



**CHILDREN
OF
THE EARTH** | INSPIRES & UNITES
YOUNG PEOPLE
for PEACE
WORLDWIDE

WWW.COEWORLD.ORG

Dear COE Family,

This packet includes information to help you plan a gathering.

This Starter Kit #2 contains the following information:

1. Guiding Practices of a Gathering
2. Launching Event: Initiating Practice Suggestions, Example of a Launching Event
3. Resources for Event Activities
4. Logistics for Planning a Gathering

Appendix

1. Brainstorm Dream Sheet
2. Sign in Sheet
3. Event Report Sheet
4. Participant Evaluation
5. Facilitator Evaluation
6. Event Report Sheet
7. Annual Report

Enjoy the beginning of your journey!

In Peace,
The COE Team

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Guiding Practices of a Gathering

A gathering is a powerful and transformative experience. The gathering that you host will be creatively unique to your local community and participants, and it is important to include certain essential elements which are foundational to COE to ensure a core connection to other COE Ambassadors around the world.

COE has agreed that a COE gathering should include the following.

- Introduction of COE to all participants
- Explanation of the Ethics and Values of COE
- Begin the gathering with a meditation/prayer of unity

With these guidelines, we hope you will be inspired to create your own Program.

Young people have experienced a meaningful gathering when the participants experience Connection, Reflection and Action.

Connection builds relationships and creates a sense of unity. Connection bridges gaps of perceived separation. During a Hub gathering you can connect through icebreakers, meditations, inter-faith gatherings, learn about other faiths and religious traditions and create spaces to share personal views and beliefs.

Reflection is when you give yourself time to go within to integrate new experiences and reach deeper understanding. It is the time when you create new meanings or strengthen previously held beliefs. Through meditation you can come to discover your True self.

Action is taking your joy from connecting and reflecting into the world! Ambassadors create simple and achievable projects that are based on the principles of spirituality. This is called *Spiritual Activism*. These projects are created by the Ambassadors and are aligned with the guiding principles and ethics of Children of The Earth. Each group may create projects that are aligned to their individual and community's needs. The groups are also welcome to duplicate best practices from other groups.



Launching Event

The purpose of a first event is to meet other like-minded young people, get to know each other better, and through building a common vision, to create a group together. The following example may be used as a guideline to help you create your first gathering, plan your activities and manage group dynamics.

The person organizing the Event will lead the proceedings, explain the activities, communicate the objectives, and make sure the group stays on schedule.

COE feels that it is important to start the meetings with an *Initiating Practice* to help focus our attention on a common vision, bring unity among the group members and align ourselves with the Heart of all encompassing Love.

This is also a great opportunity to use our energies collectively to help send positive thoughts of Love, Peace and healing to the earth and humanity as a whole.

We wish to offer you some suggestions of what you could do, but please feel free to come up with your own creative ideas.



Initiating Practice Suggestions

Music

Teaching and singing a song together is a beautiful way to begin a meeting. Sounds of nature or meditative music may also be used as a way to raise consciousness. Music is the universal language of the heart and is a joyful way to bring unity and happiness within the group.

Prayer

Invite three members of the group to bring and read a prayer from a different tradition. This will encourage learning and understanding between cultures. The participants might choose to pray spontaneously from the heart.

Meditation

Universal Peace Meditation (By Karoline Buys)

As we visualize the Dove of Peace in white radiant light, shining upon our town, city, or village let us intone all together, each one in our own mother language, 4 times, the words “May Peace Prevail in...(name of each person’s town, city, or village or community)!”

Now let us visualize the Dove of Peace in white radiant light, shining upon our respective countries and let us say together, each one in our own mother language, 4 times, the words “May Peace Prevail in (name of our own country/ state),”

Now let us visualize the Dove of Peace in white radiant light, shining upon the entirety of the earth and let us say together, each one in our own mother language, 4 times, “May Peace Prevail on Earth.”

To end this meditation the group can intone together the universal sound of OM 4 times.

(If the participants come from the same country or from a “peaceful” country, you could also pray for countries that are going through difficult times.)



Visualization

Visualization for Unity (By Karoline Buys)

Invite all the participants to sit in a circle, hold hands and close their eyes.

Guided Visualization (by the COE Ambassador):

Let us visualize a Pillar of Golden Radiant Light that surrounds our bodies and comes down from the Source of all Light and Love.

As we breathe in slowly through our nose, let us visualize how a *golden magenta* light enters through our mind's eye (third eye). This light slowly descends reaching our heart and then continuous to fill each cell of our entire body with Light.

