



INSPIRE

Making a Shared Pledge: Creating a safe, inclusive space to start your peacebuilding journey

The INSPIRE Peace Charter and a shared pledge

Individuals can achieve so much, by acting as a role model and an inspiration to others, we believe everyone has the ability to be change agents; it's not just the great and few among us but every individual every day that makes the big difference.

We want you to use the values in the INSPIRE peace charter to create your own shared pledges for action by encouraging young people to work collaboratively to discuss and debate peacebuilding. This gives an opportunity for young people to discuss and debate issues in a considered way, showing respect for others' ideas and points of view.

Why do we need Shared Pledges?

The concept of a shared pledge is applicable to any school or youth, faith, or community group. In fact, it can be applicable to any gathering of people ("members") anywhere. The idea is to facilitate productive conversations that help tackle and solve problems, generate ideas, build a sense of community and inspire social action. To achieve this, a group needs a shared pledge to enable members to feel comfortable, welcome and included - like they have a "seat at the table." A pledge will help:

- Establish explicit rules and implicit norms to protect everyone's right to speak
- Enable differing perspectives to be heard and valued
- Encourage members to take responsibility for themselves, each other, and the group as a whole
- Give each member of the group a stake and a voice in collective decisions and actions
- Give each member a sense of responsibility to take the next steps

How do we create a Shared Pledge?

You start by bringing the group together to openly discuss expectations, both for individuals and for the group as a whole.

1. **Define a "pledge"** Explain that a pledge implies all parties have a responsibility to uphold the agreement. It is a joint agreement - or a contract, a promise - with yourself and your group.
2. **Share Expectations.**
 - a) Goals - Discuss what the expected goals of the group or session are, and make sure that everyone gets a chance to share what they hope to achieve, individually and as group.
 - b) Ground Rules - Discuss what rules would be important to each member.
 - c) Consequences - Agree on consequences of the rules are not followed.
3. **Reflect on Past Experiences** To prepare members to develop a shared pledge, ask them to reflect on their previous experiences, for example:
 - Identify when you have felt comfortable sharing your ideas and questions in a group setting.
 - Identify when you have had ideas or questions but have not shared them. Why not? What was happening at those moments?

4. Select an Approach

- Discuss exactly what the pledge will contain – defined rules or expectations, suggestions for how to reconcile differences, as well as consequences.
- Decide if the work will be done as a group, individually or in small groups. We suggest that you ask small groups of members to work together to write rules or “expectations” for the whole group.
- Agree a list of key expectations or norms, and consider scenarios. (see 6)
- Present, discuss, organise - As groups present, you can organise their ideas by theme. If there are any tensions or contradictions in the expectations that have been suggested, you can discuss them as a class.
- While the process is inclusive of all ideas, ultimately it is the group leader’s responsibility to ensure that the ideas that make it into the final pledge are those that will best nurture a safe and productive learning environment.

5. Draft and Initiate the Shared Pledge

- After the group has completed its pledge (reaching consensus about rules, norms, and expectations) it is important for each member to sign his or her agreement.
- Members can do so by copying the pledge into journals and signing the page, or they can sign a copy of the pledge that will remain on the wall or on a website.

6. Examples of Expectations and Scenarios:

- Listen with respect. Try to understand what someone is saying before rushing to judge.
- Make comments using “I” statements.
- If you do not feel safe making a comment or asking a question, write the thought down on paper. You can share the idea with your teacher first and together come up with a safe way to share the idea.
- If someone raises an idea or question that helps your own learning, say thank you.
- If someone says something that hurts or offends you, do not attack the person. Acknowledge that the comment—not the person—hurt your feelings, explain why.
- Put-downs are never okay.
- If you don’t understand something, ask a question.
- Think with your head and your heart.
- Share the talking time—provide room for others to speak.
- Do not interrupt others while they are speaking.
- Write thoughts on paper and save if you don’t have time to say during class.
- Journal responses do not have to be shaped publicly
- When we have an idea or question we would like to share, we can...
- When we have an idea but do not feel comfortable sharing it out loud, we can...
- When someone says something that we appreciate, we can...
- When someone says something that might be confusing or offensive, we can...
- To make sure each member has the opportunity to participate, we can...
- If we read or watch something that makes us feel sad or angry, we can...
- To show respect for the ideas of others, we can...

Peace-Building Journey Next Step: Worksheet for Creating a Shared Pledge

As a group

1. Discuss the need to commit to peace-building at every level (community, group, individual) and how there may be different views on how to do this. Consider also starting with a definition of peace.
2. Discuss the goals of the group
3. Define shared pledge and discuss why a shared pledge to a commitment is important.
4. Reflect on times in the community or group setting when a shared pledge would be or would have been useful.
5. Discuss the ideas of: a) desired “norms” or expectations” for the group; and b) ideal scenarios for how things take place in a group setting.
6. Discuss what will be in the shared pledge (expectations, rules, ways to reconcile disagreements, consequences).

Break into small groups

1. Discuss norms and scenarios that the individuals in the group would like in the shared pledge and make a short, agreed-upon list.
2. Discuss ways to reconcile differences and outline consequences.
3. Make sure all voices in the team are heard.
4. Agree on what to present to the class.

As a group

1. Review each team’s proposal and organise by theme.
2. Discuss any issues or questions.
3. Draft the Shared Pledge for Peace for the class.
4. Each member signs the pledge.
5. Display on the wall (upload to web page, paste in journals, etc.).



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HISTORY
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