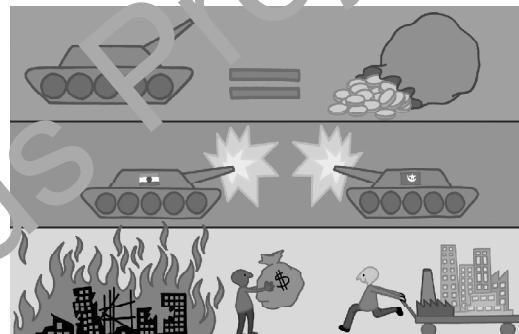
In spite of all these protests, wars continue to happen. Why ? Who gains from these wars ? What is the cost of these wars to humankind ? The next activity will give us some answers.



Use the accordion folder to provide the following information. Unfold the frames one at a time till the folder is displayed in its entirety. Pause long enough at each frame to ensure that the class has understood what is being said.

Frame 1 : The war industry

One major reason for the continuation of wars is that **war is big business**. There is a lot of money to be earned through wars and that is why people who manufacture weapons and those who sell them, constantly encourage countries to fight. For example, the American weapons industry made a profit of Rs. 2,000 billion in the 1991 war against Iraq !



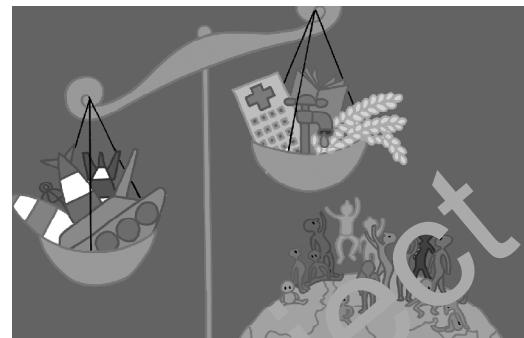
The arms manufacturing and trading industry makes huge profits, regardless of which countries are involved in a war. Often the same dealers of arms sell weapons to 'enemy' countries - such as India and Pakistan - thus making money from both countries. The two countries continue fighting and spending money on weapons that could otherwise be spent on other concerns. In this way, these countries become poorer and the arms dealers become richer.

There is money to be made not only from manufacturing and selling weapons but also from rebuilding the countries that have been destroyed. These 'reconstruction' contractors encourage the world to be in a constant state of war, since it is to their benefit.

In other words, **arms dealers and other contractors make so much money from war that they encourage the countries of the world to continue fighting. People have to realise this and get together to oppose war.**

Frame 2 : World expenditure on war

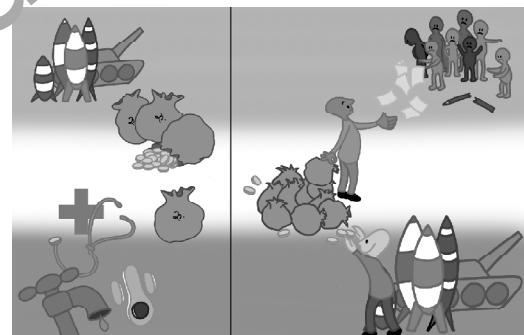
Governments all over the world spend unimaginable amounts of money on war and weapons to destroy other countries. Much less is spent on amenities needed for the benefit of their own people.



It has been calculated that worldwide military expenditure is Rs. 39,000 billion every year. With less than 4 % of this money, or Rs. 1400 billion, every single person in poorer countries can have primary education, safe drinking water and basic health and nutrition facilities.

Frame 3 : The situation in India

Do you know that India too spends enormous amounts of money on buying weapons and fighting wars at a time when crores of Indians do not have proper facilities for health and education ?



Let's look at some figures.

Health : In India the total expenditure on medical services, public health and family welfare is 1/3rd of the expenditure on defence.

Education: A few years ago the government of India said that it could not afford to spend the Rs. 400 billion that was needed to send every child to school.

Activity 4
**Information/
Writing/Drawing**
Worksheet 9
*A paradise on
earth*

In 2003, the same government announced that over the next 10 years it was planning to spend almost Rs. 5,000 billion on buying weapons.

This means that **if the government spent less than 1/10 of the amount that it spends on importing weapons, every child in India could go to school.**

Read out the following passage to the class.

War is not only about weapons and the money spent on them, but also about lives lost - for money spent can be earned again, but a life lost is gone forever. War is also about the living - orphans, widows, people who have lost their limbs in bombings, those who don't go to school, those who have no work or money, those who have lost their homes, those who live in fear for most of their lives.

There is a place on our earth, which has been in a state of war for over fifty years. Although no survey has been carried out, newspaper reports estimate that over 75,000 people have been killed, billions of rupees worth of property has been destroyed, and over two lakh people have been injured over the last 17 years alone. There is no count of those who have suffered emotional and mental trauma. The government spends more than Rs. 1 crore a day on maintaining the army in this place. Yet almost nothing is spent on education, health and providing jobs.

Almost every home has suffered from the war; women and children are the worst affected. Children here cannot do the things that you take for granted.

There are thousands of children of your age, who have lived all their lives in a war situation. Their state is such a beautiful place that it is called 'paradise on earth' but these children have never seen its beauty. They have never been to school or on picnics. When children go out, mothers worry that they will not come home alive. During the day there is the constant sound of bombs and guns; during the night there is the constant fear of raids and killings. 10 year old children look like old men and women - they are afraid to sleep at night because sleep only brings bad dreams.

Now ask the class to guess the name of this place. Let them respond; then tell them that it is not a faraway place but in our own country. It is Kashmir. Encourage them to talk about what they may have heard or read about the situation there.

Distribute copies of Worksheet 10. Ask them to complete it at home and file it in their personal folders.

Summing up

Conclude the session by making the following points.

It is said that in the 5,500 years of recorded human history, there have hardly been a few days without any conflict somewhere in the world. There have been more than 15,000 wars, big and small, during this period.

In this session we saw that while we condemn violence in everyday life, soldiers have always been honoured for participating in wars. We also saw that people, including soldiers, all over the world have begun to realise that wars are not a solution to any problem. **Wars not only take precious lives and destroy countries but also have a horrifying impact on the living, on men, women and children. But wars continue to happen because there are certain people for whom wars are a way to make huge profits.**

Enormous sums of money are spent by the governments of different countries on acquiring destructive weapons and fighting wars. But this money can be spent for the betterment of humanity, for fighting the true enemies of humankind - enemies such as illiteracy, unsafe drinking water, inadequate housing, malnutrition and inadequate health facilities. Countries have to learn to resolve differences and conflicts in other ways so that the money spent on war can be used for these purposes.

So the next time you hear about sophisticated weapons or about a war anywhere in the world, ask yourselves : **Who really benefits ? Who pays the price ?**

Group song

*Last night I had
the strangest
dream*

Distribution

Factsheets 3
seeds of peace

Factsheets 4
*We want to be
friends*

Conclude the session by distributing copies of the song. Explain what the song means and then sing it together with the class. You could set it to any popular tune.

Distribute Factsheets 3 and 4. Ask the children to read them at home and file them in their personal folders.