Now, as we gently breathe out through our mouths, let us visualize how rays of Light emanate from our hearts, reaching the hearts of all who are present in the room.

As we again breathe in and out slowly, we feel the oneness we all share with each other.

(Moment of silence)

Now let us visualize our Mother Earth in the center of the circle.

See how rays of light in myriads of colors emanate from our hearts, reaching the core of the earth. Picture her as a blue/green jewel of glorious light and embrace her with radiations of Peace, Harmony and Love.

As we continue visualizing this, let us gently intone 3 times the sacred Sanskrit words meaning "prayer of peace" of "OM SHANTI, SHANTI OM." *(Intonation followed by moment of silence)*

Slowly we become aware of our bodies and we start returning to the room.

(Moment of silence)

Thank you, o Most High Source of Light and Love for these wonderful blessings. Please Guide us through the inner silent voice in our hearts, so that we may work together in harmony as one family of light upon the earth and be instruments of compassion each day of our lives.

OM Amen

Gathering



Example of a Launching Event

This example has been drafted for a group of no more than 10 participants. Please allocate times accordingly. The total event time in this example is 5 hours.

Session 1

Introduction: 10 minutes

Share the outline of the day

Share the intentions of the day

Topic: Example- To explore and share our spirituality

Initiating Practice: 9 minutes

Refer to pages 5-7 of this packet

Icebreaker: 15 minutes

Connection

- Introduce the “Talking Stick” (the talking stick can be any object).
- The person who starts the round, holds the object and shares. As long as someone is holding the object the rest of the group listens attentively and in silence.
- After sharing each person will pass the talking stick to the person on their left until it reaches the facilitator again.
- Invite each person to share their name, favorite way to spend their free time, one fun fact nobody would know about them and lastly how do they feel right at that moment.

Activity One: 15 minutes

Reflection

Facilitator leads Meditation (If you need examples please choose one from handbook- Creating a Peaceful World - One Youth at a Time)

Activity Two: 60 minutes

The purpose of this exercise is to bring all of their ideas into one expression, showing the variety of ways that Spirituality can be expressed and perceived.

- Ask each person to team up with a person they *don't know very well*. Make sure all people have a teammate. If the group is uneven, put three in one group.
- Present the topic and question at hand: *“What does Spirituality mean to me?”*
- Each member of the small group is given a specific amount of time to share their individual thoughts.



- After all members have shared, tell them that their task is to ask them to find a way to present what they've shared to the rest of the larger group in an artistic form: They can use dance, drama, poetry, singing or visuals.

Activity Three: 15 minutes

Debrief

- Use the talking stick, invite each person to share any impressions they had from the exercise (what they felt, observed and learned).

Break: 20 minutes

Snack and move around (ex: throw a Frisbee/jump rope ☺)

Session 2

Activity One: 20 minutes

Introduction of COE (COE has a power point or written material to send you that explains the following- please contact Nina Meyerhof if you would like to receive this).

1. History of COE
2. Mission of COE
3. COE Chapters, Hubs and Ambassadors

Session 3

Activity One: 40 minutes (includes 20 minutes to introduce activity and transition)

Open Space

Open Space Technology is when the group of participants are given the “open space” to separate into different *breakout* groups to explore a topic of interest. At the beginning of Open Space, the facilitator asks for volunteers from the entire group to present a topic they are interested in exploring. If there are 5 people in your entire group the facilitator might ask for 2 volunteers to present two topics. Once the volunteers have announced the topic, the remainder of participants joins the breakout group they are most interested in.

The topic of the breakout group can be anything that is of interest to the volunteer who suggests and presents the topic. The topic can be a spiritual/intellectual idea to explore, a new song to teach, a yoga pose to practice. The topic should be something you have a real passion for and will take personal responsibility for starting the conversation about it. The break out groups will last 20 minutes.

If anyone of the participants joins a group and decides to leave during those 20 minutes, they may. If the breakout group volunteer decides to end early, he/she may and the group may join a different breakout group.

Break: 20 minutes



Session 4

Activity One: 60 minutes

Collective Vision

- Check in: Go around the circle with talking stick and do a check in of how people are feeling, what has come up for them. (+-15 minutes)
- Share the idea of starting a group
- Explain that each group is shaped by its members
- Invite the group to suggest ideas for future gatherings: (Optional: Print and Use “The Brainstorm Dream Sheet” Questionnaire and give each group a copy to fill in)
- Ask each group to present their ideal vision of a gathering.
- Facilitator writes down topics and group decides which topic to use for their next meeting.
- Together with the participants, start writing the theme, activities and experiences that will take place in your next gathering.
- The facilitator asks for volunteers and volunteer leaders to complete the organization for the next gathering. (A scribe is chosen who takes names and groups down on board).

Activity Two: 35 minutes

Closing circle (using talking stick)

Participant Evaluation



Resources for Event Activities

For specific exercises and activities please refer the COE Handbook. Please ask Nina Meyerhof about the availability of this Handbook.

Mini Peace ABC

The basics about peace. How to understand peace and its approaches today.

<http://www.activeforpeace.org/en/peares/pearesABC.htm>

Famous Definitions of Peace

Famous people have given peace several definitions. See how they describe it.

http://www.activeforpeace.org/en/peares/famous_people.html

Resources on Peacebuilding

A set of links specifically designed for youth to be able to access on the topic of peacebuilding.

http://www.activeforpeace.org/en/peares/academic_resources.html

Sustainable Global Leadership Alliance

SGLA develops young leaders with the vision to address critical environmental, economic and social challenges of our world.

We train leaders aged 15-22 to be conscious in their living, global in their experience and able to generate sustainable change.

SGLA's international experiential curriculum leads participants from personal insights to community awareness to global perspective unleashing the latent idealism of youth in the service of our collective future.

<http://www.sgl.org/index.php>

Network for Youth in Transition

This free resource & networking site is designed to strengthen the dialogue and increase awareness about the role youth play in development and peace in their communities. This site is also created as a space to share learning, from across agencies and disciplines on programming,, managing such programs and evaluating programs for and with youth.

<http://cpbinternational.ning.com/>

Open Space Technology

Open Space Technology is a simple way to run productive meetings, for five to 2000+ people, and a powerful way to lead any kind of organization, in everyday practice and extraordinary change. <http://www.openspaceworld.org/>

Icebreakers, Warm-ups, and Energizers



A set of links about tools and instruments for facilitating meetings in order to keep the energy and attention of the group at high levels.

<http://wilderdom.com/games/icebreakers.html>

The Source for Youth Ministry

Additional resources for managing youth in groups using games in different situations.

<http://www.thesource4ym.com/games/>

SALTO Youth Training Resources

SALTO-YOUTH is a network of 8 Resource Centres working on European priority areas within the youth field. It provides youth work and training resources and organises training and contact-making activities to support organisations, youth workers and National Agencies responsible for the implementation of the European Youth in Action Programme. The network is part of the European Commission's Training Strategy within the Youth in Action Programme. It works in synergy with other partners in the field.

<http://www.salto-youth.net/>

European Youth Portal

European Union Portal for Youth. http://europa.eu/youth/index.cfm?l_id=EN

Alliance of Civilizations Youth

Youth has been identified as one of the key priorities for the work of the Alliance of Civilizations. The AoC Secretariat is actively trying to involve youth directly in its work by collaborating with broad networks of youth organizations. Our goal is to have a youth perspective in the media debate, on cross-cultural and interreligious issues and in all AoC projects.

<http://www.unaoc.org/content/view/92/127/lang,english/>

UN Youth

The UN Program on Youth is the focal point on youth within the United Nations. It aims to build an awareness of the global situation of young people, as well as promote their rights and aspirations. The Program also works towards greater participation of young people in decision-making as a means of achieving peace and development.

<http://www.un.org/youth>

United Network of Young Peacebuilders

The United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders) is a global network of 42 youth peace organizations and 350 affiliates active in the field of peacebuilding and conflict transformation.

The UNOY network contributes to the work of its members and affiliates in two fundamental ways, namely capacity building and advocacy and campaigning.

<http://www.unoy.org/>



Prayers from around the world

This page has been especially designed to allow you personally to request or add your prayers or memorials for people or places on planet Earth.

<http://www.healthetheplanet.org/>

Logistics for Planning a Gathering

Volunteers:

Is there someone who will help you prepare?

Is there someone who will help you clean up?

Participants:

How many people do you want to participate?

Is your space large enough?

How long is your gathering?

What do participants need to be prepared (specific clothing, poem to share)?

Communication:

How will you advertise your gathering to participants?

How will you communicate directions?

Will you provide transportation?

Guest Speakers:

Are you going to have special guests or speakers?

Are these guests volunteering their time or is there a fee to consider?

Materials:

Paper, pencils, large board for writing?

Food:

Are you providing food?

How will food be paid for?

Accommodations:

Will people need to spend the night?

Will you provide overnight accommodations or suggestions for overnight accommodations?

If they plan on camping, do they need to bring their own equipment?

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